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The effects of personal construct group work on troubled adolescents

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University of Wollongong

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THE EFFECTS OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCT GROUP WORK
ON TROUBLED ADOLESCENTS

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Clinical Psychology)

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Deborah Margaret Truneckova
BA (Hons), Dip Ed

Department of Psychology
2000
DECLARATION

I, Deborah Truneckova, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology), in the Department of Psychology, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Deborah Truneckova

23rd October, 2000
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ABSTRACT

This report examines the effectiveness of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents.

A personal construct account of adolescence was presented followed by an account of the processes of group work from a personal construct perspective. A personal construct model of group work with troubled adolescents was then developed. Drawn from the research studies supporting this model, the aims of this research were to investigate adolescent differences between troubled and functional adolescents and the individual outcome of group work, the perceived effectiveness of group work by the participants, and the processes of group work with troubled adolescents.

Seventy-six troubled and functional adolescents, 12-15 years, attending five secondary schools in the Wollongong district took part in this research along with their parents and their teachers. Twenty-eight of the troubled adolescents participated in the personal construct group work.

Individual assessment measures offered some support for the hypotheses, showing that after group work troubled adolescents were using more abstract and interpersonal construing than they were before, and less disruptive behaviours up to twelve months later. Tools developed to assess perceived effectiveness of group work found that adolescents and their parents evaluated personal construct group work as effective in bringing about changes in interpersonal behaviour, while the teachers found it effective in bringing about changes in the personal behaviour of troubled adolescents. Measures of group process provided some
support that group members were increasingly evaluated more positively on the group work goals.

The efficacy of the group work as an outcome study based on personal construct psychology was evaluated, along with the value of the Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents as a research model. An account of group work process with troubled adolescents was followed by observations on the clinical implications of this research as a group work intervention for troubled adolescents.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction: Statement of Thesis

The following report will examine the effectiveness of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents. Overviews of research into adolescent group work have demonstrated significant shortcomings in their design and instrumentation. The challenge for this research will be to address these shortcomings, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of personal construct psychology as group work with troubled adolescents. A theoretical model will be developed for this purpose.

1.2 The Costs of Troubled Adolescents to Themselves, Their Families, Schools and Communities

Adolescence is a time of many significant maturational changes that adolescents need to make sense of and integrate. Strong feelings, both positive and negative, are experienced, and often it is the expression of those negative feelings that brings adolescents into hurtful and conflictual relationships. For most adolescents, changes in experience, in relationships, or in the environment, can be exciting and enhancing as they adapt, look at things in a new light. However, there may be the realisation that different meanings are called for, and it becomes difficult to make sense of events and the feelings they arouse. These events can feel threatening for adolescents as they attempt to retain the status quo by shutting out all that with which they find difficult to deal. They may feel helpless and confused, and attempt to
deal with these feelings by acting out, and feeling angry and hostile towards others and/or themselves.

Reactions to this sense of overwhelming anxiety carry costs for the adolescents, their families, their schools and communities. Adolescents become highly vulnerable to emotional distress leading to mental illness, and to a range of harmful behaviours (Moon, Meyer & Grau, 1999; National Health & Medical Research Council, 1997). These behaviours can encompass school difficulties, sexual acting out, eating disorders, violent outbursts, running away from school and family, and family problems, with delinquency, sexual abuse, drug addiction and suicide among the most serious problems of adolescents. The most recent national report into the health and well-being of Australia’s young people advises there is a cost to us all, as family members, relatives, friends or community members, when troubled adolescents experience persistent problematic social interactions. This cost can be extremely high and painful emotionally, socially and economically (Moon et al, 1999).

1.3 The Status of Research into Group Work with Troubled Adolescents

Group work for adolescents continues to be a challenging and important area in which both clinicians and researchers need to collaborate in order to advance the understanding and treatment of adolescents. As the amount of group work with adolescents has grown, the status of adolescent group research has also improved. Overviews of research and meta-analyses
consistently demonstrate that troubled adolescents treated in groups show a significantly higher rate of positive outcome than adolescents in control groups (Hoag & Burlingame, 1997; Kymissis, 1993; Tillitski, 1990). Research also concludes that group work has been more effective than individual treatment with troubled adolescents (Tillitski, 1990).

Reviews of research, specifically addressed at group work with troubled children, preadolescents and adolescents have been few. Prior to the qualitative and quantitative review and meta-analysis undertaken by Dagley, Gazda, Eppinger and Stewart (1994), research inquiries had rested upon the reviews of Abramowitz (1976), Kraft (1968) and Gazda and Larsen (1968). Interestingly, the common finding that group work research with children and adolescents is relatively unsophisticated continues to be upheld by Dagley et al (1994). While acknowledging that the status of group work has grown compared with earlier reviews of studies, they maintain there still continues to be important research issues not adequately addressed.

In a review of 800 studies of group work with troubled children, preadolescents and adolescents published between 1980 and 1992, Dagley et al (1994), considered only 27 studies were useful in nature. They based this judgement on the following criteria. The first criterion was that the study needed to include a population drawn from the ages 6 to 19 years. Secondly, the treatment needed to consist of group work that included counselling, guidance or training groups, and to involve group interaction and the
potential for reciprocal influence of three members or more. Thirdly, the research design had to include both an experimental group and a control group (or a comparison group/a placebo-attention control group). The final criterion for selection was that the study needed to include a report attempting to identify quantifiable outcomes. The design of the following research into personal construct group work with adolescents has set out to address these criteria.

Generally, research findings have indicated that treatment gains from group work have increased from post-treatment evaluations to follow-up evaluation. While there is support for group work as an effective clinical intervention, there has been a general reluctance to investigate the factors producing these positive outcomes. Previous reviews, for example, Abramowitz (1976), and the latest by Dagley et al (1994), have raised a number of research issues about investigations into these factors. For most group studies, the main focus has remained on the theoretical orientation, techniques used and content of the problem. It has been found that very little attention has been paid to process research, and the potential interactions of process and outcome variables related to group work.

Support for these findings has also come from Azima (1996) who undertook a selective overview of recent studies into group work with children and adolescents. He found that outcome studies of efficacy were more common than investigations of process variables, leadership and
composition. The characteristics of the groups and the group processes, and the impact they have on treatment have often been secondary to the exclusive focus on outcome measurement, and very limited information provided on the causes and relationships of the identified positive findings (Dagley et al, 1994). With little account of process assessment, the generalisation and replication of research into group work with children and adolescents is limited. It becomes difficult for the clinician to transfer the research findings into the provision of more effective therapeutic interventions. In an attempt to be better able to use personal construct group work, I will be investigating group process in this research and reporting on the impact of group processes on treatment.

The reviews also found too little utilisation of theoretical models in studies involving multiple interventions from a variety of sources in the school, family and community. In the research to be investigated in this report, I anticipate that I can address this criticism by using the intervention, personal construct psychology, which has philosophical and theoretical foundations in an active search for meaning from all participants, adolescents and their parents and teachers. I also believe that by using the concepts of personal construct psychology, I will be able to satisfy the concern of the reviewers that there has been a lack of development in the research designs and instrumentation used in outcome studies (Dagley et al, 1994).
1.4 Rationale for a Personal Construct Intervention

The selection of personal construct psychology for investigation in the following report, is based upon a number of issues. Firstly, I feel that it offers me a philosophical position on the nature of man, with notions of equality and mutual respect. It also provides me with a theoretical model from which I can attempt to understand and interpret adolescent emotions and behaviour. Another advantage of this approach for me, and I hope for others, is that personal construct psychology offers a clinical methodology that is able to describe and explain precedents and antecedents of therapeutic change. This provides a means of intervention, enabling me as a clinician to develop and facilitate this change process.

Although personal construct psychology has been primarily used as a base for therapeutic interventions for adults, I believe it can offer a lot for adolescents. The core tenets of the theory, I propose, can accommodate the developmental needs of adolescents in the following ways. It provides a positive and creative accommodation of life changes, enabling an understanding and appreciation of the transitional nature of adolescence and the process of change involved. Personal construct theory states that all people can change and we go on changing all our lives. Kelly (1955; 1991) tells me that the adolescents' systems of constructs are not static and are perpetually modified by new experiences. When contradictions and conflicts arise between constructs, then the adolescent needs to develop a way to
resolve or to transcend the inconsistency. The theory also describes the feeling states being experienced by the adolescent prior to changes being made. For me, personal construct psychology is making sense of the psychological process of change in adolescence.

I anticipate that when this set of assumptions on change is translated into personal construct group work, there will be a process of active encouragement and support for the troubled adolescents to adopt an attitude of enquiry to meeting their developmental changes. I anticipate that in the personal construct group, making choices will become for these adolescents, part of the continuing process of becoming who they are.

More specifically, I think that personal construct group work will meet and attempt to address adolescent developmental needs. The emphasis placed on searching for meaning, represents for me a process validating adolescent questioning and searching for answers about themselves and others. Adolescence is also a time when there is an intense need to expand and deepen interpersonal relations. It seems that the personal construct group can meet this need by having as its prime focus, role relationships. I understand that the basis of social interaction in the personal construct group will be on interpersonal understanding rather than simply on a shared experience.

Other adolescent needs appear to surround the insecurities arising from the many developmental changes taking place. In the personal construct
group, each adolescent will be seen as having their own unique constructions of events and experiences, and appreciated in the role of a collaborative partner. The adolescents will be actively searching for validation/invalidation of their constructions of themselves and others. The adolescents "are encouraged to trust their own constructions, and to continually reflect on these constructions" (Forster, 1997, p. 151). The personal construct group allows for these reactions and responses to be validated, while maintaining optimal therapeutic distance (Leitner, 1995), and facilitating the development of constructions of self and others.

Another advantage of this approach, which I believe is an important one when working with children and adolescents, relates to issues arising from the reason for referral. Most adolescents are referred by an adult, a parent or a teacher. Personal construct group work will enable me to circumvent this potential source of conflict over "who owns the problem, the child or adult?", by reminding me that the focus of an intervention is on the individual, the adolescent, and on the adolescent's interpretations of events, and it is not on the events themselves.

Kelly (1979c) saw the personal construct group leader as neither judge nor sympathetic bystander, but rather as a consultant to the principal investigator, the group member. The cornerstone of this relationship between the leader and member, is the group leader's credulous approach to the adolescent's concerns. Such an approach tells me that what the troubled
adolescent has to say in the personal construct group possesses an intrinsic truth which I should not ignore. As group leader, I should never discard what the adolescent says just "because it does not conform to what appear to be the facts" (Kelly, 1991, Vol.1, p 241.). The personal construct approach will enable me to seek understanding about what the adolescents feel make sense and does not make sense, to examine these meanings, and to assist the adolescents in subjecting alternatives to experimental test and revision (Kelly, 1979c). My approach as personal construct group leader will include qualities of flexibility, open-mindedness, self-empowerment, tolerance for diversity (Forster, 1997). By listening curiously with the adolescents rather than at them, this approach seems to offer a methodology for accepting the adolescents and their, at times, egocentric demands. Words do not have set universal meanings. In personal construct psychology, language is what language does (Efran & Heffner, 1998).

1.5 The Status of Research into Personal Construct Group Work

With adults, personal construct group work has been proved to be an effective therapeutic intervention with a wide range of clinical problems and with clients of different ages (Viney, 1998; Winter, 1997; Winter, 1992; Winter, 1985a). In an evaluation of 19 studies using personal construct therapy with clients, Viney, (1998) concluded that the outcomes of highly rigorous research showed personal construct therapy to be effective in achieving its goals. The effectiveness of personal construct group work had previously been
established with stutterers (Dalton, 1980) and depressives (Winter, 1985a). Effective personal construct group work had also been carried out with women survivors of incestuous abuse (Harter, Alexander & Neimeyer, 1988), with people living with AIDS and their voluntary AIDS caregivers (Viney, Allwood & Stillson, 1991), as well as with agoraphobics (Winter, Gournay, Metcalfe, Newman-Taylor, Asimakopoulou & Richards, 1997).

The research with adults suggests that personal construct group work may have a lot to offer as an intervention for adolescents. Although, much of the research focus has been on its effectiveness with adult populations, there have been a few recent accounts of personal construct group work with adolescents. One study was undertaken by Jackson (1990). The research hypothesised that by helping children to elaborate their construing of self, there would be a more positive resolution of specific problems such as school maladjustment, school refusal, and difficult relationships with parents. The results of the group work demonstrated that personal construct group work was effective in fostering psychological change in adolescents with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Personal construct group work has also been used with adolescent offenders (Viney, Truneckova, Weekes, & Oades, 1999) and non-offenders (Viney, Truneckova, Weekes, & Oades, 1997). In an extensive investigation into the effectiveness of group work on the improvement of the psychosocial functioning of adolescents, personal construct group work was found to be
immediately effective in increasing maturational processes, such as industry and affinity, and in the reduction of immature modes of psychosocial functioning, especially uncertainty (Viney, Henry & Campbell, in press-b). The results indicated that personal construct group work is an effective therapeutic intervention for adolescents and adolescent offenders alone, and with outcomes comparable to other therapeutic models of invention (Viney, Henry & Campbell, in press-a).

1.6 The Research Proposal of this Report

This research investigates personal construct group work with troubled adolescents at school. Aware of the concerns voiced by researchers such as Dagley et al (1994) over the shortcomings of group work with adolescents, I will attempt to address some of them. There will be outcome measures and process measures drawn from personal construct psychology. A clinical intervention that has been tested, improved and found effective will be used, and measures for the participants to assess the effectiveness of the intervention will be investigated.

Personal construct psychology will be used for the theoretical model, the intervention and research design, and assessment. One measure originating from another school of psychological thinking, will be used as an independent measure of outcome. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, will be employed to investigate both the effects and processes of group work. Control groups involving both adolescents experiencing and
not experiencing interpersonal difficulties will be used as comparisons with adolescents undergoing the treatment, the personal construct group work. Outcome measures of individual change will assess treatment and control groups before the intervention begins and after the intervention ends, and at twelve months follow-up for the treatment group. The respondents to the outcome measures of individual change will also include the parents and teachers of all adolescents. The process measures will collect data from the group members during the group work.

In the following research, personal construct group work using a tested clinical intervention, will be conducted with adolescents, aged 12 years to 15 years, who are experiencing interpersonal difficulties and are considered troubled at school. The Interpersonal Transaction Group format (Landfield & Rivers, 1975) provides both a tested short-term intervention and a structured group format.

Research into personal construct group work suggests that group cohesion at the early stage of group development is essential for therapeutic progress (Neimeyer, Harter & Alexander, 1991). There has also been strong evidence to suggest that structured rather than unstructured therapy groups maximise therapeutic gain (Neimeyer & Merluzzi, 1982), and that even a short-term group intervention (Llewellyn & Dunnett, 1987) can be effective. Basing the personal construct group work on the structural and process features of the Interpersonal Transaction Group format, will promote more
rapid self-disclosure and encourage the development of empathy for the troubled adolescents. It is also anticipated that this approach to personal construct group work will facilitate higher levels of group cohesion and maximise the impact of time-limited therapy. Measures for the evaluation of group process will be employed as part of the structure of the sessions, and as an overview and review tool at the end of each session.

In an attempt to advance the understanding of adolescents and of the psychological treatment of adolescents experiencing interpersonal difficulties at school, this research will also evaluate the effectiveness of personal construct group work as a vehicle for psychological change. The group members, that is, the adolescents taking part in the treatment, and the group leaders, will assess the effectiveness of personal construct group work. Significant people in the adolescent's life, that is parents and teacher, will also provide effectiveness measures.

I hope that this investigation will not become overwhelmed by the complexities of all the potential interactions of process and outcome variables that attach to group work (Dagley et al, 1994). Rather, personal construct psychology should be found to provide a theoretical model and method of intervention for group work with adolescents, and will make available techniques of assessment with a means of recording both qualitative and quantitative outcome, as well as group process variables. Personal construct group work will help, too, these troubled adolescents to reconstrue their
concepts of themselves in more positive and effective ways, enhancing their chances to relate to, and make sense of, others.

1.7 The Structure of this Report

This report on these research investigations will be structured in the following way. A personal construct account of adolescence will be presented in the context of some other approaches to that stage in the life span in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, a personal construct account of the processes of group work will be made. "The development of a personal construct model of adolescent group work will be the focus of Chapter 4. Here, the significant theoretical assumptions behind the structure and process of this format of group work will be presented. The aims and hypotheses for this research will be provided in Chapter 5, followed by a presentation of the research methodology and design in Chapter 6. The results of the group work research will be presented in Chapter 7. An evaluation of the research project will be undertaken in Chapter 8. In Chapter 8, there will be a review of the findings, followed by an evaluation of the research as an outcome study and as a study into personal construct group work, and an evaluation of the theoretical model developed. Also included in Chapter 8, is an account of group work process with troubled adolescents, followed by a consideration of the clinical implications of the intervention, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2

ACCOUNTS OF FUNCTIONAL AND TROUBLED ADOLESCENCE, INCLUDING A PERSONAL CONSTRUCT ACCOUNT
2.1 Introduction

The following personal construct account of adolescence will emphasise the role of change in adolescence and the function change has in adolescent development. And yet, our understanding of adolescent development cannot rest alone on personal construct psychology. While it will be argued that personal construct psychology enriches our understanding of the process of adolescent development and offers validating evidence for appreciating how adolescents cope with the stresses of change, we need to recognise the contributions from a range of theories. In Chapter 2, a selection of these theories will be briefly presented, followed by a fuller account of personal construct psychology and how it extends these theories.

There are many different perspectives on adolescent development. Each perspective is associated with different theories asserting different assumptions about adolescent development. They all attempt to describe and explain this complex process, and so become helpful guides in understanding and appreciating adolescent development. To this end, four different theoretical accounts of adolescent development are briefly presented; the psychoanalytic theory, the cognitive-developmental theory, the social-learning theory and the humanist theory. The selection of these four is intended to represent four significant and yet very different approaches that have contributed to our understanding of adolescent development.
2.2 The Psychoanalytic Approach to Adolescence

Sigmund Freud (1905), the founder of psychoanalytic theory, described the development of personality as the product of changing phases of sexual pleasure and of new emerging modes of social interaction. While Freud believed that children were not capable of sexual activity, he argued that sexual drives operated to direct their fantasies, their problem-solving, and their social interactions. Adolescence was considered the final stage of personality development, when the adolescent needs to cope with sexual instincts that have new and forceful implications. Normal development depends on the adolescent’s ability to channel the energy from these sexualised impulses into activities that either symbolise these wishes, or express the wishes in a socially acceptable form. This process Freud called sublimation. Sublimation are seen to be taking place when aggressive urges are channeled through competitive sports by the functional adolescent, and sexual drives are channeled into creative arts, music or drama repair by the functional adolescent.

Through the treatment and study of children, Anna Freud (1946; 1965) was able to extend Freud’s theory of psychosexual development. Anna Freud (1946) maintained that adolescence was marked by temporary disruption in the intrapsychic equilibrium between instinctual demands, and ego mechanisms, the executive of the personality. The adolescent is thought to be coping by establishing defense mechanisms. By understanding these mechanisms, Anna Freud believed it was possible to
understand adolescent adjustment. Unlike Freud, she believed the problems of adolescence are not to be unlocked by understanding instinctual forces (the id), but rather to be found in the existence of “love objects” in the adolescent’s past, both oedipal and preoedipal. The functional adolescent uses the defense mechanisms to ward off these instinctual forces. The troubled adolescent is described by Anna Freud (1946) as one who is either overindulging in id sensations through impulsive and risky behaviours, or will guard against them through rigid adherence to moral behaviour.

The psychoanalytic view of development was developed by Peter Blos (1979), to encompass a fuller description of how the child is transformed into the adult during the adolescent years. Like Freud, Blos saw the latency period of childhood as providing the necessary consolidation of ego functions to enable the adolescent to extend activities beyond the family. While Freud and Anna Freud elaborated on the defending mode, Blos contributed the significance of coping behaviours to the theory, and provided an evolutionary framework of a psychodynamic coping system for adolescents. Coping was seen by Blos to involve not only a process of self-protection in the face of threat, but also the development of new responses that reduce the incidences of conflict or resolve conflict. While intrafamilial struggles during adolescence were considered to reflect the presence of unresolved childhood conflicts, it was the intensity and the persistence of the regression, according to Blos,
which determined whether it was a functional or troubled part of adolescent development.

Moving beyond classic psychoanalytic thought with its focus on the id and libidinal impulses, Erik Erikson (1959; 1968) emphasised the ego, and its adaptive capacities in the environment to rework and change personality development. According to Erikson, the personality (or ego) synthesises both past and present experiences into serving a more adaptive function of integrating id impulses with social influences. Adolescence, the gap between the security of childhood and the new autonomy of approaching adulthood, is called, the "psychological moratorium". In Erikson's psychosocial perspective, functional adolescence is associated with the development of industry, identity and intimacy.

However, it is the resolution of a sense of identity that Erikson maintained is the hallmark of adolescence proper. To address the question, "Who am I?", it is necessary for previous and present identifications to be synthesised into a meaningful sense of identity. Peer groups, according to Erikson, play a significant role in this process of identity formation. Adolescents rely on the peer groups to provide opportunities for social experimentation. Such experimentation enables the functional adolescents to test different roles and interpersonal attitudes in their search for a new sense of self that is both refreshing and acceptable.
2.3 The Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Adolescence

Like the psychoanalytic theorist, the cognitive-developmental theorist believes that a fixed sequence of qualitative changes or stages have occurred by the time the individual has reached adolescence. However, unlike psychoanalytic theory that pays attention to subconscious thought processes, the cognitive-developmental theory emphasises rational thinking processes as the mental structures important in adolescent cognitive development.

Jean Piaget (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) is seen as the father of cognitive-developmental theory. The cognitive stage of the adolescent's development, is considered by Piaget to be a product of the interaction of biological and genetic factors on the one hand, and on the other hand, that of environmental experiences. This interaction produces a reorganisation of past mental constructs leading to the new stage, qualitatively different from the cognitive stage the individual has moved through. It is the cognitive stage that determines how the individual views and interprets their world, whether it will be a functional or troubled adolescence.

According to Piaget (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958), there are four distinct stages of cognitive development; the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete-operational stage, and the formal-operational stage. It is the formal-operational stage that signals adolescence, allowing functional adolescents to, not only systemise their
own thoughts, but to also be able to conceptualise the thoughts of other individuals.

While Erikson developed the social and cultural aspects of psychoanalytic theory, Lawrence Kohlberg (1969; 1976) extended the cognitive-developmental aspects of that theory, allowing for an interpretation of both social and cognitive phenomena. Kohlberg’s focus is on the adolescent’s interaction with others, in particular role-taking relationships, sex-role development, peer relations, attachment-dependent relations, and in the development of identity. Like Piaget, Kohlberg saw the peer relationships of adolescence as a better medium for advancing cognitive development than parent-adolescent relationships. He believed peer relationships provided adolescents with experiences in mutual give-and-take and role-taking opportunities, a necessary part in functional development. Kohlberg also views adolescence as an important period in the emergence of a personal morality, as the functional adolescent’s awareness of their subjective perspective of life events allows an appreciation of the relativistic nature of all moral principles.

2.4 The Social-Learning Approach to Adolescence

While psychoanalytic theory and cognitive-developmental theory maintain that certain specific issues must be resolved, or certain cognitive skills need to be attained during adolescence, the social-learning theorists maintain that their principles provide a suitable explanation of behaviour at any point in development. Rather than looking at feelings and thoughts, the behaviour of adolescents is observed, and environmental
influences are taken into account. From this theoretical perspective, the greatest changes in adolescent development come about through social experiences. As will be seen for these theorists, there are three basic principles that regulate changes in adolescent behaviour: reinforcement, punishment, and imitation or modeling.

The stimulus-response theory of B. F. Skinner (1953; 1974), in which adolescents are seen as being ruled and regulated by the consequences of their actions, was challenged by Albert Bandura (1977) and Walter Mischel (1973). They claimed that self-reinforcement is just as important as the notion of reinforcement.

Using the concept of behaviour as involving reciprocal determinism, Bandura (1977) maintained that psychological development is not entirely driven by environmental factors. Rather, it is determined by the adolescent cognitively processing incoming information from the environment and, in turn, the resulting environment affecting behaviour. He considered that much adolescent learning involves adolescents in observing the behaviour of parents, peers, teachers and others. Mischel (1973) argued that there were certain cognitive variables that needed to be considered in order to understand the adolescent’s personality. Firstly, one needed to consider the behavioural expectancies the adolescent has for self and others. Then it is important to determine the encoding strategies and personal meanings of the adolescent. How adolescents value subjective stimuli needs to be also considered, together with their systems of self-reinforcement, self-criticism and personal standards of
conduct. Both Bandura and Mischel emphasise that adolescents control and even construct their environment, and it is the style of cognitive processing which will determine functional or troubled development.

2.5 The Humanist Approach to Adolescence

As with social-learning theory, there is no one single strand of humanist theory. It encompasses a wide variety of views formulated to explain personality change. The emphasis in humanist theory is placed on the subjective experience of the adolescent. It is an internal, dynamic personality structure that organises the adolescent’s actions, emotions and thoughts. Unlike Freud who also believed in an internal personality structure, the humanists believe control is held by conscious mental processes rather than by subconscious forces. The two theorists who have probably influenced humanist theory the most are Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow.

The self is an important construct in Carl Roger’s (1959; 1961) theory. According to Rogers, in order for the adolescent to be well-adjusted/functional, there needs to be congruence between self-perception and real-world experiences. Rogers also discusses the relationship between the adolescent’s ideal self and the adolescent’s real self. The functional adolescent experiences little discrepancy between the ideal and real selves while the troubled adolescent experiences greater discrepancy. Experiences are characterised by what Rogers calls unconditional positive regard. If significant people in the adolescent’s world, evaluate the adolescent more often in a negative light, the more the troubled adolescent
will distort perceptions of self in an effort to insulate themselves from these negative evaluations. And so, according to Rogers, the troubled adolescent does not experience unconditional positive regard.

Best known for his conceptualisation of a hierarchy of human needs, Maslow (1970) theorises that it is the three needs of love, self-esteem, and self-actualisation that energise the adolescent's behaviour. Maslow's concept of self-actualisation has been applied extensively to adolescent relationships. Love needs are demonstrated by the adolescent's wish to interact and belong with peers. The need for self-esteem is best fulfilled by working at learning skills, and engaging in behaviour which elicits positive regard from others. Self-actualisation comes about when real-world behaviour is in accord with one's beliefs.

While each of the approaches has made a contribution to our understanding of adolescent development, there are limitations in each. Traditional psychoanalytic theory describes how the unconscious mind affects development but provides little account of the effects of the social environment on the adolescent. Also, the cognitive-developmental theory accounts for the adolescent's conscious mind and intellectual development, but provides little information on social development and on aspects of the unconscious adolescent mind. Social-learning theory increases our understanding of how adolescents learn and the influence the environment has on learning, but provides little insight into the thinking processes and emotions of adolescents. While humanistic theory
describes the adolescent's self-structure and self-concept, and provides clinical means for working through adolescent problems, there is little account of the development of childhood and adolescence and the theory lacks a scientific methodology.

While the theories recognise psychological change in adolescence, the process of change is not the basic assumption for the various theories. In contrast, personal construct psychology recognises change as central to adolescence. It is this embracing of change and of the change process, which marks the strength of personal construct psychology for adolescent development. George Kelly (1955; 1991), the founder of personal construct psychology, suggested a need for new constructs or concepts to deal with the expanded range of life events confronting the adolescent. An important element of personal construct psychology in accounting for adolescent development is the assumption of constructive alternativism. "We assume that all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement...We take the stand that there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world. No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances, no one needs to be the victim of his biography" (Kelly, 1991, Vol.1, p.11). (This work of Kelly, originally published in 1955 but only now available in the 1991 publication, will be cited throughout this report by referring to the 1991 reprint). In personal construct psychology, the conception of personality implies that adolescents are what they psychologically represent.
themselves to be (Kelly, 1991, Vol.1, p. 30-31), that is, they are what they believe themselves to be. While Kelly (1955; 1991) does not reject unconscious determinants, he does, however, construe adolescents as creators and testers of their own hypotheses about themselves and others. Adolescents, according to personal construct psychology are anticipatory and not reactive beings.

There is a strong emphasis in personal construct psychology on the creative and growth potential of adolescents. It provides a rich understanding of the change conditions particular to adolescence, in which both functional and troubled adolescents are struggling to adapt to stress inherent in achieving adolescent developmental needs. An account of personal construct psychology and adolescent development with particular emphasis on identity formation, friendship and peer group development, and the ways functional and troubled adolescents may cope with change(s) and stress(es) will now be presented.

2.6 Personal Construct Theory and Adolescent Development

Personal construct theory has no stages or phases, but rather provides a developmental psychology (Agnew, 1985) by which to understand the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is the expanding capacity for taking in new elements and contexts into meaning structures that signifies development in the theory (Vaughn & Pfenninger, 1994).

The relationship between the mother or significant carer is said to develop through a gradual process of giving meaning to each other's
behaviour. This process of creative mutual meaning-making takes on greater significance with the acquisition of language by the child. It now becomes possible to more fully understand the child’s construing through the child’s own personal experiments and what the child understands of the construing of others. The appraisal of self and others are taught to the child who is likely to incorporate them for a time into his/her own construction system. Increasingly, the influence of others outside the maternal relationship becomes more important. The construing systems of other family members, other children, and later teachers, will neither simply endorse nor contradict the constructions the child has held. They will offer quite new constructions demanding an extension and redefinition of the self, which is much more than a simple confirmation or reversal of previous construction systems (Salmon, 1970).

From the beginning, the self concept of the child, adolescent and adult is determined by the social roles the individual plays and the constructions others have of the individual. The adolescent, like the child, is said to be creating meaning in order to anticipate the world and the ways of the world. The adolescent poses questions, carries out experiments and evaluates their outcome. Their behaviour is considered experimental and their emotional states a measure of actual or impending change in their construct systems. Personality development, according to personal construct theory, is the outcome of continuous anticipatory efforts throughout the life cycle.
Personal construct research, by studying children and adolescents, has highlighted the development of construction systems. Ample evidence has been gathered which consistently demonstrates that during childhood and early adolescence there is a gradual increase in the capacity to differentiate between self and others (Adams-Webber & Davidson, 1979). There is also a progressive increase in the number of different constructs used to describe people and a gradual shift of emphasis from describing people in terms of appearance, social roles and behaviour. As children move into adolescence, more personality constructs are used to describe people (Bannister & Fransella, 1986; Barratt, 1977; Duck, 1975; Klion & Leitner, 1985; Little, 1968), reflecting a greater "individuation" and "differentiation" of people as persons (Adams-Webber, 1979), and as parents (Adams-Webber & Neff, 1996). Beyond fifteen years of age, there seems to be little further increase in the number of personality constructs (Hayden, 1982). During adolescence, according to personal construct theory, personality constructs become relatively more important in defining personal identity, construction of self, than the physical, behaviouraL and social role constructs that they replace.

In childhood through to early adolescence, there is greater use of preemptive and constellatory constructs rather than propositional constructs. Preemptive construing secures exclusively its elements for membership, constellatory construing uses stereotypical or typological thinking, while propositional construing carries no implications regarding the membership of its elements (Kelly, 1955; 1991). However, adolescence
signals cognitive and psychological development with the capacity to use more propositional constructs and the capacity to strive to achieve "meta-constructions about processes and change..." (Bannister & Agnew, 1977, p. 115). Research findings have provided support for the proposition that as adolescents mature they have greater access to propositional and reflexive construing (Strachan & Jones, 1982).

2.6.1 The Search for Self

How adolescents elaborate their construing of self is seen within personal construct theory in the same terms as the elaboration that continues for the whole of a person's life. Adolescents respond to validation or invalidation of core role constructs and to the strategies used to test out the implications of self in their repertoires for construing their world as a whole. Self-constructions, in personal construct theory, are not inherently present, but are invented to help make sense of the adolescent's behaviour and experience (Raskin, 1999). "Knowledge of the self,...takes shape through a circular interplay between the continuous "happening" of one's life and one's recomposing it through shareable meanings that allow its stable ordering" (Arciero & Guidano, 2000, p. 93.).

The person's constructs about self are termed core constructs, and it is these constructs which maintain the person as unique, as contrasted with peripheral constructs, which can be altered without serious modification of the core structure. To see a "person" is to acknowledge another "self" and to speak as a "self" is to claim the status of "person" (Bannister & Agnew, 1977). This is a process in which the notion of self is
constructed and elaborated over time. The self is construed by discriminating between significant events, and the processes of discrimination evolve into a total subsystem of constructs about self. In personal construct theory, the elaboration of self by the adolescent is essentially the ways the adolescent elaborates his/her construing of others, because the adolescent is said to have no concept of self but a bipolar construct of self-not self or self-others. It is the construction of "self versus others" which will influence how the adolescent construes experience and emotions, whether it is a troubled or functional adolescence.

It is the perceived differences between the adolescent and others which defines the contours of the self as "figure" against a general background of similarities (Adams-Webber, 1977; 1978). The research findings suggest that adolescents do develop a clear and distinct notion of their own identity, only to the extent that they can discern a specific pattern of similarities and differences between the "self" and others (Adams-Webber, 1977; 1978; Adams-Webber, Schwenker & Barbeau, 1972; Adams-Webber & Benjafield, 1976; Bannister & Agnew, 1977).

In an investigation of the elaborative process of recognising self as distinct from others, Bannister and Agnew (1977) found that, with increasing age, the constructs adolescents have about themselves increase in number, in range of convenience and in strength and variety of implications. While the construction system of self becomes larger, it's nature, in terms of hierarchic structure, that is, superordinate and
subordinate constructs, does not change. Superordinate constructs include another as the elements in its context, while subordinate constructs are included as elements in the context of another (Kelly, 1955; 1991). Bannister and Agnew (1977) suggest that the changes in the elaboration process occur in the increasing use of constructs with wider ranges of convenience.

In personal construct theory, adolescents develop a notion of their own separateness and uniqueness from the privacy of their own consciousness and from the notion that they are their own experiences. Adolescents also develop a sense of their own continuity over time, their sense of history, of past, which carries its contrast pole, a sense of present and future, a sense of what they have become, may yet become (Bannister & Agnew, 1977). So “my life”, a superordinate construction, may be elaborated out of many subordinate constructions of particular past events. Some adolescents may use the past a lot in their elaboration of self, while others may use little of their history and much of their here and now (Bannister & Agnew, 1977). In personal construct psychology, the adolescent construes self as distinct from others without assuming that others resemble him/her in terms of their experiences.

Kelly (1991) viewed the self as the composite of an individual’s “personal self-constructs” (p.80) gathered through enacting important social roles. Mair (1977) introduced the metaphor “community of self” to account for the collection of elements for which the self-constructs of the people are convenient. The degree of cognitive differentiation within and
between the self-constructs, and the extent to which construct systems are integrated into a personally coherent self-identity structure will vary in adolescents (Berzonsky, 1990). Personal growth, that is, change or moving from a troubled to a functional adolescence, becomes dependent on the adolescent's ability to recognise, elaborate, choose among, and recombine the available selves (Sewell, Baldwin & William, 1998). As Kelly's (1955; 1991) Construction Corollary states that: For people to be able to deal with life and to be able to discern some sense of order in reality, people need to detect, abstract, and interpret the similarities in events and the recurrent themes in their experiences. In adolescence, self-constructs increasingly become organised within various social roles, so that there is a number of 'selves' comprising one's self-identity. However, for the troubled adolescent, the number of 'selves' becomes increasingly not available as the adolescent's social roles are restricted.

2.6.2 Forming Friendships and Peer Groups

When they were children, adolescents relied mostly on the commonality of family experience. However, with increasing cognitive, verbal and reasoning abilities, adolescents are drawn to experimenting with new thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Close relationships in adolescence are developing, not only by sharing ideas, language and experiences, but by sharing of constructs, or ways of looking at or reacting to the world. Adolescents are able to make a sharper differentiation between peer relationships than children (Berndt & Hoyle, 1985). From childhood to adolescence, the frequency of interactions with closest
friends increases (Larson & Richards, 1991), and this increased interaction frequency becomes a barometer of the cohesiveness of friendship groups (Crockett, Losoff & Petersen, 1984).

Research within personal construct theory has established that similarity between people in terms of the content of their personal construct systems tends to be a precursor of friendship formation (Duck & Spencer, 1972), and that the friends are aware of this degree of similarity between themselves and their friends (Duck, 1973a). It would seem that commonality in non-psychological constructs may facilitate interactions between new acquaintances, whereas similarity in psychological constructs becomes increasingly important as their friendship continues to develop (Duck, 1973a; Duck & Spencer, 1972; Lea, 1979; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1977; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1981b). The research findings suggest that adolescents are forming more differentiated impressions of the personalities of their friends, and role relationships seem to develop with interpersonal experience. It is these difficulties forming role relationships, in construing the construction processes of another (Kelly, 1955; 1991), which can signify the troubled adolescent.

From early adolescence, young people prefer to be in the company of other young people in groups (Brown, Eicher & Petrie, 1986). The research data also indicate that both quantitatively and qualitatively the socialisation experience of adolescents is focused on peer interaction (Crockett, Losoff & Petersen, 1984; Moran & Eckenrode, 1991). The peer group can offer guidance and support, provide the network and context
for social supports, and lead to the development of increasingly intimate relationships.

Supported by research findings into the personal construing of adolescents, personal construct theory suggests that the peer group offers not only a commonality of experience, but also a social process which in turn provides the impetus for psychological development. To develop a new way of construing is to develop a need for validating it, and friendship with a similar other(s) can satisfy that need, while also introducing the adolescents to a further range of constructs than they presently have (Duck, 1975).

The findings from personal construct research suggest that the role of the peer group becomes an integral part in the development of a self-identity. As interpersonal relationships in the peer groups achieve greater significance, the process of self-identity is able to develop. Throughout this development, the peer group offers the adolescent a forum for role experimentation and for testing new and different constructions of self. From the perspective of personal construct theory, it is through the cycle of validation and invalidation by others of their construct systems that adolescents are able to develop a construct system defining the individuality and uniqueness of themselves, a self-identity. The concept of the validating agent (Landfield, 1988) seems a useful tool for explaining the strengths of groups such as peer groups in adolescent development (Forster, 1991). The process of developing a self-identity can be
interrupted as the troubled adolescent increasingly experiences and feels invalidated by significant others around them.

2.6.3 Risk-Taking Behaviour and Adolescent Change

While peer groups play a significant role in structuring a sense of self and social identity, they also play an important part in organising action and experience of risk-taking behaviour. Adolescent risk-taking becomes another way of expressing who you are and who you would like to be (Lightfoot, 1997). Risk-taking behaviours were understood by adolescents in a study undertaken by Lightfoot (1997), as vehicles for initiating new relationships or group memberships, and for consolidating or maintaining existing relationships. Research has also suggested that risk-taking may have positive consequences for psychosocial development, and that it could be considered a rational and thoughtful process differing little from the decision-making processes of adults (Furby & Beyth-Marom, 1992; Gardner, 1993; Lopes, 1993).

Risk-taking behaviours are considered declarations of identity. They provide adolescents with the capacity to challenge, understand and restructure the authority of parents, physical limits and social relationships. They "psychologically anchor individuals to one another" (Lightfoot, 1997, p.134). Risk-taking was not understood by adolescents as a simple attention-getting device, but as a demonstration of "your commitment to the group" and that "you have a secret that you share" (Lightfoot, 1997). Other research findings into peer groups and deviant behaviour have also found that risk behaviour defines one's sense of self.
and one's relationships with others (Lastovicka, Murry, Joachimsthaler, Bhalla & Scheurich, 1987).

A personal construct model of adolescent risk-taking has been researched and developed (Oades & Viney, 1997; Oades, 1999). Within the propositions and assumptions of this model, adolescent risk-taking can be described primarily as physical risk within the psychosocial environment. Adolescents, it is proposed, will often experience dilemmas between physical and psychosocial risk-taking, and construct revision will come about as the result of invalidation of the predictions made by the adolescent. Risk-taking is assumed to involve anxiety, with physical risk-taking associated with feelings of threat, while psychosocial risk-taking involves feelings of guilt and/or shame. Within this model, risk-taking by troubled adolescents represents foreshortened phases of the Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle (Oades, 1999).

Risk-taking involves impulsive behaviours, and impulsivity represents a lack of circumspection (Johnson, Pfenninger & Klion, 2000). Johnson et al (2000) suggest that if the adolescent's environment is chaotic, the impulsive behaviour may be adaptive, by allowing the adolescent to fit in with the changing conditions, or to impose some form of order over the chaos, by applying particular constructs across contexts. The consequence is that the impulsive adolescent has few opportunities to consider or experiment with different ways of feeling and behaving, resulting in shortened circumspection.
Within personal construct theory, risk-taking behaviour for the troubled adolescent can also be understood using Agnew's (1985) model of disorder. She maintains that, however disordered or distorted an adolescent's behaviour may appear to others, it carries its own unique sense for the adolescents, and is central in the adolescents' construction of self. The results of short-term personal construct group work with adolescents led Jackson and Bannister (1985) to conclude that it was not possible to differentiate within the group of adolescents regarded by others as problematic or hard to understand from other adolescents. Within the group, for those adolescents who experienced themselves as confused or unsure, it was not possible to separate them from those who were self-confident and whose actions were guided by a clear but possibly 'original' views of themselves. Because others experienced the adolescent as confusing, it does not necessarily follow that the adolescent shares this experience (Jackson & Bannister, 1985). Writing about survivors of child sexual abuse, Erbes and Harter (1999) speak about how as children these survivors would have developed construct systems limited in their ranges of convenience and highly discrepant from society norms. This process, they maintain, has led to relationships where the survivors' construct systems stop them from understanding and being understood.

Construction of self is the construing of oneself as distinct from others without assuming that others resemble oneself in terms of their experience. As adolescents actively construct reality through, at times, risk-taking behaviours, internal representations are formed into
meaningful recurrent patterns called personal constructs. It is these idiosyncratic self-constructs which will compose the adolescent’s identity of self-theory (Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1988). Risk-taking in adolescence carries its own unique sense for the adolescent, it becomes central in the adolescent’s developing construction of self. “This is what I am, because this is what I am not”.

The adjustment of adolescents will depend on the nature of their risk-taking behaviour and if their experiment led to elaborative choices, a construing of self. Personal construct theory would argue that troubled behaviour by adolescents comes about because of a preemptive commitment by the adolescent to either pole of the construct. The superordinate construction within personal construct psychology for all forms of problematic or psychological disorder is that they are basically failures in elaboration (Agnew, 1985). If the troubled adolescent commits himself/herself to either end of the construct, the contrast pole remains unarticulated and unexplored, and the adolescent’s experiment with the submerged pole may lock the adolescent into a hostile stance against the caring concern of others, especially parents.

The adolescent involved in risk-taking behaviours is more likely to be committed to short-term anticipation rather than long-term anticipation. Unlike adults whose lives are generally based on long-term anticipations, the adolescent is typically more concerned with here-and-now, short-term anticipations. If the adolescent fails to gain support from his or her family or peer group, there is a likelihood: “he may well be
trapped in repetitive cycles, the nature of which he cannot see and which for him do not validate what they do for other people” (Agnew, 1985, p.235).

2.6.4 Contrast, Conflict, Emotion and Change in Adolescence

Social interactions provide a source of “conceptual conflict” between the adolescent’s own ideas and those of other adolescents (Selman, 1980). While exposure to different ideas, perspectives and modes of reasoning may provoke conflict, they also promote a greater depth of understanding of the self and interpersonal relations. Adolescent friendships and the inherent conflictual nature of these friendships, serve important developmental functions, because ‘the self relies on relationships and needs them in turn to escape egoism’. Conflicts in adolescent relationships act as correctives against exaggerated feelings of uniqueness (Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

In personal construct theory, contrast implies the meaningful experience of an oppositional difference, and that the oppositional poles may be linked together or combined in some way. Kelly (1955; 1991) had argued that man would have little appreciation of friendship unless, at the same time, he could have some awareness of what it is to be excluded from that friendship. When adolescents are comparing and contrasting themselves with others, conflict becomes an inherent part of the process. A peer group will have established an expected role for the adolescent to play. Any attempt by the adolescent to break with the role will be met with hostility. Since the adolescent’s new interpersonal relationships
demand from the peer group new orientations towards the adolescent, the friends will resist any changes, as these changes may easily threaten their own sense of stability or identity. Becoming hostile, that is, exorting validational evidence even though it is recognised as a failure (Kelly, 1955; 1991), would then, from a Kellyan perspective, be an attempt by the adolescents to validate parts of their construct system, because extracting evidence is a form of validation when all else has failed. If the resistance by the peer group is maintained, adolescents may be effectively prevented from living out their new role construction (Salmon, 1970).

Emotion in personal construct theory is a construct system in a state of actual or impending change. For example, "From the standpoint of the psychology of personal constructs, anxiety, per se, is not to be classified as either good or bad. It represents the awareness that one's construction system does not apply to the events at hand. It is, therefore, a precondition for making revisions" (Kelly, 1991, Vol.1, p.367). In personal construct theory, the emotions of guilt, anxiety, fear, aggression and hostility by the adolescent imply that there are disruptions or dislodgements within the adolescent's construct system, and that these emotions describe various sequences of reconstruing which may lead to new constructions, or precipitate action and reconstruction.

Adolescents are trying to make sense of new events constantly through their active elaboration of their construct systems. Kelly saw emotions as the signals or indicators of the construing process of the
adolescent. McCoy (1981) defines positive and negative emotions by distinguishing two major outcomes of prediction.

"Kelly's fundamental view of motivation provides the basis for sorting positive and negative emotions in the expanded personal construct psychology construction of them. Since man seeks to be able to make his world predictable and for this purpose develops a construct system, positive emotions are those which follow validation of construing. Negative emotions follow unsuccessful construing. It is not the outcome of the predictions, its success or failure, which is the emotion, however, but an awareness of the state one is in as a result of the fate of the construction which was involved in the prediction. This awareness need not be conscious, as that word is ordinarily used, but the basically phenomenological nature of construing requires an experiencing of the state (p.97)."

The emotion, aggression, is considered by Kelly (1955; 1991) a positive attribute enabling adolescents to keep moving forward and outward, reducing the possibility of anxiety. Anxiety develops as adolescents are faced with an event or set of events for which their construct systems are unprepared. Personal construct theory states anxiety is: "the failure to produce a construction that appears wholly applicable to the events of which one is aware" (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 1, p. 369).
Then, adolescence can be understood as a life stage in which anxiety is a normal result of the rapid expansion of the adolescent’s own world.

If adolescents find themselves behaving contrary to their expectations of their role, that is, doing something that they normally wouldn’t see themselves as doing (Kelly, 1991, p.370-374), adolescents feel guilty. Adolescents may feel under threat and respond by either trying to avoid the change, or by trying to make it not happen in a certain way. Threat is the awareness of an imminent comprehensive change in the adolescent’s core structures and usually feels very uncomfortable and can be accompanied by physiological sensations and reactions (Kelly, 1955; 1991). According to Kelly (1955; 1991), the feeling, fear, is the awareness of an imminent incidental change in core structure, and it is the degree of potential change in core structure that differentiates fear from threat. The emotion, hostility, is experienced after adolescents have tried out a social prediction but the result is not one that was predicted, and the adolescents continue: “to extort validational evidence in favor of a type of social prediction which has already proved itself a failure” (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 1, p.375).

2.7 Critical Evaluation of the Approaches to Understanding Adolescence

The theories presented in this chapter vary in the way they handle themes of adolescent development, such as sexual and cognitive maturation. They also differ in the role they give to adolescence in the life span. Both the psychoanalytic and the cognitive-developmental theories
treat adolescence as the final period of qualitative change. Other theories, including Erikson's psychosocial theory, the social-learning theory, the humanist theory, and finally Kelly's theory of personal constructs, recognise change as a continuous element of life. While biological change continues, these theories see it as becoming subordinated to aspects of the social context, that is, the force toward psychological development.

These theories and others, along with their psychological interventions, continue to provide efficacious treatment of adolescent disorder. How does personal construct theory, as the preferred model in this research, extend these theories in our understanding of adolescent development?

In adolescence, there is the potential for changing the course of one's personal history. Personal construct psychology in particular, embraces this process of change, and herein lies the richness of the personal construct perspective. The adolescents are seen as having the capacity to make choices and invent new solutions, and in so doing, have the power to change the course of life events for themselves and for others.

In personal construct psychology, there is the unconditioned acceptance of the processes of adolescent development. Risk-taking behaviours are seen as experiments in meaning-making, and a context for the elaboration of self constructs. The elaboration in personal construct theory equally involves cognition and emotion.
Adolescence is understood as a transitional process where strong feelings, both positive and negative, are experienced. Personal construct theory, especially, does not take a prescriptive view of negative emotions as either right or wrong, but views them as a constructive part of the process of change in adolescence. Such a perspective embraces richly and deeply the emotional and developmental needs of adolescents.

Finally, as a theory of the nature of man, where we all, are continually meaning-making, personal construct theory, has the power for creative change. As we are searching for meaning in our interpersonal relationships, so are we equally anticipating, facilitating and participating in a process of change, of creative change.

2.8 Summary

Chapter 2 has briefly outlined and evaluated other approaches to adolescence, and provided a personal construct account of the developmental process of adolescence. The process is seen as one of inherent change, in which adolescents are searching for their self-identities by elaborating and experimenting with their construct systems of self and others. The account of personal construct theory also suggested that forming friendships and belonging to peer groups facilitate this process of identity formation, by increasing the opportunities for developing role relationships. Adolescents, it was then proposed, will attempt at times to cope with these changes by engaging in risk-taking behaviours, and in the process, experience emotions of aggression, anxiety, guilt, fear, threat and hostility.
Adolescents will participate in the process of change in their own way. For some, the passage will be on the whole smooth, for others, rough. For those on the smooth passage, the functional adolescents, they will develop a clear and distinct notion of their own identity and feel generally validated. For the other adolescents, the troubled adolescents, the search for their identity may be foreshortened, and they will fail to feel validated as an identity in their interpersonal relationships. Adolescence for the functional adolescent will mean intimate friendships, and identification with various peer groups. On the other hand, intimate relationships may not be available for the troubled adolescents, and membership to peer groups may be restricted to fringe anti-social groups.

Risk-taking behaviour is part of the experiments all adolescents need to carry out, as an elaborative choice, a construing of self. Such experiments for the functional adolescent will lead to reconstruction. However, for the troubled adolescents, these experiments may become an end in themselves, where the phases of the Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle are foreshortened. Contrast and conflict will be experienced by the functional adolescent as experiments of change. Accompanying these processes of change, will be the full array of both positive and negative emotions, and these will be available as part of their making elaborative choices. For the troubled adolescent, the cycle of conflict and negative emotion are perpetuated by experiences of invalidation of their identity.
While Chapter 2 provided a personal construct account of adolescence, Chapter 3 will begin to outline the psychological processes taking place in personal construct group work. Most of the research into group work has come from investigations into groups with adults, and it will be these investigations which will provide the core knowledge for the account. Despite this, it is proposed that the account in Chapter 3, may help to understand the processes occurring in group work with troubled adolescents. This account is intended to provide an understanding of both adult and adolescent personal construct group work.
CHAPTER 3

A PERSONAL CONSTRUCT ACCOUNT OF
THE PROCESSES OF GROUP WORK
WITH PEOPLE WITH PROBLEMS
3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 will present a personal construct account of the processes of group work for people with problems. This presentation will begin with an account of the role of interpersonal relationships in personal construct therapy, followed by a discussion of the six phases George Kelly (1955; 1991) identified as occurring in the formation of these relationships in group work. The therapeutic factors of group work identified by various researchers will be discussed as they relate to the interpersonal aspects of group process. Three dimensions of interpersonal relationships are identified—member to member, leader to member, and member to group; and each dimension is discussed in terms of therapeutic factors taking place along with the process of personal construct group work.

3.2 Personal Construct Therapy

According to personal construct psychology, people make sense of the world in terms of personally learned interpretations of personal constructs. While Kelly (1955; 1991) assumes there is a real world around us, he maintains that our contact with the real world is through our interpretations of that world, our constructions. While there may be similarities between peoples’ constructions, they are not the same, the degree of similarity between people will depend on how the constructs are organised in their personal construct systems.

Forming a relationship based on understanding is considered the most central aspect of interpersonal relationships in personal construct
psychology. The interpersonal relationships within the therapeutic situation became the context by which Kelly developed the psychology of personal construing, and the therapeutic dimensions of diagnosis, and transition, and the process of reconstruction (Fransella, 1970). Kelly saw both clients and therapists as scientists with their own theories and hypotheses. The therapist needs to understand the client’s behaviour as a series of experiments designed to test their construing of events. At times, these very constructions and the invalidating evidence these constructions bring, can ‘trap’ the client. Despite this, Kelly felt that the client’s personal constructions of the events are probably more relevant to their difficulties, than any theoretical constructions of professional psychologists: “If you don’t know what’s wrong with a client, ask him; he might tell you!” (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 1, p.140).

As scientists, the therapist and client adopt an enquiring perspective about the client’s life which enables both the therapist and client to experiment with and to elaborate the construct systems, and to develop more viable and satisfying ways of being in the world. In personal construct therapy, it is the interpersonal relationship between therapist and client that forms the context in which and from which the client can examine and explore self and world relationships.

Kelly (1955; 1991) elaborates on this interpersonal relationship through three corollaries that are of primary importance in the therapeutic encounter (Leitner, Dunnett, Anderson & Meshot, 1993). One of these corollaries is the Sociality Corollary. Here the therapist is being asked to
place themselves into the shoes of the client, to enable better understandings and anticipations of present and future behaviour. The second corollary, the Choice Corollary, states that people decide on the direction in which they will elaborate their construct system. According to Kelly (1955; 1991), clients will make choices as part of the process of further definition and extension of their construct systems. While these choices may not always seem “good choices” or “wise choices”, Kelly (1955; 1991), however, maintained that the therapist respects the client’s choice and sees the client at that time as attempting to make an event more predictable. The third corollary is the Experience Corollary. People can make changes to construct systems through novel encounters. The client is not bound to repeat prior construing of events through “internalised objects”, but rather constructions are malleable, and the process of construing is open to form in a variety of directions (Leitner et al., 1993).

Understanding another person, Kelly (1955; 1991) contends, is not simply understanding the contents of the construct system the person has created, but also understanding the other person’s processes of construing. In discovering the processes of the client’s construing, the therapist needs to gain an understanding of the client’s core role constructs, for core role constructs encompass: “our sense of who we are, who we would like to be, and who we feel we are becoming” (Leitner & Dill-Standiford, 1993, p.137). Clients and therapists will vary in their capacity to play roles with the other and in their capacity to construe the other, and in allowing the other to get to know them. In personal construct therapy, developing role
relationships will deepen the understanding of the process of construing in the therapeutic context.

Personal construct therapy is both an experiment, and a container of many experiments, where hypotheses about interrelationships are tested out. In safety, the experiments are focused on the meeting of the client's and therapist's construct systems, and story retelling is shared by both (Viney, 1996).

3.3 Personal Construct Group Work

Broadly, Kelly (1955; 1991) viewed group work like any other form of therapy. It is to assist the person to develop more effective ways through which to anticipate events. He outlined six phases in the development of group work. While not discrete, the phases were considered to overlap, and to provide some description of the progression of events. Throughout the six phases, Kelly (1955; 1991) identifies role enactment as a very significant player in the process of therapeutic change: "...it (the enactment) provides a transparent mask behind which the actor portrays, not a false self, but the true self which is often hidden by daily conventions and manners. The mask is therefore not a disguise, but a screen behind which the person can divest himself of his customary pretense" (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 2, p.433).

The first phase, initiation of mutual support, involves feeling acceptance and support. Acceptance was defined by Kelly (1991, Vol 2.) as: "the readiness to see the world through another person's eyes- that is, readiness for commonality" (p.421). Support was described as a broad
response pattern in which the group member successfully experiments with a variety of constructs and behaviours (Kelly, 1955; 1991). To feel supported, the group member must be aware that at least another group member is trying to see things as that person does. It is only when this happens, Kelly (1955; 1991) maintains, will the group member feel safe enough to experiment. In order to develop this acceptance and support, Kelly (1955; 1991) recommended the use of structured enactment sketches with role descriptions for the group members. By encouraging the group members to interact with each other, and not requiring excessive self-disclosure, Kelly (1955; 1991) felt the exercise provided a means for the group members to begin to trust each other and to get to know each other.

The second phase, initiation of primary role relationships, focuses attention on the nature of the relationship the group members experience with each other. It involves having each group member express their feelings about the structured enactment sketches. The group members are asked to share their own feelings, and what they would have imagined were the feelings of the group member in the role. Kelly (1955; 1991) saw this process as an assessment of shared meaning. "The contrast that a client sees between the way another person appears to feel and the way he thinks he would feel in the same situation is a measure of the commonality the client perceives between himself and others" (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 2, p.426).

During the third phase, the group members are encouraged to act together and think up and carry out their own enactments and
experiments. The sketches are much more informal, and often briefer, and there is no attempt to experiment outside the group, everything being initiated and completed within the group setting. Kelly (1955; 1991) felt that by the fourth phase, the group members would generally feel well supported and understood, and that threat would be minimized. The fourth phase, explorations of personal problems, is when the group members are encouraged to introduce their own personal problem, and the other group members are invited to enact how they would handle the problem differently.

In the fifth stage, Kelly (1955; 1991) saw the group process as moving towards exploration of role relationships outside the group context. In this phase, called explorations of secondary roles, group members are encouraged to enact situations that are related to outside events and outside persons. The group leader helps the group members to draw on their experiences in previous sessions where they enacted role relationships with another group member. The group member is then encouraged to apply this knowledge in particular to other people in their lives outside the group, and in general to humanity at large.

The sixth and final phase identified by Kelly (1955; 1991) is called explorations of secondary enterprises. Group members bring back to the group the results of experiments conducted on their new roles. If the validational evidence is satisfactory, then the group members are considered able to stand on their own feet without group support. At this phase, however, Kelly still saw the group as continuing to support the
group member. It supports the group member by helping to protect them against invalidating evidence should it arise from these experiments outside the group in the new role relationships.

Following these six phases, Morris (1977) conducted personal construct group work over one year. The group contained eight psychiatric outpatients and two leaders. It was reported that there were frequent occasions when the phases were reversed to suit the needs of the group members. Role playing and the conversational model technique (Mair, 1970) were introduced into the group work.

3.3.1 Short-Term Personal Construct Group Work

Changes in group stages were also made by Llewellyn and Dunnett (1987), when they conducted short-term group work following the six phases outlined by Kelly (1955; 1991). Following the group work, they criticised the personal construct approach to group work, arguing that rather than provide a group methodology, it provides an individual methodology in a group setting (Dunnett & Llewellyn, 1988). In spite of these concerns, short-term personal construct group work was still thought by the researchers to be more effective than other group work approaches in the following ways. There is greater emphasis on generalising to the members' world beyond the group. It is beneficial to have the group leaders modeling the process of experimentation. Personal construct group work offers the group member a method by which members can begin to understand the ways they construe the world. Various therapeutic strategies for short-term personal construct group
work for use by adolescents and adults have been presented by Viney (1996). Later research has established strong evidence for the clinical efficacy and positive outcomes of short-term personal construct group work (Viney, 1998; Winter, 1997).

3.4 Therapeutic Factors in Group Work with People with Problems

In group therapy, there are three dimensions that contribute to the overall therapeutic relationship. They are the dimensions of member to member, member to therapist and member to group, relationships. The core assumption of the research into these dimensions is that client change comes about from the interpersonal or interactional nature of the group manifested by the therapeutic factors. Therapeutic factors are defined as: 'an element of group therapy that contributes to improvement in the clients' condition and can be a function of the actions of the group therapist, the other group members, and the clients themselves' (Crouch, Bloch & Wanlass, 1993). They can be interpersonal or intrapersonal in focus. The first taxonomy of therapeutic factors was compiled by Corsini and Rosenberg (1955). In personal construct group work, therapeutic factors can be described as the constructions group members share about the interpersonal relationships of the group.

Yalom (1975; 1985; 1995) made a significant theoretical contribution by exploring the therapeutic operation of interaction, making his central therapeutic factor, that of interpersonal learning. Other factors articulated by Yalom are: altruism, catharsis, cohesion, family re-enactment, hope, identification, insight, self-disclosure, universality, and vicarious learning.
More recently, factors such as feedback, here and now focus, reality testing, role flexibility and consensual validation have been investigated. In the light of inquiry, therapeutic factors are probably the most significant contribution of group therapy to the therapeutic process literature (Fuhriman & Burlingame, 1993). Research over the past thirty years suggests that factors such as cohesion, interpersonal learning, and catharsis are universally valued across diverse clientele, while other factors have differential value depending on specific populations (Fuhriman & Burlingame, 1993).

3.5 Member to Member Relationships in Group Work

An important dimension of group work has been the member to member relationships. From a personal construct perspective, both commonality and sociality are seen as essential ingredients in determining the success or failure of group work. Commonality provides the validation and sociality the understanding. Kelly (1955; 1991) described the process of construing interpersonal relationships as the mediating process in determining behaviour.

The development of interpersonal relationships has been the source of a number of investigations. Personal construct research into the processes of construing has found that there are cyclical processes in construing during the life time of the group (Winter & Trippett, 1977). Fransella and Joyston-Bechal (1971) found that before group members changed the way they applied constructs to each other, they initially tightened and then loosened their construing. Cyclical changes were also
found in the constructs around meaningfulness of other group members (Landfield, 1979). It was found that as therapy progressed, constructs moved from concrete and physical to more abstract and psychological constructs (Duck, 1973a; Neimeyer, Banikiotes & Fami, 1979).

A number of studies have been able to demonstrate that if the group work is successful, group members come to perceive more similarities amongst themselves and their significant others (Fielding, 1975; Koch, 1983a; Winter & Trippett, 1977), and to their ideal selves (Neimeyer, Harter & Alexander, 1991). Higher levels of intimacy between friends was reported to be associated with measures of construct differentiation and abstraction (Leichty, 1989). It was also found that the measure of construct complexity (Crockett, 1965) was correlated with more 'person-centered' communicative strategies. Group members were also found to seek consensual validation in ways that parallel the process of acquaintance they use in the wider world (Duck, 1973b; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1981b). Investigations into the differential predictors of outcome in alternative treatments were reviewed by Winter (1990). It was found that, while clients who responded to behaviour therapy displayed more tightly organised, logically consistent construct systems, the reverse was true for the group members in personal construct group therapy.

The investigations into interpersonal development have also focused on the member to member relationships during group work. In a review of small groups, Neimeyer and Merluzzi (1982) concluded that inter-member bonding allows for systematic information exchange and
with an increasing information base, the members become more psychologically knowledgeable about each other. This in turn, creates greater opportunity for the validation of assumptions and initial impressions, leading to a deeper understanding of the other. It was also argued that this increase in social relations led to greater cohesion amongst the members. Group work for incest victims demonstrated that it was able to provide an opportunity for the members to experience commonality with other members and consensual validation (Alexander & Follett, 1987).

Therapeutic factors have been comparatively evaluated by asking the group member what was most helpful in therapy. Both direct and more oblique methods have been used. Yalom (1985) constructed a questionnaire of sixty statements covering twelve therapeutic factors. The respondents are asked to assign a therapeutic factor to one of the seven categories, from most to least helpful. The less direct approach has involved the use of the “most important event” questionnaire, where the respondents identify the event or events they found most personally important and describe the event in detail. Using a version of the Yalom questionnaire, thirty participants in a psychodrama group placed more emphasis on self-understanding and less on group cohesion (Kellermann, 1985). In a study of outpatients, Yalom (1985) identified the three most helpful factors as interpersonal learning, self-disclosure and acceptance. Steinfeld and Mabli (1974) reported male prison inmates as rating insight,
an existential factor, self-disclosure and feedback as the most helpful factors.

The "most important event" questionnaire was used with encounter groups and the participants identified insight, acceptance, advice and family reenactment as the most helpful factors (Liberman, Yalom & Miles, 1973). Later investigations reported new mothers in self-help groups as nominating interpersonal learning, self-understanding, catharsis and instillation of hope as most helpful (Liberman, 1990). For members of long-term groups, the most beneficial therapeutic factor was self-understanding, followed by self-disclosure and learning from interpersonal action (Bloch & Reibstein, 1980). MacKenzie (1987) found that for thirty four members of four outpatient groups, self-understanding, self-disclosure and learning from interpersonal action were deemed most helpful. When women with bulimia nervosa attending a short-term group were asked what was most helpful, more of these women indicated universality, vicarious learning and instillation of hope as more beneficial (Hobbs, Birtchnall, Harte & Lacey, 1989). Personal construct group work with agoraphobics found that using the Most Important Events Questionnaire, members rated universality more highly with self understanding following (Winter et al, 1997).

Overall, the results from investigations using Yalom's questionnaire and the "most important event" method have indicated that less disturbed group members and more functional exploratory groups, rate self-understanding, learning from interpersonal action and self-
disclosure/catharsis as more beneficial. For more disturbed members, both methods concur showing the relative importance of cohesiveness, altruism and universality (Yalom, 1985; 1995).

3.6 Leader to Member Relationships in Group Work

The role of the therapist in the group setting differs from that of the individual format. It requires flexibility in the application of intervention, strategies, balance of power and influence, and in the facilitation of multiple relationships. Flexibility is also needed in determining whether the focus is on content or process, and on the selection of individual, interpersonal or group material (Fuhriman & Burlingame, 1993).

Kelly (1955; 1991) believed that the therapist should take a credulous approach to the client. The group leader accepts the group member’s construing as it is initially presented to the group. By taking the credulous approach, the group leader invests the group member with a dignity and an acknowledgement that they are an integral, real and a whole person. However, this acceptance Kelly (1955; 1991) argued, does not mean that the group leader nor group member remain fixed to the member’s initial presentation. "One might think of this as a kind of controlled yet compassionate phenomenological approach to understanding the client from the client’s own point of view" (Epting, 1984, p.9).

The aim of personal construct therapy is: "to assist in the continuous shifting of the client’s construct system" (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 2, p.19). Within the group work, the leader is not only involved in the
content of the member's construing, but needs to be engaged in the process of change, the member's changes in construing the world. The way in which the group leader helps in the shifting of constructs, becomes a crucial element in the work of the leader. It is the process of construing which takes on most importance for the leader. It is not what is said, but rather how it is said. Progress, like growth, is seen in the context of a process (Dunnett & Miyaguchi, 1993).

The group leader in personal construct group work, is dealing with more than the group members' symptoms, but with changes in construing. New constructions are formed during creativity. Kelly (1955; 1991) viewed creativity as a cycle that begins with loosened construing and ends with tightened and validated constructions. In group work, the Creativity Cycle is repeated again and again. Loose construing can lead to varying predictions about the world and new experiences, or to different perspectives being entertained by the group member. The group leader will encourage progressive construing of these new experiences or perspectives, so that through tightened construing validation might occur. Kelly (1955; 1991) described the construing process of therapeutic change through the concept of loosening and tightening and through the CPC (Circumspection, Preemption and Choice) or the Decision-Making Cycle.

Kelly (1955; 1991) urged the group leader to give up the role of therapeutic expert. To enable this to occur he introduced the practice of reflexivity. Reflexivity requires that the group leader be willing to relate to group members on their own level, not from above or at a distance. As
the group members change their ways of construing events, the group leader also makes changes in construing. In personal construct group work, there is an underlying understanding that people can make mistakes and reinvent their lives.

In an investigation into the distinctiveness of personal construct group work, it was found that personal construct psychotherapists typically used an open facilitation directed to the group as a whole. This form of intervention was termed directive facilitation, and described for example, by using the response of a personal construct psychotherapist to Vignette A: “Let us do one of our enactments so we can all be sure we understand what you are meaning…. ..” (Winter, 1997, p.217).

In personal construct group work, role relationships are recognised as an integral part of therapeutic change. The group leader looks out for the way the members participate in a relationship with each other and the leader. Social interaction with other people is important Kelly (1955; 1991) maintains, because it is through interactions with others that construing is validated. The role relationship is the willingness by both the group leader and group member to attempt to understand the other, and to also allow the other to attempt to construe their core role. In personal construct group work, it was found that personal construct therapists focus more interventions on the relationship between the member and the leader (Winter, 1997).

As group work involves the development of role relationships, there will be feelings of vulnerability arising in both the group leader and
group member. Leitner (1985) has written about this intimate relationship (ROLE relationship) and the possible resulting feelings of anxiety, guilt, hostility, threat and fear, the "terror" of such relationships. Leitner (1990) was aware of the balance the therapist needed to make between connecting with the client in this relationship (ROLE relationship) and between remaining separate from the client. Being too close to the group member invites the opportunity to mistake the group leader's own construing process for that of the member, and being too distant encourages the perpetuation of the member's sense of emptiness and isolation (Leitner, 1990). Leitner (1990) named this balance between being too close or being too far as optimal therapeutic distance, where one must be "close enough to the other to experience the other's feelings while being distant enough to recognise them as the other's feelings not my own" (p.11).

The impact of the relationship between group leader and member on clinical outcome has been investigated. Research has found that a positive view of the therapist is associated with client improvement in highly structured interventions such as cognitive behavioural and psychoeducational approaches (Drob, Bernard, Lifshutz & Nierenberg, 1986; Falloon, 1981). Similar results have been found in investigations using encounter groups or training groups (e.g. Coche, Dies & Goettelmann, 1991; MacKenzie, Dies, Coche, Rutan & Stone, 1987). Confirmation has also come from research that has used a different perspective. When group members have been asked why they
prematurely terminated group psychotherapy, they express an unfavorable view of the therapist and the other members (e.g. Bernard & Drob, 1989; Falloon, 1981). It appears that group members who feel the group intervention was successful, typically cite the helpfulness of member interactions, but when they feel the intervention was unsuccessful, they see the group leader as negligent. Such leaders can be seen as negligent in protecting members from hostile or counterproductive interactions with other members, or for their negative dominance in threatening and intrusive confrontations (Dies, 1983; 1985).

On the other hand, researchers have found that group members do value confrontation from the group leader when the leader confronts in a more positive manner (e.g. Coche et al, 1991; Hurley, 1986). In a critique of the individual psychotherapy literature, it is asserted that the more effective therapists tend to confront and interpret client affect, and promote “more realistic and goal-directed expressions of affect on the part of their clients. Indeed, evidence from many sources suggests that rousing patient affect and motivating them to confront their fears, enhances both cognitive and behavioral changes” (Beutler, Crago and Arizmendi, 1986, p.294).

The quality of the relationship established between the leader and group members has also been investigated. In a review of thirty four studies consistent findings were found leading to a number of generalisations (Dies, 1983). The first generalisation was that a positive relationship between the leader and group members plays a significant
role in the development of helpful group norms and in facilitating therapeutic change. Secondly, it was found that a relationship with a group leader who is experienced as warm, caring and supportive is essential, but is not sufficient to promote therapeutic growth, especially with more seriously disturbed clients. Finally, that intermember bonding is often more important than the relationship between the leader and the group members.

Support for the first generalisation, that is, a positive relationship between leader and member facilitates therapeutic change, has come from personal construct research. Landfield (1979) hypothesised that improvement in psychotherapy would be accompanied by increased convergence between clients and therapists with respect to the level of organisation of their personal construct systems. Convergence was operationally defined as a decrease in the difference between the 'functionally independent construction' (FIC) scores of a client and his or her therapist from the beginning of treatment to the thirteenth week. He found, in summary, that divergence with respect to FIC scores between client and therapist at the beginning of treatment seems to relate to the client's improvement during treatment, with the improvement represented by a convergence between client and therapist in terms of their FIC scores. Findings from research into immediate and long-term outcome have shown that relationships by group members to the group leader have an impact (Neimeyer et al, 1991). The results also demonstrated that the importance of this working alliance with the group
leader grows as the group process develops, with increasing consensus between the group members' construing and that of the group leader (Ryle & Lipshitz, 1976).

While the following comment was made by a therapist in her assessment of the distinctive differences between cognitive psychotherapy and personal construct psychotherapy, the factors operating do apply when describing the role of the personal construct group leader:

Cognitive therapists seem more challenging, directive, and to be offering interpretations that do not always lead directly from what the client has said. PCP therapists come over as much looser in their construing; ask questions rather than make statements; and use interpretation more as a way of checking out their own construing or as a means of helping the client elaborate his or her construing (from Winter & Watson, 1999, p.17).

3.7 Member to Group Relationships in Group Work

Personal construct group work involves the relationship of the individual group member to the group and the need to preserve individuality and yet still accomplish the group's tasks. "...to a large extent, it is the group that is the agent of change. Here lies a crucial difference in the basic roles of the individual therapist and the group therapist. In the individual format, the therapist functions as the solely designated direct agent of change. The group therapist functions far more indirectly. In other words, if it is the group members who, in their interaction, set in motion the many therapeutic factors, then it is the group therapist's task to create
Group members have identified the interpersonal processes unique to group treatments as an intense emotional experience built on the sharing of painful experiences, the courage to take risks, and the validation from other group members (Yalom, 1985; 1995). There is some evidence that there is therapeutic change occurring in group work when it is member-centered with emotionally involving interaction (Land, 1964; Kaye, 1973; Swarr & Ewing, 1977). As well, investigations have also observed that there is a shift in the valuing of therapeutic factors during the course of the group. The results of short-term group work suggested that in the early phase of the group, vicarious learning may be more important, with self-understanding in the middle phase, and instillation of hope in the final phase (Hobbs et al, 1989).

The process of construing amongst group members was investigated when a series of studies was undertaken on thirteen groups. The groups were taking part in a nine day residential training conference, involving fifteen small group sessions of between one and two hours duration (Kupyers, Davies & Glaser, 1986; Kuypers, Davies & Hazelwinkel, 1986; Kuypers, Davies & van der Vegt, 1987). When group members' interpersonal constructions were seen to match the interpersonal development phase of the group, other members saw these members as role leaders. When there was positive member interdependence, new roles and constructs were validated by the group.
They were also evident when the individual members were followed-up several months later.

This Netherlands study also investigated changes in group members construing and changes in group functioning over time. The ways in which participants described themselves and others were categorized and analysed. It was found that some of the groups became stuck at particular stages of development. This was identified by their persistent use of the same construct style. The members of each group were then found to be using a pattern of constructs that matched those of the phase at which the group was stuck. Until the group had reached the stage of consensual validation, feedback was taken in a defensive manner. Once consensual validation had been reached, the members used feedback to enhance self-understanding. Unlike feedback, cohesion was not directly related to the stage achieved by any particular group, but rather increased over the duration of each group. By attempting to match developmental phenomena with outcome change, the study was able to suggest that the group member benefits from the group, only so far as the group itself develops.

In another study of group process, Tschuschke and MacKenzie (1989) compared two long-term therapy groups using the Gottschalk and Gleser (1969) content analysis scales. One of the groups was considered a successful outcome for the members, while the other was considered an unsuccessful outcome. The complete transcript of every fourth session was analysed in terms of six anxiety and four hostility scales. The process
patterns of each of the two groups were compared. For the successful group, there was a pattern of prolonged periods spent in various states. There was a state of painful self-disclosure, followed by a state of greater hostility-directed towards others. The two states were then repeated and eventually followed by a final state of lowered affect.

Research findings into the member to group relationship have often focused on the therapeutic factor, cohesion. Of all the identified therapeutic factors, cohesion has probably been the most researched in past years. Budman, Soldz, Demby, Feldstein, Springer & Davis, (1989) investigated the multidimensional nature of cohesiveness and the therapeutic alliance in individual therapy, and the relationship between cohesion and outcome. Cohesiveness is multidimensional in concept, and is correlated most strongly with ratings of improvement early in the group’s development. Results from the study undertaken by Braaten (1990) found that the positive effects of cohesion promote the development of therapeutic factors such as self-disclosure and feedback, attraction and bonding, and listening and empathy.

Although the importance of cohesion has long been recognised, it is argued that the concept has evaded clear definition and description (Crouch et al, 1993). There is group cohesiveness, the sense of togetherness, and there is the group member’s feeling of belonging. However, it is the group cohesiveness that is the primary condition for a group to function, and a condition for change. It embraces the
commitment of group members to the aims and the work of the group (Crouch et al, 1993).

Accounts of personal construct groups have described how groups go through cycles of sharing and individualising these constructions of cohesiveness. One such account outlines the following as the consecutive stages of group work. Firstly, there is a searching for shared meanings and for confirmation of those meanings. Secondly, the members are clarifying differences in personal meanings and elaborating them together. Finally, there is a developing of each group member’s relationship to the group coupled with a recognition that each member has their own individual system of meanings (Koch, 1985). Another account put forward by Llewellyn and Dunnett (1987) described the process of group work as one of five stages, beginning with cohesion moving to self-disclosure and role interactions, to the active experimentation in the group sessions and outside the group. In group work with incest survivors, the factor cohesion faded in importance relative to the working alliance with the group leaders (Neimeyer et al, 1991).

3.8 Overview of the Relationships in Personal Construct Group Work Processes

Forming a relationship based on an understanding with another, is considered the most central aspect of interpersonal relationships in personal construct psychology. Within therapy groups, validation and elaboration are the primary objectives of relationship formation and maintenance. Kelly (1955; 1991) emphasised the importance of social
interaction because he maintained that it is largely due to our interactions with others, that our construing is validated. In group work, the leader attempts to broaden the members' experiences by exposing them to controlled and novel experiments related to their contemporary lives. This experimental process, where constructions are devised or delineated and then tested out, was outlined by Kelly (1955; 1991) in six stages. Throughout the group work, the leader encourages the application of the members' experiments to the group, to the members' own social worlds outside the group, and has particular responsibility to ensure that each member generalises the role relationships that have developed within the group to others outside (Llewellyn & Dunnett, 1987). Construing group work needs an engagement in the understanding of the role relationships between member to member, leader to member, and member to group, and it is these processes of construing which will facilitate therapeutic change.

In the personal construct group, developments in the member to member relationships depend largely upon the processes of commonality and sociality. For the second aspect, leader to member relationships, as the role relationships evolve in the group, the personal construct group leader is actively engaged in the processes of change, assisting in the continuous shifting of the group member's construct system. The work of the personal construct group leader becomes one of making sense of the group members and of the group leader's relationship to the group members. It also involves making sense of how the members see each
other, and their relationships with each other. Finally, the work of the personal construct group leader is about making sense of the group as a whole, and the relationship every participant has to the group. This third aspect, member to group relationships in the personal construct group, travels through cycles of commonality and sociality where cohesiveness is initially important, but as the creativity of change grows, is supplanted by more experiences of individuation and role relatedness.

3.9 Summary

In Chapter 3, an account of the processes of personal construct group work with people with problems has been provided. In personal construct group work, it was suggested, it is the development of interpersonal relationships that become central to psychological change and healing. However, unlike individual therapy, the processes of therapeutic change in group work encompass not only the interpersonal relationships of therapist to client, but also the interpersonal relationships of group member to group member, and of group member to the group as a whole. An account of these processes of relationship-making in personal construct group work has been provided. And it is these processes of relationship-making, as outlined in Chapter 3, along with the personal construct account of the developmental processes of adolescence as set out in Chapter 2, which are integrated in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, an epistemology of adolescent group work process is presented. A personal construct model of group work with troubled adolescents will be developed in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

A PERSONAL CONSTRUCT MODEL OF GROUP WORK
WITH TROUBLED ADOLESCENTS
4.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the concepts and strategies put forward in Chapters 2 and 3, and presents them as a model of group work with troubled adolescents. In Chapter 2, a personal construct account of adolescence was proposed, with emphasis on adolescent developmental needs. The processes of personal construct group work were presented in Chapter 3. In this chapter, Chapter 4, I conceptualise group work as another peer grouping for adolescents, but with sometimes varying processes and goals. A counselling intervention, Interpersonal Transaction Group Work, is presented as an approach for conducting personal construct group work with troubled adolescents. Interpersonal Transaction Group Work can provide the benefits arising from a peer grouping, as well as meet the developmental needs of adolescents within a structure and processes enabling therapeutic change.

In the following model of personal construct group work with adolescents, it is argued that Kelly’s (1955; 1991) Corollaries of Commonality and Sociality play major roles in the group process. The processes of interpersonal relating take on increasingly important roles as the nature and meaning of friendships change in adolescence. These changing processes of friendship formation and maintenance, can be understood in this model by looking at the role peer grouping plays in adolescence. The peer grouping becomes the vehicle within which the
processes of commonality and sociality are played out again and again as adolescents are involved in the developmental task of identity formation.

The model proposes, too, that adolescent group work can be better understood in terms of the role, function and processes of peer groups. The group in this model is viewed as another peer group with special attributes to assist in the psychological growth and development of troubled adolescents. The model also acknowledges the particular developmental needs of adolescence. Group work for adolescents should address these needs, and it is argued that can best be done using the Interpersonal Transaction Group format. This format can provide a psychological approach and structure that is very well suited for short-term personal construct group work with adolescents.

4.2 Theoretical Assumptions Underlying Personal Construct Group Work from the Corollaries of Commonality and Sociality

4.2.1 The Role of Shared Personal Meanings in Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships are facilitated by shared personal meanings. People join groups, develop interpersonal relations, on the basis of some commonality or similarity. Kelly's (1955; 1991) model of interpersonal relations makes explicit that relationships depend on shared areas of personal meaning. "To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person" (Kelly,
Agreed interpretations and experiences of social validation become important in interpersonal relationships: "...commonality between construction systems may make it more likely that one construction system can subsume part of another" (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 1, p.69).

Although a degree of commonality of construing between people may be a prerequisite for the formation of interpersonal relationships (Duck & Spencer, 1972), this in itself, however, according to Kelly (1955; 1991) is not sufficient. The strength of the interpersonal relationship depends on whether people can understand the experience from the other person's perspective, to see things from the other person's point of view. The Sociality Corollary implies that relationships in both individual and group counselling settings are limited by the degree of understanding. By subsuming the constructions of another, the person adds the perspectives of the other to their own understandings. In personal construct group work, more than one set of related constructs is brought to bear on an experience and the group member is encouraged to see another's point of view. Although the person's interpretation may not be an accurate representation of the other person's experience, the person, by attempting to make some sense of what the other person is about, is playing a role in relation to that person. The Sociality Corollary is concerned directly with this process of interpersonal understanding and interaction.
4.3 Group Work Becomes Another Peer Grouping for Troubled Adolescents

4.3.1 Developing Social Skills

Group work provides for adolescents another peer grouping where they can share concerns, solve problems and develop ideas and opinions. Like other peer groups, it provides the support and structure for adolescents to develop a reflective awareness of themselves and others, and to develop social identification. The conversations in both peer groupings and group work become experiments about different parts of themselves and others' reactions to them. With these changes in the nature and meaning of peer relationships, there is the press for adolescents to have the social interaction skills to enable such intense relationships, and for them to be socially effective in group situations. For the troubled adolescents, research has suggested these adolescents have a limited interpersonal conceptual structure for anticipating and predicting their social environment (Reker, 1974). Group work provides the setting where social interaction skills are both developed and refined for these adolescents, and tested with their peers.

4.3.2 Developing a Sense of Self

The processes of commonality and sociality in peer groupings fulfil an important role in the development of identity formation. Identity formation is multidimensional and depends on membership in a number of peer groups. Adolescents develop relationships with friends, and with friends in groups. It is through these relationships that adolescents test
their personal and social identities. Friends, unlike parents, reflect contemporary attitudes and values, and increasingly become the yardstick against which adolescents are continually measuring themselves. The differences between parents and peers on issues and concerns also provide an important function by engaging the adolescent in considering alternative arguments and propositions, a necessary part of identity formation. Adolescents are sorting out who they really are as distinct from the person their parents think they are or would like them to be. There are also the concerns about the relationship between being a daughter or son, and being a separate self. The question of identity becomes the central issue: "Who am I?" In group work, identity formation is the force of contact with other thoughts and other viewpoints. This contact leads to a more objective stance toward self and others, and lessens the egocentricity of adolescence.

4.4 Personal Construct Group Work and the Developmental Needs of Adolescents

4.4.1 Experiments in Dependency

Dependency on others was considered by Kelly (1955; 1991) as universal, characteristic of both child and adult. He argued that it was important for people to disperse their dependencies, so that some people meet some needs, while other people meet other needs, rather than concentrate one's dependencies on the same individual or individuals, described as undispersed dependency (Walker, 1993).
Within personal construct group work, it is proposed, adolescents will experiment with their dependency on others. Adolescents need other adolescents with whom to carry out experiments about making sense of the world. Adolescents need other adolescents and are therefore dependent upon them and their peer groups. However, some dispersion of dependency is desirable and this is not always available in peer groups. Personal construct group work, unlike the peer group, provides adolescents with a useful range of validational experiences on which to base their experiments in dependency. In the group, adolescents begin experiments with adolescents not quite like them. Basically, as members of the group, they are dependent on each other. Their dependency relationship will be determined by the strength of their role relationship, that is, the strength of how they understand the way the other member sees things, their ability to subsume the other member’s thoughts and feelings. Through the articulation of personal meanings and the negotiation of shared meanings (Forster, 1997), personal construct group work helps the members to develop dependency relationships, encouraging them to have trust in themselves and others to disperse their dependency relationships outside the group. The dispersion of dependencies by adolescents is a key concept in Kelly’s understanding of social maturation (Vaughn & Pfenninger, 1994).

4.4.2 Experiments in Risk-Taking Behaviours

Risk-taking, a developmental task, is thought to be the aggressive behaviour of adolescents seeking to create some thing out of the
confusion, when adolescents will often experience dilemmas between physical and psychological risk-taking (Oades, 1999).

Personal construct group work provides the opportunities given by peer groups in sharing in risky behaviours. As well, personal construct group work develops the social connections between risky behaviours and the wider adolescent society. Almost all risk-taking begins in some moment of confusion. Kelly (1955; 1991) talks about the positive role of aggression when things are not as they were and need to be sorted out. Group work provides the environment for this creative aggressive behaviour, making the confusion more manageable and malleable.

Research has suggested that troubled adolescents are not perceived as part of the adolescent social network, they are marginalised (Brown, Lohr & Trujillo, 1990). For these marginalised adolescents, personal construct group work, unlike peer groups, can provide the connections between shared risks and social integration. It provides another peer group in which these adolescents can experience more appropriate social interaction and feel less the sense of isolation and exclusion.

4.4.3 Experiments in Acceptance and Non-Acceptance

Acceptance has been defined by Kelly (1955; 1991) as the willingness to see the world through the group member's eyes. The group leader is prepared to accept, for the time being, each group member's construction system as it stands, and to elaborate and validate the process by which the group members seek a measure of commonality with each other.
In safety and with support, personal construct group work can enable adolescents to investigate and share their constructions of acceptance and non-acceptance. Belonging, acceptance and approval by peers are very important for adolescents. This developmental need is played out in the peer group and so in group work.

The personal construct group supports the adolescent during this anxious period and encourages an acceptance of each other. It is the group process and the peer pressure in this context that can reduce denial of problems and interpersonal difficulties. Even when the adolescents are not directly confronted about their behaviour, the group context allows them to learn vicariously through the stories and interactions of others of how better to be accepted. This form of non-threatening confrontation by peers in the group work, can be particularly effective when the denial by the adolescents that they are not acceptable is strong.

4.4.4 Experiments in Identity Formation

In personal construct psychology, identity formation refers to a class of constructs that can be called personal self-constructs. The self is a construct referring to “a group of events which are alike in a certain way and, in the same way, necessarily different from other events. The way in which the events are alike is the self. That also makes the self an individual, differentiated from other individuals” (Kelly, 1991, Vol. 1, p.91).

In personal construct group work, the group becomes another grouping of peers where experiments can be undertaken in identity
formation. It provides not only a context for testing who I am and who I am not, but also a context for developing social identities and role relationships with other members.

These experiments in identity formation become pivotal to the group work, because the primary role of the personal construct group process is on developing role relationships. Unlike the peer group, personal construct group work gives adolescents the opportunity to develop a role relationship with other members who have been drawn from different peer groups. In so doing, it gives the adolescents wider experiences with peers and with adults such as the group leader, which are open and honest social interactions. For some adolescents, the group leader, unlike a parent, offers experiences of a non-critical adult, and serves as a model for self-reflection and communication of important values (Forster, 1997).

Because construing is bipolar, discovering what is 'not self' is a very important step in sorting out what 'is self'. For most adolescents, the personal construct group experience impacts on the adolescents' identification with group members and on the adolescents' construction of their own identities.

4.5 The Interpersonal Transaction Group Format

The Interpersonal Transaction Group format was developed from personal construct concepts. Concern for the development of sociality in group work led Landfield (1979) and his colleagues to develop a group therapy procedure that he called the Interpersonal Transaction Group.
Landfield felt that a person who attempts to construe the psychological processes of another person will become more sensitive to that other person's thinking, feeling, valuing and total sense of being. He hypothesised that this sensitivity for the way others view things would be associated with an increased meaningfulness of the other person and self, and with a heightened positive regard both for the other person and the self. With these issues in mind, the Interpersonal Transaction Group procedure was designed to both study and facilitate interpersonal relations.

The Interpersonal Transaction Group focuses on dyadic interactions among group members. The emphasis during these interactions is on sharing and listening. These processes are generally aimed at developing support and increasing sociality. Consensual validation, it is said by Landfield (1979), enables group members to consider the validity of new alternative constructions by reducing incidences of intense anxiety and hostility. This dyadic interaction Landfield suggested should be limited in time and content, with the discussion topics controlled for involvement level and intimacy value. Landfield, further proposed that three superordinate constructs be provided and discussed by the group leader at the beginning of the group and throughout the life of the group. These constructs which overarch the dyadic interactions and those of the whole group are ‘listening versus not listening’, ‘sharing versus not sharing’ and ‘respecting versus not respecting’.
By eliciting and sharing each others’ views, Landfield saw the members as moving from preemptive to more circumspect strategies, and from constricted to more dilated construing, as well as developing more perspective. Once each group member has interacted with each other, the members are brought together for a total group interaction. As a means of bringing to the forefront personal feelings, Landfield incorporated the concept of a ‘mood tag’. As group members record their current moods at the beginning of the group and again at the end of the group, the ‘mood tag’ becomes, not only a means of introducing personal feelings into the interaction, but also becomes a barometer of mood change during the course of the group session.

4.5.1 Support for the Short-Term Structured Approach of Interpersonal Transaction Group Format

The initial trial of the Interpersonal Transaction Group procedure was reported by Landfield and Rivers in 1975. A group comprising members with alcohol related problems met for 20 weeks. The results suggested that there was an increase in the meaningfulness, positiveness and ability to predict the perceptions of others. There was anecdotal evidence that provided support for the contention that these effects were generalised to life outside the group. The use of the Interpersonal Transaction procedure was later reported by Landfield (1979) with a number of different groups including alcohol counselling groups (Rivers, Adams & Meyer, 1978), and death education classes (Neimeyer, 1978). Research findings have demonstrated the effectiveness of Interpersonal
Transaction groups in promoting both the group members' attraction to each other (Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1983) and the group members' abilities to empathise with each other (Neimeyer, Neimeyer & Landfield, 1983). It was also shown that Interpersonal Transaction Group format provided an effective treatment with positive outcome for agoraphobics, with a reduction in anxiety and hostility and in agoraphobic cognitions (Winter et al, 1997).

In a study into group work of ten sessions for women who have been sexually abused as children (Alexander et al, 1991), it was shown that the Interpersonal Transaction Group format was useful for two reasons. Firstly, the format was found to provide a therapeutic structure differing from the confused generational role and lack of structure experienced by these women in the incestuous home environment (Sgroi & Dana, 1983). The second usage was that the Interpersonal Transaction Group format focuses directly on the development of empathic skills and on the promotion of increasingly intimate self-disclosure in a non-confronting atmosphere. There was evidence of an alleviation of distress. Compared to another group format, the members in the Interpersonal Transaction Group reported less distress while participating, and reported experiencing less conflict. The researchers suggested that it would appear "Interpersonal Transaction group format may have helped control the emergence of conflictual and stressful interactions within the group" (Alexander et al, 1991, p.224). Another important advantage of the Interpersonal Transaction group was that it was rated more popular
among women with no previous therapy experience, and more popular by members in the early stages of the group work.

The research findings suggest that the structure of the Interpersonal Transaction Group format facilitates group process. The results reported, indicate that it provides an effective short-term approach with positive outcome for a variety of clinical populations. Investigations using adolescent populations have found the format facilitates the reconstruing of risk-taking behaviours and group process with school-based adolescents (Viney et al, 1997), and with adolescent offenders (Viney et al, 1999), and that the Interpersonal Transaction Group format could facilitate group process with troubled adolescents.

4.6 The Interpersonal Transaction Group Format and Troubled Adolescents

4.6.1 The Role of Dyadic Interactions

The dyadic interactions in the Interpersonal Transaction Group Work will help to reduce the anxiety of adolescents by facilitating sharing and listening, and encouraging the loosening of construing. The emphasis on reduction of anxiety and hostility through the use of dyads appears to provide that sense of safety adolescents require when they feel confused and anxious about changes and events they are having difficulty understanding. It would seem to offer a structure that would not confront the adolescents. Rather, it provides a structure with an added degree of confidentiality and support, which may not be available for these troubled adolescents in the larger group. The use of dyads in personal construct
group work with these adolescents would appear to give greater opportunities for validation.

4.6.2 The Role of the Structured Environment

For troubled adolescents, Interpersonal Transaction Group Work, while providing a supportive and validating context, can also provide a structured environment. Adolescents when they join group work, are usually reacting to their invalidating experiences by acting out on their environment with anger or anxiety. Rather than changing themselves, they appear to others to behave in an impulsive and irrational manner. They have developed behaviours that seem to contradict normal needs. Adolescents in great need of affection may behave aggressively or ambiguously, so as to provoke rejection or exploitation (Sugar, 1986). This further invalidates any sense of worth they might have had, so the adolescents feel further under assault and threat. The Interpersonal Transaction Group Work can provide a highly structured but supportive environment, sufficient to meet these feelings of anxiety and threat.

While the Interpersonal Transaction group needs structure, it also requires a degree of 'unstructure' within a supportive framework. The lack of structure allows the group process to respond to the growth needs of the adolescents, while the supportive function of the group enables the adolescents to elaborate and construe both validating and invalidating evidence about their selves. The group process becomes a balance between these two group functions. Such a balance helps adolescents to experiment with how to relate to others and, moreover, how to construe
psychologically their relationships with group members and others outside the group. These experiences are necessary to enable adolescents to take on the developmental task of forming intimate relationships.

Adolescent groups are usually marked by conflictual and stressful interactions. The Interpersonal Transaction Group format acknowledges the negative consequences of confrontation and hostility. It seems that this approach has the potential to acknowledge the vulnerability of adolescents by providing a structure that allows for the expression of anger but tries to minimise negative destructive hostility.

4.6.3 The Role of Conflict in the Process of Change

Conflict is an inevitable part of change. The Interpersonal Transaction Group allows for the expression of anger and hostility to other group members and the group leader, and for group members to then engage in self reflection on the conflict. “Unless hostility is openly expressed, persistent and covert hostile attitudes may hamper the development of cohesiveness and effective interpersonal learning. Unexpressed hostility simply smolders within, only to seep out in many indirect ways, none of which facilitates the group therapeutic process” (Yalom, 1995, p.63). In the group, adolescents may use anger to exert control or to distance themselves from relating to the other members. Anger and hostility in the Interpersonal Transaction group are seen as feeling states signifying that a reworking of self constructions is needed. So rather than providing only a cathartic model of hostility, the Interpersonal Transaction group seeks to encourage elaboration of and
experimentation with these feeling states, and to lead the adolescents to conflict resolution, personal growth and attitude change. In the group process, catharsis, risk-taking, and exploring gradually the unknown or previously avoided constructions of self, are significant experiences.

Adolescents need to experience conflict and the capacity to withstand it (Yalom, 1985; 1995). The experiences of conflict in the group not only enhance the senses of their positions of the members but also their self-disclosure (Yalom, 1985; 1995). The group members begin to reflect and understand the other's point of view and to review their own position. In the Interpersonal Transaction Group, experiences of conflict are seen as processes for developing sociality and role relationships between group members. “The coming to grips with, working through, and eventual resolution of extreme dislike or hatred of another person is an experience of great therapeutic power” (Yalom, 1995, p.65).

It has been found that cohesive groups are more able to express hostility among members, but are also more able to express hostility toward the group leader (Pepitone & Reichling, 1955). In group work, if the adolescents feel unable to express negative feelings toward the group leader, Yalom (1985; 1995) suggests several harmful consequences may ensue. The adolescents may make a member the scapegoat for their hostility or rail against authority figures such as teachers and police. They may turn the anger onto themselves setting themselves up as the scapegoat of teachers and police. The feelings of disappointment and anger may also be suppressed and there may be a general atmosphere of
irritation and disquiet. The Interpersonal Transaction Group will enable adolescents to express these negative feelings to the leader. This expression becomes an important exercise in direct communication and in witnessing non-defensive, non-retaliatory behaviour from the leader. So, according to Yalom (1985; 1995), it serves in turn to increase the cohesiveness of the group.

4.6.4 The Role of the Invitational Mood

The Interpersonal Transaction Group Work, through adopting the invitational mood, facilitates empathy and self-disclosure in a non-confrontative atmosphere, and is best positioned to encourage therapeutic change in troubled adolescents. While addressing the potential for change (constructive alternativism), Kelly (1955; 1991) turned his thoughts to what he saw as the risks of change. People construe human nature in their own way and make social predictions on the basis of these constructions. Turning up invalidating evidence tells the person that they were wrong about people. In response, the person could review their outlook, or just let matters ride. People may try to avoid change with its inevitable uncertainties, doubts and guilt, and feel threatened, aware of imminent, comprehensive change in core structure Kelly (1955; 1991). Or, on the other hand, the person could close their eyes to reality and attempt to make people fit their construct system, and this is the hostile choice (Kelly, 1979a). Where the person experiences a breakdown in the system for anticipating events, anxiety is felt. Anger is experienced when the person is confronted with the possibility of a sharp change in core self-role.
Adolescence implies profound changes. These changes span physical, psychological, cognitive and social domains. What was known in childhood, is not always known in adolescence. Adolescents also see that much that has been known, their childhood being, what they have believed in over many years is about to be invalidated. Adolescents in response to change, may shift from a preferred pole to its opposite and experience further invalidating evidence. The adolescent has attempted to dispel the confusion by seeking something new, or by regressing to something old. This process may be repeated many times as adolescents attempt to make sense of all the changes, and the inevitable changes these cause in the world at large.

For adolescents, much of this knowledge of themselves does not have a language, but is sensed and felt. Interpersonal Transaction Group Work instead of insisting that old truths are about to give way to new ones, takes the view that it is not the truth that is changing, but the group is exploring the possibilities of a new approach to the truth (Kelly, 1979b). So the group work adopts the language of hypothesis, what Kelly (1979b) describes as ‘the invitational mood’. By stating a new outlook on selves and others in the form of hypotheses, adolescents are left to feel intact and whole (Kelly, 1979b). “...it invites one to get on with the task of understanding life, to test, to calculate new experiences, and to profit from mistakes, rather than to be overwhelmed with guilt on realising that he has made them” (Kelly, 1979b, p.155). By learning the language of hypothesis (Kelly, 1979b), it is suggested, adolescents are better able to
understand, rather than feel threatened by change. In this way, the Interpersonal Transaction Group Work can facilitate the processing by adolescents of the many changes existing outside the life of the group that will need to be negotiated by adolescents as they travel through adolescence.

4.7 A Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents

The following is a personal construct model of group work with troubled adolescents based on the theory and psychology of personal construct and the above discussion (Kelly, 1955; 1991).

General Propositions about Relationships

1. *Interpersonal relationships in personal construct group work are facilitated and developed by commonality in construing, and by subsuming constructions of another.* The Corollaries of Commonality and Sociality in personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955; 1991) play major roles in the group process by allowing group members to make sense of each other, and to form and develop interpersonal (role) relationships.

2. *The changing nature and meaning of friendships require differing interpersonal skills; and it is within peer groupings that adolescents experiment with the interactional processes of commonality and sociality.* During adolescence, there is the
increasing need for close and caring relationships with their peers, enabling adolescents to share mature affection, thoughts, concerns, and common interests.

4. **Adolescent group work can be conceptualised in terms of the role, function and processes of peer groups in adolescence, with special attributes to facilitate psychological growth and development.** Like the peer group, adolescent group work provides the setting in which social interaction skills can be developed and refined, and tested with their peers.

5. **Personal construct group work, based on the Corollaries of Commonality and Sociality (Kelly, 1955; 1991), provides through its processes of social interactions and relationship formations, the capacity to meet more fully the developmental needs of troubled adolescents than the peer groups.** In the personal construct group, the troubled adolescent experiences non-exploitative relationships based on empathy and understanding.

6. **The theoretical assumptions behind the Interpersonal Transaction Group format brings to personal construct group work with troubled adolescents, the primary objectives of relationship formation and maintenance.** The theoretical and philosophical assumptions behind the Corollaries of Commonality and Sociality are firmly embedded in the Interpersonal Transaction Group Format.
Propositions about Group Work with Adolescents being Another Peer Grouping

7. Group work with adolescents is another peer grouping allowing adolescents to develop role relationships. The changing nature and meaning of friendships require adolescents to develop different interpersonal skills that allow a reflective awareness of themselves and others.

8. Group work with adolescents is another peer grouping where the processes of commonality and sociality play an important role in the development of a sense of self. It is through the development of relationships in peer groupings that adolescents test a range of personal and social identities.

Propositions about Personal Construct Group with Troubled Adolescents

Meeting the Developmental Needs of Those Adolescents

9. Within personal construct group work, troubled adolescents can experiment with their dependency on others. The relationships in the personal construct group, enable the adolescents to experiment with varying degrees of dependency and with dispersion of dependencies.

10. Personal construct group work with troubled adolescents construes risk-taking behaviour as the aggressive behaviour of adolescents experimenting with their own constructions. With the dramatic maturational changes in adolescence, adolescents are often confused, and risk-taking is an experiment seeking to create
some thing out of the confusion. The personal construct group work develops the social connections between these behaviours and the wider adolescent society.

11. *In personal construct group work, troubled adolescents are able to experiment with constructions of acceptance/non-acceptance.* There is a developmental need for adolescents to belong, and the personal construct group based on themes of commonality and sociality can provide the emotional support and safety for these sometimes difficult experiments.

12. *In personal construct group work, the group provides not only a context for experimenting with who I am and who I am not, but also a context for experimenting with social identities and role relationships with other members.* Identity formation is an important developmental milestone in adolescence, as adolescents become increasingly less dependent on their parents and more independent.

**Propositions about the Interpersonal Transaction Group Format with Troubled Adolescents**

13. *The role of dyadic interactions in Interpersonal Transaction Group Work helps to reduce the anxiety of troubled adolescents, and facilitate sharing and listening.* When adolescents feel less anxious and/or hostile, they are more likely to engage in meaningful dialogue with another adolescent.
14. The role of structure in the Interpersonal Transaction Group format, provides a supportive and validating context for troubled adolescents. The structured environment allows troubled adolescents to experiment with behaviours and emotions without feeling out of control, while the lack of structure enables the group process to respond to the psychological growth needs of these adolescents, as development is not always linear or co-ordinated.

15. The role of conflict in the process of change in the Interpersonal Transaction Group format allows troubled adolescents to experiment with conflictual feeling states. By experiencing conflict and the capacity to withstand it, the troubled adolescents are better able to form and develop relationships.

16. The role of the invitational mood in Interpersonal Transaction Group format, by facilitating empathy and self-disclosure in a non-confrontative atmosphere, enables troubled adolescents to experiment with the developmental changes of adolescence. The language of hypothesis facilitates understanding, and reduces feeling threatened by change.

4.8 Summary- A Model of Group Experience

In Chapter 4, I have presented a model of adolescent group work. The model based on the Interpersonal Transaction Group, sees elaboration and validation of construing as the primary objectives of relationship
formation and maintenance. Developmentally, the model anticipates that the group work will deal probably with issues of control and conflict both within and outside the group in the early stages. As the group matures, personal and interpersonal issues are expected to predominate. Affective expression, especially anger, will probably remain difficult for some adolescents as they express more their ambivalence around intimacy and dependence.

This model of group experience will allow adolescents to think and feel about themselves, and to reflect on their ways of making sense of things. Out of this process, the adolescents may become aware of the ways they make meaning, and sometimes develop alternative ways of making sense of things when old events reappear. In this model, the commonality of the group is the focus of experimentation with self and others, identity formation. It is considered supportive of growth to the degree that the level of sociality between members enables adolescents to reformulate, to try out alternative constructions of self and other, and to explore avenues usually ignored or dismissed. It is a model of group work experience in which content and process is embedded in the members' experiences of commonality and sociality.

The model of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents was tested using the hypotheses presented in Chapter 5. Drawn from the research studies supporting this model, the aims of the investigation were to investigate differences between troubled and functional adolescents, the effectiveness of group work and the processes
of group work with troubled adolescents. The hypotheses, while reflecting these three strands, have operationalised the propositions of this model by, firstly, in the form of assessment measures used to report on individual change, group work effectiveness and group process, and secondly, by the design and development of the group work intervention.
CHAPTER 5

AIMS AND HYPOTHESES
5.1 Introduction

The following aims have been developed from research into personal construct psychology, and more particularly from research into personal construct group work. The first aim evolved from the early research into the construct systems of children and adolescents, in which investigations have established a change in structure and content of construct systems as children move into adolescence. While personal construct group work has been found in a sizeable number of investigations to be an effective therapeutic intervention, the number of studies into its effectiveness with adolescents has been limited. The second aim sets out to replicate these findings. The third aim has developed in part from the general research into group work process, and from investigations into personal construct group processes. It also reflects my own professional interest in group process as an important player in psychological change.

The hypotheses are the tools by which to investigate the aims. They reflect the research strands mentioned above, but also attempt to be responsive to the needs and capacities of the participants— the adolescents, their parents and their teachers. The hypotheses, developed to investigate individual outcome, attempted to determine if those changes in construing reported by previous research occurred after conducting personal construct group work. One of these hypotheses was designed to investigate changes in those problematic behaviours most commonly
reported by parents and teachers. The hypothesis developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the group work intervention reflects the theory and philosophy of personal construct psychology, that is, everyone is an equal participant and their voices are equally valid. The hypotheses to investigate group process were drawn from personal construct group work research, which are presented in Chapter 3.

5.2 Aims

Broadly speaking, the aim of this research has been to investigate the effects of personal construct group work on troubled adolescents. Specifically, the research has aimed to:

1. to explore the differences in the content and structure of the construing of troubled and functional adolescents;
2. to demonstrate the effectiveness of group work for troubled adolescents, their parents and their teachers; and
3. to inquire into the processes of personal construct group work with adolescents.

5.3 Hypotheses

Hypotheses have been developed to investigate individual change, the effectiveness of group work and group process.

5.3.1 Individual Outcome

5.3.1.1 The troubled adolescents, before the group work, will make less use of abstract construing than will the functional adolescents;
5.3.1.2 After group work, the troubled adolescents will use more abstract construing than before it;

5.3.1.3 After group work, the troubled adolescents will use more interpersonal themes than before it;

5.3.1.4 After group work, the troubled adolescents will show less disruptive behaviour both at school and at home than before it.

Evidence of support for the four hypotheses developed to explore individual change was drawn from data based on the measures, the Repertory Grid, the Conners' Rating Scales and the assessment device, the Self-Characterisation.

5.3.2 Perceived Group Work Effectiveness

5.3.2.1 Personal construct group work will be an effective intervention for the troubled adolescent, as assessed by the adolescents, their parents and their teachers.

Evidence of support for the hypothesis developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of group work was drawn from data based on three measures, group members' structured interview, parent's structured interview, and teachers' standardised questionnaire.

5.3.3 Group Process

5.3.3.1 During group work, the group members will use more interpersonal themes than at the beginning of the group work;

5.3.3.2 During group work, the group members will increasingly evaluate themselves more positively on the goals of group work than at the beginning of the group work;
5.3.3.3 During group work, the group leaders will report a progressive attainment of the goals of the group work by the group members;

5.3.3.4 During group work, the differences between the ranking by the group members of themselves and the group leaders on the goals of group work will decrease.

Evidence of support for the four hypotheses developed to inquire into the assessment of group process, was drawn from the data of five measures, the Mood Tag, the Group Members’ Session Evaluation, the Group Leaders’ Session Evaluation, Group Grid 1 and Group Grid 2.
CHAPTER 6

METHOD
Overview

In the Method chapter, Chapter 6, I will initially describe the sampling of the participants in this research. This will be followed by an account of the procedures and design of the group work intervention undertaken. A description of the outcome measures will follow, focusing initially on those measures used to assess individual change. A brief account of research findings for the measures, Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation, is provided. The third measure of individual change, the Conners' Rating Scales, is described along with a brief survey of research findings supporting the effectiveness of the measure. The next grouping of outcome measures to be described are those measures designed to investigate the perceived effectiveness of the group work by seeking assessments from the three different groups of participants, adolescents, their parents and their teachers.

Moving on from the outcome measures, I describe those measures used to assess group process. A brief account of personal construct research findings about group process is provided, followed by a description of the various assessment measures. The design of the research project is next outlined. The formation and composition of the treatment/control groups is described. The description provides an account of the collection times of the dependent variable data for outcome measures to assess individual change, for outcome measures to assess perceived effectiveness of group work and finally for measures to assess
group process. This is followed by the procedures used to collect the data. Again, this account presents this information in three parts; collection of data of individual change, collection of data on the perceived effectiveness of the group work, and collection of data on group process.

The data analyses, the final presentation in this chapter, has been divided into eight sections, reflecting the hypotheses being tested. The first account is of the data analyses used to investigate the abstract construing of the adolescents. This is followed by analyses investigating interpersonal construing of adolescents, and by analyses looking into the changes in the behaviour of the adolescents. Analyses used to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of the group work by participants, comes next, followed by the data analyses used to investigate group process. Analyses of group process data are subdivided into four strands. The first is the interpersonal construing during the group work, with the second strand involving the constructions of self by group members according to the goals of group work during the group work. The constructions by the group leaders of the group members according to the goals of group work during the group work makes up the third strand, and finally, the fourth strand presents the data analyses used to investigate constructions of self and group leader by group members according to the goals of group work during the group work.

6.1 Sampling Participants

Seventy-six adolescents (47 males, 29 females), aged between 12 years and 15 years (mean age 13 years, 11 months), took part in this
research. The adolescents were attending five secondary schools of the Department of School Education, New South Wales, Australia. The five schools draw students from areas which include both public and private housing (Illawarra Regional Information Service, 1996, 1999), and are representative in terms of gender balance, age ranges, proportion of aboriginal students, ethnicity and single parent households (Illawarra Regional Information Service, 1996, 1999). Informed consent was obtained from all participating adolescents and their parents. The parents and teachers of the adolescents also provided data for the research. A summary of the demographic data for the participating adolescents is presented in Table 1, showing gender, age, aboriginality, other languages spoken besides English, and sole parent household, with a further description of the participating adolescents following.

Once a school had given permission (refer Permission Letters, Appendix 8) for the research to be conducted, the participants to be sampled were nominated by the Student Welfare Committee in each school. The names were then passed onto the school counsellor and Year Patron who contacted each student to see if they were interested in taking part. If the student agreed, their parents were then contacted for permission to continue. It was at this stage that Consent Forms (Appendix 8) were posted to each participant. After general consent had been given to participate in the research, the initial offer of participation in the group work to the adolescent and parent came from the school counsellor based in the relevant school. The offer was made independent of the Student
Welfare Committee of the school, and presented to both the adolescents and their parents as a positive way to possibly make some helpful changes. Consent Forms (Appendix 8) about participation in the group work were forwarded to the adolescents and their parents.

Troubled adolescents were described by the Student Welfare Committees in the different schools in the following ways. In the classroom, troubled adolescents were generally highly distractible and inattentive, usually disturbing the other students in the class. They were usually argumentative with temper outbursts and unpredictable behaviour. Their often defiant and rude behaviour, and their high level of uncooperative behaviour, was making excessive demands on the teachers' time and attention. When these adolescents were participating in group activities within the class, their behaviour would range from that of teasing cruelly the other students, to lacking leadership and being easily led, to isolating themselves from the group and not being accepted by the other students.

On the other hand, the functional adolescents in the various schools were described by the Student Welfare Committees as generally very co-operative in class, attentive to their work and wanting to get along with others. While the adolescents ranged in their level of self-esteem, they usually were positive in their outlook. They were generally compliant to teacher instructions and demands. These adolescents in group activities were able to share, and while some showed more leadership qualities than
the others, they all exercised a sense of fair play, and a willingness to act for the common good.

6.1.1 Representativeness of Samples

The participating adolescents were considered to be generally representative of the range of students in their school population. They were representative in terms of the ranges of emotional and behavioural adjustment of adolescent students attending school. The adolescents were representative in terms of learning ability and representative of the overall educational performance of adolescent students at the school. The adolescents and their schools were considered representative of other adolescents attending comprehensive secondary schools in the Illawarra region (Department of School Education, 1999; Illawarra Regional Information Service, 1996, 1999). (See Table 1).

6.1.2 The Group Work Sample

Of the adolescents experiencing interpersonal difficulties at school and described as troubled, twenty eight adolescents initially participated in the personal construct group work. Two of these adolescents moved to new schools after the first data collection (Time 1), and were not available for the group work when it began.

6.1.3 The Control Sample 1

The other group of twenty adolescents experiencing interpersonal difficulties at school, and described as troubled adolescents, formed Control Sample 1. Of this sample, three adolescents left their schools
during the study and were not available for the second data collection (Time 2).

Table 1

Summary of the Demographic Data (Percentages) of the Adolescents Participating in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Aboriginality</th>
<th>Language Other Than English</th>
<th>Sole Parent Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M F 12-13 14-15</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td>50 50</td>
<td>25 75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(troubled adolescents- no participation in the group work)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 2</td>
<td>54 46</td>
<td>39 61</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(functional adolescents-no participation in the group work)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td>79 21</td>
<td>36 64</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(troubled adolescents- participated in the group work)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.4 The Control Sample 2

Twenty eight adolescents who were not experiencing difficulty in interpersonal relationships at school and described as functional adolescents, formed Control Sample 2.
6.1.5 Parents of the Participants

The number of parents participating in the data collection at the five schools is presented in Table 2. Of the parents of the adolescents taking part in the group work, one parent declined to take part, one parent had moved out of the district, and another withdrew after the first data collection following a move of schools. There were three parents of adolescents forming Control Sample 1 who declined to take part in the data collection, and another parent who withdrew at the second data collection. (See Table 2).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Work Sample</th>
<th>Control Sample 1</th>
<th>Control Sample 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.6 Teachers of the Participants

The Year Patrons, (teachers in charge of particular grades and taking on the roles of general supervision and pastoral care for the students in these grades) of the seventy-six adolescents in the five secondary schools, took part in the study. The Year Patrons, being representative of all the adolescent’s teachers, provided data for all the participating adolescents.

6.2 The Group Work Intervention

6.2.1 Group Sessions and Group Leaders

The group work was conducted in the schools of the participants during school hours. It occurred weekly for ten weeks and the sessions ran for an hour and a half. Five group work interventions were conducted in the five participating schools, with twenty five adolescents completing the group work interventions. For three of the group interventions, there were two group leaders while there was only one group leader conducting the other two, as the school counsellor at that school was not available. Throughout all the group interventions, I was the principal group leader and I directed the group work. All group leaders were trained psychologists employed as school counsellors with the Department of School Education. The principal group leader was not employed in the five schools. On the other hand, the co-leaders were employed in their respective schools as school counsellors. The ages of the group leaders ranged from 37-45 years. There was one male and three female leaders. The co-leaders participated in a pretraining session between 3-4 hours,
and supervision of approximately one hour took place following each session. I was involved on a weekly basis as supervisor of the group leaders, and was receiving supervision from an experienced clinical psychologist.

6.2.2 The Group Work Goals

The following group work goals were developed to guide the therapeutic process, and to provide a benchmark for the evaluation of the group work by the group members and the group leaders at the end of each session. The goals have been developed from the six stages of group work outlined by Kelly, (1955; 1991). Therapy groups are seen as passing through varying phases of development, and at each of these six stages, Kelly (1955; 1991) considered different therapeutic approaches were needed. The group work goals are presented in Table 3; and where the goals are considered to focus directly on one of the six different stages (Kelly, 1955; 1991), the stage of group development is identified. (See Table 3).

6.2.3 Themes of Construction

Themes of construction were developed for each session. These themes promote exploration and experimentation of the group work goals, and address perceived adolescent developmental needs, as proposed in the Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents (Chapter 4). In the session, the theme of construction directed the content and process of the session. The themes of construction for the ten sessions are set out in Table 4. (See Table 4).
## Table 3

### Goals for the Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Group Development (Kelly, 1955; 1991)</th>
<th>Therapeutic Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Initiation of mutual support</td>
<td>1. To provide validation for the construing of each member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Initiation of primary role relationships</td>
<td>2. To develop a sense of belonging to the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Initiation of mutual primary enterprises</td>
<td>3. To develop a sense that others in the group understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Exploration of personal problems</td>
<td>4. To develop sufficient trust within the group to allow for the sharing of constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exploration of secondary roles</td>
<td>5. To explore personal problems and begin to formulate hypotheses and to design experiments leading to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exploration of secondary enterprises</td>
<td>6. To explore the similarities and differences in both the group members and significant others outside the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. To reconstrue ways of applying the group experiences to everyday situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. To grow in self-validation and self-regard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

**Themes of Construction for the Sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Themes of Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>The group/The group and me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Advantages and disadvantages of getting close to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Times I feel I belong to my family and times I feel I do not belong&lt;br&gt;My family and me/not me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Feeling hurt by others&lt;br&gt;Hurting the feelings of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Feeling angry and being understood&lt;br&gt;Feeling angry and not being understood&lt;br&gt;The different ways we feel angry and the different ways other people feel angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>The ways I see myself and the ways others see me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>What I want in myself and what I do not want in myself&lt;br&gt;The ways I am changing and the ways I am not changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 8</td>
<td>Times I feel powerful and times I feel powerless&lt;br&gt;Being in control and being out of control&lt;br&gt;Ways I control others and ways others control me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>The meaning of the group&lt;br&gt;The meaning of the group to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 10</td>
<td>My experience in the group&lt;br&gt;My experience after the group. How will I be different?&lt;br&gt;Saying goodbye to the group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.4 The Group Work Structure and Size

The structure was designed with a prescribed and articulated format as outlined in the model of Personal Construct Group Work with Troubled Adolescents proposed in Chapter 4. This format was used across all the five group interventions. The group met at the same time each week and at the same venue, a school room. The group was closed, and the size of the groups ranged from 4-8 adolescents. In an effort to enhance the adolescents’ awareness of the group structure, pretraining was carried out during the pre-group interview. Here the process and goals of the group work and the organisational aspects of the group intervention were explained and discussed.

The group size, gender, age and number of group leaders for each of the groups is outlined in Table 5. Of the twenty-six adolescents who began the group work, there were no dropouts, all adolescents completing the group work. If adolescents were suspended from school for misbehaviour, they were able to continue participating in the group work. Session attendance did vary due to illness during the Winter months, with Session 5 recording the highest absentee rate of eight members across the five group work interventions. (See Table 5).

The group work structure broadly followed the guidelines of the Interpersonal Transaction format as outlined by Landfield (1979). The Mood Tag was used at the beginning of the session and again at the end of the session. The rotating dyads took place, followed by all the members
coming together in a large group. The overall time structure of the group work is set out in Table 6. Overall, the group work structure for each session involved the following eight phases: the Group Statement, 'Taking Care of Yourself', Mood Tag, Dyads, the Large Group, Group Activity, Mood Tag and Session Evaluation (see Table 6). In Table 6, 'Group Activity' is illustrated as part of the 'Large Group'.

Table 5
Gender, Age of Group Members, and Number of Group Leaders in the Five Group Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Group Members Male</th>
<th>Group Members Female</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Number of Group Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School W</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2(1)*</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0(1)*</td>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(1) Indicates that one adolescent from School F and School I moved to another school after the first data collection (Time 1) and the two adolescents did not participate in the group work.
The dyads were formed by asking the group members to choose a partner. If there was an odd number of members, the group leader joined up with the member and became part of the rotating dyads for the session.

The Group Statement encompassed the three superordinate constructions of listening, sharing and respecting (Landfield, 1979). It also provided the four rules of the group work (refer Appendix 1):

(a) no side conversations are allowed
(b) we must be kind to one another
(c) no physical harm can occur to people or the room
(d) when we meet as a group, we all sit together in a circle

'Taking Care of Yourself' reminded the adolescents that they needed to emotionally take care of themselves. They were asked to nominate a person who could help out if this was ever needed.

The Mood Tag involved each group member writing down on the tag their first name and how 'I feel and don't feel at the moment'. These were then discussed in terms of similarities and differences in mood.

The themes of the dyadic interactions, while introducing the theme of construction for the session, also provided tools with which the adolescents could begin to explore their constructions and those of the other members around this theme. The tools involved activities, such as, discussion points, craft/art activities, worksheets and narratives.
Table 6

The Time Structure for Each Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood Tag</th>
<th>Rotating Dyadic Interactions</th>
<th>Large Group</th>
<th>Mood Tag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How I feel and don’t feel at the moment</td>
<td>2 adolescents in a dyadic interaction</td>
<td>Interactions between and amongst group members and group leader</td>
<td>How I feel and don’t feel at the moment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 minutes   30 minutes   40 minutes   10 minutes

Time Line

0 minutes   90 minutes
Following the dyads, the group members came together as a large group. The Large Group was designed to encourage further elaboration on the theme of construction facilitating tightening of the adolescents' construing. The members, through discussion, activities and role plays, were being encouraged to develop greater understanding of themselves and the other members. The Large Group was designed also to facilitate the movement through cycles of sharing and individualisation identified by Koch (1985). These are the searching for shared meanings and their confirmation, the clarification of differences in personal meanings, and the elaboration of them by the group members. Finally, Koch (1985) saw personal construct groups as going through cycles of developing relationships of individual members to the group while recognising the individuality of their systems of meanings.

The Group Activity attempted to test out revisions in construing through physical activities involving tactile and emotional behaviours, such as the Trust Walk and Family Sculpture. The activity also provided a medium for the group to offer support, by reaching out to different members through physical contact.

After the second Mood Tag that followed the same format as the first Mood Tag, the group members were asked to complete the session evaluation 'How was today's session?' Here the adolescents were asked to rate themselves on 8 constructs designed to reflect the eight group work goals.
6.2.5 The Group Work Process

The group work process followed the guidelines set out by Landfield (1979) in his formulation of the Interpersonal Transaction Group format. The focus of the process was on the material emerging within the group, on the 'here and now' rather than drawing on an historical focus. The constructions for working as a group were discussed with the group members and emphasised throughout the sessions. These constructions of group work process were the following:

(a) listening and sharing,
(b) talking about feelings and thoughts rather than acting them out in the group,
(c) sharing as much as we want,
(d) listening actively, asking for clarification if needed but not questioning values or statements,
(e) each person having their own point of view,
(f) each person having their unique view of the world,
(g) in the group we are trying to understand how each person sees their world and
(h) needing to maintain confidentiality.

6.3 Outcome Measures

6.3.1 Measures to Assess Individual Change

The Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation were used in a number of ways to assess individual change. Firstly, they were used to explore the content of the self-constructions of both troubled and
functional adolescents. The content of constructs was explored for adolescents, before and after the group work took place. Secondly, the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation were used to map out the content and structure of construing as a predictor of therapeutic change. Thirdly, the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation were used to evaluate the processes of the therapy in this research and also the outcome of this group work. These measures will now be described.

To enable assessment of the adolescents' constructions, four categories of content analysis were developed for the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation. The development of the categories drew on three sources, the guidelines for analysis of a Self-Characterisation established by Neimeyer (1993), the self-characterisation scores provided by Jackson (1988), and an extensive survey of research into adolescent development. A brief overview of the four categories is presented in Table 7, with a fuller account included in Appendix 2. Category A measures self description, Category B measures use of construing, while Category C measures self evaluation, and Category D measures the level of abstraction. Each category is divided into two levels of measurement. Category A measures construing of self or construing of self in relation to others, and in the analysis and evaluation of this study the two levels are referred to as personal or interpersonal construing. Category B measures reconstruing of past events or anticipating events using existing constructs. Category C measures understanding of own limitations or validation of self. Lastly, Category D measures concrete construing or abstract construing. (See Table 7).
Table 7

Categories for the Assessment of the Content and Structure of Adolescents' Responses to the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation

Category A - Self Description
A.1 Construing of Self
A.2 Construing of Self in Relation to Others

Category A is designed to accommodate two ways in which adolescents may construe themselves. The first measure, construing of self, refers to psychological statements made by adolescents. These are personal statements or descriptions of themselves, their unique characteristics. The second measure, construing of self in relation to others, refers to interpersonal construing. This measure will assess the way in which adolescents construe themselves in relation to important people in their lives, that is, friends, parents, family.

Category B - Use of Construing
B1 Reconstruing of Past Events
B2 Anticipating Events Using Existing Constructs

Category B is designed to account for the process of construing by adolescents. Reconstruction is a process involving changes in perceptions and understanding of past events. The first measure, reconstruing of past events, will assess this process. A reconstruction of past events or experiences can enable adolescents to attach a different meaning or interpretation to future events. The second measure, anticipating events using existing constructs, is designed to assess adolescents' descriptions of how they anticipate they would behave or feel if an event or experience were to occur in the future.

Category C - Self Evaluation
C1 Understanding of Own Limitations
C2 Validation of Self

Category C is designed to measure adolescents' constructions of self. The strategies by which adolescents elaborate their construing of others and by implication themselves, lead to a construction of self built on comparisons adolescents come to see between themselves and others. The first measure, understanding of own limitations, will assess the capacity of adolescents to construe their personal limitations when relating to others. The second measure, validation of self, will assess the capacity of adolescents to construe their personal strengths in relation to others.

Category D - Level of Abstraction
D1 Concrete Construing
D2 Abstract Construing

Category D is designed to measure the level of abstraction of construing. The structural complexity of construing can vary from physicalistic constructions to psychological constructions. The first measure, concrete construing, refers to constructs which describe physical attributes and behavioural accomplishments such as sports, hobbies and future careers. The second measure, abstract construing, refers to attempts by adolescents to, not only understand their system of personal constructs, but the personal construct system of the person with whom they are relating. There is an attempt by adolescents to establish a role relationship. There is evidence that adolescents are trying to interpret the psychological behaviour of themselves and others.
Another measure of individual change was the Conners' Rating Scales. These scales provided a comprehensive checklist of behaviour problems easily understood by parents and teachers of school-age adolescents.

6.3.1.1 The Repertory Grid

While personal construct psychology (Kelly, 1955; 1991), views the individual as unique, with an idiosyncratic system of construing and understanding of the world, it is said these understandings are forged against broader patterns of interpersonal, social and cultural interaction (Feixas, Procter & Neimeyer, 1993). Central to personal construct group work is the interpretation of interpersonal relations. The Role Construct Repertory Test was one of two research innovations introduced by Kelly (1955; 1991) as: "a direct approach to the elicitation of such constructs in the subjects whose person-social behavior we wish to understand" (p.152, Vol. 1, 1991). The Repertory Grid is an ideographic instrument able to contextualise the responses of adolescents, and to articulate relatively enduring aspects of the adolescent's unique worldview.

Repertory Grids have been directed towards assessing constructions in a wide variety of intrapersonal and interpersonal domains. An example of the use of the Repertory Grid in assessing intrapersonal domains studied the use of the grid technique to measure self-esteem (Forster & Schwartz, 1994). The interpersonal domain has been explored using the Repertory Grid with clients in therapy and some of these investigations will be discussed. The reliability and validity of the
Repertory Grid has been established and a selection of these research results is presented in Table 8. (See Table 8).

In clinical areas, the Repertory Grids have been used, for example, to understand how eating-disordered clients feel about themselves (Button, 1992), the ways in which conflictual and abusive couples construe their relationships (Neimeyer & Gold-Hall, 1988), and individuals’ threat in relation to death and dying (Epting & Neimeyer, 1984). The focus of the Grid “may be on the client’s self-constructions, on their constructions of other people, or on their constructions of the relationships between themselves and other people” (Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1993, p.220). The Repertory Grid has also been used as a clinical tool to assess therapeutic outcome with clients with varying psychological disorders, through construct content (e.g. Caine, Wijesinghe & Winter, 1981; Winter, 1982; 1985a; 1985b) and construct relationships (e.g. McKain, Glass, Arnkoff, Sydnor-Greenberg & Shea 1988; Neimeyer, 1988; Winter, 1983, 1992b). There are a number of studies using the Repertory Grid that have demonstrated that group work can promote reconstruction through more positive self-construing and increasing similarity in the construing of self and others (Winter, 1985a; 1992b; 1997), and between self and ideal self (Winter et al, 1997).

The Repertory Grid has been employed by studies researching the construing of children and adolescents. Much of the research has been directed at identifying the differences in the types of constructs used by children at varying ages. Studies have shown that from 12 to 15 years, the
Table 8
The Reliability and Validity of the Outcome Measures

Measures to Assess Individual Change

a) Repertory Grid

**Reliability**
- test-retest reliability (modal r=.85, for periods up to 1 month) (Feixas, Moliner, Montes and Mari, 1992)
- differentiation between “self” and “others” in adolescents. Test-retest reliability range from .86 to .95 (Adams-Webber, 1989)
- self differentiation is consistent and stable (Adams-Webber, 1989)
- data collection tool, reliability range .70 to .83 (Hutchinson, 1998)

**Validity**
- intercorrelation established for discrimination of elements (ordination, self-other discrepancy and self-ideal discrepancy) (Feixas et al, 1992)
- association between level of differentiation of construing in adolescents with identity status (Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1988)
- data collection tool, convergent validity established as moderately good (Hutchinson, 1998)

b) Self-Characterisation

**Reliability and Validity**
- Jackson and Bannister (1985) demonstrated (i) predictable change and predictable stability (ii) correlated with a number of measures including Repertory Grid
- scoring criteria, the ‘good psychologist’ measure significant at .05 level of confidence (Jackson, 1988)
- able to monitor progress in therapy (e.g., Kremsdorf, 1985), suggesting adequate reliability

c) The Conners’ Rating Scales (CTRS-39/CPRS-48)

**Reliability and Validity**
- average reliability (internal consistency) of .94 for scales, CTRS-39, (Edelbrock, Greenbaum & Conover, 1985)
- moderate to high degree of individual stability (.52 to .77) over 1 year for both scales (Glow, Glow & Rump, 1982)
- interrater reliability, (parent/teacher), correlations significant (p<.001) (Goyette, Conners & Ulrich, 1978)
- discriminant validity established for both scales, 20 significant factors (eigenvalues >1) (Glow et al, 1982)
- coefficients for 5 factors range from .63 to .94 (Goyette et al, 1978)
- item analysis of CTRS-39, correlations ranged from .27 to .52 (p<.005) (Trites, Bouin & Laprade, 1982)
- studies using CTRS-39 found general agreement on major factor, conduct problem (Edelbrock et al, 1985)

Measures to Assess Group Change

a) Group Grids 1 and 2

**Reliability and Validity (Interpersonal Transaction Research)**
- consistency results, r=.82 (p<.001) over 14 weeks (Landfield & Schmitt diehl, 1983)
- correlation between group’s prediction of group member and group member’s positive regard for group members, r=.51 (Landfield & Schmitt diehl, 1983)
- significant relationship between variables, self-regard and self-meaning, r=.63 (Landfield and Schmitt diehl, 1983)
use of personality (abstract) constructs increases dramatically, and by mid-
adolescence they are the most prevalent of all (Allison, 1976; Barratt, 1977;
Brierley, 1976; Duck, 1975; Little, 1976). There is also evidence to suggest
that as children mature and gain in interpersonal experience, there are
increases in the degree to which they differentiate between themselves
and others (Adams-Webber, 1985). Although the data have suggested
there is evidence of a difference, clinician-researchers have cautioned
against this assumption, interpreting the results as representing not a
difference in type of constructs but rather an increase in their level of
complexity or abstraction. "Kelly would have us see the child's
behaviour, as we should see our own, as a continuous experiment"
(Bannister & Agnew, 1977, p.124). "Thus we are arguing that the personal
construct system, from the beginning of life, essentially gets bigger, its
scope extends; but its nature, in terms of manifesting superordinate and
subordinate constructs, elaborating in terms of varying validational
fortunes, being defended from chaos by hostility and so forth, does not
change" (Bannister & Agnew, 1977, p.112).

6.3.1.2 The Self-Characterisation

The second assessment innovation introduced by Kelly (1955; 1991)
was the Self-Characterisation. While the Self-Characterisation is similar to
the Repertory Grid, in that they both are methods of self-exploration and
techniques to encapsulate the person's way of viewing the world, there is
a major difference. Unlike the Grid method, the Self-Characterisation
seeks out superordinate rather than subordinate constructions (Fransella
& Bannister, 1977). While the Repertory Grid lends itself to quantitative
analysis, there have been very few attempts to develop a mathematical scoring method for use with the Self-Characterisation, resulting in less application of it in research when compared with the Repertory Grid. One attempt to provide a mathematical scoring method was the system developed by Jackson and Bannister (1985) with the Self-Characterisations of adolescents. However, the few attempts has meant that research investigating its reliability and validity has been limited. The results from an example of these studies are presented in Table 8. The Self-Characterisation is chiefly aimed at helping the clinician to formulate diagnoses and therapeutic hypotheses. It seeks to gain insights into another person's construct system when one listens to "nature babbling to herself" (Kelly, 1991, Vol.1, p. 246). It is a technique for looking at the way a person construes rather than at the development of constructs.

While the Self-Characterisation has been most easily accommodated in individual therapy, it has been employed in a limited sense in clinical work using groups. It has been used in marital (Kremsdorf, 1985; Neimeyer & Hudson, 1985) and family therapy contexts (Alexander & Neimeyer, 1989). The Self-Characterisation has also been used in group therapy (Beail & Parker, 1991; Epting & Nazario, 1987; Levy, 1987; Morris, 1977), and more recently to facilitate discussion in group work with agoraphobics (Winter et al, 1997). In personal construct group therapy with adolescents, Jackson (1990) described how the Self-Characterisation was part of a variety of structured exercises used to assist clinical outcome.
The Self-Characterisation has also been used in group work to demonstrate changes in the content of the construct system during and after therapy. Using Self-Characterisation measures, Jackson (1990) was able to show an increase in self-esteem and in the elaboration of construing of self and others. The results also allowed the author to conclude that adolescents who have a well-developed view of themselves tend also to have a well-developed view of others.

6.3.1.3 The Conners' Rating Scales

The third outcome measure of individual change was the Conners' Rating Scales. The reliability and validity of the scales has been established and the results of a selection of these investigations are set out in Table 8. These scales are generally sensitive to externalising behaviours such as aggressive conduct problems, hyperactivity, defiance of authority and classroom behaviour problems. Research has established that the Conners' Teacher Rating Scale can discriminate children and adolescents exhibiting externalising behaviours (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) from children and adolescents coping effectively in the classroom and at home (Schachar, Sandberg & Rutter, 1986). Parent-teacher correlations, although acceptable (Conners, 1990), were found to be slightly lower than mother-father (Conners, 1973; Goyette, Conners & Ulrich, 1978) and teacher-teacher correlations (Conners, 1969; Glow, Glow & Rump, 1982), along with mothers' ratings correlating significantly with teachers' ratings while fathers' ratings did not (Schaughency & Lahey, 1985). Further, the investigations have established that the scales are
sensitive to treatment effects (Barkley, 1987; Conners, 1990; Fischer & Newby, 1991). Since beginning the data collection for this research, there has been a revision of the Conners’ Rating Scales, including a revised teacher and parent rating scale and an adolescent self-report scale (Conners, 1997).

The overall total score was used as the outcome measure of individual change. High scores on the Conners’ Rating Scales indicated more problematic behaviour.

6.3.2 Measures to Assess the Perceived Effectiveness of Group Work

The measures used to assess the perceived effectiveness of the group work were developed around the understanding that adolescents are seen as unique, and personal construct group work actively attempts to understand them, and to share with them the meanings of their interpretations and experiences. With this purpose in mind, different structured interviews (refer Appendix 3) were designed to facilitate the communication of the constructions of the three types of participants; adolescents, parents and teachers. The design also entailed differences reflecting the passage of time between the two data collection points. Despite these variations, the primary focus for the different interviews was similar, to encourage the participants to provide their own constructions of effectiveness. The anticipated outcomes of the structured interviews are presented in Table 9. (See Table 9).
Table 9

The Anticipated Outcomes of the Structured Interviews Designed to Assess the Impact of the Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Structured interview</th>
<th>Parent Assessment</th>
<th>Teacher Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Pre-group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Anticipations for change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Predictions for change related to participation in group work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Post-group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-construction</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Anticipations for change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Evaluation of change related to group work participation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Evaluation of the group work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Pre-group</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constructions of the adolescent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Anticipations for change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Predictions for change related to participation in group work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Post-group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constructions of the adolescent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Evaluation of change related to group work participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Evaluation of group work in effecting change in their adolescent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Pre-group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constructions of the main difficulties and/or problems the adolescent experiences at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Anticipations for change in the adolescent at school</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Predictions for change in the adolescent related to participation in group work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Post-group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of the occurrence of the main difficulties and/or problems experienced by the adolescent prior to group work</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Evaluation of anticipations for change by the adolescent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Evaluation of change in the adolescent related to group work participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3.2.1 Group Member Assessment

The group members were initially invited to provide a description of themselves. If they could change themselves, the members were then asked what would they change and not change, and how would the group work help with these changes. Following the group work, the group members were again invited to provide their self-construction. They were encouraged to talk about changes they would like or not like in themselves. The group members were then asked if the group work had helped in the anticipated changes. The group members were also asked if they had changed in other ways. The closing part of the interview involved encouraging the group members to voice what they felt was good and not so good about the group work, and changes they might want in the running of future group work.

6.3.2.2 Parent Assessment

The parents in the structured interview were firstly invited to describe their adolescent. They were then encouraged to share what changes they would like to see in their adolescent’s behaviour, and how they felt the group work may help in bringing about these changes. Following the group work, the parents were again invited to describe their adolescent. They were asked if the group work had helped to bring about the anticipated changes in their adolescent’s behaviour. The parents were then invited to talk generally about how they felt their adolescent had changed. Finally, the parents were asked how they felt being part of the group work had helped their adolescent to change.
6.3.2.3 Teacher Assessment

The standardised questionnaire invited the teachers to describe what they felt were the main difficulties or problems the adolescent experienced at school. The teachers were then asked to describe the changes they felt the adolescent needed to make at school. The teachers were also asked to list three changes they would want in the adolescent’s behaviour, following participation in the group work. Following the group work, the teachers were asked to review the group work by describing behavioural changes in the adolescent. Firstly, the teachers were asked if the adolescent continues to experience the same difficulties or problems. The teachers were then invited to describe how the adolescent had made changes following the group work. Finally, the teachers were asked if the three changes they wished to see occur as a result of group work had occurred.

6.4 Measures to Assess Group Process

Investigations have sought to measure clinical change in treatment groups by measuring the structural features of construct systems (for example, Bannister, Adams-Webber, Penn & Radley, 1975; Fransella, 1972; Landfield, 1971; Neimeyer, Heath & Strauss, 1985; Ryle, 1980). One personal construct technique used in the measurement of therapeutic change has been the Group Grids (for example, Fielding, 1975; Koch, 1983a, 1983b; Watson, 1970, 1972; Winter, 1985a, 1992b). Usually, group grids have employed the members of the group, often including the leader(s) as elements on the grid. During the group work intervention,
each member of the group ranks themselves and the other group members on constructs which are usually supplied. Interpersonal Transaction research into group grids, has shown acceptable levels of reliability and validity. These results are presented in Table 8.

The implications drawn from investigations into group process as measured by Group Grids, have led to the identification of successive developmental phases in the life of the group (Koch, 1985). One of these research findings has been that group cohesion at the early stage of group development is essential to positive outcome, but this factor declines in importance as the group becomes more established (Neimeyer et al, 1991). Further support has come from investigations into validation and invalidation of construing by the group. It was found that members will reconstrue in response to invalidation of their self constructions by other group members only if the group is supportive towards them, providing an overall climate of validation (Catina, Tschuschke & Winter, 1989). The grids have also suggested that while views of other group members may recede in importance as the group develops, the importance of the working alliance with the group leader grows (Neimeyer et al, 1991).

6.4.1 Group Grid 1

Group Grid 1 used eight supplied constructs drawn from the group work goals. The group members and leader(s) were used as elements. The supplied constructs were designed to investigate the group process in terms of Kelly’s (1955; 1991) stages of group work (refer to Appendix 4). The group members and leader(s) were required to rank themselves and
the other group participants on the supplied constructs, the positive pole on the left and the negative pole of the construct on the right. The group participant ranked themselves and the other group members. The ranking numbers ranged from the number 1 to the number of elements (members/leader(s)) forming the group, from 'most like' to 'least like', with low ratings indicating close proximity to the positive pole and high ratings showing close proximity to the negative pole. The ranking by the group work participants ranged from the number 1, 'most like', to the number constituting the group, 'least like', on each of the eight constructs.

6.4.2 Group Grid 2

Group Grid 2 was attempting to investigate group process using constructs commonly held by the group members. Each Group Grid 2 contained eight constructs supplied from the Repertory Grids of the members of that group, so that the constructs for each group grid varied from group to group. The positively evaluated pole of the construct reflected elements on the Repertory Grid construed as alike, while the negatively evaluated pole was the construct provided by the adolescent as different from the elements (persons) considered alike. The positively evaluated pole of the construct was on the left of the grid and the negatively evaluated pole on the right side. The ranking numbers ranged from the number 1 to the number of elements (members/leader(s)) forming the group, from 'most like' to 'least like'. Low ratings indicated close alignment with the positive pole while high ratings were aligning closely with the negative pole.
6.4.3 The Mood Tag

The Mood Tag was introduced by Landfield and Rivers (1975), as part of the format for the Interpersonal Transaction Group, to elicit emotional constructs at the beginning and ending of the session. It was predicted that the Mood Tag would be able to demonstrate group processes by firstly, showing how the adolescents and the group leaders anticipated each session, and what impact the session had had on them. Secondly, it was anticipated that the Mood Tag would identify when intrapersonal constructions of the group members and leaders shifted to themes that were interpersonal.

6.4.4 Group Session Evaluation by Group Member and Group Leader

The Group Session Evaluation (refer Appendix 5) by the group members explored group process by investigating the self-constructions of the adolescents at the end of each session. The adolescents were asked to construe how they felt at that moment, and how they would construe themselves in terms of eight supplied constructs developed from the group work goals (refer Table 3), on a scale 1 to 5 (5 being the positive pole of the construct). The Group Session Evaluation (refer Appendix 6) by the group leader and co-leader attempted to look at group process by rating each member in terms of eight supplied constructs developed from the group work goals, on a scale from 1 to 3 (3 being the positive pole of the construct).
6.5 Design

The troubled adolescents were randomly assigned to the two treatment/control groups (Group Work Sample or Control Sample 1). The functional adolescents comprised Control Sample 2. Dependent variable data involving measures to assess individual change were collected on two occasions, before the intervention, pre-group (Time 1), and following the intervention, post-group (Time 2). For the Group Work Sample, a third data collection involving the Conners' Rating Scales was made twelve months following the intervention (Time 3).

Dependent variable data, involving measures to assess the perceived effectiveness of group work, were collected from the three participants twice, at Time 1 (pre-group) and at Time 2 (post-group). These participants were the adolescents in the Group Work Sample, and their parents and teachers.

Dependent variable data involving measures to assess group process were collected for the Group Work Sample. Using Group Grid 1 and Group Grid 2, these data were collected during the second, fifth and ninth sessions. Data from the Mood Tag were collected twice each session, at the beginning and towards the end of the session. Dependent variable data involving the Group Session Evaluation by the group members and group leader and co-leader were collected at the end of each session.
6.6 Procedure

6.6.1 Collection of Data of Individual Change

The data measuring individual change were collected during an interview lasting between 45-60 minutes at the participating adolescent’s school. Due to a lack of resources, the collection of the data was principally carried out by the researcher with some assistance from a student clinical psychologist who independently collected data on a third of the adolescents and parents participating in the research. This data collection involved administering the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation. The presentation of these measures by the researcher and assistant was standardised, following the procedure outlined below. An inspection of the content analyses of the data collected by the two researchers, has revealed no significant bias in the allocation of the constructs by the independent raters to the two categories, concrete/abstract and personal/interpersonal, confirming the independence of the data collectors and the standardisation of the administration of the measures.

Repertory Grid

Triadic elicitation of constructs was carried out using twelve elements with the element, actual-self, forming part of each sort. Written on individual cards, the twelve supplied elements included:

- myself as I am (actual-self);
- myself as I would like to be (ideal-self);
- mother;
- father;
- brother or sister (of opposite sex to participant if possible);
- someone of the opposite sex and of the same age whom I
admire; best friend; a person of the same age whom I dislike; a teacher I like; a teacher I dislike; a person who is usually not in trouble at school; a person who is usually in trouble at school.

Constructs were elicited by asking the adolescent “in what way are two of the people alike and therefore different from the third person?” This account was written by the researcher on the left hand pole of the Repertory Grid. The adolescent was then asked to name the characteristic of the third person that made the person different from the other two. The researcher recorded the adolescent’s response on the right hand pole of the Repertory Grid. The constructs were then read back to the adolescent to confirm a representative recording. The adolescent was then asked to rank the elements in relation to the construct on the left hand pole. The ranking ranged from “most like (rank of 1)” to “least like (rank of 12)”. The researcher recorded these rankings onto the Repertory Grid.

Self-Characterisation

The adolescent was invited to write or to tell the researcher their character sketch.

“I want you to tell me about what sort of person....(name) is. If you like I will write down what you say or you can write it down yourself. Tell me about yourself as if you were being described by a real or imaginary friend who knows you and likes you, and above all understands you very well. This friend perhaps could describe you better than anyone could ever really know you. Be sure to include everything about yourself that contributes to your qualities...
as you are now, both positive and negative. Make sure you tell it in
the third person. Perhaps you could begin with your name, such as
'Melissa/John is.............' Try to fill the page”.

These instructions were read to each adolescent and were also
placed at the top of the response sheet. The oral Self-Characterisations
were transcribed by the researcher.

The data from the Repertory Grids and the Self-Characterisations
were subjected to a qualitative analysis. Two of the four categories
developed for the analyses, were used in the qualitative analyses of the
Repertory Grid constructs. Each construct was rated according to the
criteria for Category A, Self Description, and again according to the
criteria for Category D, Level of Abstraction. The four categories were
used in the analysis of the Self-Characterisation responses. For the
purposes of analyses, each sentence was considered one unit of meaning
and was placed in categories A, B or C. Once the whole script had been
scored in this manner, each sentence was then content analysed in terms
of the fourth category.

Two independent raters applied content analysis to the data. One
of the raters was the researcher. The researcher’s ratings were used in the
subsequent data analyses. The question of possible bias is mentioned in
Chapter 8 (p.224). However, attempts were made to control for reliability
by measuring interjudge agreement using the kappa statistic. The results of
the kappa measure of agreement between two independent scorers of these
categories with Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation constructs are
presented in Table 10. From the results for the measure, it is possible to conclude that there was moderate to good agreement between the raters, and that this agreement across all groups was significant. (See Table 10).

The Conners' Rating Scales

The administration of the Conners' Rating Scales (CPRS-48 and CTRS-39) was standardised, with the parents and teachers asked to complete the checklist according to the instructions provided by the authors.

Use of Measures of Construing

In this study, the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation were used as measures of change during personal construct group work with troubled adolescents. These two measures were chosen initially because they were devised by Kelly (1955, 1991), and were therefore appropriate to the assumptions of the theory (Viney, 1998), and to the practice of personal construct psychology. They were also chosen because it was felt they could obtain and measure the language of adolescent construing. It was anticipated that by using these measures, the study would gain greater credibility and integrity as an investigation into the effectiveness of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents.

The data analyses of the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation in this research were confined to an analysis of the constructs elicited from the adolescents, and these responses being content analysed. This decision allowed the researcher to provide equal weighting to the analysis of the two measures without one measure dominating the
other measuring individual change in personal construct group work. It also enabled the focus of the research to remain on investigating the effectiveness of personal construct group work.

Table 10

Level of Agreement Between Raters Using the Categories in the Content Analyses of Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation Constructs at Time 1 and Time 2

a) The Repertory Grid Constructs using Category A (Self Description) (A), and Category D (Level of Abstraction) (D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Work Sample</th>
<th>Control Sample 1</th>
<th>Control Sample 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>.979</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>12.43</td>
<td>13.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>.854</td>
<td>.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>15.619</td>
<td>13.56</td>
<td>18.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) The Self-Characterisation Constructs using Category A (Self Description), Category B (Use of Construing), Category C (Self Evaluation) (A/B/C); and Category D (Level of Abstraction) (D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Work Sample</th>
<th>Control Sample 1</th>
<th>Control Sample 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A/B/C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A/B/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>16.089</td>
<td>12.76</td>
<td>13.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.742</td>
<td>.679</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p < .01 (one-tailed)
The choice to extend to the Repertory Grid rather than stay with the Role Construct Repertory Test was taken because it would provide data for future research. The Repertory Grid allows greater scope and complexity in statistical analyses through the many computer programmes designed to do Repertory Grid analyses. Computer programmes have been developed to reduce "the amount of data by highlighting substantial relationships and by muting or suppressing weak relationships" (Bell, 1982, p.2). One of the first of these computer programmes was INGRID (Slater, 1964, 1977). Other examples of computer packages since Slater's pioneering work are GAB (Higgenbotham & Bannister, 1983), FLEXICARD (Tschudi, 1989; 1992), G-PACK (Bell, 1987) and GRIDSTAT (Bell, 1997), while packages with a particular emphases have been PEGASUS (Thomas & Shaw, 1977; Shaw, 1980) and CONFLICT (Slade & Sheehan, 1977; 1979) set up to analyse inconsistencies in construct relationships. Basically, the computer programmes use four basic methods of decomposing grid data; principle component approaches, multidimensional scaling approaches, cluster analysis and order analysis methods (Bell, 1982; 1990; 1997).

The analyses undertaken in this study, have dealt with a portion of the available data from the Repertory Grids. Further analyses of grid data at a structural level could be undertaken in future research. Using one of the computer programmes mentioned above, structural analyses could be undertaken by, for example, looking at the type of relationships between the elicited constructs and/or the supplied elements, the hierarchical
relationships of the constructs and/or elements, determining the degree of
differentiation within the construct systems of the adolescents, or among
the elements, the figures nominated by the adolescents. This could mean
looking at the relationships between the adolescents’ rating of the elicited
constructs for the different people (elements), by comparing that rating
with the rating given by the adolescent to themselves and/or their ideal
self.

The development of personal construct systems of content analysis
has been growing as researchers have studied individual differences in
communication behaviour. Applegate (1990) reviewed the findings of this
research, and he suggested some logical extensions to the prevailing
research findings. He concluded by saying “future accounts of construct
and communication development must give adequate attention to the
accommodation process and, in doing so, recognise the reflexive relation
between construct system and communication development” (Applegate,

Approaches to the measurement of the meaning of constructs have
been provided by Landfield and Epting (1987), Neimeyer (1993) and
between construct development and children and adolescent construing
capacities, and provides a system for coding the level of abstraction of
constructs. However, it is a system found unable to account adequately
for the language, with its idiosyncratic idioms and slang, provided by the
adolescents in their responses. This difficulty was also experienced when
the language from the adolescents in the same pilot study, were subjected to the coding system of Jackson (1988), where Self-Characterisation responses are summed into a "Good Psychologist" score.

These experiences from the pilot study with the data, led to the decision to develop a system for content analysis of responses to the grids and self-characterisations which would be able to maintain the integrity of the adolescents' language, acknowledge the psychological development of adolescents, and be useful as a coding system for further research into adolescent construing.

One example of how the content analysis developed for this research may differ from the systems developed by others, is the greater emphasis that has been placed on the inclusion of other events/people in the adolescent's response when determining if the construct is analysed as abstract rather than concrete. This meant that a response such as "At school she gets good grades in some classes but others not so well" or "She always goes to Wollongong with her friends and stuff like that" were not considered concrete construing but rather abstract. The analysis attempts to recognise the use by adolescents of social perspective taking (Selman, 1980) in the construing of "....others not so well", and in the relationship meanings adolescents attach to slang such as "....stuff like that". The adolescents were seen as reflecting/comparing themselves against others/other contexts, and relating themselves to others, expressing differences and similarities within themselves and within their social relationships.
6.6.2 Collection of Data on the Perceived Effectiveness of the Group Work

The data concerning the evaluation by the adolescent and their parent of the effectiveness of the group work were collected using a structured interview. Data concerning the evaluation by teachers of the effectiveness of the group work were collected through a standardised questionnaire.

The structured interviews involving the adolescents were conducted by the researcher at the adolescent’s school and followed the administration of the individual outcome measures. The researcher transcribed the responses of the adolescents. The structured interviews involving the parents, lasting approximately 45 minutes, were conducted by the researcher and if required were also transcribed.

The data from the structured interviews and standardised questionnaires were subjected to a qualitative analysis. The responses were content analysed and categories were established. These categories were: Personal Behaviour, Interpersonal Behaviour and School Achievement. Each clause in the participant’s response was scored under one of the categories. The total number of responses for each category was calculated into a percentage. Two independent raters were used to score the responses of the adolescents, parents and teachers. The level of agreement between the two raters was assessed using the \( \kappa \) measure of agreement, and the results are set out in Table 11. The results represent
a good level of agreement across all the data analysed, and that this level of agreement was significant.

6.6.3 Collection of Data on Group Process

While the instructions for the measures of group process were not standardised, every attempt was made to keep the instructions simple, direct and consistent across the five group work interventions.

Group Grid 1 and Group Grid 2 were administered towards the end of Sessions 2, 5, and 9, and the presentation was alternated. Sessions 2 and 9 were chosen as they did not signify the beginning or the ending sessions of the group work intervention, and Session 5 as it signified the midpoint of this process.

The data from the Mood Tags were subjected to a qualitative analysis. Two categories were developed for the analyses, personal/interpersonal construing and positive/negative construing. Each construct recorded on the Mood Tags, “I feel.....”/“I don’t feel.....” was rated for the category of personal/interpersonal construing and again for the category of positive/negative construing.

In Table 12, the results of the kappa measure of agreement between two independent raters of the Mood Tags are presented. It was found that the level of agreement between the raters ranged from moderate to good agreement across the categories, and the raters exhibited significant agreement on their ratings. (See Table 12).
Table 11

Level of Agreement Between Raters in the Content Analyses of the Structured Interviews and Standardised Questionnaires Evaluating Perceived Effectiveness of the Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Group K</th>
<th>Pre-Group z</th>
<th>Post-Group K</th>
<th>Post-Group z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structured Interview</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>9.247</td>
<td>.840</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>.965</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>6.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.952</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>.711</td>
<td>4.335</td>
<td>.899</td>
<td>5.914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>.915</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>.915</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Interview</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>6.443</td>
<td>.779</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>8.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td>6.351</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td>6.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>718</td>
<td>5.358</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standardised Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>7.904</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>8.514</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p< .01 (one-tailed)
Table 12

Level of Agreement Between Raters in the Content Analyses of the Mood Tags of Group Members and Group Leaders for the Ten Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Personal/Interpersonal Content</th>
<th>Positive/Negative Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Member</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Tag</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) “I feel...”</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>14.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) “I don’t feel...”</td>
<td>.859</td>
<td>9.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Leader</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Tag</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) “I feel....”</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td>10.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) “I don’t feel....”</td>
<td>.674</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p < .01 (one-tailed)

6.7 Data Analyses

The SPSS statistical programme was used in the data analyses.

Inferential statistics draw conclusions about population characteristics on the basis of information from samples drawn from the population (Graziano & Raulin, 1997). The data analyses set out to draw these conclusions, by employing parametric statistics as the hypothesis-testing procedure. This enabled the analysis of data from each dependent measure and the testing of differences in the population means. The data from all the group work interventions were pooled in most of the
analyses, and there was no examination to determine if there were any differences in process and outcome measures between these interventions (groups). This decision was taken due to variability in group size and to the small size of some groups.

The differences among the troubled adolescents were assessed using multivariate statistics. Multivariate statistics "provide analysis when there are many independent variables (IVs) and/or many dependent variables (DVs) all correlated with one another to varying degrees" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989, p.1). Univariate analyses of variance was also used to test differences in the dependent variables, with post hoc analyses to look at the differences between the samples of troubled adolescents for each significant univariate finding.

6.7.1 Abstract Construing of Adolescents

(Hypothesis 5.3.1.1)

(Hypothesis 5.3.1.2)

The constructs elicited from the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation were content analysed according to the criteria in "Categories for the Assessment of the Content and Structure of Adolescents' Responses to the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation" set out briefly in Table 7, expanded in Appendix 2 and scoring detail in Appendix 7. For each measure, the number of constructs rated as concrete or abstract, Category D (D-1/D-2), was recorded.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to look for differences between the sample groups, Control Sample 2, Control Sample
1, and Group Work Sample, on the two scales of Category D, Level of Abstraction. ANOVAS using the Category D scores, D-1/D-2 as dependent variables, from the measures Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation, investigated differences between the sample groups.

Investigations were then undertaken to determine whether there was an effect of treatment on two dependent variables, the rate of concrete construing and the rate of abstract construing measured on the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation. Multivariate analysis of variance, (MANOVA), (Independent Variable (IV)-treatment; Dependent Variables (DV)-Category D (D-1/D-2) was conducted to determine the differences between Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1 in the number of constructs rated abstract or concrete after the group work intervention. To control for the influence of Time 1 (before the group work intervention) on Time 2 (after the group work intervention) for the multivariate analysis, difference scores were calculated by subtracting Time 1 scores from Time 2 scores only in the analysis of Repertory Grid because of the issue of independence of the data.

Descriptive statistics, (the number of counted responses, percentages, means and standard deviations), were used to show the number of constructs rated Category D, level of abstraction, at Time 1 and Time 2 for Group Work Sample, Control Sample 1 and Control Sample 2.

The McNemar Change Test was used to determine if there were any significant changes from Time 1 to Time 2 in Category D, level of
abstraction, for each of the three samples of adolescents, Group Work Sample, Control Sample 1, and Control Sample 2.

ANCOVA (covariate- Time 1), was conducted to look at the effects of gender and age on the levels of concrete and abstract construing (Category D) at Time 2 of troubled adolescents after treatment.

6.7.2 Interpersonal Construing of Adolescents

(Hypothesis 5.3.1.3)

The constructs elicited from the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation were content analysed according to the criteria set out in the “Categories for the Assessment of the Content and Structure of Adolescents’ Responses to the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation” outlined briefly in Table 7, in more detail in Appendix 2 and operationalised in Appendix 7. For each assessment device, the number of constructs rated Category A, self description, was recorded.

Investigations were carried out to determine the effect of treatment on the rate of personal and interpersonal construing as recorded on Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation. Multivariate analysis, MANOVA (IV-treatment; DV-Category A (A-1/A-2)), was undertaken to determine if there were differences between the Group Work Sample and the Control Sample 1 in the number of constructs rated personal (A-1) or interpersonal (A-2) after the group work intervention. Again, to control for the influence of Time 1 (before the group work intervention) on Time 2 (after the group work intervention) for multivariate analysis, difference scores were calculated for the Repertory Grid by subtracting Time 1 scores
from Time 2 scores. Normally, the MANCOVA would be used to control for the influence of Time 1 but due to the issue of independence of data, difference scores were used.

Descriptive statistics (the number of rated responses, percentages, means and standard deviations), were used to show the number of constructs rated Category A, self description at Time 1 and Time 2, for Group Work Sample, Control Sample 1, and Control Sample 2.

The McNemar Change Test was employed to determine if there were any significant changes from Time 1 to Time 2 in Category A, self description, for each of the three samples, Group Work Sample, Control Sample 1, and Control Sample 2.

ANCOVA (covariate-Time1), was conducted to determine the effect of gender and age on the levels of personal and interpersonal construing, Category A, of the troubled adolescents after the intervention, Time 2.

6.7.3 Changes in the Behaviour of the Adolescents

(Hypothesis 5.3.1.4)

Descriptive statistics (number of respondents, means and standard deviations), were calculated for non-treatment adolescents (Control Sample 1 and Control Sample 2) at Time 1 and Time 2, and of treatment adolescents (Group Work Sample) at Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3, on the Conners’ Parent Rating Scale-48 (CPRS-48) and Conners’ Teacher Rating Scale-39 (CTRS-39).

MANOVA (IV-time; DV-CPRS-48/CTRS-39) was conducted to determine if there were differences between Group Work Sample and
Control Sample 1 at Time 2 (after the group work intervention) in behaviour ratings by parents and teachers of these adolescents on the CPRS-48 and the CTRS-39. MANOVA (IV-treatment; DV-CPRS-48/CTRS-39) was carried out to establish also if there was an effect of treatment on the behaviour ratings recorded on the CPRS-48 and CTRS-39 of the Group Work Sample and the Control Sample 1. In order to control for the influence of Time 1 on Time 2, difference scores were calculated by subtracting Time 1 ratings from Time 2 ratings for the multivariate analysis.

Analysis of variance, ANCOVA (covariate-Time 1), was used to further investigate the effect of treatment on the CPRS-48 at Time 2 for troubled adolescents.

The effects of gender and age were pursued by using ANCOVA (covariate-Time 1) on the ratings of CPRS-48 and CTRS-39 at Time 2 of troubled adolescents in Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1.

6.7.4 Evaluation by Participants of the Perceived Effectiveness of the Group Work

(Hypothesis 5.3.2.1)

Descriptive statistics (the number of responses, percentages), were calculated to show the changes in behaviour anticipated by the respondents (adolescents, parents and teachers), following group work. They were also employed to determine if behavioural change according to the respondents, had occurred following the group work intervention.
They were used, too, to demonstrate the type of behavioural change respondents indicated had occurred following group work.

6.7.5 Interpersonal Construing During the Group Work

(Hypothesis 5.3.3.1)

Descriptive statistics, (the number of responses and percentages) of group members' and group leaders' Mood Tag statements ("I feel....."/"I don't feel.....") across the ten sessions at the beginning and at the end of each session, were calculated in order to make comparisons between the Mood Tags at the beginning and the end of the group work sessions.

Content analysis was carried out according to the criteria established for Category A, personal/interpersonal construing (refer to the "Categories for the Assessment of the Content and Structure of Adolescents' Responses to the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation", and criteria established to determine positive/negative content.

The McNemars Change Test was used to determine if the changes between the beginning and the end of the sessions in the overall number of Mood Tags content classified as personal or interpersonal were significant.

6.7.6 Constructions of Self by Group Members and the Goals of Group Work During the Group Work

(Hypothesis 5.3.3.2)

ANOVA, (repeated measures,) was calculated to determine if there were differences between the sessions in the group members evaluations of themselves according to the group work goals (refer to Table 3 where the group work goals are outlined). Descriptive statistics (means, and
standard deviations) of the number of evaluations, were calculated for the
ten session evaluations by group members of their attainment of the goals
of group work.

6.7.7 Constructions by the Group Leaders of the Group Members
and the Goals of Group Work During the Group Work

(Hypothesis 5.3.3.3)

ANOVA, (repeated measures,) was employed to investigate if there
were differences between the sessions in the group leaders’ reports on the
group members in relation to their attainment of the group work goals.
Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) of the number of
evaluations, were calculated for the ten session evaluations by group
leaders of the attainment of the goals of group work (refer Table 3) by the
group members.

6.7.8 Constructions of Self and Group Leader by Group Members
During the Group Work

(Hypothesis 5.3.3.4)

ANOVA, (repeated measures), was used to investigate if there were
significant differences between Session 2, Session 5, and Session 9 of group
members’ rankings of self and leader on the eight constructs supplied on
Group Grid 1 and on Group Grid 2.

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) of rankings by
group members of self and leaders across the eight goals of group work
(refer Table 3) at Time 1 (Session 2), Time 2 (Session 5), and Time 3
(Session 9) on the two group grids were calculated. Then for Group Grid 1
and Group Grid 2, the differences in these scores between group members' ranking of self and of leader were calculated at Time 1 (Session 2), Time 2 (Session 5), and Time 3 (Session 9) on the eight goals of group work (refer Table 3).

6.8 Summary

In Chapter 6, the methodology and design of the research have been presented. Analyses of the data collected to test out the hypotheses presented in Chapter 5, is undertaken in Chapter 7. The results from this assessment of adolescent functioning and outcomes, are presented in Chapter 7 in three strands to reflect the grouping of the hypotheses in Chapter 5. The first strand sets out to analyse the data collected to assess adolescent functioning and outcomes following personal construct group work. This is followed by an analysis of the data provided by the participants on the effectiveness of the group work intervention. The last strand presents the results of the investigations into the group process. A summary of the results follows.
CHAPTER 7

RESULTS
Overview

Chapter 7, the Results chapter, is divided into three strands; individual outcomes for adolescents, perceived effectiveness of group work, and group process. The first strand begins with the results of the analyses of the data collected to assess individual outcomes. These analyses are divided into four sections, each section addressing the data collected and analysed to support the four hypotheses dealing with individual outcomes in adolescents. At the beginning of each section, the hypothesis being tested is stated. There is then a summary of the analyses undertaken to assess individual outcomes of troubled adolescents. The results of these analyses are presented. The second strand follows with an analysis of the data collected from the adolescents, parents and teachers in their assessment of the effectiveness of the group intervention. Again, the hypothesis developed to test out the effectiveness of the intervention is provided at the beginning of the strand, followed by the results of the analysis. The second strand ends with a summary of these results. Finally, in the third strand, the data collected to evaluate group process in the group work intervention is analysed. These analyses test out the data for the four hypotheses on group process. The four hypotheses are stated initially, followed by the results of the analyses, and the third strand ends with an overall summary of the results on group process.
7.1 Assessing Adolescent Functioning and Outcomes

The results presented in the following three sections are drawn from comparisons of the three sets of variables, and the data arising from the content analyses of constructs elicited from the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation. The content analyses used a rating system derived for the study and described in Chapter 6. Two categories, Self Description and Level of Abstraction, and the two scales within each category, personal/interpersonal and concrete/abstract, (refer Table 7 for a brief description, a fuller description in Appendix 2 and the scoring criteria in Appendix 7) were used in the content analyses. The comparisons made at Time 1 and at Time 2 and between the scales in each category, are presented for the two control groups, Control Sample 2 and Control Sample 1, and for the treatment group, Group Work Sample. The fourth section reports comparisons using data drawn from the Conners' Rating Scales and on comparisons made post-group twelve months (Time 3). Finally, the results reporting gender and age differences are presented, followed by a brief summary of these results evaluating individual change.

7.1.1 Abstract Construing of Adolescents Before Group Work

Hypothesis 5.3.1.1. The troubled adolescents, before the group work, will make less use of abstract construing than will the functional adolescents.

The constructs elicited from the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation for the three samples at Time 1 were content analysed in
terms of level of abstraction by counting the number of constructs rated as concrete or abstract using independent ratings. Descriptive statistics (the number of responses, percentages, means and standard deviations) based on the number of responses rated, were used to show the constructs rated Category D at Time 1. Analyses of variance investigated whether there were any differences between the sample groups on the two scales of Category D.

Analyses of variance established differences between the sample groups on the two scales of abstraction, with no significant within-group differences in the numbers of concrete and abstract constructs for the sample groups. Between the groups, Control Sample 1, Control Sample 2, and Group Work Sample at Time 1, there were significant differences in the level of concrete construing as measured by the Repertory Grid ($F(2,75)=7.519, p<.001$), and by the Self-Characterisation ($F(2,75)=8.697, p<.001$). Further data analyses of the outcome measures of individual change involved one-way comparisons at Time 1 of the two groups of troubled adolescents, the Group Work Sample and the Control Sample 1, and the functional adolescents, Control Sample 2, on the number of constructs rated abstract. ANOVA established significant differences between the groups, Control Sample 1, Control Sample 2, and Group Work Sample in the number of constructs rated abstract construing measured by the Repertory Grid ($F(2,75)=7.519, p<.001$) and by the Self-Characterisation ($F(2,75)=12.396, p<.001$).
Descriptive statistics that illustrate the analysis to be presented on the results for the functional adolescents, Control Sample 2, are outlined now. The data from the Repertory Grid are presented in Table 13. The number of constructs rated shows that fewer functional adolescents provided concrete constructions at Time 1 than abstract constructions. (See Table 13).

Table 13

The Number of Responses Rated, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages of the Repertory Grid Constructs for Control Sample 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category - Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>10.68</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>9.32</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>7.68</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>12.32</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the Self-Characterisations, presented in Table 14, demonstrated that the number of constructs rated as concrete construing were less than the number of constructs rated abstract at Time 1, with fewer functional adolescents providing concrete constructs than abstract constructs. (See Table 14).

Table 14
The Number of Responses Rated, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages of the Self-Characterisation Responses for Control Sample 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category - Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the troubled adolescents who did not take part in the group work, Control Sample 1, the descriptive statistics on the ratings of their constructs on the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation are now outlined. The results of the Repertory Grids, presented in Table 15, demonstrated that at Time 1 more constructs were rated abstract than concrete constructs. (See Table 15).

Table 15

The Number of Responses Rated, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages of the Repertory Grid Constructs for Control Sample 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category - Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar trend although not as strong, was seen in the Self-Characterisations of this sample of adolescents. Presented in Table 16, the
descriptive statistics showed that more adolescents at Time 1 were using abstract construing in their self constructions compared with concrete construing. (See Table 16).

Table 16

The Number of Responses Rated, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages of the Self-Characterisation Responses for Control Sample 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category - Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings for the troubled adolescents who participated in the group work, Group Work Sample, presented a different picture. In Table 17, the results of the number of rated constructs from the Repertory Grids showed that at Time 1 there were more adolescents, responding with concrete constructs rather than abstract constructs. (See Table 17).
Table 17

The Number of Responses Rated, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages of the Repertory Grid Constructs for Group Work Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category - Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>12.46</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 2</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>10.88</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>10.65</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar results were obtained when the adolescents' Self-Characterisations were analysed for Level of Abstraction. More of the constructs of these adolescents at Time 1 were rated as concrete rather than as abstract constructs. (See Table 18).
Table 18
The Number of Responses Rated, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages of the Self-Characterisation Responses for Group Work Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category - Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time 2</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A - Self Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construing</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Construing</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category D - Level of Abstraction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Construing</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Construing</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The content analysis of the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation, provided some support for the hypothesis that troubled adolescents before the group work would make less use of abstract construing than would the functional adolescents. While the results from the Control Sample 1 failed to provide support for the hypothesis, there was consistent support from the troubled adolescents who took part in the group work. Figure 1 illustrates these results, by showing that overall, across the two measures, before the group work, functional adolescents...
were using more abstract construing than troubled adolescents in the Group Work Sample. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Use of Abstract Constructs on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation by Group Work Sample, Control Sample 1 and Control Sample 2 at Time 1

7.1.2 Abstract Construing of Adolescents Following Group Work

Hypothesis 5.3.1.2. After group work, the troubled adolescents will use more abstract construing than before it.

The constructs elicited from the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation for the three samples were content analysed at Time 2 according to the criteria (refer Chapter 6 and Appendices 2 & 7) established to determine levels of abstraction. Differences in the number of constructs rated as abstract or concrete from the Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1 on the individual measures were examined by using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Difference scores, the
subtraction of Time 1 scores from Time 2 scores, were used in the statistical analyses of the Repertory Grid due to the variables being linearly dependent on preceding ones. Descriptive statistics (the number of responses, percentages, means and standard deviations) were used to show the number of constructs rated Category D at Time 1 and Time 2 for the Group Work Sample and the Control Sample 1. The differences between the two scales of Category D, and between the scores at Time 1 and Time 2 for Group Work Sample were calculated.

When the MANOVA (Independent Variable (IV)-treatment, Dependent Variables (DV)s)-Category D, D-1 concrete construing/D-2 abstract construing,) using Orthonormalized Transformation Matrix (Transposed), investigated the effect of treatment on the overall rate of abstract constructs of troubled adolescents, it was found to be approaching significance (multivariate $F(1,41)=3.04, p=.089$). Treatment was found to significantly effect the rate of abstract construing of troubled adolescents as measured by the Self-Characterisation (multivariate $F(1,41)=5.86, p<.05$). Further analysis employing univariate F values and using difference scores, found a significant effect of treatment on Category D (D-1/D-2) by the Repertory Grid (univariate $F(1,41)=5.397, p<.05$). For the treatment sample, Group Work Sample, MANOVA found a significant main effect of treatment on the rate of concrete construing of these adolescents (multivariate $F(1,41)=4.15, p<.05$), with these adolescents decreasing their rate of concrete construing after treatment. (See Table 19).
Table 19

The Means of Responses (Standard Deviations) Rated Concrete Construing in Control Sample 1 and Group Work Sample on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Repertory Grid</th>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Characterisation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>Time 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td>7.90 (3.99)</td>
<td>10.00 (4.81)</td>
<td>5.10 (3.61)</td>
<td>3.65 (3.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td>11.21 (3.98)</td>
<td>9.35 (4.71)</td>
<td>6.71 (3.39)</td>
<td>5.12 (3.86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Table 19 illustrates a reduction in the number of constructs rated concrete construing for both measures at Time 2 for the Group Work Sample, the table shows a mixed result for Control Sample 1. At Time 2 for this sample, there was a reduction on the measure, Self-Characterisation, but on the measure Repertory Grid, there was an increase.

Table 20 sets out the level of abstract construing for these two groups, Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1. For Group Work Sample, there was an increase at Time 2 in the number of constructs rated abstract construing on both measures, Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation. These changes in the results of the Self-Characterisation at Time 2 were found to be significant (McNemar Test, p<.01). For the Control Sample 1, the results at Time 2 of the number of constructs rated
abstract construing decreased on one measure, Repertory Grid, and increased on another, Self-Characterisation. (See Table 20).

Table 20

The Means of Responses (Standard Deviations) Rated Abstract Construing in Control Sample 1 and Group Work Sample on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Repertory Grid</th>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Characterisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>Time 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td>12.10 (3.99)</td>
<td>10.00 (4.81)</td>
<td>6.15 (3.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td>8.79 (3.98)</td>
<td>10.65 (4.71)</td>
<td>4.17 (2.42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following participation in group work (Time 2), more of the adolescents in Group Work Sample were using abstract construing in their Repertory Grids and Self-Characterisations. This increase in abstract construing is illustrated in Figure 2, where the percentage of adolescents using abstract construing on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation increased from Time 1 to Time 2. (See Figure 2).

7.1.3 Interpersonal Construing of Adolescents Following Group Work

Hypothesis 5.2.1.3. After group work, the troubled adolescents will use more interpersonal themes than before it.

The constructs elicited from the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation for the three samples of adolescents were analysed at
Time 2 in terms of level of interpersonal construing compared to personal construing. Differences between the Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1 in the level of interpersonal construing measured by Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation scores between Time 1 and Time 2 were examined by MANOVA. Difference scores, the subtraction of Time 1 scores from Time 2 scores, were used in the statistical analyses of the Repertory Grid due to the variables being linearly dependent on the preceding variables. Descriptive statistics (the number of responses, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to illustrate the number of constructs rated Category A, that is, personal (A-1 construing of self)/interpersonal (A-2 construing of self in relation to others), at Time 1 and Time 2. Changes in Category A over time in the two measures were also calculated for the troubled adolescents.

![Figure 2. The Use of Abstract Constructs on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation by Group Work Sample at Time 1 and Time 2](image)
The MANOVA (IV-treatment, DVs-Category A (A-1 personal construing/A-2 interpersonal construing)), using Orthonormalised Transformation Matrix (Transposed), found that treatment significantly effected the overall measure of personal construing (multivariate $F(1,41)=5.17$, $p<.05$). There was a significant effect of treatment on the number of personal constructs as measured by the Self-Characterisation of troubled adolescents (multivariate $F(1,41)=5.50$, $p<.05$). Using univariate $F$ values, a significant effect of treatment was found on the number of personal constructs (univariate $F(1,41)=6.40$, $p<.05$), and on the number of interpersonal constructs (univariate $F(1,41)=6.47$, $p<.05$) measured by the Repertory Grid using difference scores. The main effect of treatment on the overall measure of the number of interpersonal constructs of troubled adolescents was approaching significance (multivariate $F(1,41)=3.86$, $p=.056$), with a significant effect of treatment on the number of interpersonal constructs as measured by the Self-Characterisation of troubled adolescents (multivariate $F(1,41)=7.64$, $p<.01$). (See Tables 21 and 22).

Table 21 sets out the level of personal construing for the two groups, Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1. There was a decrease in the number of constructs rated personal at Time 2 for adolescents in Group Work Sample and this reduction occurred in both measures. This was not the case for Control Sample 1 where, at Time 2, there was an increase in the number of constructs rated personal constructs in the Repertory Grid and a decrease in the Self-Characterisation. As Group
Work Sample was reducing their number of personal constructs, Table 22 indicates that they were increasing their number of interpersonal constructs and that these changes in the level of interpersonal construing were significant for both measures, the Repertory Grid (McNemar Test $p<.05$) and Self-Characterisation (McNemar Test $p<.05$).

In summary, the results from the content analyses of constructs rated personal/interpersonal of the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation constructs provided some support for the hypothesis, that, after group work the troubled adolescents used more interpersonal themes in their constructs. On the Repertory Grid, there were more adolescents in the Group Work Sample providing interpersonal rather than personal constructs at Time 2 compared to Time 1. At Time 2 on the Self-Characterisation, there were also more adolescents in Group Work Sample providing interpersonal rather than personal constructs, than at Time 1. Figure 3 illustrates the increase in interpersonal construing from Time 1 to Time 2 for these adolescents in both the measures. Further support for the hypothesis comes from the results of the control group of troubled adolescents, Control Group 1. Lack of any significant change in the interpersonal construing in Control Group 1 provides support for the prediction that treatment alone would increase the level of interpersonal construing.
Table 21

**The Means of Responses (Standard Deviations) Rated Personal Construing in Control Sample 1 and Group Work Sample on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Repertory Grid</th>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Characterisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>Time 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td>10.05 (3.89)</td>
<td>11.41 (4.09)</td>
<td>5.40 (3.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td>12.46 (3.72)</td>
<td>10.89 (3.09)</td>
<td>7.11 (3.24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22

**The Mean of Responses (Standard Deviations) Rated Interpersonal Construing in Control Sample 1 and Group Work Sample on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Repertory Grid</th>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Characterisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>Time 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td>9.95 (3.89)</td>
<td>8.58 (4.09)</td>
<td>3.10 (1.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td>7.50 (3.77)</td>
<td>9.12 (3.09)</td>
<td>2.29 (1.61)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.1.4 Behavioural Changes of Adolescents Following Group Work

Hypothesis 5.2.1.4 After group work, the troubled adolescents will show less disruptive behaviour both at school and at home than before it.

The findings from the determination of differences in response rate of teachers and parents on the Conners' Rating Scales present comparisons of three sets of variables: Control Sample 1, Control Sample 2, and Group Work Sample. The comparisons were made at pre-group (Time 1) and at post-group (Time 2) for all variables, and at 12 months post-group (Time 3) for one variable, Group Work Sample. Firstly, the results of the two control groups and the treatment group are presented, followed by the
results of a comparison of those troubled adolescents who did or did not participate in the group work.

The parents of the adolescents included in Control Sample 2, the functional adolescents, rated their adolescents higher at Time 1 ($M=13.57$, $SD=6.72$) on the Conners' Parent Rating Scale-48 (CPRS-48) than they did at Time 2 ($M=11.50$, $SD=8.13$). Table 23 includes the numbers of respondents, means and standard deviations for Control Sample 2. There was a decrease in the reporting of these behaviours at Time 2. The teachers using the Conners' Teacher Rating Scale-39 (CTRS-39) recorded very few of these behaviours at Time 1 ($M=6.93$, $SD=8.25$), and there was a small increase in these behaviours recorded at Time 2 ($M=8.25$, $SD=13.53$). The ratings by parents of the troubled adolescents in Control Sample 1 were compared to the ratings by the parents of adolescents in Control Sample 2. In Table 23, the ratings of Control Sample 1 demonstrated many more instances of problematic behaviours listed on the Conners' Parent Rating Scale-49 at Time 1 ($M=32.65$, $SD=19.61$), with an increase in the occurrence of these behaviours recorded by the parents at Time 2 ($M=38.38$, $SD=19.63$). The teachers of these adolescents, Control Sample 1, recorded many more occurrences of these behaviours than did the parents at Time 1, ($M=77.25$, $SD=38.26$). However, unlike the parents, the teachers recorded a decrease in these behaviours at Time 2 ($M=67.90$, $SD=38.48$).
Table 23

The Number of Respondents, Means and Standard Deviations of Conners’ Parent Rating Scale-48 and Conners’ Teacher Rating Scale-39 at Time 1 and Time 2 for Control Sample 1, Control Sample 2 and Group Work Sample, and Time 3 for Group Work Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conners’ Parent Rating Scale-48</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32.65</td>
<td>19.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38.38</td>
<td>19.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13.57</td>
<td>6.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42.46</td>
<td>19.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34.80</td>
<td>19.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.80</td>
<td>20.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conners’ Teacher Rating Scale – 39</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>77.25</td>
<td>38.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67.90</td>
<td>38.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>13.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>83.04</td>
<td>34.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>82.04</td>
<td>41.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>65.46</td>
<td>34.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the troubled adolescents who participated in the group work, the Group Work Sample, their parents recorded many occurrences of the behaviours \((M=42.46, \sigma_D=19.17)\) listed on the Conners’ Parent Rating Scale-48 at Time 1 (refer Table 23). However, at Time 2, the parents reported a significant decrease \((M=34.80, \sigma_D=19.59)\), with a further decrease \((M=30.80, \sigma_D=20.14)\) in these behaviours reported at Time 3. The teachers of these troubled adolescents who participated in the group work, also recorded many more occurrences of the behaviours for these adolescents at Time 1 \((M=83.04, \sigma_D=34.58)\), than they did for the other adolescents. By Time 2, the teachers were indicating that generally there had been little decrease in these behaviours \((M=82.04, \sigma_D=41.93)\). However, by Time 3, the teachers responded by recording a decrease \((M=65.46, \sigma_D=34.86)\) in the occurrence of behaviours listed in Conners’ Teacher Rating Scale-39.

Differences between Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1 at Time 2 in behaviour as reported by parents and teachers on the Conners’ Rating Scales were examined. MANOVA, \((IV\text{-}time, DVs\text{-}CPRS-48/CTRS-39)\), using Orthonormalised Transformation Matrix (Transposed), found a significant linear effect of time on the ratings of the CPRS-48 of troubled adolescents \((E(2,48)=9.43, p<.001)\) and to be approaching significance on the ratings of the CTRS-39 of troubled adolescents \((E(2,46)=2.74, p=.075)\). Using MANOVA \((IV\text{-}treatment, DVs\text{-}CPRS-48/CTRS-39)\), it was established that there was a significant effect of treatment on the CPRS-48 and the CTRS-39 of troubled adolescents.
Further analysis using univariate F values, found there was a significant difference in the CPRS-48 ratings between treatment and non-treatment samples of troubled adolescents employing difference scores (univariate $F(1,39)=8.81, p<.01$). By controlling for the effects of Time 1, ANCOVA (covariate-Time 1), a significant main effect of treatment on the CPRS-48 at Time 2 was found for the troubled adolescents ($F(1,40)=6.47, p<.05$). (See Figure 4).

**Figure 4. The Mean Scores of the Conners' Parent Rating Scale-48 and the Conners' Teacher Rating Scale-39 for Group Work Sample at Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3**

In Figure 4, the mean scores of the CPRS-48 and the CTRS-39 for the Group Work Sample adolescents is graphed. The graph illustrates how the above results offered support for the hypothesis that after group work, these adolescents would show less disruptive behaviour both at school
and home than they did before the group work. While the decrease at Time 2 was small for the teachers, it was a greater decrease for the parents. For both respondents at Time 3, there was a decrease in disruptive behaviours when compared with the levels identified by these respondents before the group work.

7.1.5 Gender and Age Differences in the Responses of Adolescents, Their Parents and Teachers

Gender and age differences in the troubled adolescents’ responses and those responses of their parents and teachers were examined.

ANCOVAs were used to investigate the effects of gender on levels of concrete/abstract construing and personal/interpersonal construing while controlling for the effects of Time 1. It was found there was a significant main effect of gender at Time 2 on the Repertory Grid, a measure of concrete construing and of abstract construing ($F(1,42)=5.19$, $p<.05$), and on the Self-Characterisation, a measure of abstract construing ($F(1,42)=4.19$, $p<.05$). In Table 24, it appears that for both Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1, there were more males than females using concrete construing on the Repertory Grid at Time 2. The results further confirm this trend that female adolescents were consistently using more abstract construing across the two measures than were the male adolescents at Time 2. (See Table 24).
Table 24

The Means of Responses (Standard Deviations) Rated Concrete or Abstract Construing by Gender in Group Work Sample and Control Sample 1 on the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation at Time 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Concrete Construing</th>
<th></th>
<th>Abstract Construing</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repertory Grid</td>
<td>Self-Characterisation</td>
<td>Repertory Grid</td>
<td>Self-Characterisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Sample</td>
<td>10.04</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.86)</td>
<td>(7.55)</td>
<td>(3.77)</td>
<td>(4.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Sample 1</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.87)</td>
<td>(3.60)</td>
<td>(3.48)</td>
<td>(3.27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis using ANCOVA (covariate-Time 1), found significant main effect of gender on the Conners' Parent Rating Scale of troubled adolescents while controlling for the effects of Time 1 ($F(1,40)=7.71, p<.05$).

The effects of age on the levels of concrete/abstract construing and on the levels of personal/interpersonal construing were investigated using ANCOVA with the effects of Time 1 controlled. A significant main effect of age was found on the Self-Characterisation, a measure of concrete construing of troubled adolescents ($F(1,42)=3.20, p<.05$) and approaching significance on the Self-Characterisation, a measure of personal construing of troubled adolescents ($F(1,42)=2.71, p=.059$). The younger adolescents (12-13 years) were providing more concrete, personal constructions than the older adolescents (14-15 years). Age differences in treatment and non-
treatment adolescents were found to have a significant effect at Time 2 on the Conners' Teacher Rating ($F(3,45)=4.53$, $p<.05$), the teachers rating the younger adolescents (12-13 years) as demonstrating more of the behaviours on the scale than the older adolescents (14-15 years). The two-way analysis of covariance for age and treatment revealed no significant interactions on the variables due to empty cells/singular matrix.

In summary, overall there were no significant interactive effects of gender and age and treatment. However, there were significant main effects of gender and age on some of the styles of construing and areas of behaviour used by the troubled adolescents in the study.

7.1.6 Evaluation of Individual Outcome

The results showed that for those adolescents taking part in the group work, the Group Work Sample, were using less abstract construing than the functional adolescents; however, this trend was not consistently illustrated for the troubled adolescents who did not participate in the group work. After group work, the results showed that, for Group Work Sample, there was an increase in their abstract construing, while for Control Sample 1, there was an increase on one measure and a decrease on the other measure. Further analysis showed that troubled adolescents participating in the group work, increased their use of interpersonal rather than personal constructs on two assessment tools, while the results from the control group of troubled adolescents were inconsistent, with an increase on one tool and a decrease on the other.
When measures of behavioural change were analysed for the troubled adolescents, the results showed that the group work intervention was linked to a reduction in the number of disruptive behaviours reported by parent and teacher. These behaviours had decreased after the group work, and twelve months later, according to the parents. They decreased only twelve months after the group work according to the teachers.

The analyses of individual outcome by troubled adolescents, also found that, while there were no significant interactive effects of gender, age and treatment, these variables did effect some styles of construing and some levels of disruptive behaviour.

7.2 The Assessments of Adolescents, Parents and Teachers Before and After Group Work

Hypothesis 5.3.2.1. Personal construct group work will be an effective intervention for the troubled adolescent, as assessed by the adolescents, their parents and their teachers.

The findings from the content analyses of the outcome measures of personal construct group work, the structured interviews and standardised questionnaires (refer Appendix 3), present comparisons of three sets of variables: adolescent, parent and teacher assessments. The comparisons were made at pre-group (Time 1) and at post-group (Time 2). The results of the data collected at Time 1 form three sections. The first section presents the constructions the various participants had of the adolescent before group work. In the second section, the results represent the changes the various participants wanted to see in the behaviour of the
adolescent. It is in the third section, illustrated through Table 25 and Figure 5, that the results describe how the participants anticipated the group work would bring about these changes in the adolescent. In the following presentation, it is the results pertaining to the third section that receives most attention, as it is these results that directly address the hypothesis. While the other sections are briefly covered, a fuller account has been provided (Truneckova & Viney, 1997).

7.2.1 Anticipations of Group Work

7.2.1.1 The Adolescent Prior to Group Work

The self constructions of the adolescent were generally described by the adolescent and their parents in terms of personal qualities. Of the adolescents, 49% construed themselves in terms of personal qualities and 66% of parents construed their adolescents in this way. The adolescents, for example, construed themselves as: “nice; average; quiet; a pessimist; unpredictable” and their parents provided constructions such as: “pretty; good kid; lonely; gentle; angry; confident”. Self constructions in terms of interpersonal qualities were also provided by the adolescents and their parent. Of the adolescent self constructions, 24% were rated as interpersonal constructions, while there were 34% of parent responses rated as interpersonal constructions. The remaining adolescents construed themselves by describing the activities or sports they do, or in terms of their physical appearance.
7.2.1.2 Nominated Changes in the Adolescent

The adolescents, their parents and their teachers were then asked to describe the changes they would like to see occur in the adolescent’s self constructions. More adolescents, 38%, said they wanted to make changes in their physical appearance. Adolescents said they wanted to change, for example: “what I look like; my figure; being big; my hair colour”. There were 29% of adolescents who nominated changes in personal behaviour, 26% adolescents who described changes they wanted to happen in their interpersonal behaviour, and 7% of the adolescents described changes in school achievement.

When parents were asked what changes they would like to see in their adolescent’s behaviour, more parents, 49% of responses, spoke of changes in interpersonal behaviour. The parents spoke of changes, such as: “learn to socialise; not be easily led; listen to adults; talk about things more”. There were 33% of responses that were rated as changes in personal behaviour, and 18% of responses by parents rated as changes in school achievement.

When teachers were asked to describe the changes they felt the adolescents needed to make at school, many responses, 64%, spoke about changes in interpersonal behaviour with peers and teachers. The teachers spoke about the adolescents: “(not) reacting as quickly; accepting others; being less aggressive; making less verbal attacks”. The teachers also described changes in personal behaviour, 20%, and 18% of responses from teachers rated changes in school achievement.
7.2.1.3 Effects of Group Work on the Adolescent

The adolescent, their parents and their teachers were asked to describe how they felt the group work would help make these changes. These responses are set out in Table 25 and illustrated in Figure 5.

Table 25

Changes Anticipated by the Adolescents, Their Parents and Their Teachers in Behaviour Following Personal Construct Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Sample</th>
<th>Personal Behaviour</th>
<th>Interpersonal Behaviour</th>
<th>School Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Changes Anticipated by the Adolescents, Their Parents and Their Teachers in Behaviour Following Personal Construct Group Work
Nearly two thirds of the adolescents, 61%, spoke about how the group work would facilitate changes in the area of interpersonal behaviour. These adolescents, for example, described how the group work would help: “stop me from getting into trouble; (help) me get along with people because we talk together as a group and (the group) will listen to me, listen to my problems”. There were 33% of the adolescents who spoke about how the group work would help make changes in their personal behaviour, for example: “make me better tempered; give me a higher self-esteem and help me to be a better person”. A small number of adolescents, 6%, responded by speaking about changes in school achievement. Here they spoke about: “being a better student in work; getting more school work done”. Like the adolescents, more parents, 71%, anticipated that the group work would facilitate changes in interpersonal behaviour. Responses rated as changes in interpersonal behaviour were, for example: “learn to share and be open; learn to help someone without getting something in return; realise other kids have problems and he isn’t alone”. There were 29% of responses that were rated as changes in personal behaviour. The parents spoke about how the group work would help bring about change by, for example: “learn not to have a chip on his shoulder; develop a sense of self; stop getting upset easily”.

The teachers responded in a similar way. When asked what changes they would like to see come about as a result of the group work, 54% of responses were rated as changes in interpersonal behaviour, and 38% of responses were rated as changes in personal behaviour. There
were also anticipations that there would be changes in school achievement, 8% of responses. Responses rated as changes in interpersonal behaviour included: “not react so quickly; more positive feelings about others; accept other students and reduce bullying”. Examples of the responses included under the rating, changes in personal behaviour, were: “increase confidence in own judgement/abilities; more positive self image; less violent reactions”. The responses rated as changes in school achievement as a result of the group work included responses such as: “obey instructions without comment; not as disruptive; able to work independently without disrupting others”.

The responses by the adolescents, the parents and the teachers, outlined the changes they anticipated would result from personal construct group work. It can be seen that for most respondents more changes were anticipated to occur in interpersonal behaviour, rather than in personal behaviour, or school achievement.

7.2.2 Evaluation of Group Work

Following the group intervention, the adolescents, their parents and their schools were interviewed again. As with the interview prior to the group work, the questions were designed to discover the adolescents’ self constructions and to discover how their parents construed them. The interview also sought to have the adolescents, their parents and their schools evaluate whether the changes in self constructions, they had said they would like to occur as a result of the group work, did occur. The adolescents and their parents were also asked to comment on the group
work itself. As was the case with the results from the data collected at Time 1, only some of the results from the data collected at Time 2 are fully presented. There is a brief account, firstly, of the constructions the various participants had of the adolescent after the group work, and of the changes the adolescents said they would make about themselves. There is a fuller presentation of the results describing the evaluation by the participants of the effectiveness of the group work on adolescent change.

7.2.2.1 The Adolescent Following Group Work

Following the group work, both adolescents and their parents continued to provide more self constructions in terms of personal qualities than in terms of interpersonal characteristics. There were 54% of the adolescent self descriptions rated in terms of personal qualities. Of the parents' constructions of their adolescents, 60% were rated in terms of personal qualities. The adolescents described themselves, for example, as: “kind; trustworthy; lazy; impulsive” while their parents described them, for example, as: “moody; deep thinker; happy; very unsettled”. Post-group, increasingly more adolescents and parents used self constructions rated in terms of interpersonal behaviour than was the case before the group work. Examples of interpersonal constructions, used by 33% of adolescents, were: “helpful; you can trust me; not very good behaviour”. From the parental responses 40% were rated as interpersonal constructions. When asked to describe their adolescent, parents, for example, said they were: “more co-operative; intolerant of others; more willing to negotiate”.
7.2.2.2 Nominated Changes in the Adolescent

In the post-group evaluation, the adolescents were again asked what they would change/not change about being themselves. In response to changes they would make, more adolescents, 46%, said they would change their personal behaviour rather than physical appearance, as was the case before the group work. The adolescents, for example, spoke about: “being more confident; (change) my temper; not be slack”. There were a similar number of adolescents, 27%, before and after the group work, speaking about changes in interpersonal behaviour. Also, there were fewer adolescents, 18%, after the group work compared to before the group work, who spoke about changes in physical appearance. There was little change in the number of responses expressing a wish to make changes in school achievement. There were 9% of responses rated in this category after the group work.

7.2.2.3 Perceived Effectiveness of the Group Work

Both the adolescents and their parents were asked if the changes they had anticipated they would like to happen as a result of the group work did occur. In Table 26 and Figure 6, it can be seen that 58% of adolescents said the anticipated changes occurred, while 23% said the anticipated changes occurred ‘a bit’. There were 19% of adolescents who said that these changes did not occur. Most parents, 72%, said that the anticipated changes did occur. There were 12% of parents who said the changes had occurred ‘a bit’, and 16% who said that changes had not occurred. (See Table 26 and Figure 6).
Table 26

Adolescents', Parents’ and Teachers’ Assessment of Behavioural Change Following Personal Construct Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Sample</th>
<th>Yes(^a)</th>
<th>A Bit(^b)</th>
<th>No(^c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Anticipated changes did occur  
\(^b\) Anticipated changes occurred a bit  
\(^c\) Anticipated changes did not occur

Figure 6. Adolescents’, Parents’ and Teachers’ Assessment of Behavioural Change Following Personal Construct Group Work
Prior to the group work, the teachers had been asked to describe the main difficulties or problems the adolescent was experiencing at school. Most of the responses were rated as difficulties or problems in interpersonal behaviour. Following the group work, the teachers were asked whether these difficulties or problems were continuing, and if so, were they at the same level of intensity, or were they diminishing. For most adolescents, 77%, the teachers felt these difficulties or problems were continuing, however, for 70% of these adolescents the teachers felt these difficulties or problems were diminishing. Before the group work began, the teachers had been asked to describe the changes they would like to see come about in the adolescent as a result of the group work. When the teachers were asked following the group work, if these changes had occurred, 63% responded affirmatively, while 37% reported that these changes had not occurred. The teachers were asked, also, to describe any changes they felt the adolescent was able to make following the group work and these are shown in Table 26. Here the teachers report how 85% of the adolescents did make changes, while there were no changes in 15% of the adolescents.

The responses from the adolescents, parents and teachers illustrated in Figure 6, clearly indicate that most respondents saw behavioural change as occurring following personal construct group work.
For those adolescents and parents who said that the anticipated changes did occur, they were asked to describe the changes. These results are set out in Table 27.

Table 27

Adolescents', Parents' and Teachers' Assessment of Behavioural Change Which Occurred After Personal Construct Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Sample</th>
<th>Personal Behaviour</th>
<th>Interpersonal Behaviour</th>
<th>School Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that the descriptions given by the adolescents and parents were similar, with 57% of adolescents and 57% of parents talking about changes in terms of interpersonal behaviour. The adolescents, for example, described how: “I started talking nice to people; I get along with people better”. The parents, for example, described their adolescents as: “being teased less; puts himself in other peoples' positions; talks more”. There were 32% of adolescents who spoke of changes in terms of personal behaviour, for example: “taught me to keep my temper down; happier; changed the way I feel, a bit better”. A similar number of parental responses, 31%, described changes in personal behaviour, for example:
“stronger in self; more settled; different attitude, more confident”. The remainder of adolescent responses, 11%, spoke of changes in school achievement, for example: "getting most of my work done in time; doing my work when I am asked". There were 12% of parents who also described changes in school achievement, and they spoke about: "good half yearly report; two merit awards; school work pretty good".

The teachers had indicated that 85% of the adolescents had made behavioural changes following the group work (refer Table 26). They were then asked to describe these changes, and these results are included in Table 27. According to the teachers, more of these changes, 54%, occurred in personal behaviour, while 34% of the changes occurred in interpersonal behaviour, and 12% occurred in school achievement.

The results as illustrated in Figure 7, indicate that personal construct group work seems largely to have been judged effective in bringing about change.

7.2.3 Evaluation of Group Work

Most adolescents, their parents and their teachers evaluated the group work as effective in bringing about behavioural change. More adolescents and parents reported these changes as occurring in interpersonal behaviour, and these results seem to be in line with the anticipations of the adolescents and parents prior to group work. On the other hand, more teachers described the changes as occurring in personal behaviour, and these changes were not in accord with the anticipations of teachers prior to the group work. Changes occurring in school
achievement were described by a small number of adolescents, parents and teachers.

Figure 7. Adolescents', Parents' and Teachers' Assessment of Behavioural Change Which Occurred After Personal Construct Group Work

7.3 Group Process

The following findings result from analyses of the tools used to evaluate group process. The tools were completed during the group work sessions by the adolescents in Group Work Sample, and the group leaders

7.3.1 Interpersonal Construing of Adolescents During Group Work

Hypothesis 5.3.3.1. During group work, the group members will use more interpersonal themes than at the beginning of the group work.

In order to investigate the level of interpersonal construing during the group work, the Mood Tags were content analysed. The categories used were personal/interpersonal content, and positive/negative content,
The criteria used to investigate personal/interpersonal content were drawn from the system of content analysis established to evaluate the Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation (refer Chapter 6, Appendix 2). The descriptive statistics (number of responses, percentages, means and standard deviations) of these responses based on the analysis, made comparisons between the Mood Tags (“I feel....”) at the beginning and at the end of the group work sessions. Comparisons were also conducted on the Mood Tags (“I don’t feel....”) at the beginning and at the end of the sessions.

Overall, the adolescents used more constructs rated personal rather than interpersonal on their Mood Tags. The results failed to provide support for the hypothesis that there would be an increase in the number of interpersonal constructs on the Mood Tags as the group work progressed. Table 28 indicates that content analyses of the Mood Tags (“I feel....”) revealed 19% of responses ($M=4.10$, $SD=2.96$) of adolescents used interpersonal construing rather than personal, increasing to 21% of adolescent responses ($M=4.30$, $SD=3.40$) by the end of the sessions. (See Table 28).

This trend is highlighted in Figure 8, showing very little variation across the ten sessions between the beginning and the end of the session, in the level of personal and interpersonal construing. However, there was one exception, Session 1, where it can be seen there was an increase of 33% by the end of the session in the number of adolescents using interpersonal constructs.
Table 28

The Means of Rated Responses (Standard Deviations) and Percentages for the Mood Tags, and the Rating of the Mood Tags, at the Beginning and at the End of Each Session Across the Ten Sessions of the Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construing</th>
<th>At the Beginning of the Session</th>
<th>At the End of the Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel...</td>
<td>I don’t feel...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.96)</td>
<td>(1.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(19%)</td>
<td>(11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>17.70</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.40)</td>
<td>(3.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(81%)</td>
<td>(89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.50)</td>
<td>(2.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(62%)</td>
<td>(31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>14.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.97)</td>
<td>(3.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(38%)</td>
<td>(69%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, it can be seen from Figure 8, that when there was an increase in interpersonal construing across the session, the increase was small. There were small increases in interpersonal construing during Session 3 (29% to 31%), Session 4 (4% to 13%), Session 9 (33% to 35%) and Session 10 (5% to 11%).
The predominantly personal content of the Mood Tags ("I feel...") was rated more often as positive rather than negative. Overall, the findings presented in Table 28 indicate that at the beginning of the session, adolescents were using positive constructs, 62% (M=13.60, SD=3.50), and a similar event was happening at the end of the session with 64% (M=13.10, SD=3.48) of adolescents using positive constructs. However, this was not consistently demonstrated across all sessions. There were more adolescents using constructs rated as negative rather than positive at the beginning of Session 3 (55%) and Session 9, (52%) and by the end of the session, more adolescents were using negative constructs than positive constructs (Session 2 (56%), Session 6 (52%), Session 9 (55%)).
The data on the Mood Tags ("I don’t feel....") presented in Table 28, indicate that more adolescents used personal rather than interpersonal constructs across the ten sessions of group work. Overall, at the beginning of the sessions, 11% (M=2.30, SD=1.25) were using constructs rated as interpersonal, and by the end of the sessions it had increased a little to 15% (M=2.90, SD=1.10). Overall, more adolescents were using personal construing on their Mood Tags ("I don’t feel....") both at the beginning and end of the sessions. The generally consistent low level of interpersonal construing is illustrated in Figure 9. Yet, there was one exception, and that appears to be Session 5, where 13% more adolescents were using interpersonal construing by the end of the session. The themes in the group work for Session 5 were, ‘Feeling angry and being understood/Feeling angry and not being understood/The different ways we feel angry, and the different ways other people feel angry’. (See Figure 9).

Figure 9 also illustrates that during Session 7, there were few adolescents using interpersonal construing. From the beginning to the end of the Session 7, the level of interpersonal construing had risen from zero to 6%.

Unlike the Mood Tags ("I feel...."), many more of the Mood Tags ("I don’t feel....") were rated as negative rather than positive. Across the ten sessions, 69% (M=14.10, SD=3.41) at the beginning of the session, were rated as negative, and there were 75% (M=14.50, SD=2.12) rated negative at the end of the session (refer Table 28). The predominant use of
personal, negative Mood Tags ("I don’t feel...."), both at the beginning and end of the sessions, was generally consistent across the ten sessions. The changes between the beginning and the end of the session in the overall number of Mood Tags ("I don’t feel") analysed as personal constructs were found to be significant (McNemars Test, p<.001). There was an overall decrease in the number of personal constructs at the end of the session compared to the number at the beginning of the session, however, the consequent changes in the use of interpersonal constructs was not.

![Graph showing the level of interpersonal construing on mood tags during group sessions.](image-url)

**Figure 9. The Level of Interpersonal Construing on the Mood Tags ("I don’t feel....") by Group Members at the Beginning and End of the Ten Sessions of the Group Work**
7.3.2 Group Members' Constructions of Self in Relation to the Goals of Group Work

Hypothesis 5.3.3.2. During group work, the group members will increasingly evaluate themselves more positively on the goals of group work than at the beginning of the group work.

Investigations into the evaluations by group members of their attainment of the eight goals of the group work intervention, were undertaken by comparing the group members’ session evaluations (refer Appendix 5). ANOVA (repeated measures) was used to determine if there were differences between the group members’ session evaluations of themselves on the goals. Descriptive statistics (number of group members, means and standard deviations) of the number of evaluations were used to show these assessments by the group members over the ten sessions and are presented in Table 29. The responses to Question 8 on the Group Session Evaluation, which asks the group members if they are looking forward to the following session, were not included in the mean evaluation score for Session 10. Statistical analysis of the group members' descriptions of their feelings on the Group Session Evaluation were not undertaken as these descriptions formed part of the supervision discussion.

ANOVA found there were significant differences between sessions, in the ratings by group members of their attainment of the group goals of the intervention ($F(1,7)=5530.57, p<.001$), and it showed a significant linear trend.
Figure 10 illustrates that there was a decrease in their rating of their attainment from Session 1 to Session 3, and then there was a slight increase in their attainment rating after Session 3 to fall at Session 9 and then rise for the last session. It also shows that the mean rating by group members of themselves for Session 10 was higher than that attained by them on other sessions, and so provides limited support for the hypothesis that during the group work the group members will increasingly evaluate themselves more positively on the goals of group work. (See Figure 10).

Table 29

The Number of Group Members, Means and Standard Deviations for Ten Session Evaluations by Group Members of Their Attainment of the Goals of Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29.15</td>
<td>7.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25.46</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.17</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.83</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.33</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29.05</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29.35</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.43</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.90</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The evaluation of Session 10 was based on responses to Questions 1 to 7 and not Question 8.
The results from the group member evaluations provided support for the hypothesis that during group work, the group members would increasingly evaluate themselves more positively on the goals of group work than at the beginning of the group work.

![Figure 10. The Mean Evaluations of the Ten Sessions by Group Members of Their Attainment of the Goals of Group Work](image)

**7.3.3 Group Leaders’ Reporting of the Progressive Attainment by Members of the Goals of Group Work.**

Hypothesis 5.3.3. During group work, the group leaders will report a progressive attainment of the goals of the group work by the group members.

The group leaders' reports (refer Appendix 6) on the group members in relation to the group work goals, were considered by comparing the group leaders' reports across the sessions. ANOVA (repeated measures) was employed to determine significant differences between the sessions. Descriptive statistics (number of group members,
means and standard deviations) of the number of evaluations were
determined to demonstrate the direction of these evaluations by the group
leaders over the ten sessions and are set out in Table 30.

ANOVA found there were significant differences between sessions
in the rankings of group leaders of the attainment of the goals of group
work by group members ($F(1,7)=773.68, p<.001$), with a significant linear
trend over the ten sessions.

The results from the investigations into the group leaders' reports
offered support for the hypothesis that during group work, the group
leaders would report a progressive attainment of the goals of the group
work by the group members. The group leaders' reports of the group
members for the ten sessions are illustrated in Figure 11. The graph shows
a progressive increase from Session 1 to Session 3, with a steep rise at
Session 4 where the theme of the group work was 'Feeling hurt by
others/Hurting the feelings of others'. After Session 4, the assessments
were higher than earlier sessions, with Session 10 recording one of the
highest attainment scores for the entire ten sessions. (See Table 30, see
Figure 11).

7.3.4 Constructions of Self and Group Leader by Group
Members During Group Work

Hypothesis 5.3.3.4. During group work, the differences between
the ranking by group members of themselves and the group leaders on the
goals of group work will decrease.
Table 30

The Number of Group Members, Means and Standard Deviations for Ten Sessions Reported by Group Leaders of the Attainment of the Goals of Group Work by Group Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31.13</td>
<td>10.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34.50</td>
<td>11.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39.88</td>
<td>6.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56.43</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46.13</td>
<td>12.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47.75</td>
<td>10.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40.50</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48.75</td>
<td>9.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45.13</td>
<td>15.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>11.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. The Mean Evaluations for Ten Sessions Reported by Group Leaders of the Attainment of the Goals of Group Work by Group Members
ANOVA (repeated measures) was undertaken to determine if there were any significant differences between Time 1 (Session 2), Time 2 (Session 5), and Time 3 (Session 9) of the group members' rankings of self and leader on the eight constructs of Group Grid 1 and of Group Grid 2. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations of rankings) of self and leader ranking by members on each of the two group grids are set out in Table 31. The differences in scores between the group member's ranking of self and of group leader were measured at Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3 for the eight constructs of Group Grid 1 and Group Grid 2. The differences were calculated by subtracting the ranking given to the leader from the ranking given to the member for the same construct. The ranking given to each construct for both the group member and leader was determined by awarding the construct with the lowest mean ranking (representing the highest frequency of positive rankings) with a ranking of 1, the next lowest a ranking of 2 and so on until the ranking of 8 was given to the construct with the highest mean ranking (representing the lowest frequency of positive rankings).

The ANOVA demonstrated significant difference across time on the group members' ranking of self ($F(2,14)=92.16$, $p<.001$), and group members' ranking of group leader ($F(2,14)=22.41$, $p<.001$) on Group Grid 1. ANOVA conducted on Group Grid 2 produced a similar result. There was a significant difference across time of the group members' ranking of self ($F(2,14)=21.93$, $p<.001$), and of the group members' ranking of the group leader ($F(2,14)=8.81$, $p<.01$). (See Table 31).
The descriptive statistics set out in Table 31 further illustrate these findings. The group members ranked themselves less positively at Time 1, than at Time 2 and Time 3 on both the group grids. Similarly, on both grids, the group members ranked their group leaders less positively at Time 1, than at Time 2, and Time 3.

Table 31

The Means (Standard Deviations) of the Rankings by Group Members of Themselves and the Group Leaders on Group Grid 1 and Group Grid 2 at Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Time 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Grid 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Ranking</td>
<td>3.51 (0.16)</td>
<td>2.67 (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking of Leader</td>
<td>3.61 (0.31)</td>
<td>3.04 (0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Grid 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Ranking</td>
<td>3.41 (0.16)</td>
<td>2.84 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking of Leader</td>
<td>3.62 (0.23)</td>
<td>3.10 (0.48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rankings of Group Grid 1 and Group Grid 2 indicated that there was a decrease in the scores of self ranking at Time 2 compared to Time 1, and by Time 3 the scores had increased again. The results of the rankings of leader on both grids demonstrated a similar pattern. There was a decrease in the ranking at Time 2 compared with Time 1, and by
Time 3 the ranking scores had increased. On both grids, the mean rankings at Time 3 for both measures, self and leader, remained below that of Time 1. These results suggest that the group members at Time 1 were ranking themselves and the group leader less positively on the constructs. By Time 2, they were ranking themselves and the leader more positively and at Time 3 while not ranking themselves and leader as positively as they had done at Time 2, the rankings were more to the positive pole of the construct than they were at Time 1.

Figure 12 and Figure 13 present the differences in the mean scores between the group member ranking of self and group leader at Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3. (When there is no difference between the mean scores at either of the three time points, this is represented in the figures as lying along the zero axis.)

![Figure 12. Difference Scores Between Group Member Ranking of Self and Leader on Group Grid 1](image-url)
In Figure 12, there was a decrease in the differences in the mean scores by Time 3 across five (constructs 1, 2, 3, 5, 8) out of the eight constructs supplied on Group Grid 1.

The differences in the mean scores for Group Grid 2, illustrated in Figure 13, demonstrate that there was a decrease in the differences in scores by Time 3 across four (constructs 3, 4, 5, 8) out of the eight constructs.

![Figure 13. Difference Scores Between Group Member Ranking of Self and Leader on Group Grid 2](image)

The results provide some support for the hypothesis that during group work, the differences between the ranking by group members of themselves and the ranking by group members of the group leaders on the goals of group work will decrease. The results from the ANOVA demonstrated that the ranking of self and leader on both grids differed on the three occasions. Statistical analysis using the difference in scores
between the group member's ranking of self and of group leader, was able to show that the differences the group members saw between themselves and the group leader did decrease on some of the eight constructs supplied for each group grid. The content of these constructs included the following themes: feeling important, feeling comfortable, feeling understood, feeling the person wants the best for me, and feeling valued by the person.

7.3.5 Evaluation of Group Process

The results from the analysis of the Mood Tags, ("I feel...")/(I don't feel..."), failed to provide support for the hypothesis that there would be an increase in interpersonal construing during the group work. Overall, the group members were using predominantly personal rather than interpersonal themes for both Mood Tags. The findings into the evaluations by group members of their attainment of the goals of the group work intervention, gave support for the hypothesis that group members, during the group work, increasingly evaluated themselves more positively on the goals of group work. Support was also available for the hypothesis that group leaders would be reporting over the ten sessions a progressive attainment of the goals of therapy by the group members. Finally, the findings from the measures of group process provided some support for the hypothesis that, during group work, the differences the group members saw between themselves and the group leaders on the goals of group work would decrease.
7.4 Summary

In Chapter 7, the data collected to test the hypotheses developed to investigate individual change, the effectiveness of group work, and of group process were analysed. The analyses found support from the results that there were changes in the content and structure of construing and in the behaviour of troubled adolescents following participation in personal construct group work. The analyses also found support from the participants in the effectiveness of personal construct group work. Finally, the statistical analyses of group process data found that participants were reporting progressive attainment of the goals of therapy, and reporting also, that during the group work, the members were feeling less difference between themselves and the leaders on some constructs.

This analysis of the results will be followed by an evaluation of the research project in Chapter 8. Beginning with a review of the findings, the evaluation will then determine the value of the research as an outcome study of group work, and determine the value of the proposed Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents. This will then be followed by an account of group process with troubled adolescents. Finally, in Chapter 8, I will address the clinical implications arising from this research and for future research, and finish with concluding remarks.
CHAPTER 8

AN EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF GROUP WORK ON TROUBLED ADOLESCENTS
Overview

In Chapter 8, an evaluation of the research, I begin with a review of the results of this investigation into personal construct group work with troubled adolescents. In this review, the findings about individual change in the adolescents are presented first, followed by those about the perceived effectiveness of the group work for the participants, and then a brief overview of the findings about group process in this personal construct group work. Following the review of the findings, I begin an evaluation of this research by using the six criteria proposed by Viney (1998) for evaluating an outcome study of group work, together with the seven issues raised by Viney (1998) to determine the efficacy of the group work, as an outcome study based on personal construct psychology. The value of the Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents proposed in this research is determined using standards specified by Viney and Oades (1998). This is followed by an account of group work process with troubled adolescents based on my experiences as a leader but participant in the group work. Clinical implications arising from this research are canvassed before concluding remarks are made.

8.1 A Review of the Research Results

8.1.1 Individual Outcomes for Adolescents

Outcome measures were used to measure individual change. The Repertory Grid and the Self-Characterisation were used to measure changes in the self-construing of adolescents before the group work (Time
and again after the group work (Time 2). A system of content analysis was developed to measure the amount of change and the type of change in the self-construing of the adolescents on these two measures. The analyses of these measures offered some support for the hypothesis that troubled adolescents before the group work would make less use of abstract construing than would the functional adolescents. Following completion of the group work, the analyses provided consistent support for the hypothesis that the troubled adolescents who participated in the group work used more abstract construing than they did before the group work. The analyses also offered consistent support for the hypothesis that the troubled adolescents who participated in the group work used more interpersonal construing after it than they did before it.

Further confirmation of individual change was provided by the results of the third measure of individual change, the Conners' Rating Scales. The behavioural changes recorded on these scales provided support for the hypothesis that the troubled adolescents who participated in the group work would show less disruptive behaviours at home and this would continue at twelve months follow-up. However, support for the prediction of a decrease in disruptive behaviours at school did not occur until twelve months after the completion of the group work.

8.1.2 Perceived Effectiveness of the Group Work

One of the aims of the research was to measure the effectiveness of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents. Data were sought and gathered using personal construct methodology in the form of
structured interviews and standardised questionnaires from troubled adolescents, their parents, and their teachers. The analyses of these evaluations by the participants compared two occasions, pre-group (Time 1) and post-group (Time 2), and provided strong support for the hypothesis that personal construct group work is assessed by the adolescents, their parents and their teachers as an effective intervention for troubled adolescents. Personal construct group work was evaluated by the adolescents and their parents as effective in bringing about changes in interpersonal behaviour, and by teachers, as effective in bringing about changes in the personal behaviour of the troubled adolescent. This perceived effect by teachers at Time 2 is in contrast to that reported above for behavioural changes, and may suggest impermeable construing by teachers with troubled adolescents.

8.1.3 Group Process

A number of hypotheses were developed to investigate the group processes of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents. Firstly, it was hypothesised that during the group work, the group members would use more interpersonal themes than at the beginning of the group work. Data from the Mood Tags failed to support the hypothesis, and the results of the analysis, unlike those achieved by Landfield (1979) with adult group members, showed predominantly personal construing by the group members and any increases in interpersonal construing were not being measured by the Mood Tags.
Group process was also assessed by measuring how the group members evaluated themselves in relation to the goals established for the personal construct group work. There was support for the hypothesis that this evaluation would become more positive as the group work progressed. These session evaluations showed there was both interpersonal and personal growth, with group members increasingly indicating that they felt they belonged more to the group, that the group had a greater understanding and acceptance of them, and that they had a greater understanding and acceptance of themselves.

Investigations into the group members' constructions of themselves during group work were complemented in the research by requesting the group leaders report on the group members' attainments. There was strong support for the hypothesis that these reports show progressive attainment of the goals of the group work by the group members. The group members were evaluated as increasingly experiencing validation from the group, as increasingly being understood and trusted by the other members, as questioning more their personal meanings, and trying out new ways of behaving inside and outside the group. The reports also showed that the group members, through a process of understanding the similarities and differences amongst group members, had increased self-validation and self-regard. The reports from the group leaders also confirmed the decrease in the positive evaluations by group members during Session 9. This decrease was construed by the group leaders as indicating the group members were not ready to leave the group work,
and probably ten sessions were not long enough for these adolescents to sufficiently reconstrue themselves.

Assessment of the group processes involved, as well, investigating the differences between the ranking by group members of themselves and the group leaders on the goals of group work. It was hypothesised that these differences in ranking would decrease over the sessions. The data from Group Grid 1 and Group Grid 2, used to measure these rankings, showed a moderate trend by the group members to rank themselves and the group leaders as similar rather than different on the goals of group work. A result, in part, which replicates the findings reported by Neimeyer et al (1991) with adult group members.

8.2 An Evaluation of the Outcome Research

Evaluations of personal construct psychotherapy have involved both comparative outcome studies and outcome studies of personal construct therapy. Comparative outcome studies involving evaluations of personal construct interventions against other psychological therapies, have increasingly been undertaken (for example, Watson & Winter, 1997; Winter, 1997; Winter & Watson, 1999), despite the misgivings by personal construct researchers about the push to empirically validated treatments (Neimeyer & Raskin, 2000). These studies have established the distinctiveness and efficacy of personal construct therapy. Evaluations of personal construct outcome studies began earlier with investigations, for example, by Epting (1981), and later with a comprehensive review of the research by Winter (1992). Both researchers found empirical evidence for
the therapeutic approach of personal construct psychology, and urged that further research be undertaken.

More recently, Viney (1998) has provided a paradigm for outcome evaluation of personal construct therapy. By applying the criteria proposed, nineteen multiparticipant outcome studies of personal construct therapy were examined, and it was concluded that the outcomes of highly rigorous research show personal construct therapy to be effective in achieving the goals of therapy (Viney, 1998).

The criteria for evaluation provided by Viney (1998) will be used in the following evaluation of this research project as an outcome study of group work with troubled adolescents. Within the paradigm, the evaluation process deals with the appropriateness of the following aspects of outcome research. These aspects deal with sampling, design, measures of the dependent variables, analyses, and treatment validation.

8.2.1 Sampling

The first criterion raised for evaluating an outcome study is unbiased sampling. Random sampling was used, the only restriction placed on recruitment was that of age, the adolescents needed to be 12 to 15 years of age. Random sampling, however, led to a bias in terms of gender distribution with fewer female adolescents participating in the treatment group, raising questions about the representativeness of this sample. Further questions over the representativeness of the samples of troubled adolescents are appropriate given the differences in results achieved by the two groups on measures to assess some dependent
variables before treatment intervention. Unintended biases such as this, in the two samples of troubled adolescents, does affect the validity of the control sample as a contrast to the treatment sample. The limited size of the samples and the differences in the sizes of the samples also affects the power of the sample. Further concerns in this area need to be voiced. Participation in the study was necessarily voluntary for all adolescents and their parents. Issues of bias need to be raised over a sample of adolescents possibly motivated by different internal and external circumstances to participate in the study.

8.2.2 Design

Viney (1998) puts forward four criteria that distinguish a well-designed therapy outcome study. The first is that baseline data for the dependent variables are contrasted with data on the same variables after the completed intervention. Baseline data were available in this research. For the treatment group, this allowed a contrast of data on three occasions, allowing the dependent variables evaluating outcome and group process to be studied.

The second criterion considered important in evaluating the design of an outcome study is whether there has been the inclusion of one or more contrast groups for comparison. In this research, two contrast groups were included. There was a contrast group of troubled adolescents and a contrast group of functional adolescents. However, the control group of troubled adolescents does not provide a robust contrast group, given the sampling problems.
The well-designed outcome study needs to include, according to Viney (1998), data on the dependent variables collected after some period following the intervention. The data are compared with data previously collected before and after the intervention. Twelve months following the intervention, data were collected in this research on one dependent variable. They were only collected for one sample, the treatment group, and using only one measure. This is a limitation in the design of the research.

The final criterion developed by Viney (1998) when evaluating the design of an outcome study, relates to retention rates. When follow-up data are collected, retention rates need to be made available for the samples of participants indicating whether the retained samples show any bias. In this research, retention rates have been provided on the follow-up data, indicating both the number and gender of adolescents, and the rate of parent participation. In Group Work Sample, retention rates at Time 2 and Time 3 for adolescents were 93%, and for parents 96%. For the control groups, in Control Sample 1, the retention rates at Time 2 were 85% for adolescents, 94% for parents, while in Control Sample 2, retention rates were 100% for both adolescents and their parents at Time 2.

On the whole, it would appear that this outcome study into personal construct group work with troubled adolescents does show some features of a well-designed therapy outcome study. Identified weaknesses in the design have been found in the contrast group, and in the restrictions
on the data collected for dependent variables twelve months following the intervention.

8.2.3 Measures

The appropriateness of the measures used to gather data on the dependent variables is the next criterion Viney (1998) considers important when evaluating outcome studies. Appropriateness of the measures is considered in terms of the reliability and the validity of the measures, whether the measures used were appropriate to the assumptions underlying the therapy, and to therapy outcomes.

Consistency of measurement can be internal to the instrument, can be measured over time or between judges. In this study, data concerning research into the reliability of five measures, Repertory Grid, Self-Characterisation, Conners' Rating Scales and Group Grids have been provided. When content analysis was used to analyse data from other instruments employed in this research, the Repertory Grid, the Self-Characterisation, the structured interviews, the standardised questionnaires and the Mood Tags, measures of interjudge reliability were determined, and found acceptable.

Evidence of validity, both convergent and discriminant, has been reported on five measures used in this research. The reported investigations have established that the measures, Repertory Grid, Self-Characterisation, Conners' Rating Scales and Group Grids are measuring theoretical constructs intended for measurement. For the measures designed for the research and depending on content analysis to provide
the data, statistical tests of validity are not available. Possible threats to
the validity of these measures can come from the researcher failing to
control for reliability of the measure, and from the researcher violating
assumptions underlying the statistical analysis. In this research, attempts
have been made to control for reliability by measuring interjudge
agreement, and by not violating assumptions of content analysis
methodology in using data reflecting the participants' meaning-making.
However, the criteria used in the content analyses, and developed to
measure the content of the construing, remains untested outside this
research. There are also questions around the independence of the
researcher as therapist and collector of data, and around the independence
of the researcher and co-researcher as collectors of data.

8.2.4 Appropriateness of the Measures to the Assumptions
Underlying the Group Work and to Group Work Outcomes

Four of the measures used in this research were developed by Kelly
(1955; 1991), or from later research into personal construct psychology.
Kelly (1955; 1991) developed the Repertory Grid and Self-Characterisation,
and these instruments are considered an appropriate measure of the
content and structure of constructs. The other two measures, the Group
Grids, are not considered to be in conflict with personal construct
assumptions as they have been developed to measure group process
through group members' construing. Issues about meanings measured by
the group grids can be raised, as supplied rather than elicited constructs
were used. Also, as a further investigation into group process, the data
from the group grids could have been complemented by introducing Yalom's (1995) measure of therapeutic factors, "Most Important Events Questionnaire", as another measure of the group process.

The methodology of content analysis fits well with personal construct assumptions because ".....research participants are creative interpreters in their focus on thematic content provided in response to open-ended questions" (Viney, 1998, p. 373). The content analysis methodology used in this research has attempted to fit with these assumptions, but remains untested outside this research.

One problem arising from this research in terms of fitting with personal construct assumptions, has been the use of the measure, Conners' Rating Scales. The Conners' Rating Scales have been developed from another theoretical model with different assumptions underlying therapy and outcomes. In defense of its use in this research, this instrument has been used as a measure of behaviour, and not a measure of construing. It provides for the research a source of independent evidence on group work outcomes in terms of behaviour that is much used in adolescent outcome research.

In summary, it is considered that the instruments used in this research measure appropriately the dependent variables. All of the measures, with one exception, are appropriate to the assumptions of personal construct psychology. However, the content analysis adopted and some procedures used for measurement, remain untested outside this research.
8.2.5 Statistical Analysis

The appropriateness of the statistical analyses of data is "...judged in terms of the research questions asked, the size of the sample, the level of scaling attained by the measurement, and the distribution of scores" (Viney, 1998, p. 374). The actual analyses used in this research ranged from nonparametric tests such as kappa estimates of agreement to multivariate analyses, including analysis of covariance. The choice of analysis did try to meet measures of appropriateness and at the same time maintain the integrity of the meaning-making.

A problem in the analysis, has been the pooling of data from the five group work interventions to provide overall outcome assessments of the dependent variables, rather than analysing the data to discern the differences between and amongst the interventions and the group members. One example of this has been the way the data from the group process measures have been analysed. The change measures while gathering data from each group member and group leader, produce results on the overall group process, and do not account for the different rates of change in the group members. This approach to analysis fails to pay due respect to personal construct assumptions about the unique meanings of each group participant, and about the basic therapeutic assumption that clients change at different rates.

8.2.6 Treatment Validation

Although this research was unable to provide evidence in vivo that the interventions conducted truly represented personal construct group
work, useful data were collected from the group members and leaders during and after the group work sessions. While not as robust as evaluations by independent judges of taped sessions, these data do provide some validation that the treatment was compatible with the group work goals established on Kelly’s (1955; 1991) assumptions of personal construct group psychotherapy.

8.3 Summary

In evaluating this research as an outcome study of personal construct group work, I believe the study satisfies many of the criteria considered by Viney (1998) as appropriate in evaluating outcome research. However, if this research is to be repeated, there are some problems that need to be addressed by the researcher. These are: representativeness of the sampling, in the design, the follow-up evaluation of outcome, the use of a measure to evaluate outcome not based on personal construct assumptions, the lack of a robust measure of treatment validation, and the independence of the data collection from the treatment.

8.4 An Evaluation of the Research from the Personal Construct Perspective

In her evaluation of outcome studies using personal construct therapy, Viney (1998) believes seven issues need to be considered also when evaluating an outcome study in personal construct therapy. These seven issues are described in the following manner: “the choice of goals for the therapy, a comparison of quantitative with qualitative data, the use
of no-treatment control groups, the methods of data collection chosen, the constraints of some statistical analyses, the problems of multiparticipants studies, and the inclusion of the therapist variables in the study designs” (p. 367). I will now consider the seven issues raised by Viney (1998) as necessary for any evaluation of personal construct group work.

The first of these issues involves the choice of goals for the therapy. In this research, goals for the group work were developed from the six stages of group work outlined by Kelly (1955; 1991). These goals then formed the assumptions underlying the group work content, process and outcome. Measures of evaluation were also developed from the assumptions underlying the goals of group work. It can be established, I believe, that the goals of group work are based on personal construct assumptions.

The second issue is the use of quantitative rather than qualitative data in personal construct studies. While personal construct therapy focuses on meaning, Viney (1998) wonders whether quantitative studies may fail to deal adequately with the meanings of the participants. Despite this, quantitative studies do “.....provide more informative and concise summaries than qualitative studies” (Viney, 1998, p. 376). In this research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and the qualitative data were described using both words and numbers. There was an attempt in this research to search for meanings. However, the qualitative data were subjected to untested content analyses raising questions over the integrity of the meanings achieved.
The next issue to be raised by Viney (1998) is the use of no-treatment contrast groups in the design of the studies. The current thinking is that instead of using no-treatment contrast groups, better evaluation of therapy outcomes can be achieved by making comparisons with groups experiencing other forms of therapy (Task Force on Promotion and Dissemination of Psychological Procedures, 1995). In this research, no-treatment contrast groups were used rather than groups experiencing other forms of therapy. The efficacy of the group work is now open to some doubt.

The fourth issue raised concerns about the methods of data collection used in the studies. In personal construct research, Viney (1998) reminds us that both data collectors and contributors add something to and gain something from the data collection. An attempt was made to do just that by having all the participants use their own meanings to evaluate the intervention, during or after the group work. Despite this, I do not believe the roles of researcher and co-researcher were truly exchanged, as the participants have not been involved in the analysis and interpretation of these results.

The next issue concerns the constraints of certain statistical analyses for outcome studies using personal construct therapy. Viney (1998) raises the question of whether the assumptions behind certain statistical models used, fit with the assumptions underlying the therapy, and in the case of personal construct therapy suggests that the fit is better when
nonparametric analyses and analyses of variance are performed. Both forms of analyses were used in this research.

The sixth issue is the use of multiparticipant outcome studies rather than individual outcome studies. This was multiparticipant research. However, in an attempt to broaden the field of interpretations, raters from varying perspectives, the adolescents, their parents and their teachers participated in the study.

Finally, the seventh issue involves including the specific characteristics of therapists using the personal construct therapy. While group leaders in this research were clearly described and asked to make sense of the meaning systems of the adolescents, there was no data on this. Information on their making sense of each others' meaning systems was limited to what took place in the group process, in the evaluation, and in supervision.

In summary, Viney (1998) raised seven issues important when evaluating outcome studies from a personal construct perspective. According to the issues raised by Viney (1998), this research as an outcome study handled some of these issues appropriately and others not so well. Appropriately, the group work was based on goals clearly reflecting personal construct assumptions, secondly, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected, and thirdly, a multiparticipant sample was used. There are some concerns over how appropriately the research has addressed the other issues. These lie in the use of a no-treatment contrast group, limitations in the exchange of researcher/co-researcher roles, how
well the statistical analyses still holds the meanings of the participant responses, and in not exploring more fully the meaning systems of the group leaders.

8.5 An Evaluation of the Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents

Contemporary debate is engaged over the role of theory in psychological research (Viney & Oades, 1998). A theory is not a discovery but a construction, an invention. “Constructively speaking, a theory, as long as we accept its assumptive structure can be applied in its original form, elaborated, or even revised in its subordinate implications” (Chiari & Nuzzo, 1996, p. 27). Presentation of the theory in research can be in the form of a conceptual model. However, while the theory can have many models, each model has only one theory (Viney & Oades, 1998).

Consisting of a set of propositions based on the supporting theory, the conceptual model directs both the planning of the research and the interpretation of its findings. Models provide important functions by which the researcher can evaluate the supporting theory. One function is the way conceptual models can order the theoretical assumptions and allow the researcher to keep in perspective the relevant research questions. “Using a model, with a limited set of events, helps the researcher to focus on the events that are relevant and ignore those that are not” (Viney & Oades, 1998, p. 6). Another function is that of accountability providing a means by which the research can test out assumptions of the theory. By making the theory testable and therefore accessible, conceptual models
offer a broader and more creative understanding of the research at hand (Sexton, 1997). Theoretical concepts and research variables become more articulated and better defined in the conceptual model, leading to better research design. Another function of the conceptual model in research is its capacity to encourage the researcher to use better measures for data collection. Within the model, the researcher has made assumptions about the people from whom the data is to be collected and these assumptions become reference points for the researcher and the reviewer. In the conceptual model, a system of inquiry is built in based on systems of meaning, beginning with lower order to higher order concepts. This allows the researcher to test out hypotheses generated from the propositions of the model (Chiari & Nuzzo, 1996).

How these various functions of conceptual models play out in research into personal construct psychology is developed by Viney and Oades (1998). The functions are described: ".....protection from the complexity of events, accountability, heurism, definitions of both concepts and variables, ways to determine the appropriateness of data collection methods and prediction" (Viney & Oades, 1998, p.4). They move beyond the functions of the conceptual model, by translating these functions into standards by which to evaluate personal construct models. It is these standards that will be used to evaluate the model I have developed for this research- a Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents.
The first standard put forward is based on the notion that personal construct models must be firmly based in the theory, that is, personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955; 1991). Four different levels are identified, the first being that the propositions need to be consistent and truthful to personal construct theory. I believe the model presented in this research does do that. It has been developed from the theoretical concepts of personal construct theory, a set of propositions setting out to truthfully reflect the basic assumptions of the theory. The second level by which to evaluate whether the propositions of the model are firmly based in personal construct theory, is whether they are consistent with the philosophical assumption of personal construct psychology, constructive alternativism. The model does in fact argue from the premise that there are many views of the world, and the one way we can understand adolescents, is to explore their world and attempt to discover and construe their meanings.

Conceptual models also need to be consistent with the concepts of their theories and also to more recent extensions of the theory. This model, I believe also fulfills this requirement. Both the general and the more specific propositions of the model have relied upon conceptual ideas and their constructions, as described by Kelly (1955; 1991) and later personal construct researchers. Finally, the fourth level states that the propositions of the model need to be consistent with the methodologies proposed in personal construct theory. The propositions are believed to be true to the philosophical assumption of constructive alternativism, and
capable of being operationalised by the methodologies of personal construct psychology. It would seem that there is sufficient evidence to declare that the model being presented in this research does meet the standard, of being true to its parent theory on at least four different levels.

The second standard put forward by Viney and Oades (1998) is that of clarity, that the model must be clearly and concisely described. Again the authors provide levels within this standard that need to be achieved. The first level is that the model needs to be easily comprehended and able to effectively generate research. I have attempted to satisfy this requirement by providing a developmental approach in the presentation of the propositions. This approach starts with general propositions about relationships, leads into relationships between group work and peer groups, is followed by propositions conceptualising the relationships between group work and adolescent developmental needs, and finally, ends with a set of propositions propounding the relationships between Interpersonal Transaction Group Work and troubled adolescents. The propositions are stated and defined in ways consistent with personal construct psychology. Whether the hypotheses developed from the model can be articulated in future research remains to be seen.

The second level, conciseness in a model, seeks both simplicity of ideas and simplicity in the language used to express these ideas. Each proposition in the Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents uses one sentence and is usually followed by another sentence which attempts to define and operationalise the concepts
in the propositions. The meanings behind the words used to express the ideas are drawn from personal construct theory, and are used consistently in this sense. According to this evidence, the model for this research does meet the standard of clarity, but again this standard remains untested outside this research.

The third standard put forward is that the model needs to be internally consistent, that the concepts and assumptions of the model are not in conflict. The premise for the propositions of the current model being put forward is based on the theoretical assumptions of the Corollaries of Commonality and Sociality, and the philosophical assumption of constructive alternativism, as defined and operationalised in the parent theory, personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955; 1991). In this way, I believe, the concepts and assumptions of the model are internally consistent as the propositions are compatible with each other and support each other. Threats to the internal consistency of the model could come from the linking of sociality and psychological change. Research (Selman, 1980) into the development of perspective-taking by adolescents suggests, that for some adolescents holding in their minds at the same time their own perspective and the perspective of another is difficult. It is only later that they are developmentally able to recognise that there are elements of right and wrong in all perspectives. For these adolescents, the process of sociality may not play a major role in their psychological changes.

Personal construct models need to be parsimonious. This is the fourth standard, one of accounting for maximum data with the minimum
number of propositions. While this model provides fifteen propositions which may be seen as considerable, it is also trying to provide propositions to account for four levels of relationships involving adolescents and their worlds. Although this model is complex, every attempt has been made to provide simplicity to enable future operationalisation of the propositions by researchers. For these reasons, I believe the model meets the standard of parsimony.

The next standard sets out how the model needs to deal adequately with the psychological events on which it concentrates. The inspiration for the model came from a desire to investigate personal construct group work with adolescents. The model began with two psychological events, troubled adolescence and group work. The propositions attempt to define and operationalise the relationships within each and between each psychological event. While there may have been other psychological events within this parameter that could have been identified, such as functional adolescents, I believe on balance the model does account for the psychological events of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents.

A model needs to be assessed according to whether it is comprehensive, that is, sufficiently broad-based to be able to include all relevant events on the one hand, and on the other, specific enough to make prediction possible. Comprehensiveness was sought in this model of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents by using a developmental structure beginning with general propositions about
adolescent relationships, leading to more specific propositions about group work relationships, and to a particular format of group work, Interpersonal Transaction Group. While attending to one particular grouping of adolescents, troubled adolescents, and to one group work format, Interpersonal Transaction Group, may limit the comprehensiveness of the model, it does however, operationalise some of the key concepts of Interpersonal Transaction Group for further research with troubled adolescents.

Finally, the propositions of the conceptual model enable predictions to be made about the findings of the research. The propositions in this model have generated hypotheses seeking to investigate individual change, efficacy as determined by the participants, and the process of personal construct group work with adolescents. These investigations were able to collect data that demonstrated that personal construct group work increases the abstract and interpersonal construing of the adolescents, and is construed by the participants as an efficacious treatment.

In general, the evidence provided suggests that the model presented in this research, Personal Construct Model of Group Work with Troubled Adolescents, fulfils the general functions of a conceptual model and specifically, goes towards meeting the standards presented by Viney and Oades (1998) to evaluate a conceptual model. The propositions of the model appear to be appropriately based in personal construct psychology, provide levels of clarity and parsimony, and appear internally consistent.
Problems in reaching the standards have been identified in two areas. These are whether the model deals adequately with the psychological events of adolescence and group work, and if the comprehensiveness of the model has been limited by the particular focus on one group of adolescents and on one format of personal construct group work. However, this loss it is felt has led to a gain by providing propositions within the model which have operationalised concepts that were useful in the current research.

Future research will need to develop the conceptual model by articulating more clearly and comprehensively the propositions about group work with adolescents being another peer group. Also, it is suggested there could be a linking of propositions about the developmental needs of adolescents with propositions about personal construct group work process. To do so would lead to the generation of hypotheses better able to measure group process with adolescent group work, addressing one of the functions of a conceptual model that of greater accountability.

8.6 An Account of Group Work Process with Troubled Adolescents

These investigations into personal construct group work with troubled adolescents have provided many experiments in the psychological challenge of identity formation. I want to argue here that these experiments have a significant impact on the group processes, and any therapeutic group intervention for adolescents needs to especially
account for this challenge, and that it is the depth of this acknowledgement that will determine the efficacy of the intervention.

It was found in this research that personal construct group work, while providing the interpersonal relationships and experiences of peer groups, also promoted growth and development. The struggle for identity, as experimented within the personal construct group work, was observed and felt by me to release both constructive and destructive experiences. In the following account of the group processes in the personal construct group work with troubled adolescents, these experiences are outlined with particular emphasis on the destructive experiences. I will argue that in the personal construct group, these experiences, constructive and destructive are interrelated, and that the growth and development of the group work depend on both these being available in the group work. Creative and destructive forces are bipolar constructs in group process.

I will explore the nature of the destructive experiences in the group work by elaborating on what I identify as the anti-group (acknowledgements to Nitsun, 1996). The anti-group is identified by Nitsun, as the group process in which the negative experiences and feelings are directed at the group, rather than at the group members. The group is then construed as threatening by the members. Recognition and validation of the role of the anti-group, I believe, has implications for the group leader. I will also explore the interrelationship of the anti-group and the group leader.
The experiences of these groups lead me to propose that personal construct psychology provides a clinical model and clinical practice, able to connect the creative and destructive forces in group work. I believe that personal construct psychology provides ways to translate into clinical practice the group processes of the anti-group. The emotional experiences of anxiety, threat, aggression and hostility, key players in the anti-group, are validated through personal construct group work. This psychology can provide the theoretical background, and the psychological skills, for the group leader to understand and work with the anti-group, and acknowledges the role of anxiety, threat, aggression and hostility in the developmental task of identity formation.

The therapeutic processes in group work, identified by Yalom (1985; 1995), emphasised growth and development. It was Bion (1961) who theorised about the destructive processes of the group work, and how the group task is undermined by the impact of primitive fantasies and behaviour subverting the group’s potential power and efficacy.

The positive value of hostility according to Gans (1989) is often unappreciated and underestimated. The expression of hostility can be a very important therapeutic vehicle in group work with children, announcing change and the chance for reparation and intimacy within the group (Slavson, 1964). While there has been a substantial body of writing on group cohesion, there has been very little beyond Bion’s work to account for the instability or disruption experienced in groups (Hawkins, 1986). Nitsun (1996) observes that descriptions of group aggression are
generally about aggression in the group in the form of anger, hostility or rivalry between members, and there has been very little about the notion of aggression towards the group. The general assumption is that the group is a safe, good place to be, and that any problems with it are within the individual members rather than the group itself. Aggression towards the group, Nitsun maintains, creates a problematic setting, triggering withdrawal or destructive behaviour ultimately set to undermine the group. Nitsun develops his thesis of an "anti-group", and sees the anti-group as occupying a complementary relationship with creative group forces. It is this conflict between creative and destructive which is seen by Nitsun as generative.

Adolescent groups are subject to sudden and seemingly inexplicable fluctuations of feeling and behaviour, and this was the case in these personal construct groups. Such fluctuations can lead to either constructive or destructive group processes. Within this account of group process, I believe, the concept of the anti-group is able to provide some understandings of these tensions experienced in adolescent groups. In the personal construct groups, constructive experiences seemed to exist in a dynamic relationship with destructive experiences, a wholesome group seemed to exist with the anti-group. As the adolescents searched for their identities, both the constructive and destructive properties of the anti-group were present. I would like to further suggest that by accounting for the anti-group from a personal construct perspective, it is possible to better understand the process of personal construct group work with
troubled adolescents. This better understanding can be achieved through this notion of bipolarity of constructs, and through the acknowledgement by personal construct psychology in the validation of key feeling states which play an active role in the anti-group, that is, anxiety, threat, aggression and hostility.

The personal construct groups in this research in the early stages were fraught with anxiety. Fuelled on fears of invalidation, loss of control and shameful exposure, both members and the group leaders were vulnerable to experiencing anxiety and hostility towards the group. During the early stages of the groups, the level of anxiety and hostility was heightened, often expressed through aggressive comments with either implicit or explicit sexual overtones. These comments or actions were indiscriminately directed at other members or at the leader(s). An overriding sense of distrust and lack of safety developed. Issues of trust-distrust were at times unable to be elaborated upon, and experimented with, without the anxiety of the adolescents becoming too great. This was illustrated in the groups by some members electing not to participate in some group activities, in particular the 'trust' exercises. Across all groups, when the adolescents' anxieties were building, disparaging remarks increased in frequency and intensity as did comments used by the members to keep distance between themselves and the group, 'them – not me'.

As the group work moved along, interpersonal relations took precedence. Yalom (1985; 1995) described interpersonal learning as
probably the core "curative factor" in group work. Interpersonal learning can bring also interpersonal threat and tensions. This sense of threat and subsequent tensions did develop from interpersonal experiences within the group, of rivalry, envy, dominance, criticism, rejection, scapegoating and hostility. As these adolescents attempted to regain their sense of control, they lashed out at the other members, unleashing their feelings of hurt and anger. These feelings were expressed by the members being persistently sarcastic to each other, cutting across other members speaking, and personal verbal abuse of each other. The tensions would also be carried over into the group activities. In one group, during the role play in the activity, the family sculptures, one boy was consistently given the role of 'mother' by each member. The members would then begin to criticise his role playing, claiming it was offensive and against their mother and then begin to intimidate him and threaten to fight him. Further, in this group and others, members would tease a member, while another member would appear conciliatory and inclusive of the scapegoated member, leaving this member very vulnerable. At other times, these feelings and behaviours would be directed at members and at the group, for not always participating in 'trust' activities. The blame for the assaults was at times placed on the setting or group, rather than on the members themselves.

Blaming of the group or setting took the form of indiscriminate disruptive behaviour. The members would confront any group talk, and attempt to draw the attention of the group away and onto themselves.
This meant at times, the group would contain all members being disruptive for the 'sake of it'. In one group, a boy had told another member before the group met, that he was going 'to trash' the group room. While his hurt and anger arose from an incident earlier in the week with a member of his family, the group member was highly anxious as he raged against the group, the people, the equipment, with his fears of further rejection. The anti-group created group processes through which all the difficult issues were usually displaced outside the membership of the group.

As the personal construct groups matured, there was generally a reduction in anti-group behaviour. There was greater trust and intimacy and a sense of safety. And yet, with that sense of safety came greater openness and the potential for further confrontation and anti-group behaviour. The destructive force of the anti-group appeared when the adolescents experienced the group cohesion and empathy as frustrating, and difficult to construe and manage. Also, because the group was coming to an end, ambivalent feelings were expressed, and the anxiety arising from this made it difficult for the group members to work through them. These ambivalent feelings were probably no better illustrated than when members in the groups were able to participate together in the group activities, but unable to work together as a group during group discussion. The group experience became one of members pulling the group apart while others were actively drawing it together. There was a sense of chaos as feelings about belonging and not belonging vacillated...
within the group and within individual members. Anti-group behaviour was then acted out, making the termination of the group a difficult process with many ambivalent feelings still present.

It was also apparent that often the adolescent groups created those anxieties they sought to allay. With the multiplicity of members and potential relationships, there was a constant need for the adolescents to differentiate self and other. The perceived threat of loss of identity evoked anxiety for some members, leading to hostile feelings, with the adolescents construing the group as divided into good and bad. While the bad part in the group was often scapegoated, the bad part also became that thing outside the group - school, parents and adults. The division of the group as good and bad, often began with the scapegoating of a member. In groups, where the scapegoated members were trying to pull the group apart with disruptive behaviour and indiscriminant verbal attacks, the members, once they realized their group could withstand the assaults, then turned on the attackers. They identified the 'bad' in the group now with these members. Once the 'bad' had been identified, all the members joined together. Then as a group, they condemned the school and authority figures, and painted these figures as worse than themselves. The group, for example, was seen by some as caring, while the school was said to not care about them. One member expressed it in the following way: "...the teachers can't be hurt but they hurt us," while in another group the scapegoating of the bad part was forcefully stated as "...we want the group because we can do what we like and shit on the school
which is shit and nobody can touch us." While this process had the power to weaken the group by increasing anxiety and concerns of safety, it also had the paradoxical effect of uniting the group against authority, such as school and parents. The "other" in the process of differentiation became the authority of adults. It seemed the anti-group became a constructive force allowing the adolescents to experiment with their feelings of conflict with the world, as framed by their attempts to work through separating self from other.

I believe that, if the rage and hostility is not acknowledged by the group and the leader(s), then the relationship between the members can be undermined, leading to extreme tension in the fabric of the group. Troubled adolescents feel that the world in general invalidates them, especially their identity. They are very vulnerable to similar experiences of invalidation while in the group, and will vent their anger and hostility onto the group, seeking to destroy the group rather than have their self further invalidated. For some members, experiences of validation in the group often follow the acceptance by most of the group of a member who had previously been scapegoated. These members who felt invalidated would then set out to disrupt groupwork or activities, and at times would talk about wanting to 'destroy' or 'wreck' the group.

My experiences suggest that the group leader(s) plays a pivotal role by understanding and validating these vulnerable feelings of the group members. Within the personal construct group, the leader(s) needs to actively support the process of experimentation by the adolescents in the
construing and subsequent reconstruing of what they feel is their “good self” and their “bad self”. However, the leader(s) needs to be aware that this process of differentiation creates tensions of its own. While experiencing a sense of separateness, the adolescent has to face problems created by difference. For adolescents still very much unsure of who they are, the emotional pain of feeling separate from family, of not knowing what to expect in relationships any more, can be difficult. The leader(s) needs to show the adolescents how to cope with the inevitable loss that follows on from the gain. The process of self-other differentiation becomes a seesaw, one of continuous tension, and the anti-group forces, I believe, tend to predominate as the adolescents struggle with these conflicts.

Across the span of the life of the personal construct group, there may be a suddenness, intensity and amplification of feeling which can be disturbing and threatening to the group leader(s). The leadership of the group therapist becomes constantly under challenge during these sudden and intense changes in group affect. The crucial integrating function of the leader(s) becomes one of pulling the group together. This requires the group leader(s) to keep the whole group in mind, and not to side with any members. Keeping the whole group in mind is an important technique (Nitsun, 1996), being aware that the capacity of adolescents to construe groups as entities, and to maintain a group construct, may be underdeveloped. Keeping the group in mind requires, in cognitive and emotional terms, the development of formal operations, the basis of
abstract thinking (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). The capacity for abstract thinking develops in adolescence, and the complex demands arising from the group, could make it emotionally difficult for the adolescents to hold the group in mind.

At these stressful times in the personal construct groups, there was very strong pressure for the leader(s) to collude with the group in scapegoating another member. The adolescents would also attack the leader's authority through angry challenges, implicitly encouraging the leader(s) to control or criticise an acting out member. The group leader(s) needed to keep the whole group in mind when the scapegoated member would retaliate against the whole group and seek to disrupt it by throwing and/or breaking equipment. During this process, the group would draw together seeking allegiance with the leader(s) by demanding the leader(s) do something to stop the disruptions, and blaming the leader(s) for letting it happen. It was necessary for the leader(s) to distinguish destructive from constructive expressions of hostility, and to set limits to prevent abusive interactions taking place, and to keep the whole group in mind.

As the adolescents struggled with the anxiety and the threat they experienced with identity formation, the abuse did escalate. I noticed that intervention by the leader(s) was influenced by our judgement of the events and by our construing of the group aggression. Such challenges did arouse strong negative feelings in our counter-transferences. Winnicott (1949) has described how the hate in the counter-transference is a natural response to the demands made of the leader, and owning such
hatred is an essential part of the therapeutic process. At these times, we, as group leaders, were apt to be confused about ourselves and the group, often feeling powerless and impotent, while struggling to contain our own feelings of threat and anger, and to keep the whole group in mind. We also found that challenges to the authority of the leader(s) did occur when the group believed the leader(s) was able to previously withstand and survive their confrontations. Within the groups, these confrontations were often in the form of personal attacks on the leader(s). These attacks often began with a member revealing anxious and/or hurtful experiences. In one group, it followed a member discussing his hurtful and violent altercation with his brother. The leaders were accused by the member of not caring about him and the group. In another group, a member angrily recounted how he had been recently placed on a disciplinary level at school, and then turned and blamed the leaders and the group for the level. (Disciplinary levels are graded to reflect the seriousness of the misbehaviour, and these levels can incur loss of privileges and/or punishments such as detentions.) On all occasions, the member continued to disrupt the group activity and process for the rest of the session. Such attacks, it appeared, were made possible because the group no longer felt so anxious. The members felt the group was validated, and that the leader(s) had the capacity to impose limits, cope with their anxiety, and keep the group together.

The anti-group, I would argue, becomes the barometer of group process. It can measure the growth and development of the group. It can
signal to the leader whether group process is a validating or invalidating experience. The anti-group also reflects the conflictual struggle adolescent groups need to travel while undertaking the journey of differentiation of self from others. The concept of the anti-group, I believe, enables personal construct group work to dynamically explore and elaborate on these conflictual struggles of the adolescents. It enables the personal construct group leader(s) to validate this struggle, and to offer experimental situations where further meaning can be gained. Importantly, as a clinical process, it allows the leader(s) to maintain or re-establish the therapeutic distance (Leitner, 1995) in the adolescent group. A theoretical understanding of the role of the anti-group in group process can also be validating for the group leader(s), allowing a reduction of negative feelings in the counter-transference by providing a clinical framework in which to reconstrue the adolescents' hostility.

8.7 Implications of the Research for Group Work with Troubled Adolescents

What are the implications of this research? I will first direct my observations to the clinician. I will make them through the framework of my constructions based on the experience of the participants and myself, and the narratives created from conducting personal construct group work. Personal construct approach to group work was a validating experience for the troubled adolescents. They continued to attend and participate. The bipolarity of constructs and meaning-making, is understood by them. They like the focus on them as unique, with their
own system of meaning-making. The process of reflexivity enabled the adolescents to feel validated, worthy of interest.

While the philosophical assumptions and the therapeutic process which arises from these assumptions engages and validates troubled adolescents, it also allows for conflictual struggles and aggressive and hostile strivings to be very much in the face of every participant. Personal construct psychology does provide a conceptual framework for understanding these powerful feelings of invalidation on an individual level. However, I believe it is this concept of anti-group which allows the group leader to make better sense of it within group process. The implication here is that while personal construct psychology provides the clinician with a comprehensive and effective understanding of the individual, it does not fully account for adolescents in group process. Personal construct psychology also releases the clinician from needing to 'pathologise' the adolescent.

In the light of this experience, what would I do differently? Firstly, I would be more aware of how the personal construct research accounts of group process with adult populations are not sufficient as a body of knowledge to research adolescent group process. Secondly, my experience told me how ten sessions as a short-term intervention for troubled adolescents is too brief. Thirdly, an understanding of the role of the anti-group would have allowed me and other group leaders to feel and be more effective, and to feel more validated personally and professionally.
Another implication arising from the research, was the active role of all the participants in the assessment of the efficacy of the group work. While it demonstrated the different meanings the participants had about effectiveness, it also showed a lot of commonality in their constructions. It also gave ownership of the group work to the participants, and I sensed a greater commitment by all. It also provided another window to view the capacity of these troubled adolescents to reconstrue themselves in more positive and effective ways, enhancing their chances to relate to, and make sense of others.

If I were to undertake the research again, I would use personal construct psychology in a more comprehensive way. I would do this by using personal construct psychology to initially identify the samples of adolescents. It is anticipated this could involve assessing the adolescents' meaning making, using for example, the experiential constructivist approach put forward by Leitner, Faidley & Celentana (2000), along with the ratings by the adolescents of their self-defined problems (Winter, 2000). I would also look to a more active participation by the participants in the data collection, keeping in mind the five stages outlined by Viney (1988) in the mutual orientation model, where the data collector and data contributor give and gain from the research process. Finally, if I was undertaking these research investigations again, I would use the assessment framework used at the start to identify the meaning-making of the samples, the Kellyan diagnostic constructs (Winter, 2000), to evaluate
the behavioural changes construed by the participants to have occurred following the group work.

8.8 Conclusions

In conclusion, the question needs to be raised: Has this research been able to meet the challenges raised from the shortcomings identified by reviews of research into adolescent group work, and also achieve my aim to demonstrate the effectiveness of personal construct group work with troubled adolescents? Yes, I believe the research has demonstrated that personal construct psychology offers a pluralistic methodology, providing a research model that can be deductive, theory-guided and quantitative, but also one that explores participants' meanings and experiences of group work.

Although it has some weaknesses, the research has been able to provide an effective school-based personal construct group work intervention that is short-term and structured, and able to be evaluated. It has established in a truly personal construct way, by using the voices from a variety of participants, that personal construct group work can be an effective psychological treatment of troubled adolescents at school. It has also confirmed the healing power of the relationship. The challenge now is to other researchers to evaluate and test this model of group work with troubled adolescents.
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APPENDICES
This is our group. Its success or failure is up to us. We come together in search of ourselves. What we have to share is honesty; what we hope to gain is trust. Through expressing our feelings, hopes, and dreams, we can become known to one another. Friendship and self-understanding are the rewards. We will respect the privacy of each member by keeping group business within the group. What we see here, what we say here, what we hear here, let it stay here.

There are only four rules for this group: (a) No side conversations are allowed, (b) we must be kind to one another, (c) no physical harm to people or the room, and (d) when we meet as a group we all sit together in a circle.

(Carrell, 1993)
Appendix 2

CATEGORIES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT RESPONSES TO THE REPERTORY GRID AND THE SELF-CHARACTERISATION

CATEGORY A - SELF DESCRIPTION

A.1 CONSTRUING OF SELF

A.2 CONSTRUING OF SELF IN RELATION TO OTHERS

Category A, Self Description, is designed to accommodate two ways in which adolescents may construe themselves. The first, construing of self, refers to psychological statements. These are personal statements or the way in which the adolescents would describe themselves, their unique characteristics. The second, construing of self in relation to others, refers to interpersonal construing, the way in which the adolescents construe themselves in relation to important people in their lives i.e. friends, parents, family.

The theoretical and research background behind the design of Category A, Self Description, is drawn from, broadly speaking, four accounts of the psychological process of adolescent development. A brief overview of the literature will directly follow with a fuller account later.

The first account focuses on the theoretical writings and the research findings of personal construct psychology. Kelly (1955) wrote about the uniqueness of the individual and that self should be considered as another construct defining the individuality or uniqueness of the person. It is the cycle of validation andinvalidation by others of the construct system which becomes pivotal in the developmental process of psychological maturation. As there is further elaboration of self, so there is further elaboration of interpersonal relations. Research into the personal construing of children and adolescents has suggested, with increasing age, construing of self and others elaborates.

From the cognitive-development perspective, reference can be made to the work of Elkind. While formal-operational thought (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958) will allow for adolescents to recognise the thoughts of others, adolescents may become overwhelmingly egocentric and preoccupied with their own thoughts and feelings.

Another area of research which has provided support for the design of Category A, Self Description, has been in social psychology and the development of the self-concept. Rosenberg (1985), in delineating the major characteristics of a ‘good’ self concept, found the concept of mattering to be important. Interpersonal mattering refers to whether adolescents feel they have an impact on significant people in their lives.

Research into group formation, in particular the role of the peer group in adolescence, provides data relevant to the interpersonal experiences of adolescents. Theoretical models explaining the significance of peer friendships in adolescence, range from psychoanalytic to ego psychology to social cognitive approaches. Research suggests belonging to peer groups provides adolescents with an important experience in interpersonal relationships and this impacts significantly on the process of identity formation.
Broadly speaking, the literature suggests that adolescence is marked by a search for self-identity. This process depends on the interplay between the psychological maturation of adolescents and the development of their interpersonal relationships. Category A has been designed to measure both these psychological processes through the constructions the adolescent provides for self and others.

THE PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PERSPECTIVE

Kelly (1955) wrote that people's behaviour and personality can be understood in terms of the individual and the unique complex of constructs people use to perceive the world and adapt to it. The emphasis is on the uniqueness of the individual. Each individual constructs his/her own hypotheses to explain past and present experiences. These hypotheses also allow the individual to discriminate between experiences and events, as they are perceived by the individual, to plan present and future action. Kelly considered development to be related only in part to chronological age. In personal construct psychology, this developmental process takes place through the cycle of validation and invalidation by others of the construct system, a continuous development of construing of self and not self.

It is the placement and classification by individuals of their own behaviour and actions within their personal construct system which comes to define the self. The self, was considered by Kelly (1955), as another construct defining the individuality or uniqueness of the person, a self-identity. Kelly stated that "the self is, when considered in the appropriate context, a proper concept or construct. It refers to a group of events which are alike in a certain way and, in the same way, necessarily different from other events" (p.131). Research studies with children and adolescents suggest that individuals have a clear and defined notion of their identity only to the extent that children or adolescents can discern a specific pattern of similarities and differences between self and others (Adams-Webber, 1970, 1977, 1978; Adams-Webber & Benjafield, 1976; Bannister & Agnew, 1976; Benjafield & Adams-Webber, 1975). "For we have not a concept of self, but a bipolar construct of self-not self or self-others" (Bannister & Agnew, 1976, p.99). Research has also contended that identity can be conceptualised as a self-constructed theory of the self (Berzonsky & G.J. Neimeyer, 1988). "A self-theory is a knowledge structure or self-schema which contains constructs and postulates about the self interacting in the world" (Berzonsky, Rice & Neimeyer, 1990, p.251). One's identity or self-theory is composed of idiosyncratic self-constructs (Berzonsky & G.J. Neimeyer, 1988).

Research into the personal construing of children and adolescents has generally supported Kelly. It has been found that construing of self elaborates as the whole construct system elaborates. With increasing age, children are able to more readily recognise themselves as distinct from other people, as the constructs children have about themselves increase in number, in the range of convenience and in strength and variety of implications (Bannister & Agnew, 1976).

As self-construing elaborates with age, adolescents develop interpersonal experience which allows them to form more differentiated perceptions of the personalities of others (Adams-Webber, Schwenker & Barbeau, 1972). Kelly's model of interpersonal relations implies that the probability that one person will be able to understand the constructions of another should also increase with the degree of similarity between their personal construct systems.

Duck (1975) studied the relationship between adolescents' friendship choices and their personality development. The research findings suggest that there are gradual changes in the nature of commonality between friends as their relationship develops. Once a friendship has become firmly established, similarity in terms of psychological constructs
seems more important than similarity in terms of other types of construct. Duck continues by proposing that there may be two distinct stages through which the development of a role relationship typically progresses. In the initial stage, each adolescent is concerned primarily with the non-psychological construing of the other. In the later stage, interaction between adolescent friends will involve communication mostly in terms of one another's psychological constructions. This implies that commonality in terms of non-psychological constructs may facilitate interactions between new acquaintances, whereas similarity in terms of psychological constructs should become increasingly important as their relationship continues to develop.

These research findings by Duck suggest that for adolescents, the peer group offers not only a commonality of experience, but also a social process providing an impetus for psychological development. To develop a new style of construing is to develop a need for validating it and friendship with a similar other satisfies that need, while also introducing the adolescents to a fuller range of constructs than they presently have (Duck, 1975).

In general terms, research suggests that adolescence is a developmental process which is heralded by two significant psychological events. Firstly, through the greater elaboration of self, the adolescent engages in the process of self-identity. To enable this developmental process to take place, interpersonal relations achieve greater significance. It is through the cycle of validation and invalidation by others of the construct system that adolescents are able to develop a construct system defining the individuality and uniqueness of themselves, a self-identity.

It is anticipated that Category A, Self Description, will be able to measure the adolescent's discernment of his or her self as unique. It is also anticipated that the category will be able to measure interpersonal construing and be sensitive to the construction processes by which the adolescent construes the pattern of similarities and differences between self and others.

COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

With the onset of formal operations, adolescents can conceptualise their own thoughts from those of other people. However, while adolescents can now recognise the thoughts of others, they may fail to differentiate between the objects towards which the thoughts of others are directed and those which are the focus of their own concern (Elkind, 1967). Egocentrism emerges. It is a process where adolescents believe others are as interested in themselves as much as they are, and it is accompanied by a sense of personal uniqueness and indestructibility. There is a preoccupation with and a self-consciousness about physical appearance and interpersonal behaviour. Adolescents construct what Elkind calls an imaginary audience where other people are as admiring or as critical of them as they are of themselves.

As adolescents see themselves as very important to the imaginary audience, Elkind proposes that adolescents come to regard themselves and their feelings as unique and special. According to the adolescents no-one else can know how intensely they feel, and it is this feeling of uniqueness and intensity Elkind labels as personal fable.
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Rosenberg and his colleague (Rosenberg, 1979, 1985; Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982) have written extensively on the self-concept and adolescent development. The general notion behind their theoretical and research perspective is that a higher or more advanced self-concept is associated with more positive psychological well-being. Psychological well-being it is proposed includes such diverse components as a sense of worth, confidence in oneself, perceived ability to perform well, self-efficacy, psychological comfort and feeling good about oneself. Drawing on three large-scale studies of adolescents, Rosenberg (1985) assessed the association between self-concept and psychological well-being. He was able to delineate the major characteristics of a 'good' self-concept and included a high self-esteem, feelings of "mattering", stability in self-concept, low vulnerability, a sense of personal control, low levels of public anxiety, and what was described as an "harmonious plane of co-ordination".

It is the concept of mattering, in particular interpersonal mattering, it is proposed relates to the construing measured by Category A. Mattering refers to the degree in which adolescents feel they count or make a difference. Rosenberg, (1985) identifies two types. Societal mattering involves feelings of making a difference in the broader sociopolitical events of society. The second type, that of interpersonal mattering, refers to feelings of whether one has an impact on specific significant others. Rosenberg maintains that the essential ingredient of interpersonal mattering is the feeling that one is the object of another person’s attention or notice. Corollaries of mattering include feeling missed if absent, being of concern to others, feeling as if one is someone else’s ego extension, and feeling that others depend on one.

PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON GROUP FORMATION

To understand why peer groups emerge during adolescence requires a recognition of the psychosocial nature of adolescence. Adolescents are pressured by individual and social needs to identify with a social group. The social environment encourages group identity and discourages social alienation. These interpersonal pressures lead to the formation of groups as adolescents are encouraged by the social structure of our society to identify with a peer group.

From early adolescence, young people prefer to be in the company of other young people in groups (Brown, Eicher & Petrie, 1986). The research data also indicate that both quantitatively and qualitatively the socialisation experience of adolescents is focused on peer interaction (Crockett, Losoff & Petersen, 1984; Moran & Eckenrode, 1991). A number of theories have been put forward about why early adolescents turn to peer groups. It has been argued that these friendships are associated with changing aspects of psychological drives that are related to narcissism and emerging phallic conflicts (Blos, 1962). From an ego-psychology perspective, Erikson (1968) suggests that friends offer constructive feedback and information on self-definitions and perceived commitments. McCandless (1970), a social-cognitive theorist, sees peer groups as important because of their reinforcing nature.

Research suggests that adolescents chose their friends based on similarity of interests, values and opinions (Whitbeck, Simons, Conger & Lorenz, 1989), the most common characteristic of adolescent friends being similar age, and same sex and race (Kandel, 1981). In her research into the processes underlying friendship formation, Kandel (1981) found that similarity between friends was due to either assortative pairing where friends are selected on the basis of similarity or on a socialisation process where friends influence each other.

Within the process of identity formation, Erikson (1959) felt that there were other factors necessary apart from the concept of childhood identification. One was the need for the child to experience social opportunities where she or he recognises how others perceive one to be. Social experiences encourage the development of social skills and this
development in turn creates positive experiences and a feeling of self-confidence. R.W. White (1960) referred to this last factor as the need to develop competency, the ability to feel effective in one's dealings with the world. For White, competency, as reflected in the adolescent's abilities, skills and limitations is essential in order to understand identity development.

**CATEGORY B - USE OF CONSTRUING**

**B.1 RECONSTRUING OF PAST EVENTS**

**B.2 ANTICIPATING EVENTS USING EXISTING CONSTRUCTS**

Category B, Use of Construing, is designed to account for the process of construing by adolescents. Reconstruction is a process involving changes in perceptions and understanding of past events, a reconstruing of past events. It is also a capacity to carry this process of reconstruction forward when anticipating and subsequently interpreting future events and experiences, anticipating events using existing constructs. This process encapsulates the sense that adolescents are now more able to work out for themselves how they would want to behave and feel. The first measure is B.1, reconstruing of past events, describes how adolescents no longer place the same meaning or interpretation to a past event or experience. The second measure, B.2, anticipating events using existing constructs, accounts for the reconstruction of past events or experiences enabling adolescents to attach a different meaning or interpretation to future events.

The theoretical and research background behind the design of Category B, Use of Construing, will now be briefly presented. A fuller account follows.

Personal construct theory provides an account of the process of construing-reconstruing. Changes in peoples' construing occur mainly in response to disconfirmation of their anticipations (Kelly, 1955). For some people, particularly adolescents with disordered behaviour, reconstruction is difficult to undertake and when undertaken is misguided and fails to provide validation. Difficulties in engaging in the elaborative process may be related to a failure to develop commonal constructs. Without the necessary commonality, sociality becomes difficult to sustain. Reconstruction, that is, the change from disorder to order, can be facilitated and activated through therapy. It can provide the adolescents the avenue for engaging in the elaborative process of circumspection, pre-emption and choice.

Research into the intellectual processes of adolescence has provided understanding into the content and processing of information. The developmental milestones of adolescence in information processing lead to a capacity for more complex problem-solving and decision-making abilities and to a capacity for social insight.

From the research into personality development of adolescents, a psychotherapist has identified four psychological processes occurring in adolescence which he maintains are essential for adult character development. The first involves a capacity to identify with other role figures beside parent. The process of adolescence involves coping with negative psychosocial experiences and the manner in which the adolescent resolves this trauma is significant. Adolescence also allows the individual to acquire a sense of their personal history. Finally, it is during this time that adolescents develop a sense of committed sexual-identity.

Research drawn from general theories of self-concept, has been able to delineate the major characteristics of a 'good' self-concept in adolescence. Findings into the characteristic, personal control or self-efficacy, are presented.
THE PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PERSPECTIVE

Changes in the form and content of peoples’ construing occur mainly in response to disconfirmation of their anticipations. Kelly (1955) continues by postulating that it is those constructs closely related to the original expectations which will be most affected by predictive failure. The impact of any invalidating experience in terms of its range of ‘implications’ will be greater when the constructs within a given system of subsystem are highly interrelated. When people are anxious, that is, when they are confronted with events outside the ranges of convenience of their construct system, they will attempt to make changes in order to accommodate their construing of those events. “From the standpoint of the psychology of personal constructs, anxiety, per se, is not to be classified as either good or bad. It represents the awareness that one’s construction system does not apply to the events at hand. It is, therefore, a precondition for making revisions” (Kelly, 1955, p.498). This revision will involve further differentiation and reintegration of their construct systems, the process of reconstruction.

Reconstruction can follow when people receive an unexpected reaction from someone. They then question their own behaviour rather than accusing the other person of being wrong. Kelly (1955) equated learning with experience. When learning takes place people successively reconstrue -leading to reexperience. The cycle starts with anticipation and ends with reconstruction. Kelly (1955) writes about the cycle of circumspection, pre-emption and choice. The circumspection phase Kelly describes as a time when people survey all issues which might be entailed in decision-making. The phase of pre-emption refers to a focusing on the most important issues. Choice represents the phase when people decide how to act. Problems in the decision-making cycle for people can manifest in extreme positions. For example, people may be stuck in endless circumspection finding it difficult to come to any conclusion whatsoever, or people may circumspect for a very long time and can only make an impulsive choice in the end. Alternatively, people may impulsively decide without considering the implications of their actions.

Children or adolescents moving into school can experience such decision-making problems as they face interpersonal events that may be entirely outside the range of convenience of their constructs. A construction of self validated at home, may be invalidated at school. Discriminations made by these adolescents of situations requiring obedience and independence may not serve their purpose in the world of school.

A personal construct model of adolescents assumes adolescents are creating meaning in order to anticipate the world and its ways. Emotion in personal construct theory is a construct system in a state of actual or impending change. Behaviour brings knowledge because it is through behaviour that the adolescent poses questions, carries out experiments and evaluates their outcome. Not only is behaviour experimental but it is an elaborate choice, a construing of self.

In constructing a personal construct model of disorder for the child, Agnew (1985) reminds us that however disordered or distorted a child’s behaviour may appear to others, the behaviour carries its own unique sense for the child and for the child’s construing of his/her self. Drawing from Agnew’s model of disorder, an attempt will now be made to discuss the psychological process through reconstruction from disorder to order for adolescents.

Adolescent construction of self is elaborated through the extension and definition of the constructs, self-not self and self-others. Accounting for the relationship between self and others Kelly (1955) proposed the commonality and sociality corollaries. The commonality corollary deals with the question of shared meaning. The sociality corollary addresses
interpersonal interaction and the need for social role engagement. Disordered behaviour by the adolescent may reflect a failure to develop commonal constructs. The adolescent experiences a marked inconsistency in what is presented as common constructs within the family or when the culture of the family, school and community are significantly different.

For the adolescent to begin the process of exploration involved in sociality, some commonality is necessary. The research findings by Duck (1975) provide some support. By studying the relationship between adolescents' friendship choices and personality development, Duck reported that commonality facilitated and initiated friendships. Once commonality was established similarity in terms of psychological constructs became increasingly important as the relationship developed. If the constructs are confused or unusual or are not articulated or enquiry is not possible then it is not possible for the adolescent to develop constructions about others' constructions. The adolescent may experience difficulty forming relationships.

Psychological disorder is primarily a failure in elaboration. Elaboration is founded on choice and for a construct to work well both ends of the dichotomy need to be elaborated, 'for the richness of meaning of a construct lies in the contrast' (Fransella, 1972). Disorder of behaviour may arise out of the adolescent's pre-emptive commitment to either end of the construct. The contrast remains unarticulated and unexplored and if the adolescent does decide to experiment with the submerged pole decision-making may be impulsive, without direction, and troublesome to others. Therapy can provide the adolescent with means by which the alternative behaviour or submerged pole is rephrased in a language that is understood by them. Adolescents are also encouraged to experiment in ways which suit their needs and are acceptable to the adults.

Anticipation for adults is often not lived in the present, the here and now, but shaped by superordinate construing into long-term anticipation. Some commitments by adolescents are generally underscored by short-term anticipation which leads to disordered behaviour. They are described as impulsive, moody and unable to tolerate frustration. They often become trapped in repetitive cycles where they are unable to understand the "rules" for validation by the school, community and family. Therapy can offer these adolescents a language and means by which short-term anticipation can become longer term. Therapy groups can support psychological maturation by allowing adolescents to reformulate and try out alternative constructions and to negotiate and explore avenues usually ignored.

COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Although early research into intelligence recognised that along with a general g factor in intelligence, there was a role for the higher mental abilities associated with attention, memory and comprehension, the focus remained on the content rather than on the cognitive process. It was Guilford (1967) who proposed a model of intelligence based on the processing of information. The adolescent was now seen as actively seeking out information and engaging in complex thinking.

Intelligence now involved not only the content of information processing but also the process by which information becomes useful information to the adolescent. In the light of the work by Guilford and others, Sternberg (1977) formulated the concept of componential analysis. He proposed that components were the elementary processes by which adolescents form internal representations of external objects or ideas and engage in mental manipulations. Within this model of intelligence, Sternberg recognises five basic forms of information-processing components. Meta components are complex decision-making and problem-solving processes. Control strategies involving meta components, become more refined between childhood and adolescence. With adolescence, there is a more effective use of instructional rules and guidelines and a more efficient performance of tasks. This
sophistication in decision-making and problem-solving processing allows information processing to become broader where more diverse pieces of information are utilized. Adolescents are better able to combine and encode these pieces of information. They are also able to better comprehend the information because they are capable of looking at the connections. There is also greater flexibility in the utilization of strategies for gathering information. These developmental trends lead to more complex problem-solving and decision-making abilities in adolescence (Sternberg & Powell, 1983).

From an information processing or cognitive model, competence by adolescents in making decisions comes from a logical approach to choices based on knowledge or information. The knowledge involves a process where there is active consideration of viewpoints and the ability to translate these choices into action. Integral to this process of consideration of viewpoints is the adolescent’s capacity for social insight. Here adolescents are able to understand the motivation and intentions behind not only the behaviour of others but of themselves as well.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Research into personality development offers some understanding of personality development, the process of construing by adolescents. From an extensive background in psychotherapy with children and adolescents, Blos (1979) identified what he considered four essential preconditions for character development which occur during adolescence. The first, is that the ego must loosen infantile-object ties. Incited by pubertal change adolescents begin to gradually identify with other role models beside parental figures. This transformation makes independence possible allowing for new identifications and explorations into independence.

The second precondition proposed by Blos deals with the implications of and necessity for trauma. It is only through experiencing trauma can adolescents develop sensitivities to identify and cope with the consequences of a loss of self-control or a decline in self-esteem. By adaptively changing the potential trauma of negative psychosocial experiences, the ego is allowed to deal with such situations and to gain from these experiences.

The third precondition for positive character formation to occur is that of ego continuity. Blos was identifying the psychosocial process where in order to have a future adolescents need to recognise the immediate past and develop a sense of heritage, of social identity and a sense of one’s roots.

The fourth precondition deals with the resolution of bisexual orientation. There is a need for adolescents to diminish sexual ambiguity allowing for a sense of committed sexual-identity formation.

Research within a social psychological perspective offers some support also for the design of Category B. The general theories of self-concept as applied to adolescent development are based on the assumption that a higher self-concept correlates with more positive psychological well-being. Rosenberg(1985) has assessed this association between self-concept and psychological well-being. Drawing on three large-scale studies of adolescents, Rosenberg concluded that a sense of personal control or self-efficacy is an essential characteristic of good self-concept. Locus of control, the individual’s expectations about internal versus external control, increases steadily during adolescence. Adolescents who have a sense of internal locus of control believe they are in control of what happens to them, and that changes by them, will result in future events being understood or experienced differently by them. Future events are no longer considered the result of factors other than themselves.
CATEGORY C - SELF EVALUATION

C.1 UNDERSTANDING OF OWN LIMITATIONS

C.2 VALIDATION OF SELF

Category C, Self Evaluation, is designed to measure the adolescent's constructions of self. Adolescence is a time of identity development where adolescents strive for an integrated sense of self. In personal construct theory, constructions of self are elaborated from bipolar constructs of self-not self or self-others. The elaboration process involves an understanding of how others 'see' you and the capacity to respond effectively to the validation or invalidation of self constructs. The first scale, C.1 understanding of own limitations, and the second scale, C.2 validation of self, refer to the elaborative process of a construction of self.

The theoretical and research background behind the creation of Category C has been drawn from social cognition and identity formation-development studies. A brief overview of these investigations will now follow with a fuller account later.

Personal construct theory considers psychological development as an evolutionary process beginning in infancy and continuing through to old age. Constructions of self are formed and reformed through an elaborative process of comparing oneself and others. Research findings with children and adolescents suggest that there is an intensification of this process during adolescence. Adolescents unlike younger children, are able to use propositional and reflexive construing allowing for greater differentiation and integration of self constructs.

From the cognitive-development perspective adolescence is a time of improved problem-solving and decision-making abilities. These developmental tasks allow for more effective social information processing. These findings appear to be supported by the work of Selman (1980) and Elkind (1967). Selman proposes that adolescents are now able cognitively and psychologically to understand others and understand how others may 'see' them. Elkind suggests that with the onset of formal operations, adolescents are less egocentric and more willing to integrate the feelings of others and to recognise their own limitations. Cognitive processes become increasingly based on self-reflection within a broader social context (Mead, 1934).

Research also suggests that with cognitive differentiation there is increased disparity between ideal self-image and the real self. According to Erikson, adolescence is a time of searching for answers about identity. Marcia (1966) conceptualised the measurement of identity leading the way for a number of research investigations into the development and process of identity formation. Generally, the findings support Erikson's contention that identity formation is the central psychological task of adolescence. The findings also describe identity formation as a process of increasing differentiation.

PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PERSPECTIVE

Personal construct theory assumes that people function like scientists, using their own personal theories of themselves and other people to attempt to predict, explain and control events in their experience. Psychological development is considered essentially an evolutionary process "involving the progressive differentiation of systems into independently organised subsystems ('fragmentation') and the integration of the functions of these subsystems at increasingly higher levels of hierarchic organisation ('modulation')" (Adams-Webber, 1981). While differentiation allows people to make meaningful discriminations of events, integration enables people to maintain overall unity of their
construct system. Kelly (1955, 1969) argued that while differentiation and integration were logically distinct, they were equally essential for psychological development. As people actively construct reality as they live it, internal representations or cognitive schemas are formed into meaningful recurrent patterns called personal constructs, and it is these idiosyncratic self-constructs which compose one's identity or self-theory (Berzonsky & G. Neimeyer, 1988). Berzonsky et al (1990) conceptualise identity as a self-constructed theory of self, an information-oriented, self-exploratory approach to producing a well-differentiated set of theoretical self-constructs.

People's processes are psychologically channelised by the ways in which they anticipate events (Kelly, 1955). It is the way in which people respond to validation or invalidation of core constructs which maintain self or identity, maintaining the person as a person. To see a person "is to acknowledge another "self", to speak as a "self" is to claim the status of "person"" (Bannister & Agnew, 1976). Adams-Webber et al (1972) found that the more accurate an adolescent is in discriminating between two new acquaintances in terms of their elicited constructs, the greater the extent to which adolescents differentiate between themselves and others on the basis of their own personal constructs. Within personal construct theory, construction of self/identity is the construing of oneself as distinct from others without assuming that others resemble oneself in terms of their experience. Construction of self/identity involves superordinate constructs. These constructs may be primarily elaborated from past experiences or for some people these constructs may be about defining self in present day experiences.

Subordinate constructions are involved in building up a subsystem about self, a superordinate construction. Berzonsky et al (1990) sought to investigate the structural dimensions of older adolescents' personal construct systems or self-theories, and the relationship of these self-theories to the identity status paradigm of Marcia (1966). It was hypothesised that scientific self-theorising should produce a well differentiated, hierarchically organised system of self-constructs. It was also hypothesised that dogmatic self-theorising should promote an inflexible organisation with limited differentiation, and fragmented loosely organised self-constructs should be associated with diffuse ad hoc self-theorising. This it was suggested would allow progress toward identity achievement to be accompanied by increased differentiation and integration resulting in a hierarchically organised system of distinctive, well articulated self-constructs (Berzonsky et al, 1990). The results suggested that self-theories which were simultaneously highly integrated and differentiated were based on constructions of self that were information-oriented and self-exploratory.

Within personal construct theory, psychological development is the continuous process of people elaborating their construing of self. For child, adolescent and adult, behaviour is a continuous experiment in this elaborative process. In an investigation of the elaborative process of recognising self as distinct from others, Bannister and Agnew (1976) suggest that the changes in the elaboration process occur in the increasing use of constructs with wider ranges of convenience. In childhood through to early adolescence, there is greater use of preemptive and constellationary constructs rather than propositional constructs. However, adolescence signals cognitive and psychological development with the capacity to use more propositional constructs and the capacity to strive to achieve "meta-constructions about processes and change and ...the recognition of the reflexive nature of construing" (Bannister & Agnew, 1976). The achievement of reflexivity enables adolescents to reflect on their notion of self and to construe their constructions of themselves and of others' constructions of themselves.
An investigation into the changes in identification during adolescence does lend some support to Bannister and Agnew’s proposition that as children mature they have greater access to propositional and reflexive construing. The researchers, Strachan and Jones (1982), found that early adolescents (12 years) were primarily identifying with parents while older adolescents (17 years) were identifying less with parents and more and more with other adults and peers as they were developing their own independent ways of construing people. For the mid-adolescents (14 years) there was more dissatisfaction with present self and greater experimentation with new roles.

In personal construct terms, identity achievement is a process determined by the way adolescents respond to validation or invalidation of core role constructs. The strategies by which adolescents elaborate their construing of others and by implication themselves leads to a construction of self built on comparisons the adolescent has come to see between themselves and others. It is anticipated that Category C will be able to measure the adolescents’ construing of self; their personal limitations, and their personal strengths.

**COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE**

During adolescence, with increasing intellectual development, there is an improvement in the processing of social information. These developmental trends lead to improved problem-solving and decision-making abilities. It has been suggested by Havinghurst (1972) that the elements of decision-making support all developmental tasks of adolescence such as educational and career choices, identity formation and value selection. From an information-processing or cognitive model, competence in making decisions comes from a logical approach to choices based on knowledge (information), an exploration for and a weighing up of viewpoints and the process of turning choices into action (Adams, Gullotta & Markstom-Adams, 1994).

**SOCIAL COGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELF/IDENTITY**

There has been increasing interest in researching the importance of cognition in social life. Selman (1980) maintains that the development of social cognition in the form of conceptions, reasoning or thought, while not unrelated, is however distinct to nonsocial cognition. In order to understand how adolescents understand social relationships, Selman put forward a theory looking at the structural development of social reasoning with a focus on social perspective taking and the developmental course of such a process. Social perspective taking, according to Selman, includes an understanding of how people maintain related and co-ordinated views, not simply recognising that two people hold separate viewpoints. Selman continues by suggesting that social perspective taking involves more than focusing from self to others in the Piagetian sense, but rather it forms a psychological infrastructure that provides adolescents with fundamentally important social-cognitive skills.

The development of social perspective skills progresses in a steplike manner. These skills influence the way in which children understand their social and interpersonal relationships. It is at the third level, between the ages 10-15 years, Selman suggests the child is capable of engaging in third-person and mutual perspective taking. Here children are able to step outside of the self as a system within self/other relationships, and to assess and reflect on actions, intentions and psychological characteristics of the self and others.

With the onset of formal operations, Elkind (1967) suggests adolescents are capable of conceptualising their own thoughts from those of others. Adolescent egocentrism gradually disappears. Through social and intellectual experiences, there is a development in the capacity to differentiate between self-preoccupations and the interests of other people. Accompanying this process is the realisation that others are concerned about different, while sometimes related, thoughts, issues and behaviours. This developmental process allows
adolescents to gradually integrate the feelings of others into their own thoughts and feelings, and to be able to recognise their own limitations.

In his writings on the capacity to learn language, Mead (1934) suggested that in order for this process to be effective, people need to learn to regard themselves from the perspective of others. This process has been referred to as symbolic interactionism. In symbolic interactionism, self-reflection is a social construction that involves reflecting on the self through the perspective of others. Mead proposed that through play and game experiences, children finally form a self-view that exceeds the immediate perspective and includes others and their perspectives. Contemporary writings (Selman, 1980; Damon, 1983) on the role of social-perspective on self-development, and the early writings of Mead (1934), all suggest that social-cognitive perspective includes an understanding of the self increasingly based on self-reflection within a broader social context.

Beginning with the clinically-based work of Carl Rogers and his associates, the role of the concept real self versus ideal self in the self development of adolescents has drawn attention by theoreticians such as Achenbach and Zigler (1963). Coming from a cognitive-development perspective, they argue that with a development in psychological maturity there is also a concomitant increase in self-disparity between the ideal self-image and the real self. The disparity is widest for adolescents who are more cognitively differentiated and emotionally mature.

Self-consciousness can be described as the emotional state that accompanies self-awareness. Self-awareness represents the degree to which focus on the self is delineated and obvious. Duval and Wickbind (1972) introduced the concept of a duality in self-awareness. Objective self-awareness attends to the self to the exclusion of others while subjective self-awareness focuses primarily on others with little attention on the self. The implications of self-consciousness has led to two major camps, one group advocating that self-awareness is a precursor for positive mental health and the other group maintaining that positive mental health can be equated with low self-consciousness.

In order to arrive at an integrated sense of identity during adolescence, Erikson (1968) describes a necessary state of crisis which creates the force enabling adolescents to search for answers to bring about identity development. For those adolescents unable to meet the challenge of crisis, a state of role confusion arises and adolescents are unable to arrive at a psychological self-definition. The result of this confusion is that decision making becomes threatening and conflictual leading to a sense of isolation and the achievement of a negative identity. From the ego-psychology perspective of Erikson, adolescence is characterised by identity achievement versus identity diffusion.

Marcia (1966) conceptualised the measurement of ego identity in terms of two major variables that of 'crisis' and 'commitment'. By crisis, Marcia referred to “the adolescent’s period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives”, and he wrote that commitment "refers to the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits” (p. 551). Using an interview technique, Marcia developed four types of identity status: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium and identity achievement. Marcia characterised the four types. Briefly, the identity diffusion adolescent was described as impulsive, the foreclosure adolescent as one who assumes the commitments of parents and the moratorium adolescent while displaying high levels of reasoning, seems to lack well-defined goals and values. The fourth status, the identity achievement adolescent, was described as having strong and well-defined commitments, and to exhibit the highest levels of ego development.

Marcia’s (1966) framework for the study of identity formation has provided a useful conceptual structure for investigations into the psychological and social behaviour of adolescents. Berzonsky (1992) describes diffused adolescents as avoidant oriented because
Diffusion is associated with avoiding making decisions as long as possible. The foreclosed adolescents he describes as normative oriented, where they conform to the expectations and prescriptions of parents or significant others. Berzonsky (1992) describes moratorium youth as information oriented. Here decisions are formed on a wide and pertaining body of information. The identity achievement adolescents are described as the most complex, highly adaptive personality profile of the four identity-status groups. Berzonsky (1992) found that they demonstrated a greater capacity for reflective or analytic cognitive style. A number of cross-sectional and longitudinal research studies have been undertaken to determine the developmental relationship between the four identity statuses (for example, Archer & Waterman, 1983). A review of the findings (Waterman, 1982) suggested that the four identity statuses could be identified as early as 11-12 years of age, however, the quality and character of each of the identity statuses may be specific to a given age. Of significance, the review was able to indicate that with increasing grade level or age the number of identity achievement and moratorium adolescents increased, while the number of foreclosure and diffusion adolescents decreased, and there were few consistent sex differences.

Generally, there is consistent evidence from a number of research findings that provides evidence for Erikson's argument that identity formation is a central element of the adolescent experience. The findings also support the view that identity formation is "a process of increasing differentiation" (Erikson, 1968, p.23), a gradual process of change from a simple role confusion to a highly complex and purposeful role structure.

Research has also focused on the possible necessary or sufficient conditions for identity change. Results from a number of research projects (for example, Rowe & Marcia, 1980; Berzonsky, Weiner & Raphael, 1975) have reported that adolescents with an identity-achievement status have not necessarily developed the capacity for formal logical thinking, and that while cognitive development may promote advanced identity development, it does not necessarily determine it.

**CATEGORY D - LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION**

**D.1 CONCRETE CONSTRUING**

**D.2 ABSTRACT CONSTRUING**

Category D, Level of Abstraction, is designed to measure construing that is hierarchical in nature. The structural complexity of the construing can vary from physicalistic constructions to psychological constructions. The first measure, D.1, is concrete construing. It refers to the adolescent's constructs which describe physical attributes and behavioural accomplishments such as sports, hobbies and future careers. The second measure, D.2, abstract construing, refers to an attempt by the adolescent to, not only understand their system of personal constructs, but the personal construct system of the person with whom they are relating. There is an attempt by the adolescent to establish a role relationship. There is also evidence that the adolescent is trying to interpret the psychological behaviour of themselves and others.

The theoretical and research background behind the creation of Category D, Level of Abstraction, has been forged from varying perspectives and research findings into adolescent development. A brief overview will now be presented followed by a fuller account of the theoretical and research background.

Personal construct research findings suggest that, with increasing age, children make greater use of psychological or abstract construing. There is greater evidence of abstract construing during adolescence. However, research also suggests that individuals throughout
life will use both concrete and abstract construing in relation to specific construct systems. It is in adolescence, that the individual develops the capacity to engage in abstract construing.

According to the cognitive-development perspective, adolescence marks a development in formal operational thought. Unlike concrete thought, where solutions are limited to tangible problems, formal operational logic allows adolescents to engage in abstract thinking in areas of cognitive, social and psychological development. In the area of cognition, Keating (1980) has summarised five major outcomes associated with the development in abstract thought. In the development of social cognition, Selman (1980) argues that just as important as formal operations is in adolescence, so is development in social perspective taking or social reasoning. With the capacity for abstract thinking, adolescents are now able to understand self and social relationships at multiple levels and layers of understanding, and to see that each level has its own point of view. In the area of psychological development, adolescents now have the capacity to allow for complex changes in character formation. Just as the structural changes in cognitive capacity contributes to character formation, so it does in moral development and the principles for moral conduct become more complex. Adolescence is also a period where much of the time is spent exploring psychological aspects of self. Selman (1980) has identified three levels of developmental progression in understanding self. Adolescents are able to have a full understanding of their own self-awareness. Adolescents, unlike children, are also able to engage in self-understanding and to think and reflect upon the self (Damon & Hart, 1982).

It would appear from the literature available that adolescence is clearly a very significant period within the developmental process toward maturation. Unlike stages before and after, it is a time marked by an increasing capacity to use abstract thinking cognitively, socially and psychologically. Category D, Levels of Abstraction, has been designed to measure abstract construing and concrete construing, as it is expected that adolescents will be using both forms of construing. A developmental perspective suggests that the process of adolescence is not linear and that adolescents while using formal operational thought in one area of behaviour maybe using concrete thought in another. The following account of the development of abstract thought in adolescence reflects this uneven step-like process.

**PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PERSPECTIVE**

Personal construct theory implies that individuals continually develop. Kelly (1955) equated learning with experience. As the individual successively reconstrues events, learning takes place through that experience. Unlike the notion of psychic energy that pushes unconscious thought or images into consciousness, Kelly maintained that the individual construes an event at a particular level of cognitive awareness because it is at that level at which the individual can understand that event. The level of cognitive awareness will vary according to the event being experienced. Each individual will have a repertoire of constructs varying in their level of complexity.

As children mature, they are able to employ progressively more complex levels of cognitive awareness. Reconstruction of life events leads to learning based on those experiences. Research has tended to confirm this. Both boys and girls use predominantly physicalistic constructs in early adolescence, whereas in later adolescence, role and psychological constructs predominate (Allison, 1976; Brierley, 1967; Little, 1968). However, interpretation of these results and other studies (Ravenette, 1977; Salmon, 1976) has claimed, that in the spirit of personal construct psychology it would be more appropriate to assume that even young children have psychological or abstract constructs and that maturation represents an increase in their complexity and the capacity of the child to verbalise them. Development in interpersonal construing does not necessarily equate with the gradual acquisition of abstract construing. This means that a reference to physical characteristics
cannot be said to be conceptually simpler than an explicit reference to psychological characteristics. In fact, the research by Canter (1970) suggests that describing construing as simple or complex can only be meaningful in relation to specific construct subsystems and not as a description of whole personal construct systems. People vary in degree of complexity from construct subsystem to construct subsystem. As Kelly said "...an event seen only in terms of its placement in one dimension is scarcely more than mere datum. And about all you can do with a datum is just let it sit on its own continuum” (1969, p.118).

The research findings do suggest that adolescents’ construing of self becomes more complex. Adolescents are more readily able to recognise themselves distinct from other people. The construing of self elaborates as the whole construct system elaborates. As children grow older and enter adolescence they increasingly make greater use of psychological constructs (Bannister & Agnew, 1976; Jackson & Bannister, 1985). It is expected Category D will be able to measure the structural quality of the adolescent’s construing, that is, the concrete construing and the abstract construing.

**COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE**

Between the ages 7 to 12 years, children can solve problems associated with the seriation and classification of information. Concrete thought or concrete operations as termed by Inhelder and Piaget (1958), is limited to solutions for tangible problems. However, with adolescence, there is a development in formal operational thought. The formal-operations stage enables adolescents to engage in combinatorial reasoning, in hypothesis testing and in understanding proportionality. Keating (1980) has summarised five major outcomes associated with the development of formal-operations during adolescence. The first is an ever-increasing ability to use abstractions. Adolescents can now distinguish both the real and the concrete from the abstract or the possible. Secondly, the development in hypothetical reasoning enables adolescents to recognise the notion of falsification. Adolescents can now generate hypotheses and be able to eliminate them as insupportable. Thirdly, adolescents are now able to think about the future by planning and exploring the possibilities of causation. The fourth outcome is the capacity by adolescents to engage in metacognition. For adolescents, introspection now becomes an integral part of everyday life. Finally, the fifth outcome identified is the general expansion of thought. Adolescents are now able to broaden horizons to include religion, justice, morality and identity. Broadly, formal-operational thought offers for adolescents a clearer differentiation of subject/object interactions.

Adolescence also signals the development in social cognition in the form of conceptions, reasoning or thought. Selman (1980) argues that just as significant as formal operations, social perspective taking can be seen as a psychological infrastructure that provides adolescents with a basic and important social-cognitive skill.

Selman proposes a developmental pattern of five steplike levels which influence how children understand their social or interpersonal relationships. It is the fifth step or Level 4 which seems to relate to the capacity for abstract construing. After 12 years of age and extending throughout adulthood, the individual develops the capacity for in-depth and societal/symbolic perspective taking. During this stage, Selman claims that actions, thoughts, motives or feelings are recognised to be psychologically determined but are not necessarily understood by the self through reflection. Adolescents develop the capacity to view their own personality and that of others as the result of values, beliefs, traits and attitudes. Personality can now be seen as a self-system that has its own complete and complex developmental history. Adolescents are now able to comprehend social relationships as multiple levels and layers of understanding. Adolescents at this level of social perspective taking are developing the capacity to think abstractly about many levels of self/other understanding, and to see that each level has its own point of view.
Piaget has proposed that the major changes in cognitive abilities assist adolescents in viewing the world in new and more sophisticated ways through the emergence of formal-operations logic. When adolescents are capable of thinking about their own thoughts and are able to see the world around them in more abstract terms, a greater complexity in personality processes occurs. It appears that the structural changes in the way adolescents perceive their world contributes significantly to the process of character formation.

Not only is adolescence a period of ego development but also a period of moral development. As the structural changes in the cognitive capacity contributes to the process of character formation, so it does in moral development and the principles for moral conduct become more complex. Kohlberg (1969) put forward a model of universal stages in moral development with age-trend data on boys aged 10, 13 and 16 in the United States of America, Taiwan and Mexico. The general pattern was one where with increasing age, the boys functioned at higher stages in his model of moral development. Support has been provided for Kohlberg’s model by longitudinal studies. The model has also been criticised for its gender bias (Gillian, 1982). In general, the research into moral development would suggest that lower levels of moral development are characterised by self-protective behaviour and an orientation toward the external world. Middle levels of moral development are focused on following traditional roles and maintaining the existing social order. For individuals in the higher levels of moral development and psychosocial maturity, rules of conduct are founded on reciprocity and on mutual agreements concerning correct social behaviour.

The development of the self has its foundation in social development. Adolescence is a period where much of the time is spent exploring psychological aspects of self, reflecting on their strengths, weaknesses and fears. Selman (1980) identified three levels of developmental progression in understanding the self. As young children there is little or no distinction made between inner and outer states of being. Understanding of the self is based on physical attributes and what appears to be reality. In later childhood, there develops a recognition of differences between inner and outer states of being. They are now able to describe their “true self” in terms of more subjective inner states. However, it is not until adolescence, Selman maintains, that there is a full understanding of their own self-awareness. Adolescents are now able to integrate the various disparate components of the self-as-known into a conception of self which has internal consistency (Damon, 1983). Damon and Hart (1982) proposed that adolescents are able to recognise that the self can actively initiate and modify conscious experience and that both conscious and unconscious psychological processes form an individual’s self. By drawing on the physical, social and psychological aspects of the self-as-known (the ego in personality), Damon and Hart described the developmental progression of the self-as-known through childhood and adolescence. In early adolescence the focus is on self-understanding based on social-personality characteristics. In late adolescence, the focus is on belief systems, personal philosophy and one’s own thinking processes.
REFERENCES


Appendix 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES AND QUESTIONNAIRES

Student Interview-Pre-Group

NAME: 
SCHOOL: 
DATE: 

1. What would be the main way you would describe yourself?
2. If you could change being you, what would you change?
3. What would you not change about being you?
4. How do you feel being in the group will help you change?
5. Anything else you would like to say?

Student Interview-Post-Group

NAME: 
SCHOOL: 
DATE: 

1. What would be the main way you would describe yourself?
2. If you could change being you, what would you change?
3. What would you not change about being you?
4. Before the group, you said that you felt that being in the group would help you change_____. Did this happen? In what way?
5. Did you change in other ways? How did you change?
6. What do you feel was good about being in the group?
7. What did you not like about being in the group?
8. If you could make changes about how the group was run what would you do?

Parent Interview-Pre-Group

CHILD'S NAME: 
CHILD'S SCHOOL: 
DATE: 

1. How would you describe your child?
2. What changes would you like to see in your child's behaviour?
3. How do you feel the group will help your child make these changes?
4. Any other comments you would wish to make?
Parent Interview-Post-Group

CHILD'S NAME

CHILD'S SCHOOL

DATE

1. How would you describe your child?
2. Before the group you said you thought the group would help your child change in the following way:________ Has this happened?
3. Could you describe how your child has changed?
4. How do you feel being part of the group helped your child change?
5. What suggestions would you make if further groups were run in the school?

Teacher Questionnaire-Pre-Group

GROUP WORK STRATEGIES FOR THE GROUP MEMBER

NAME-----------------------------------------
SCHOOL--------------------------------------YEAR---------------------

1. Describe the main difficulties/problems you feel the student experiences at school?
2. What changes do you feel the student needs to make at school?
3. What changes would you like to see come about as a result of the group intervention?
   a) _______ b) _______ c) _______

Teacher Questionnaire Post-Group

REVIEW OF THE GROUP WORK STRATEGIES FOR THE STUDENT FOLLOWING GROUP WORK

NAME-----------------------------------------
SCHOOL--------------------------------------YEAR---------------------

1. Prior to the group intervention you described the main difficulties/problems you felt the student experiences at school. Does the student still experience these difficulties/problems at school?
   Yes / No (please circle).
   If Yes, could you please comment further by circling either (a) or (b)?
   (a) Do the main difficulties/problems continue at the same intensity?
   (b) Do you feel they are diminishing?
2. Do you feel that the student was able to make changes in his/her behaviour following the group intervention? If yes, how?_______
3. You described changes you would like to see come about as a result of the group intervention. Could you please indicate whether these changes have occurred? (circle Yes or No)
   a) Yes / No
   b) Yes / No
   c) Yes / No
4. Any comments you would wish to make on the group intervention and the student’s involvement.
Appendix 4

GROUP GRID 1 CONSTRUCTS

Group Grid 1 uses 8 supplied constructs drawn from the goals for the group work. The constructs reflect the order of the group work goals.

1. I feel important around this person./I feel unimportant around this person.
2. I feel comfortable around this person./I feel uncomfortable around this person.
3. I feel this person understands me./I don’t feel this person understands me.
4. I feel I can trust this person./I feel I can’t trust this person.
5. I feel this person wants the best for me./I feel this person isn’t interested in my future.
6. I feel encouraged by this person to make changes in my life./I don’t feel encouraged by this person to make changes in my life.
7. I feel this person has confidence in me./I feel this person lacks confidence in me.
8. I feel valued by this person./I don’t feel valued by this person.
Appendix 5

GROUP PROCESS ASSESSMENT: GROUP MEMBER

HOW WAS TODAY'S SESSION?

NAME ______________________

In the group today, we talked about _____________________________

Circle the words that best describe your feelings about the session today. You can add your own words if you can’t find the words you want to describe your feelings.

- satisfied
- great
- annoyed
- bored
- angry
- confused
- upset
- interested
- dissatisfied
- happy

1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = No Opinion  4 = Agree  5 = Strongly Agree

1. I liked the group today.  1 2 3 4 5
2. I figured out something about myself in the group today.  1 2 3 4 5
3. I felt I wasn’t alone with my feelings in the group today.  1 2 3 4 5
4. I understood more about another group member today.  1 2 3 4 5
5. I shared something about myself in the group today.  1 2 3 4 5
6. I felt comfortable in the group today.  1 2 3 4 5
7. I felt the group understood me better today.  1 2 3 4 5
8. I am looking forward to our meeting next week.  1 2 3 4 5
Appendix 6

GROUP PROCESS ASSESSMENT: GROUP LEADER

GROUP SESSION EVALUATION

1. GROUP LEADERS
2. GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT
3. SCHOOL
4. DATE
5. NUMBER OF SESSION
6. THEMES OF CONSTRUCTION

Listed below numbered 1 to 8 are the processes that could occur. Could you please respond by placing either 1 or 2 or 3 beside each group member?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1=no 2=maybe 3=yes</th>
<th>GROUP MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Validation from the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Feel they belong in the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Feels understood by the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Trusts the group members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Questioning their constructs and experimenting with different ways of construing events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Sharing (similarities between members) and individualisation (differences between members)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Reconstruing experiences / events inside and / or outside the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Self-validation and self-regard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7

SCORING CRITERIA: CATEGORIES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT RESPONSES TO THE REPERTORY GRID AND THE SELF-CCHARACTERISATION

Each sentence is considered one unit of meaning and as such is scored once across the three categories, Category A.1/A.2 or Category B.1/B.2 or Category C.1/C.2. This means that each sentence receives only one rating across the three categories.

CATEGORY A - SELF DESCRIPTION

CATEGORY A.1 CONSTRUING OF SELF

Category A.1 refers to the personal statements or descriptions made by the adolescents about themselves.

1.0 Personal Statements without interpersonal elaboration

1.1 Descriptions of self
e.g. “He is funny/quiet/shy/happy.”
“He has blue eyes and brown hair.”
“She has a mother, father and two sisters.”
“Her favourite food is pizza.”
“He can be good/bad.”
“She sticks up for herself.”
“He is a nice person.”

1.2 Likes/Dislikes
e.g. “He does not like school because of the teachers.”
“She is good at body boarding and doesn’t like school.”
“She doesn’t like cleaning up.”
“He hates football.”
“She loves animals.”

1.3 Activities
e.g. “He listens to music.”
“She plays sport.”

2.0 Future Careers
e.g. “He would like to be a teacher.”
“When he gets older he will work in the steelworks.”

3.0 Descriptions of Friends without interpersonal elaboration
e.g. “He has few/many/lots of friends.”
“She has a friend called Sarah.”
A.2 CONSTRUING OF SELF IN RELATION TO OTHERS

Category A.2 refers to how the adolescents construe themselves in relation to other people.

1.0 Description of Friends an account of the length, frequency or intensity of the relationships
   e.g. "He has a fair few friends and they like going to the beach."
   e.g. "He has a fair few friends both inside school and outside school."
   "He has some friends at school."

2.0 Personal Statements with interpersonal elaboration
   e.g. "His friends think he is funny and a bit of a bastard sometimes."
   "Her friends know she is always there for them."
   "She's not too good at telling people how she feels."
   "She is caring/out-going/helps/listens/trusts......"
   "She feels left out."
   "She can co-operate with other people and make new friends."

3.0 Family Relationships with interpersonal elaboration
   e.g. "She and her sister are always fighting."
   "He's sort of in a bit of trouble with his family."
   "His (family/family member) loves him/is nice."

4.0 Behavioural Descriptions with interpersonal elaboration

   4.1 Behavioural interactions
   e.g. "When people get on his nerves he either runs at them and hits or says something back or just ignores them and keeps on doing what he was doing."
   "When other people cause trouble and the teacher starts yelling at them and if you say one word and she sends you out."

   4.2 Use of "friendly"
   e.g. "She is nice and friendly."

   4.3 Use of "trouble"
   e.g. "He is the sort of person that doesn't like getting into trouble at school."
   "In the past she had a lot of trouble with her parents and older sister."

   4.4 Use of "talking/arguing/debating/fighting"
   e.g. "He is a nice person he likes telling jokes."
   "When she's really happy she usually talks non-stop, but she can't help it."
   "She is talkative."

5.0 Likes/Dislikes with interpersonal elaboration
   e.g. "He dislikes school because the teachers pick on him."
   "She doesn't like people who (act posh/be snobs)."
   "He can't stand anyone who is racist or can't accept people for what they are."
   "He hates people who have to always be perfect."
CATEGORY B - USE OF CONSTRUING

B.1 RECONSTRUING OF PAST EVENTS

Category B.1 refers to descriptions provided by adolescents of changes in their perceptions and understandings of events in the past.

1.0 Likes/Dislikes with implications of possible behavioural change
   e.g. “He doesn’t like it when he wags and gets busted for it and doesn’t like being suspended because it gets boring like school.”

2.0 Describing Behavioural Change
   e.g. “She is trying to be good at school.”
   “He has been a trouble maker but since he has started to mature and learnt that school is not just fun and games, he has been behaving quite well in class and outside school.”
   “But lately he has stayed out of trouble and he has improved.”
   “Since the group he has not been on levels and is getting merit certificates.”
   “She believes in free love and peace because she’s sick of fighting with people who she doesn’t really hate.”

B.2 ANTICIPATING EVENTS USING EXISTING CONSTRUCTS

Category B.2 refers to the hopes and wishes described by the adolescents.

1.0 Contemporary Events/Experiences
   e.g. “Life at the moment sux because too many problems outside school, his family, but he thinks life will get better because he wants to get a job and get out of home.”
   “He wants to behave at school.”
   “She hopes her school work improves a lot more and her behaviour outside improves.”
   “She wishes she would get along better with her teachers then she might not get in as much trouble.”
   “She wish that people stop telling her where she going to end up, when they don’t know what she’s planning to do when she grows up.”
   “She is changing schools to have a new start.”
   “If there was something he could change he wouldn’t come to school.”

2.0 Future Events/Experiences
   e.g. “He wants to be a policeman because he hates to see people getting hurt.”
   “When she leaves school she wants to be a zoologist but she doesn’t think she will get there because she is only in E classes for Science and Maths.”
   “He would like to have children when he is a bit older because he likes to play with his niece.”
CATEGORY C - SELF EVALUATION

C.1 UNDERSTANDING OF OWN LIMITATIONS

Category C.1 refers to attempts by adolescents to describe what they construe as personal limitations when relating to others.

1.0 Personal Statements

e.g. "No one really knows him properly."
"She is a very moody person."
"She doesn’t do anything OK."
"She can be a bit horrible."
"She is bitchy."

1.1 with qualification

e.g. "She is very loud/very chatty."
"He worries a lot."
"She always gets nervous."

1.2 with interpersonal elaboration

e.g. "He is easily influenced by other people because he doesn’t want to feel stupid."
"He is good once you get to know him but if you don’t know him you probably don’t like him."
"Other people wouldn’t like him because he doesn’t do what they do."
"He doesn’t care much for people he doesn’t like."
"She also uses her being witty attitude and so forth when she’s feeling down or hurt."
"He hangs around with the wrong people."
"He tries to stay out of trouble but it never works."

1.3 Use of “but/and” where a positive and negative personal statement are in the one sentence. Score for the negative personal statement.

e.g. "He is quiet, protective but sometimes stubborn."
"He is a kind boy, he is generous, smart but he also has a bad temper and is not very patient."
"She is nice sometimes and other times she can be mean."
"The only bad thing she has is a short temper but she can control it."
"At school she gets good grades in some classes but others not so well."

2.0 Behavioural Descriptions

e.g. "He gets angry when he is teased."
"He has a pretty short temper and likes fighting."
"She also likes to write poems and things and stories about people but she’s not too good at telling people how she feels."
"Sometimes people call her names and stuff and she gets really angry and she hits them."

3.0 Behavioural Experiences

e.g. "Sometimes people call him names and stuff and he gets really angry and he hits them."
"He sometimes gets angry and upset with his parents because they always telling him to do things."
"She gets a lot of mood changes depending on a lot of different things."
4.0 Likes/Dislikes with psychological elaboration

- "He doesn’t like to do anything he doesn’t want to do."
- "He doesn’t like it when he gets stirred up sometimes."
- "She dislikes doing about everything."

C.2 VALIDATION OF SELF

Category C.2 refers to the adolescents’ descriptions of their personal strengths in relation to others.

1.0 Psychological Attribute

1.1 Personal Statements

- "He is understanding/kind/generous person/friend.
"He is someone you can talk to about your problems and he likes to talk to people."
- "He does not love himself and he doesn’t care what anyone thinks."
- "She is a reliable person who you can trust."
- "She respects other people’s opinions."
- "He tries to be himself and not do what others tell him, not easily influenced, that’s really important."
- "He doesn’t try to put people down/hassle them."
- "She believes strongly in letting other people do what they want to do."
- "She will listen, she will give her point of view, what she thinks."

1.2 Use of "care" and "helps/helpful" with psychological/interpersonal elaboration

- "She cares about the environment."
- "She is caring, likes to help out people a lot but when she does help out she takes it onto herself and puts a lot of energy behind what she believes in."
- "He doesn’t care much about himself but when he wants to he can care a lot about someone else e.g. girlfriend."
- "He is helpful to his parents/friends."
- "He helps around the house."

1.3 Use of "nice" with psychological/interpersonal elaboration

- "He is nice, fit, athletic type of thing person."
- "Her friends think she is a nice person."

1.4 Use of "always/most of the time/almost/usually"

- "She always gives you money and she shares her food sometimes."
- "Most of the time he puts himself out for others."
- "He is down to earth and can almost sort out any problem in a non-violent way."
- "Usually he helps around the house."

1.5 Use of "very/well"

- "He is very friendly because he gets along with anybody."
- "She gets along well with her classmates/family."
- "He does well at school."

1.6 Use of "tries hard"

- "He is a happy person, he tries hard at all his work."
- "She tries hard at school."

1.7 Use of "good/OK/alright"

- "She is a good friend/person."
- "He is good at fixing motorbikes."
- "He does cycling and he’s OK at that."
- "He is an alright guy, good friend."

2.0 Description of Friends with interpersonal elaboration
e.g. "Her friends like her because she listens."
    "His friends like the way he does what he wants to do."
    "He has lots of friends and most of them like him."

CATEGORY D - LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION

Once the text has been scored for either Category A, B, or C, the whole text is then evaluated in terms of the following criteria for Category D. Again, each sentence is considered one unit and is either scored D.1 Concrete Construing, or D.2 Abstract Construing.

D.1 CONCRETE CONSTRUING

This category refers to descriptions of physical attributes and experiences, and to behavioural accomplishments such as sports, hobbies and future careers.

1.0 Physical Attributes
    e.g. "He has blue eyes and brown hair."

2.0 Behavioural Descriptions without psychological elaboration
    2.1 Activities
        e.g. "He goes to the beach a lot or if he is not at the beach he is skateboarding."
            "He is good at body boarding."
            "She listens to music everyday."
        2.1.1 The use of "fun" to describe an activity.
            e.g. "He likes sport because it is fun to do."
    2.2 Experiences
        e.g. "She tries to get out of school as much as possible."
            "Sometimes he wishes he wasn't at school."
            "She thinks school sucks."
    2.3 Likes/Dislikes
        e.g. "He likes to try new stuff."
            "She hates nearly all the teachers."
            "His heroes ride motorbikes."
            "She likes animals."
    2.4 Descriptions without qualification
        2.4.1 Good/Bad
            e.g. "He is bad at school."
                "The teachers are good."
    3.0 Sports without psychological elaboration
        e.g. "She likes to play all sorts of sport."
            "He plays soccer whenever he can."
    4.0 Hobbies without psychological elaboration
        e.g. "He collects basketball cards."
            "She likes to draw and paint."
    5.0 Future Careers without psychological elaboration
        e.g. "She wants to be a lawyer."
            "He likes doing things with his hands and wants to be a carpenter."
6.0 Descriptions of Family without interpersonal and/or psychological elaboration
   e.g. “His brothers are Anthony and Brad.”
   “She lives with her auntie.”
   “Her parents have split up and she lives with her mother.”

7.0 Descriptions of Friends without interpersonal and/or psychological elaboration
   e.g. “He has lots of friends.”
   “She has friends at school.”
   “His friend is called Jason.”

D.2 ABSTRACT CONSTRUING

This category refers to attempts by adolescents to not only understand their system of personal constructs, but the personal construct system of the person with whom they are relating. There is also evidence that adolescents are trying to interpret the psychological behaviour of themselves and others.

1.0 Psychological Attribute
   e.g. “He is a (kind, fun, nice, energetic, happy, dumb) person.”
   “She has a pretty short temper/can take a joke.”
   “He is a pretty good guy.”
   “He can get very angry very easily and he doesn’t like to be pushed around.”

2.0 Behavioural Descriptions with psychological elaboration
   2.1 Activities
   e.g. “She enjoys (music, school, sports etc.).”
   “He sort of likes it, but it gets a bit boring.”

   2.2 Experiences
   e.g. “He likes school sometimes.”
   “Her first year at school was pretty rough and she got into lots of trouble.”
   “Kind of likes going to school, it is OK, sometimes it is boring.”
   “He tries hard at (school, school subject, sport).”

   2.3 Likes/Dislikes qualified by a reason /consequence / preference
      Reason
      e.g. “He doesn’t like school because he gets into too much trouble.”
      “He hates the teachers because they pick on him.”
      “She likes talking about it.”
      “He doesn’t like it when he wags and gets busted for it and doesn’t like being suspended because it gets boring like school.”

      Consequence
      e.g. “She is caring, likes to help out people a lot, but when she does help out she takes it onto herself and puts a lot of energy behind what she believes in.”
      “He doesn’t like tidying up his room and it’s usually messy.”

      Preference
      e.g. “She would prefer sport to school because she doesn’t like it much.”
      “He would like to have children when he is a bit older.”

3.0 Descriptions with qualification
   3.1 Good/Bad
   e.g. “He’s not really good at school work.”
   “She’s pretty good at it.”
   “At school she gets good grades in some classes but others not so well.”
   “She is trying to be good at school.”
4.0 Descriptions of Relationships providing interpersonal and/or psychological elaboration

The descriptions will provide some account of the length, frequency or intensity of the relationships.

4.1 Friendships

e.g. "He has a lot of friends and most of them like him."
    "She is a good friend."
    "He likes to smoke pot with his friends and hang around with his friends."
    "She always goes to Wollongong with her friends and stuff like that."
    "She sometimes goes to the movies with them."
    "We go to each other's place everyday after school and do our homework together."

4.2 Family Relationships

e.g. "She has an older sister that she doesn't get along with very well, and she fights with her parents a lot."
    "He gets along with his family."
    "He loves his family."
    "Her family loves her."
    "She sometimes gets angry and upset with her parents because they always are telling her to do things."

4.3 General Relationships

e.g. "He hates people who have to always be perfect."
    "The things that piss him off is when people get annoying and tell him what to do all the time."
    "She hates people who tease others."
SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS ON THE ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT RESPONSES TO THE REPERTORY GRID

Each construct from the left and right poles is considered one unit of meaning. The constructs are scored using Category A.1/A.2 and again using Category D.1/D.2. It is intended that the guidelines established for the scoring of the Self-Characterisation responses will provide the basic information and understanding to rate each construct in Category A and Category D. The following comments are intended as supplementary explanation considered necessary given the structural difference in the Repertory Grid responses when compared with the Self-Characterisation responses.

CATEGORY A-SELF DESCRIPTION

Category A.1 Construing of Self

1.0 Personal Statements without Interpersonal Elaboration
   1.1.1 Psychological descriptions of self
e.g. "powerful/independent/individualistic"
   1.4 Interests
e.g. "likes same or different TV shows/things/interests"

4.0 Descriptions of Behaviour without Interpersonal Elaboration
e.g. "screams/yells/shouts"
     "teaches/learns"
     "quiet/temper/naughty"
     "have fun/goes out"

Category A.2 Construing of Self in Relation to Others

1.0 Descriptions of Friends - an account of the length, frequency or intensity of the relationships
   1.1 Describing the company of friends
e.g. "are friends/not friends"
     "a lot in common/gets along/fun together/being alone"
     "goes to parties(with friends)/stays at home(without friends)"

2.0 Personal Statements with interpersonal elaboration
   2.1 Using same/different
e.g. "same or different humour/personality/behaviour/attitudes/feelings/opinions/thinking"

4.0 Behavioural Descriptions with interpersonal elaboration
   4.1.1 Describing the type of behavioural interaction
e.g. "annoying/boring/obedient/fights/angry/shows-off/easy going"
     "available/controls/understands/explains/hard to approach/joking"
CATEGORY D-LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION

Category D.1 Concrete Construing

2.0 Behavioural Descriptions without psychological elaboration

2.1.2 Interests
  e.g. "likes same or different TV/things/interests/friends/people"

2.4 Descriptions without qualification

2.4.1 Good/Bad
  e.g. "good personality/people"
   "bad behaviour"

2.4.2 Happy/not Happy
  e.g. "they are happy"

2.5 Behavioural Descriptions without interpersonal elaboration or qualification
  e.g. "fighting/talking/funny/play around/stupid"
      "screams/yells/teaches/learns/(not)in trouble/naughty/smart"

7.0 Descriptions of Friends without interpersonal and/or psychological elaboration
  e.g. "little/a lot/less in common"

Category D.2 Abstract Construing

1.0 Psychological Attribute

1.1 Using interpersonal elaboration
  e.g. "same or different personality/humour/behaviour/attitudes/
       feelings/thinking/opinions"

2.0 Behavioural Descriptions with psychological elaboration

2.3.1 Likes/Dislikes describing interpersonal interactions
  e.g. "likes/dislikes arguing, joking, trouble, fighting"

3.0 Descriptions with qualification

3.2 Happy
  e.g. "happier/never happy/can be happy/sometimes happy/always happy"

4.0 Descriptions of Relationships providing interpersonal and/or psychological elaboration

4.1 Friendships
  e.g. "do things together"
   "likes friends around"
Appendix 8

PERMISSION LETTERS

The Principal,
--- High School,

Dear ---,

I am working as a school counsellor at ----- High School. Currently, I am undertaking doctoral studies in clinical psychology at the University of Wollongong. I am proposing to undertake research into the effectiveness of group counselling for students who are consistently behaving contrary to the behavioural expectations of the school.

This research project will not begin until next year, but I feel it is important that I contact you now and tell you of my proposal that I will briefly describe in the following part of my letter. I am also contacting your school counsellor and briefly outlining my proposed research.

WHAT THE RESEARCH PROJECT CAN OFFER THE SCHOOL.

1. The project is offering the school extra counselling time of ten weeks duration in the form of group work with students.
2. The project is offering to train school counsellors in personal construct group work within their own schools.
3. The project is proposing that group work may be an effective and viable counselling technique for disruptive students that can be carried out in schools. A pilot study carried out at -----High School has yielded encouraging results.

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH.

Approval has been granted by a) Department of School Education, South Coast Region. b) Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH.

The research aims to offer a therapeutic intervention for high school students who are continually misbehaving at school. It is proposed to use personal construct group work of ten weeks duration with up to 8 students within a school setting. The research anticipates that the group intervention will allow these adolescents to reconstrue their interpersonal relationships and allow their experience at school to be richer and more self-rewarding. The project can involve the training of school counsellors in personal construct group work, and their participation as a co-therapist. The research will also be collecting data from students who are effective in the way they get along with others.

RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH.

Research has suggested that the causation of disruptive students is usually multifactorial. This research strategy attempts to address one of the causes, that is, the psychological dysfunction of the adolescent.

In terms of psychological intervention, there are very limited resources that are currently available for these disruptive students. This research may be able to offer the schools, through their school counsellor, such a resource.

The research strategy is offering the schools a preventative measure which complements the student welfare programme in the school. It provides those students who continue to engage in unacceptable behaviour an opportunity to break the cycle and adopt more effective ways of relating to both teachers and peers.
Much of the time and expertise of the human resources within the schools are tied up attempting to manage the needs of these students. This research by presenting a therapeutic intervention may be able to release these human resources into the education and welfare of the broader community of students.

THE TARGET GROUP.

- 13-15 year old students enrolled in the fifteen government high schools within the Illawarra region.
- students who have been identified by the school executive and the school counsellor, based on the school’s discipline policy, as continually misbehaving and incurring suspension from school due to this misbehaviour. It is anticipated that the students nominated by the schools will have been involved in behaviours such as physical assault against peers and the physical and verbal harassment of teachers and peers.

TIME INVOLVED FOR SCHOOL STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS.

Year Patrons:
- a) time involved in helping to select the students to be nominated.
- b) time to complete the Conners’ Teacher Rating Scale. This to be repeated again 10 weeks later.

School Counsellors:
- a) time involved in helping to select the students to be nominated.
- b) if requested, time involved in running the groups as co-therapist.

Students:
- a) all students involved will be required to take part in two 1 hour interviews, 10 weeks apart.
- b) students taking part in the group counselling, will be required to attend for 1 1/2 hours weekly for 10 weeks.

Parents:
- a) interview to complete the Conners’ Parent Rating Scale and raise any questions about the study. This to be repeated again 10 weeks later.

TIMETABLE FOR THE RESEARCH.

It is anticipated that the research project will begin in Term 1, when I will be contacting schools seeking expressions of interest. The group counselling would then be conducted during Term 2 and during Term 3.

I hope you feel that this research could be beneficial to your school. I will recontact you early in the new year to see if you and your school may be interested in taking part in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Truneckova.
The School Counsellor,
--- High School,

Dear ----,

I am writing to your principal at--- High School, outlining my research project for next year. I feel it is important that I let you know about my research. Currently, I am undertaking doctoral studies in clinical psychology at the University of Wollongong. I am proposing to undertake research into the effectiveness of group counselling for students who are consistently behaving contrary to the behavioural expectations of the school.

If you would like to be a co-therapist in the group counselling I would be delighted and we can share our knowledge and experiences. If on the other hand, it is not possible for you to take on this role, I am quite prepared to run the group myself. I want to stress that you should not feel obligated in any sense to take on this role unless you feel it is possible for you. I fully understand the heavy case-load we are all trying to manage. I will briefly describe the research proposal and if you have any queries please give me a ring.

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The research strategy is offering the schools a preventative measure that complements the student welfare programme in the school. It provides those students who continue to engage in unacceptable behaviour an opportunity to break the cycle and adopt more effective ways of relating to both teachers and peers.

Much of the time and expertise of the human resources within the schools are tied up attempting to manage the needs of these students. This research by presenting a therapeutic intervention may be able to release these human resources into the education and welfare of the broader community of students.
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TIME INVOLVED FOR SCHOOL STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS.

Year Patrons:  
  a) time involved in helping to select the students to be nominated.  
  b) time needed to complete the Conners' Teacher Rating Scale. This to be repeated again 10 weeks later.

School Counsellors  
  a) time involved in helping to select the students to be nominated.  
  b) if requested, time involved in running the groups as co-therapist.

Students  
  a) all students involved will be required to take part in two 1 hour interviews, 10 weeks apart.  
  b) students taking part in the group counselling, will be required to attend for 1 1/2 hours weekly for 10 weeks.

Parents:  
  a) interview to complete the Conners’ Parent Rating Scale and raise any questions about the study. This to be repeated again 10 weeks later.

TIMETABLE FOR THE RESEARCH.

It is anticipated that the research project will begin in Term 1, next year, when I will be contacting schools seeking expressions of interest. The group counselling would then be conducted during Term 2 and during Term 3.

I will be recontacting your principal early next year. I will write again to you at the same time.

Yours faithfully,

Deborah Truneckova
Consent Forms

Dear _____________________ (parent/guardian’s name)

As part of the requirements for my post-graduate studies, I am proposing to undertake research into the effectiveness of group counselling for adolescents who would like to be able to get on better with their classmates and teachers. I am currently enrolled in the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology degree in the Department of Psychology at the University of Wollongong, and my supervisor is Associate Professor Linda L Viney.

I have requested the school ____________ (name of school) to identify students between the ages 13-15 years who sometimes seem to have difficulty getting along with other students at school, and whom the school feels may benefit from group counselling.

Your child ____________ (child’s name) has been identified by the school and I am seeking your consent for your child to take part in my study. I will also be writing to ____________ (child’s name) seeking his/her consent.

Participation by your child will involve initially an interview at school with me for an hour. During the interview, I will attempt to find how ____________ (child’s name) understands and relates to the important people in his/her life. The next stage will involve an interview with you as the parent/guardian where I will ask you to fill out a short checklist on your child’s behaviour, and answer any questions or concerns you may have about involvement in the study.

After 10 weeks, I will need to talk to you and your child again. The same procedure will be used, involving an interview of one hour with your child and a 30 minute interview with you, the parent/guardian. For most parents and students this will be the end of your involvement in this research. However, for those students who wish to take part in the group counselling, further involvement will be needed over a period of ten weeks.

Let me assure you that all your communications and responses in this research will be treated with complete confidentiality. The information collected will only be used to assess the effect of group counselling on adolescents and will not be used for any other purpose.

If you wish to withdraw your consent for your child’s participation in this study you are free to do so at anytime.

If you have any enquiries at anytime regarding the conduct of the research, please contact the Secretary of the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on (042) 213079.

If you wish to take part in this research please sign below.

Signature ___________________ Date ___________
Dear ________________ (parent/guardian's name)

As part of the requirements for my post-graduate studies, I am proposing to undertake research into the effectiveness of group counselling for adolescents who would like to be able to get on better with their classmates and teachers. I am currently enrolled in the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology degree in the Department of Psychology at the University of Wollongong, and my supervisor is Associate Professor Linda L Viney.

In order to better evaluate the effectiveness of this study, I feel it is important that I not only talk to students who sometimes have difficulty relating to others, but also to students who are able to relate to others effectively. For this reason, I have requested the school ____________ (name of school) to identify students between the ages 13-15 years who relate and communicate well with others at school.

Your child ____________ (child's name) has been identified by the school and I am seeking your consent for your child to take part in my study. I will also be writing to ______________ (child’s name) seeking his/her consent.

Participation by your child will involve an interview at school with me for an hour. During the interview, I will ask ____________ (child’s name) how he/she understands and relates to the important people in his/her life.

Let me assure you that all communications and responses in this research will be treated with complete confidentiality. The information collected will only be used to assess the effect of group counselling on adolescents and will not be used for any other purpose.

If you wish to withdraw your consent for your child’s participation in this study you are free to do so at anytime.

If you have any enquiries at anytime regarding the conduct of the research, please contact the Secretary of the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on (042) 213079.

If you wish to take part in this research please sign below.

Signature_______________ Date_____________
Dear (student’s name)

I am writing to you and your parents about a research project I would like to undertake as part of my university studies in the Department of Psychology, University of Wollongong. I am interested in seeing if group counselling can make it easier for students to get along better with their classmates and teachers.

I have asked your school to identify students between the ages 13-15 years who experience difficulty sometimes getting along with others at school. I am writing to you asking you if you would like to take part in my study. I am also writing to your parents/guardians asking for their permission for you to take part.

If you agree to take part in my research, I will need to see you for one hour on two different occasions, 10 weeks apart. During that hour, I will be asking you about how you get along with those important people in your life and how you would describe yourself. I will also be asking your parents/guardians to fill out a checklist on your behaviour and giving your parents/guardians the opportunity to ask questions they may have about this research.

For most students and their parents/guardians this will be all that will be needed. However, for those students who decide to take part in the group counselling, I will need to see them over a period of ten weeks.

If at any time you no longer wish to take part in this research, you are free to withdraw.

Anything you say to me as part of this research will remain totally confidential. By that I mean that I will not discuss what you have said to me with anyone else. What you have said to me will only be used to look at the effect of group counselling on adolescents and for no other purpose.

If you wish to take part in this research please sign below.

Signature_________________________ Date________________

Dear (student’s name)

I am writing to you and your parents about a research project I would like to undertake as part of my university studies in the Department of Psychology, University of Wollongong. I am interested in seeing if group counselling can make it easier for students to get along better with their classmates and teachers.

To better understand how students get along with each other, their teachers and families, I feel it is important that I talk to students who seem to get along well with most people. For this reason, I have asked your school to identify students between the ages 13-15 years who relate well with most people.

I am writing to you asking you if you would like to take part in my study. I am also writing to your parents/guardians asking for their permission for you to take part.

If you agree to take part in my research, I will need to see you for one hour at your school on two different occasions, 10 weeks apart. During that hour, I will be asking you about how you get along with those important people in your life and how you would describe yourself. I will also be asking your parents/guardians to fill out a checklist on your behaviour and giving your parents/guardians the opportunity to ask questions they may have about this research.
For most students and their parents/guardians this will be all that will be needed. However, for those students who decide to take part in the group counseling, I will need to see them over a period of ten weeks.

If at any time you no longer wish to take part in this research, you are free to withdraw.

Anything you say to me as part of this research will remain confidential. By that I mean, I will not discuss what you have said to me with anyone else. What you have said to me will only be used for this study and for no other purpose.

If you wish to take part in this research please sign below.

Signature_________________ Date________________

Dear_________________ (parent/guardian’s name)

Previously, I wrote to you about my research project into the effectiveness of group counselling for students who are sometimes experiencing difficulty getting along with other people in their lives. Thankyou for your support.

Your child’s school has suggested that your child __________(child’s name) may wish to take part in the group counselling. It is felt that group counselling may help __________(child’s name) to better understand how he/she relates to others and how __________ (child’s name) could get along even better with important people in his/her life. I am seeking your support for the school’s nomination of your son/daughter to take part in the group counselling.

Participation in the group counselling would require meeting for 1 1/2 hours weekly, for a period of 10 weeks. Within the group of 8 students and myself as group leader, topics will be introduced each session. These topics will be about how people get along with other people.

The discussions within the group will remain strictly confidential and will not be used for any other purpose than this research.

If you wish to withdraw your consent for your child’s participation in this study you are free to do so at anytime.

If you have any enquiries at anytime regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the Secretary of the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on (042) 213079.

If you wish for your son/daughter to take part in the group counselling, please sign here.

Signature_________________ Date________________
Dear __________________________ (student’s name)

When I wrote to you before, I talked about my research and my interest in finding out if group counselling can help students get along better with important people in their lives. Your school has suggested that you may be interested in taking part in the group counselling and I am wondering if you would like to participate.

Taking part in the group counselling would mean meeting for about 1 1/2 hours every week for a period of 10 weeks. Within the group you would be with 7 other students from your high school, and I would be the group leader. In the group, we will talk about different ways each of us get along with people in our lives and we will try to work out better ways we could do this.

If at anytime you no longer wish to take part in the group counselling, you are free to withdraw.

The discussions we have in the group will remain confidential, that is, what we say in the group will not be discussed with anyone else outside the group. What you and the other students say in the group will only be used to look at the effect of group counselling on adolescents and for no other purpose.

Again, if you have any questions about the way the research is going, you could ring or ask one of your parents to contact the Secretary of the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on (042) 213079.

If you wish to take part in the group counselling, please sign below.

Signature __________________________ Date _____________

Information and Appreciation Letters

(These letters were sent to the parents of adolescents who had taken part in the research. Each letter referred to the group work intervention of their child’s school.)

Dear --__________ ,

Thank you for your participation in, and support for our evaluation of group counselling. This project was interested in determining whether group counselling can be effective for students 13-15 years who are getting into trouble at school. Twenty-two students and their parents participated in the evaluation.

The group counselling involved 7 student from Year 8, and Year 9. The group met every Wednesday morning for 10 weeks during Term 2. The theme of the group counselling was to allow each group member to look at relationships between themselves and others in the group, and between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. Within the group, the focus was on each group member gaining a greater understanding of their feelings and behaviour and to better understand how other people see and understand them.

Teachers and parents completed the Conners Rating Scales both before we began the group counselling and after we completed the group counselling. Now in terms of outcomes the results from the Conners Rating Scales are mixed. For all parents whose adolescents took part in the group counselling there was a reported change in behaviour for the better. On the other hand, while the teachers reported for most students who took part in the group an
improvement in classroom behaviour, this was not as marked as the improvement reported by the parents. The parents of the students in the group counselling were also asked directly if they felt the counselling had led to changes in their adolescent’s behaviour. One parent felt there had been no change, while the remaining parents described positive changes ranging from slight to significant.

Students were involved in an interview of approximately one hour. This interview took place twice, before and after we began the group counselling. In the interview the students were firstly asked to describe themselves. When the students were asked to describe themselves, more students than not were able to describe themselves in terms of behavioural or emotional responses. For example, ‘(I) get embarrassed and worry what others might think’, ‘(I) can listen to (my) friends’ problems’ and ‘(I) will say what (I) think even if (my) friends don’t like it’. In the interview, the students were also asked to talk about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. Most of the students accounted for the similarities and differences in terms of interests such as sport and music, or in physical attributes such as height, hair colouring etc. We also found that some students are beginning to describe these similarities and differences in terms of behavioural attributes such as ‘being able to talk together’, ‘being able to laugh and joke together’, and ‘doesn’t listen and says things that hurt’.

We found that after the group counselling the students who participated in it used a broader range of ways to describe themselves. Whereas before the group counselling these students tended to describe themselves in terms of trouble at school, they were now describing other aspects of themselves. For example, ‘someone you can talk to’, ‘his friends think he is an alright guy’, and ‘he can keep a promise’.

When the students were also asked to talk about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home, we found that fewer of their relationships, particularly at school, were being described in terms of ‘being in trouble’ versus ‘being out of trouble’. The students were now talking about these relationships in broader terms. For example, ‘(we) get agitated and angry if people go on about certain things’, ‘(we’re) not as smart’ and ‘(we) can handle being wrong’.

When the students involved in the group counselling were asked directly if they felt their behaviour had changed as a result of their participation in the group, all expressed that there had been positive changes ranging from some change to considerable changes. One student did add that he felt the changes had not been maintained and that he was now in as much trouble at school as before.

In summary, it would appear that group counselling has something to offer students 13-15 years attending school. The results suggest that there were positive behavioural changes at both school and home, although the greatest change was reported at home. The results also suggest that following group counselling students seem more able or willing to have a broader understanding of themselves and their relationships with others at school and home. Finally, it would appear that enough students are willing to take part in group counselling, which suggests that group counselling offers potential in providing counselling to a greater number of students.

We would like to further evaluate the long-term effects of group counselling. This will be done by seeing if the changes reported by both parents and teachers for the students who participated in the group counselling are continuing in twelve months.

Yours faithfully,

Deborah Truneckova,
Group Counsellor

Faithfully yours,

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Group Counsellor
Dear---------,

Thank you for your participation in, and support for, our evaluation of group counselling. This project was interested in determining whether group counselling can be effective for students 13-15 years who are getting into trouble at school. Twenty one students and their parents participated in the evaluation.

The group counselling involved 7 students, Year 7 and Year 8. The group met every Thursday morning for 10 weeks during Term 2. The theme of the group counselling was to allow each group member to look at relationships between themselves and others in the group, and also between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. Within the group, the focus was on each group member gaining a greater understanding of their feelings and behaviour, and to better understand how other people see and understand them.

Teachers and parents completed the Conners Rating Scales both before we began the group counselling, and after we completed the group counselling. Now in terms of outcomes the results are mixed. Most parents whose adolescents took part in the group counselling reported change in behaviour for the better. There was also one parent who reported less change, and an increase in negative behaviours. On the other hand, the teachers reported an improvement in classroom behaviour for two of the students who participated in the group. For one of these students, teachers reported a very significant improvement in classroom behaviour. For the remaining students, the teachers reported very little improvement in classroom behaviour, or a slight to moderate increase in negative classroom behaviours. The parents of the students in the group counselling were also asked directly if they felt the counselling had led to changes in their adolescent's behaviour. While four parents felt there had been a significant change, one parent reported a slight change, and two parents reported no change at all. The parents who felt there had been a change described these changes in the following ways: 'talks more', 'more confident', and 'seems more settled'.

All students were involved in an interview of approximately one hour. This interview took place twice, both before and after we began the group counselling. In the interview the students were firstly asked to describe themselves. While all the students described themselves in terms of what they like and like to do, most were now beginning to describe specific behavioural characteristics with both a positive and a negative quality about them. For example, '(I) have a short temper but (I) can control it', '(I) am very loud and (I) like to give my opinion on a lot of matters not concerning (me)', '(I) don't like getting into trouble (but I) am not very good at stopping (myself) from getting into trouble' and '(I am) always joking but unfortunately (I) can't be hassled back because (I) take things too seriously'.

In the interview the students were also asked to talk about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives at school and at home. While some students predominantly accounted for the similarities and differences in terms of interests such as sport and music, many more students were describing these similarities and differences in terms of behavioural attributes such as 'we both like each others company, we joke around', '(they are) quiet, don't talk, keep to themselves' and '(they) get along with anyone, not judgemental'.

We found that after the group counselling, the students who participated in it generally described themselves with greater assertiveness. Whereas before the group counselling these students tended to describe themselves in terms of what they hated and disliked, they were now describing behavioural characteristics about themselves. For example, '(I) don't care much about (myself) but when (I) want to, (I) can care a lot about someone else', '(I) stick up for (myself)' and '(I) get a lot of mood changes depending on a lot of different things'.
The students who participated in the group counselling were also asked about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. We found that the differences in their relationships were perceived as less reactive, and more in terms of behavioural characteristics. For example, 'we have a quick temper', 'we are both loud and get angry a lot', 'we like the same things, talk about the same things, agree on same things', and 'we don't care what people think whatever, we are not so negative'.

The students involved in the group counselling were asked directly if they felt their behaviour had changed as a result of their participation in the group. Five students said positive changes had occurred. However, two students felt there had been no changes, and added they were getting into as much trouble at school as before. Of those students who expressed experiencing positive changes, the main reason put forward was receiving less tickets by teachers for misbehaviour.

In summary, it would appear that group counselling has something to offer to students 13-15 years attending school. The results suggest that there were some positive behavioural changes in terms of interpersonal relationships at both school and home, although the greatest change was reported at home. The results suggest that following group counselling students seem more able or willing to have a broader understanding of themselves and their relationships with others at school and home. Finally, it would appear that enough students are willing to take part in group counselling, which suggests that group counselling offers potential in providing counselling to a greater number of students.

We would like to further evaluate the long-term effects of group counselling. This will be done by seeing whether the changes reported by both parents and teachers for the students who participated in the group counselling will continue in twelve months.

Yours faithfully,

Deborah Truneckova,
Group Counsellor

Faithfully yours,

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Group Counsellor
Thank you for your participation in, and support for our evaluation of group counselling. This project was interested in determining whether group counselling can be effective for students 13-15 years who are getting into trouble at school or have difficulty getting along with other students at school. Eight students and their parents participated in the evaluation.

The group counselling involved 3 students from Year 9. The group met every Wednesday morning for 10 weeks during Term 3. The theme of the group counselling was to allow each group member to look at relationships between themselves and others in the group, and also between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. Within the group, the focus was on each group member to gain a greater understanding of their feelings and behaviour, and to better understand how other people see and understand them.

Teachers and parents completed the Conners Rating Scales both before we began the group counselling, and after we completed the group counselling. Now in terms of outcomes the results are mixed. Most parents whose adolescents took part in the group counselling reported no change in behaviour on the Conners Rating Scale. On the other hand, the teachers reported change in behaviour for the better for two of the students on the Conners Rating Scale. For the remaining student, the teachers reported a moderate increase in negative classroom behaviour. The parents of the students in the group counselling were also asked directly if they felt the counselling had led to changes in their adolescent’s behaviour. The parents reported positive changes. These changes were described as ‘being more settled and responsible’ and ‘being more co-operative and helpful at home’.

All students were involved in an interview of approximately one hour. This interview took place twice, both before and after we began the group counselling. In the interview, the students were firstly asked to describe themselves. All the students were describing themselves in terms of behavioural characteristics with both a positive and negative quality about them. For example, ‘I am quiet, protective but sometimes stubborn’, ‘I always talk and can’t stop talking and that can annoy people sometimes’ and ‘people don’t like me when I boss them around and don’t care about them’.

In the interview, the students were also asked to talk about similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives at school and at home. Some students were accounting for these similarities and differences in terms of interests such as activities and sports. However, on the whole most of the students were describing the similarities and differences between people in terms of behavioural attributes such as ‘we understand how we feel’, ‘we listen to each other and try to understand and help each other out’ and ‘they are more responsible than me’.

We found that after the group counselling, the students who participated in it were now more often describing themselves in terms of their relationships with other people in their lives. For example, ‘I fit in better with my family’, ‘school is alright with the kids now, there were a few problems’ and ‘my mates think I’m easy going, great to talk to, and understanding’.

The students who participated in the group counselling were also asked about similarities and differences they perceive between themselves and important people in their lives both at home and at school. We found that the students were now describing these similarities and differences less in terms of physical appearance and interests in sport etc. These similarities and differences were now described in terms of how they got along with others or did not get along with others. For example, ‘they get upset easy/I don’t get upset easy, I get angry easier’, ‘they don’t react as aggressive to personal feelings’ and ‘we do things together and help each other out’.

The students involved in the group counselling were asked directly if they felt their behaviour had changed as a result of their participation in the group. All the students felt there had been positive changes ranging from a bit to a lot of change. The students described
these positive changes in the way they can talk to other people and the way these people talk back to them.

In summary, it would appear that group counselling has something to offer students 13-15 years attending school. The results suggest that there were some positive behavioural changes in terms of interpersonal relationships at both school and home. The results suggest that following group counselling students seem more able or willing to have a broader understanding of themselves and their relationships with others at school and home. Finally, it would appear that enough students are willing to take part in group counselling, which suggests that group counselling offers potential in providing counselling to a greater number of students.

We would like to further evaluate the long-term effects of group counselling. This will be done by seeing whether the changes reported by both the parents and teachers for the students who participated in the group counselling will continue in twelve months.

Yours faithfully,

Faithfully yours,

Deborah Trunecкова
Group Counsellor

Dear———,

Thank you for your participation in, and support for, my evaluation of group counselling. This project was interested in determining whether group counselling can be effective for students 12-15 years who seem to be getting into trouble at school or have difficulty getting along with other students. Ten students and their parents participated in the evaluation.

The group counselling involved 4 students from Year 7. The group met every Wednesday afternoon for 10 weeks during Term 3. The theme of the group counselling was to allow each group member to look at relationships between themselves and others in the group, and also between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. Within the group, the focus was on each group member to gain a greater understanding of their feelings and behaviour, and to better understand how other people see and understand them.

Teachers and parents completed the Conners Rating Scales both before I began the group counselling, and after the group counselling. Now in terms of outcomes the results are mixed. All parents whose adolescents took part in the group counselling reported a positive change in behaviour. On the other hand, the teachers reported moderate increases in positive behaviour for two of the students who participated in the group. For the remaining two students the teachers reported a slight increase for one student and a large increase for the other student in negative classroom behaviours. The parents of the students in the group counselling were also asked directly if they felt the counselling had led to changes in their adolescent's behaviour. All four parents felt there had been positive changes. These changes were described in the following ways; 'more co-operative in behaviour both at home and at school', 'an improvement in application to school work', and 'evidence of a greater sense of maturity in their attitude towards themselves and people at home'.

All students were involved in an interview of approximately one hour. This interview took place twice, both before and after the group counselling. In the interview, the students were firstly asked to describe themselves. While all the students described themselves in terms of what they like and like to do, most were describing specific behavioural characteristics with both a positive and negative quality about them. For example, 'I am sometimes annoying, but I am caring and loving inside', 'I am nice and
sometimes funny and understanding, (but) sometimes if I don't get my own way I get real angry', and 'sometimes my friends get annoyed with me because I don't always do what they want to do'.

In the interview the students were also asked about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives at school and at home. While students were accounting for the similarities and differences in terms of what they like to and do not like to do, they were also describing these similarities and differences in terms of behavioural attributes. For example, ‘they both get worried/sometimes I’m worried and sometimes I’m not’, ‘they both have the same temper, bad temper/I haven’t got a bad temper like they do’, ‘we think of good things/she doesn’t think about anything, she just does it’, and ‘we trust each other/he doesn’t trust us as much’.

I found that after the group counselling the students who participated in it were describing themselves more in terms of their interpersonal relationships. Whereas before the group counselling these students tended to describe themselves around their likes and dislikes, they are now describing how they get along and do not get along with others. For example, ‘I don’t like people who make you choose which friend to like’, ‘I don’t like fights because they don’t come to anything’, and ‘my friends think I’m a good friend to them because I don’t play tricks on them and stuff like that, I always play with my friends’.

The students who participated in the group counselling were also asked about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. I found that while the students are continuing to describe these similarities and differences in terms of interests and what they like and do not like to do, they are describing them now more often in terms of behavioural characteristics. For example, ‘we are always joking around/she’s always serious’, ‘they both get angry/I don’t get angry as much’, and ‘we think differently/she has responsibility’.

The students involved in the group counselling were asked directly if they felt their behaviour had changed as a result of their participation in the group. All students felt there had been positive changes ranging from some change to considerable changes. These changes were described as getting into less trouble at school, getting their schoolwork done, and feeling better at home.

In summary, it would appear that group counselling has something to offer to students 12-15 years attending school. The results suggest that there were some positive behavioural changes in terms of interpersonal relationships at both school and home. The results suggest that following group counselling students seem more able or willing to have a broader understanding of themselves and their relationships with others at school and home. Finally, it would appear that enough students are willing to take part in group counselling, which suggests that group counselling offers potential in providing counselling to a greater number of students.

I would like to further evaluate the long-term effects of group counselling. This will be done by seeing whether the changes, reported by both parents and teachers for the students who participated in the group counselling, will continue in twelve months.

Yours faithfully,

Deborah Truneckova
Group Counsellor
Dear——,

Thank you for your participation in, and support for, my evaluation of group counselling. This project was interested in determining whether group counselling can be effective for students 12-15 years, who are beginning to get into trouble or seem to be having difficulties getting on with other students. Fifteen students and their parents participated in the evaluation.

The group counselling involved 5 students from Year 7. The group met every Thursday morning for 10 weeks during Term 3, with myself and the school counsellor, ————, as the group leaders. The theme of the group counselling was to allow each group member to look at relationships between themselves and others in the group, and also between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. Within the group, the focus was on each group member to gain a greater understanding of their feelings and behaviour, and to better understand how other people see and understand them.

Teachers and parents completed the Conners Rating Scales both before I began the group counselling, and after the group counselling. Now in terms of outcomes the results are mixed. The parents whose adolescents took part in the group counselling reported a significant change in behaviour for the better. On the other hand, the teachers reported an improvement in classroom behaviour for one of the students who participated in the group. For the remaining four students, the teachers reported very little improvement in classroom behaviour or a slight to moderate increase in negative classroom behaviours. The parents of the students in the group counselling were also asked directly if they felt the counselling had led to changes in their adolescent's behaviour. All the parents felt there had been positive changes ranging from subtle to obvious. The parents described these changes in terms of thinking about consequences, having greater self esteem, becoming involved in more activities, and generally getting along better with others.

All the students were involved in an interview of approximately one hour. This interview took place twice, both before and after the group counselling. In the interview the students were asked to describe themselves. While all the students were describing themselves in terms of what they like and like to do, all were either beginning to, or were predominantly describing specific behavioural characteristics with both a positive and a negative quality about them. For example, 'I hate to learn things that I think is hard or is new and when I do I don't feel very confident', 'I get on with kids who have problems because maybe I am easy to talk to and can understand good', and ‘my friends get annoyed with me when they say they’re right and they are wrong and I tell them they are wrong’.

In the interview, the students were also asked to talk about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives at school and at home. While some students predominantly accounted for the similarities and differences in terms of interests such as sport and music, many students were more often describing these similarities and differences in terms of behavioural attributes such as ‘we usually don’t argue/he always seems to have a go at me whenever he has a chance’, ‘they are careful with things/I am not as careful’, and ‘I take criticism hands down and try to fix it/they can’t handle criticism’.

I found that after the group counselling the students who participated in it generally used a broader range of ways to describe themselves. Whereas before the group counselling these students tended to describe what they like to do and not like to do, they were now describing more how they get on with people and how other people get on with them. For example, ‘my friends like me because I am reliable (but) they get annoyed when I am nasty’, ‘I make it easy for my friends to know me’, and ‘my friends get annoyed with me if I am in trouble because if they are fighting with their other friends they have no one else to hang around with’.

The students who participated in the group counselling were also asked about the similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and important people in their lives both at school and at home. I found that for some of the students they were describing a greater sharing of interests, for example, ‘we like to do lots of stuff together’. The other
students were now describing their relationships in terms of behavioural characteristics, for example, ‘we are nice to people/she is nice to people in different ways’ and ‘we joke (but) are not nasty jokers/he’s a nasty joker’.

The students involved in the group counselling were asked directly if they felt their behaviour had changed as a result of their participation in the group. Four students said that positive changes had occurred. However, one student felt there had been no change at school and at home: ‘no better no worse’. Of the four students who expressed experiencing positive changes, most expressed them in the following way: ‘getting along better with people at school and at home’.

In summary, it would appear that group counselling has something to offer to students 12-15 years attending school. The results suggest that there were some positive behavioural changes in terms of interpersonal relationships at both school and at home. The results suggest that following group counselling students seem more able or more willing to have a broader understanding of themselves and their relationships with others at school and home. Finally, it would appear that enough students are willing to take part in group counselling, which suggests that group counselling offers potential in providing counselling to a greater number of students.

I would like to further evaluate the long-term effects of group counselling. This will be done by seeing whether the changes, reported by both parents and teachers about the students who participated in the group counselling, will continue in twelve months.

Yours faithfully,

Deborah Truneckova
Group Counsellor
Appendix 9

GLOSSARY

This glossary of personal construct terms used in this thesis has been drawn from the extensive glossaries of Bannister & Fransella (1986) and Viney (1996), and acknowledgements are made to these authors.

Abstraction
In abstraction, people's approaches to their worlds become more general, less related to the physical world, and have a higher level of conceptualisation.

Aggressiveness
Aggressiveness is the active elaboration of one's perceptual field.

Anger
Anger is experienced when people get no confirmation for their predictions about events and try to extract some.

Anxiety
Anxiety is experienced when people become aware that they do not have the constructs to make interpretations and predictions about events that they need.

Bipolar Constructs
When constructs are used, they imply that both similarities and differences are perceived between events. They are therefore bipolar, providing a choice between two opposing predictions and courses of actions.

Choice Corollary
Persons choose for themselves that alternative in a dichotomised construct through which they anticipate the greater possibility for the elaboration of their system.

Commonality of Construing
The constructs that people share have commonality.

Commonality Corollary
To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, their processes are psychologically similar to those of the other person.

Concretisation
In concretisation, peoples' approaches to their worlds become more specific, more related to the physical world, and have a lower level of conceptualisation.

Constellatory Construct
A construct which fixes the other realm membership of its elements is called a constellatory construct. This is stereotyped or typological thinking.
Constriction
Constriction occurs when people reduce the number of events with which they deal because of apparent incongruity between them.

Constructs
These are the meanings by which people make sure of their lives. They are interpretations that aid in understanding the past and present and predicting the future. They are based on comparisons of events in terms of their similarities and differences.

Construct Systems
In construct systems, people's constructs are recognised as influencing one another and being influenced.

Construction
The application of constructs to make sense of one's world constitutes construction.

Constructive Alternativism
There are as many ways to make sense of the world as there are people to make sense of it.

Constructivism
Constructivism involves a set of assumptions about the nature of the world, which maintains that any account of that world must be constrained by the constructions or creations of the people who devised that account.

Construing
Construing involves making sense of present and past events and making predictions about those in the future.

Contrast
The relationship between the two poles of a construct is one of contrast.

Core Constructs
Constructs that are referred to as core are those by which we make sense of ourselves, which are the most central, stable, and sustaining.

Core Role Constructs
Core role constructs are the most central, stable, and identity-sustaining constructs people use for predicting their interactions with others.

CPC Cycle
The CPC Cycle is a sequence of construction involving in succession, circumspection, pre-emption, and control, leading to a choice precipitating the person into a particular situation.

Creativity Cycle
The creativity cycle is used to make sense of new situations. It starts with open-ended construing and ends with construing that is more precise and useful for decision making.

Dependency, Dispersed
When people see themselves as using help from a wide range of people, their dependencies are dispersed.
Dependency, Undispersed
When people see themselves as using help from only a narrow range of people, their dependencies are undispersed.

Dilation
Dilation occurs when people expand the number of events of that they make sense that has the effect of expanding the range of application of their constructs.

Elements
The things or events which are abstracted by a person’s use of a construct are called elements. In some systems these are called objects.

Enactment
Enactment involves acting out particular events (or relationships) to encourage reconstruing of those events and to develop new courses of actions.

Experience Corollary
A person’s construction system varies as they successively construe the replication of events.

Fear
Fear is the awareness of an imminent incidental change in one’s core structures.

Guilt
Guilt arises with awareness that one’s actions do not fit with one’s most central constructs about oneself.

Hostility
Hostility is experienced when people try vigorously to confirm their disconfirmed interpretations and predictions.

Impermeability
Construing has impermeability if it cannot be applied to new events and people.

Invalidation
When people’s predictions of events, which they have based on their construing, are disconfirmed, distressing emotions result.

Loose Construing
Construing that is loose leads to predictions about events that can change but are recognisably related to each other.

Peripheral Constructs
A peripheral construct is one which can be altered without serious modification of the core structure.

Permeability
Construing has permeability if it can be applied readily to new events or people.

Personal Construct Psychology
This is a constructivist theory developed by George Kelly.

Personal Construct Therapy
This is a constructivist psychotherapy developed by George Kelly.
Pole
Each construct discriminates between two poles, one at each end of its dichotomy. The elements abstracted are like each other at each pole with respect to the construct and are unlike the elements at the other pole.

Pre-emptive Construct
A construct which pre-empts its elements for membership in its own realm exclusively is called a pre-emptive construct. This is the 'nothing but' type of construction—'if this is a ball it is nothing but a ball'.

Propositionality
Construing has propositionality if it implies only the predictions related to the specific construct referred to. It is relatively uncontaminated by other constructs.

Range of Convenience
A construct's range of convenience comprises all those things to which the user would find its application useful.

Reconstruction
Any reinterpretation of the meaning of events is reconstruction.

Reflexivity
Reflexivity involves using any psychological theory to account for its theorist as well as other people. Of reconstructive therapy, it requires that therapists be accounted for using the concepts employed for clients.

Repertory Grid Technique
Repertory Grid Techniques are used for assessing the content of people's personal meanings and how they use them. They were developed from personal construct theory.

Role Relationships
Role relationships are relationships between people in which each participant tries to take the perspective of the other.

Self-Characterisation
Self-Characterisation is a simple personal construct theory technique for assessing the content of people's personal meanings.

Sociality Corollary
To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, they may play a role in a social process involving the other person.

Submergence
The submerged pole of a construct is the one which is less available for application to events.

Subordinacy
Subordinate constructs are lower order constructs in the hierarchical system of constructs that are influenced by and understood through other constructs.
Superordinacy
Superordinate constructs are higher order constructs in the hierarchical system of constructs that influence and can be used to understand other constructs.

Threat
People experience threat when they recognise the imminent possibility of major changes to their most central constructs about self.

Tight Construing
Construing that is tight leads to unvarying predictions about events.

Validation
When people's predictions about events, which they have based on their construing, are confirmed, enjoyable emotions occur.