The stories of our fathers: Men's recovery
from intergenerational wounds

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the narratives of recovery for men who have been injured in their relationship with their father. Six men participated in the study and each man reported that they had been injured in their relationship with their father and have therapeutically engaged in the process of recovery. These men worked with the researcher towards the co-construction of their narrative of recovery and this provided an in-depth examination of the men's subjective experiences. Six narratives were written in the first person focusing on the process of recovery. Each narrative was co-analyzed with individual participants by using Arvay's (2003) Collaborative Narrative Method. Narratives were returned to the respective co-researcher in order to evaluate the worth of the study. The study explored the process of recovery in the unique personal context in which it occurred and provided concrete examples of what the recovery process is actually like. In order to uncover the patterns of recovery, a cross narrative theme analysis was conducted that revealed six primary patterns of recovery. The results show that there may be a convergence of trauma for men when developmental trauma and masculine gender role trauma intersect. The narrative patterns of recovery that emerge help highlight and provide critical components of treatment and recovery for men who experience this convergence of trauma.

PREFACE

This dissertation is an original intellectual product of the author, Michael R. Dadson. The research was approved by UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board; subject H10-02819, Nadia Rad: Senior Administrative Coordinator Research Ethics Board.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Social Context and Rational for the Study

Some scholars regard masculinity and men's psychological wellbeing as a silent crisis (Levant, 1997; Robertson, 2007). It is well known that gender issues and dominant ideals of masculinity have emerged as reasons for men's reluctance to admit and seek help for psychological problems (Oliffe & Phillips, 2008; Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2000). Researchers recognize that the way men construct and perform their masculinities conflicts with traditional models of therapy and is contributing to the current crisis and men's gender-role stress (Levant, 1998, 2006). Gender ideologies and masculine role identifications are intergenerational transmission processes passed from father to son (Dadson, Westwood & Oliffe, 2013; Luddy & Thompson, 1997). Many men today are haunted by the ruins of alienated relationships with fathers and the transgenerational trauma passed on to them (Biller, 1982; Corneau, 1991).

Previous research shows a link between healthy fatherhood and men's psychological wellbeing. The characteristics of the father, the amount of time he spends with his children, and the closeness of the father/child relationship, have all consistently predicted offspring adjustment outcomes in clinical and non-clinical populations (Amato, & Gilbreth, 1999; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001) and many have concluded that fathers have a significant influence on their offspring's psychosocial and emotional development (Connell & Belshy, 1998; Lisak, 1994; Richards & Duchkett, 1996). On the other hand, fathers can also influence negative outcomes in children. In 1994 a study in *The American Journal of Public Health* reported that children exhibiting violent misbehaviour in school were 11 times more likely to live without their father as children who did not exhibit violent behaviour (Ko, 1999). In fact, low supervision of adolescents frequent in father absent homes, was found to be a greater cause of delinquency than

poverty (Sampson & Laub, 1994). In the popular press the absence of fathers is consistently

associated with juvenile emotional disorders, crime, suicide, promiscuity and later marital break-

up (Rotheisler, 1997). In the U.S., the Department of Justice reports that 72 percent of adolescent

murderers, 60 percent of rapists, and 70 percent of long-term prisoners grew up in father-absent

homes (Ko, 1999).

In Canada, the rate of marital break-up has risen 600% in the last 30 years (Rotheisler, T.

1997). Statistics Canada, (2001) reported that about 4 out of 10 Canadian marriages end in

divorce. Approximately 90 percent of children of divorce no longer live with their father

(Furstenberg, 1990). As a result, many young boys are growing up without or with limited

positive influence of their fathers. How does this affect both the boy and the absent father?

Strained father son relationships have significant, weighty implications for men's psychological

health because the relationship between fathers and their children has been demonstrated to have

a profound effect on the psychological health of both children and fathers (Ball, Moselle &

Pedersen, 2007). In other words, the health risks for men are compounded because of the ways

fathers influence their sons.

For example, substance use is a major category of health determinants referred to as

'personal health practices and coping strategies' adopted by the Public Health Agency of Canada

(PHAC) as a category of determinants of health (PHAC, 2003). When fathers are close to their

children both are less likely to engage in substance abuse and youth are more likely to abstain

from substance use (Ball, Moselle, & Pedersen, 2007). Ball et al. (2007) concluded the

father\child relationship has a profound effect on the health of both children and fathers because

it can mitigate, or provoke health risks like, suicide, depression, substance abuse and

dependence, emotional disorders, crime, violence and even hospital visits. Healthy involved

father/child relationships predict an overall, healthier ecology (Ball et al., 2007) and an overall sense of psychological wellbeing (Dadson, Stewart, & McDonald, 2013).

These health risks effect not only fathers and sons but men in general. Men are two times less likely than women to be diagnosed with depression but 4 times more likely to commit suicide. More than 90 percent of homicide-suicide offenders are men. Alcohol abuse and dependence are approximately four times more common among men than women (Grant Harford, Dawson, Chou, & Pickering, 1994; Oliffe & Phillips, 2008; Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2000). Gender issues and dominant ideals of masculinity have emerged as reasons to explain these discrepancies and men's general reluctance to treat mental illnesses (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2000; Oliffe & Phillips, 2008). Researchers are recognizing that the way men construct their masculinity is contributing to the crisis in men's health and that relationships with fathers shape the way sons adopt, construct and perform masculinity.

The problem facing counselling psychologists is that the culture and language of traditional psychotherapy conflicts with masculine culture and language (Levant 1997). There seems to be a gap between the way health care professionals provide services and the way men assess their health care needs. There is a significant need to bridge this cultural divide and explain the process of therapy in the language and culture of men.

Research Question

Within this social context, this study sets out to answer the following question: How do men construct, in their own language and culture, the process of therapeutic recovery from trauma experienced in their relationship with their fathers? This question is important because: (1) Canadian researchers recognize that masculinity is socially constructed; (2) there is a recognized need to describe the process of therapy in the language and culture of men; (3) there

is a dearth of studies that focus on the effects of gender-role trauma in father/son relationships, and (4) the need to research effective treatment process that are accessible to men is well documented (Allen & Daly, 2007; Ball, et. al, 2007; Carlson, 2006; O'Neil, 2008). I address these problems and this gap by investigating the process of therapeutic repair for men who have experienced traumatic gender role strain in their relationship with their fathers and describe the process of recovery in the language and culture of men.

O'Neil (2006) describes the process of repair from gender role trauma that includes, "mediating heterosexual antagonism, developing a capacity for intimacy, redefining [male] power and control, processing emotional pain and healing the inner child" (p.279). Although such descriptions are helpful, counselling psychologists need to hear men describe, in their own words, the process of therapeutic change and their narratives of repair. The results of this study yield fuller accounts that help bridge the "cultural gap" between therapists and men and help construct effective treatment and interventions that are relevant to men.

The Researcher in the Research

One of the valuable features of qualitative research is that the conditions and situations of experience have the opportunity to become explicit. It is reasonable for all individuals engaging in the study to be frank about their own experiences and to inform the academic community of those immediate contexts that may intersect with this research project. In effect, the reader, researchers, and evaluators place themselves in the research and contextualize their situations in relation to the study. I have chosen to provide the reader with information about my situation and contextualize myself in relationship to this study. The thoughtful reader is encouraged to reflect on his/her own life situation, how it may intersect with this research topic, and explicitly contextualize themselves in relation to this research project.

I bring to the study the ethnic and cultural context of a Caucasian, English speaking Canadian man of British heritage born on the West Coast of Canada. I am a heterosexual 53 year old male who is the father of two biological children, a son 21 years old and a daughter who is 17 years old. I am a doctoral student in counselling psychology and have been registered as a Clinical Counsellor for 10 years. For over 15 years, I have contracted as a therapeutic Foster Parent with a government agency to provide care for children who have been removed from their homes because of parental neglect or violence. Also, in the past I contracted with Intensive Child Care Resources Vancouver, to develop residential stabilization resources for violent teenage offenders and teenage girls who have been victimized in the sex trade industry.

Growing as a boy, my personal experiences with my own father were difficult. My father died September, 2007. We were not close and rarely spoke in the years before he died. Throughout my life I have few memories of positive interactions with my father. I experienced him as harsh, distant, uninvolved, unreliable and unloving.

I rarely noticed my relationship with my father until I was 12 years old. When I was 12, my mother, with whom I felt secure and close, developed a brain tumour and died within an eight-month period. At this time, for some reason, I assumed my father would develop a relationship with all six of his children. This did not happen. While my mother was in the hospital my father left the family and developed a relationship with someone else. Although I continued to have a bedroom in our home I rarely saw my father. My siblings were all older and moved out. I recall few positive interactions with my father during this time. I realize now what took some time to accept—he had little ability or interest in establishing a relationship or engaging in any aspect of his parental role. Those were very traumatic, difficult and troubling years.

In my late teens my spiritual life became a very positive and transformative experience for me. I accepted the gracious message of Christianity. I found it very fulfilling to engage in a loving relationship with God based on his unconditional, sacrificial acceptance and grace. I pursued ordination in the church but I found the church's teaching about God as a loving heavenly Father emotionally difficult to accept. I preferred to experience God generically.

Over the following years I became more aware of others who seemed to find relating to God as father fulfilling and that seemed helpful. I also observed others struggle with their relationships with their fathers. As I began working with children in the Ministry of Children and Families I noticed that instability and a lack of connectedness in parental relationships resulted in chaotic and severe destabilization for children. In contrast, forming connections with caring adults seemed to ease and quiet delinquent behaviour. I recognized, through experience, the many benefits for children when they had secure relationships with parental models and caregiving adults. My concern with this topic deepened when I had two biological children of my own. I was concerned that my painful experiences with my father might affect them negatively. In my master's thesis I investigated the lived experience of young adults who have a secure, close relationship with their fathers. I found the results of this research personally transformative and professionally powerful because it equipped me experientially to know the therapeutic power of secure attachments with men.

Now I approached this present study eager to learn more about the process of recovery from traumatic experience(s) with fathers because I believe such a study will provide me with personal insight to my own experiences with my father. I also expected that this study would help me in my role as a father. I found that this study has helped me as a counselling psychologists and a therapeutic foster parent because I have learned more about the process of

therapeutic recovery for sons who have be traumatized by their fathers. I have also learned how to work more precisely with men who have sustained this injury.

The Purpose of the Study

Research to date and the silent crises men face, show us the need to further explore the pathways that link men's psychological health to the quality of the father/son relationship. We need to learn how to help men navigate their way through what for many is isolation and silence in order to find repair and health. When fathers are empowered to walk with their sons through life's significant challenges and hardships, young men find courage and guidance. The need to equip men and interrupt the cycle of 'absent fathers, lost sons', calls for further conceptual elaboration, research, and investigation into the association between fathers' involvement in the lives of their sons and men's psychological health. This need highlights the importance of finding out more about the specific links or pathways between the father/son relationship, male psychological injuries, and movements towards health. Knowing how the father/son relationship mitigates against men's psychological health risks clarifies how to support these moderating relationship characteristics. Learning about the lived experience of sons and how they perceive their relationship with their fathers can help identify these links. Learning more about the effect fathers' injuries have on men is important because it will equip us to address their health care needs more effectively. Researching men's experience of repair provides insight into the psychological health risks that are associated with alienated father/child relationships and how to facilitate a process of repair that is accessible to men.

There is a significant body of research showing a range of impacts of father-child relationship on the well-being of children and adult children. Recent research recognizes the relationship between the quality of father\child relationship and positive health practices.

Evidence shows positive father involvement is associated with healthy coping strategies in fathers and youth, and results in lower risk of negative health outcomes for both fathers and children (Ball, Moselle & Pedersen, 2007). In spite of this, there is a dearth of focused research on the specific links fathers' involvement has on sons' psychological health.

Research suggests that deepening our understanding of securely attached father/child relationships has great import for nurturing therapeutic relationships and developing the person of the therapist (Dadson, 2005; Lambert & Barley, 2001). Deepening our understanding of father/child relationships provides an important glimpse into the way men attach. Knowing more about father/son injuries and how men recover will help caregivers understand how to provide healthcare services to men.

This study further our understanding about the significant life experiences of male generative relationships and the symbiotic developmental risks or benefits for men. It provides insight into both the impact of failed fathers' generative relationships and necessary ingredients for men to experience recovery from this injury. This narrative study does this by presenting our research participants answer the question: "How do men construct the process of therapeutic recovery from trauma experienced in their relationship with their fathers?"

The Significance and Contribution of the Study

The results of this study are vital to counselling psychologists because we need to know not just the facts of an experience but the impacts of an intervention or a process of change. The process of therapy involves the client and therapist coming to know each other in such a way that both client and therapist contribute to and are changed by the interaction and communication present in a therapeutic relationship (Lambert & Barley, 2001). Understanding narratives of repair for masculine gender role injuries is particularly crucial in order for counselling

psychologists to help men out of the silent crisis caused by rigid masculine identifications (Levant, 2006; O'Neil 2008).

First, the study contributes by helping practitioners identify male psychological health concerns that intersect in the father/son relationship. It will enhance our understanding of current theoretical and conceptual frameworks on father/son relationship injuries and adds to a growing body of research that has identified the link between fathers' involvement and their son's health. This study is particularly pertinent because it focuses on male psychological heath concerns that are contextualized within the father/son relationship. By identifying the common themes of meaning in sons' experience within this relationship, the study adds a rich picture of what it looks like when the father/son bond is injured and broken. Their stories help us understand more about male injuries and provide a clear description of the process of recovery.

Second, the study contributes therapeutically and educationally. The collective narrative of this experience can help guide health care professionals toward helping the next generation of sons and fathers. The results of this study provide health professionals with a description of the process of recovery from a broken father/son relationship. This account reveals important information that can help prevent and treat the psychological health risks and associated injuries that result from fathers' abuse, neglect and limited involvements in their son's lives.

Finally, this study provides new information about the link between father/son relationships, gender trauma, developmental trauma, and the narrative themes of recovery from a specific male psychological injury. These advancements are very important because they address the "cultural gap" that exists between counselling psychology and men, offer direct for future research, and enhance therapeutic designs that are aimed to develop future psychological practice with men.

CHAPTER 2: LITRATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to critically evaluate key published material related to masculine gender role injuries and the father/son relationship. My objectives in this review is to increase familiarity with foundational research that underlies and informs the masculine gender role constructs, discuss this research from a critical methodological perspective, and examine current findings that address the way paternal attachments styles intersect with gender-role formation.

I accomplish these objectives by tracing the history and theoretical evolution of masculine gender role paradigms with a particular focus in gender role trauma strain and the fatherhood wound. The development of the key constructs and themes are examined and an overview of established research designs and measures most frequently used to investigate gender role paradigms are highlighted. In this review I discuss two basic theoretical groups: The Gender Role Identity Paradigm and Sex Role Theory, and The Gender Role Strain Paradigm. This overview is followed by a critique of their contributions and limitations. Additionally, the chapter provides examples of how the constructs and measures of these theoretical groups are used by gender role researchers, both within counselling psychology and within other disciplines.

Understanding the relationship between theory and measurement is particularly important to psychologists and the study of gender because the ways psychologists construct masculinity reflects researchers' underlying theoretical preferences, as do their measures. The measures employed in the gender role paradigms are grounded in theory and that theory serves as an operational definition of masculinity in their subsequent empirical studies.

Before I launch into the development of the gender role identity paradigm, I think it is important to situate my discussion of the father-son injury within the context of attachment

theory. Understanding this theory of relationships helps us understand the important ways that gender role strain, gender role trauma and the relationship of the father can intersect in the lives of men. As we move through this chapter, I will highlight some of the research that supports a correlation between the father-son relationship and gender role self-identifications and having a basic understanding of attachment theory will be helpful.

The Theoretical Framework of Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1969,1988, 1998) argued that irregularities in parental caregiving disrupted children's development and had profound effects on how they later navigated all close relationships. Strongly advocating that theory needed to be based on direct observational studies and on retrospective reports of therapy, Bowlby's interest in direct observational research helped separate him from other relational psychoanalytic theorists at the time and broaden the appeal of this theoretical approach. Through this longitudinal process of observation, he and other key founders of attachment theory, such as Ainsworth with her work on the Infant Strange Situation, discovered that patterns within parent-child interactions predicted what became referred to as the child's *internal working model* of self and others (Bowlby, 1969; Cassidy & Shaver, 1999; Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist & Target, 2000; Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson & Collins, 2005). These complex inner working models form the bases for predictable relational patterns that are relatively stable throughout the lifespan (Goldberg, Muir & Kerr, 1995; Lopez, Mauricio, Gormley, Simko & Berger, 2001).

Many developmental, social and counselling psychology researchers and practitioners share the assumption that the attachment relationship between a child and his or her primary caregiver is a cornerstone of relational development and the ongoing relational functioning in the individual. An attachment theory framework continues to provide a useful lens from which

researchers can find out more about the way different attachment styles influence men's inner working models of gender and masculine identifications.

Ainsworth (1967) first sketched out different patterns of infant attachment in an appendix to her book, *Infancy in Uganda: Infant care and growth of love*. Later, her studies involving extensive home observations during infants' first year of life, supplemented by the laboratory assessment procedure, "the strange situation," delineated three main patterns of attachment. The formulations of these patterns, first called attachment styles in 1978, are the result of this empirical research in which Ainsworth formally measured and coded the infant's behavior towards her mother (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Ainsworth et al. 1978). Ainsworth et al. (1978) described how three major patterns of parent-child dyad interactions, which they labeled secure-autonomous, anxious-ambivalent, and anxious-avoidant, were associated with particular maternal behaviors toward the infant in the home and the infants' adaptive responses to those behaviors in order to maintain proximity with the parent. These measures and ideas, combined with Bowlby's (1969, 1988, 1998) theoretical trilogy on attachment and loss, form the backbone of all subsequent discussions of attachment process and attachment styles (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Research examining individual differences in attachment functioning in adults has focused on patterns of expectations, needs, emotions and social behaviour that result from a particular history of attachment experiences (Fraley, 2002). Generally, attachment styles are understood as a person's most enduring and accessible working models. They represent the typical functioning of a person's attachment system both in a specific relationship and globally across relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Attachment theory has been one of the most generative psychological theories of the last 40 years. Although it emerged out of the psychoanalytic tradition, it is regarded as a grand theory of social development and has become a guiding force in research within both social and developmental psychology (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). Moreover, attachment theory's research arm has extended to industrial psychology, neuropsychology, clinical and counselling psychology, developmental, educational and social psychology (Schore & Schore, 2008; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Simpson & Rholes, & Philips, 1998).

Although attachment styles generally fall into three types, today there is a proliferation of attachment style classifications and test measures. The way attachment styles are constructed directly relates to how attachment classifications are operationalized and the types of questions motivating researchers. Constructions and measures often depend if the research is interested in the intergenerational transmission of attachment patterns (largely developmental interests or interested in social cognitive dynamics affecting feelings and behavior in adult close relationships (largely personality social interests) (Fraley, 2002; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Simpson & Rholes & Phillips, 1998). Due to the foci of existing research on the latter form of attachment patterns in relationship to masculine gender role (O'Neil, 2008; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) this review will focus on attachment as conceptualized by social and personality psychology.

Researchers from social and personality psychology rely primarily on self-reports of attachment-related thoughts and feelings in adult relationships (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). Here, researchers investigate attachment styles through a variety of self-assessment reports like those developed by Hazen and Shaver (1987) and the Relationship Questionnaire developed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) to determine attachment styles and functioning. Roisman, et

al. (2007) point out that the Relationship Questionnaire represents a model that describes prototypic forms of adult attachment differently than developmental assessments and their correlation is disputed. The use of these measures, their correlation, and their effectiveness is debated by both disciplines (Fraley, 2002).

Despite its roots in a common theoretical tradition, attachment research is often conducted in distinct and often separate investigative branches. These distinctions are important, given that in this article we are reviewing research that has investigated how adult attachments styles affect the way adult men construal their masculine gender roles within relationships. As we review research findings it is important to be aware of these differences, but a detailed discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this article (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Our topic is contextualized within the perspective of personality and social psychology largely because this research method has more in common and intersects well with masculine gender role measures.

For some time social psychology has been interested in the way people subjectively construe social experiences, identity formation, gender role identity and adult relationships and has become increasingly interested in the way interpersonal relationships, attachment bonds and family relationships shape not only our beliefs, feelings, and expectations about ourselves, but also influence our beliefs, feelings and interactions with others (Anderson & Chen, 2002; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Research consistently shows that relationships exert a powerful and often underappreciated influence on how we construe ourselves and our social world (Anderson & Chen, 2002; Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett, 2006). Attachment theory is one of the most heavily researched conceptual frameworks in modern psychology that addresses questions about relationship influences (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Questions like: How do our relational

patterns influence the way we address our friends, family and romantic partners? How do relationships shape our thoughts, feelings and actions? Do early childhood relationship patterns shape the way we see ourselves and others? Attachment studies provide some provocative answers to these questions and sport a large body of research that supports this framework.

For our purposes, the thread of inquiry that is addressed by attachment theory researchers in social psychology is the relationship between attachment styles and identity formation. Numerous studies have produced findings that link secure attachment styles to positive identity formation (Benson, Harris, & Rodgers, 1992; Meeus, Oosterwegel, & Vollebergh, 2002). Although the majority of these studies are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal or experimental, the volume of research finding that a secure attachment style is associated with higher identity achievement and lower identity diffusion is impressive (Benson, Harris, & Rodgers, 1992; Meeus, Oosterwegel, & Vollebergh, 2002; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Although social psychologists share a theoretical underpinning with other research traditions that recognize attachment styles fundamentally represent inner working models of self and others, because their research is conducted largely through validated self-assessment reports they apply the theory to operational attachment styles through test scores that measure, "a constellation of behaviors, cognitions and affect-regulation strategies. These cluster nicely into three theoretically consistent patterns" (Bernier & Dozier, 2002, p.172); 1) secure 2) ambivalent/ preoccupied or 3) avoidant /dismissive (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Bernier & Dozier, 2002). Within attachment theory, it is proposed that adults with secure attachment styles tend to experience greater emotional comfort, expression and flexibility with their emotions and emotional experiences in relationships. As well, they tend to experience greater comfort with the emotions, actions and experiences of others. The dismissive/avoidant pattern of insecure

attachment is characterized by a high degree of anxiety, self-reliance, as well as discomfort with emotional closeness, and efforts to avoid intimacy whenever possible. Finally, the ambivalent/ preoccupied form of insecure attachment is defined as a way of relating in which the individual struggles with intense fears of abandonment and rejection, while simultaneously having intense feelings of jealousy and possessiveness (Shi, 2003).

An attachment theory framework is helpful because it postulates that secure relationships predict high flexibility, adaptability and exploration (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Bernier & Dozier, 2002). Therefore, securely attached men, it is predicted, will have a high degree of flexibility and gender role adaptability because they are free to explore less conventional ideologies (O'Neil, 2008). This secure and reflective environment should facilitate the development of psychological androgyny (Bem, 1981). In contrast, insecurely attached men, given their more rigid environment, develop a higher reliance on stereotypical thinking and therefore favour the endorsement of traditional masculine gender roles. Specific attachment insecurities (dismissive/avoidant, ambivalent/ preoccupied) may interfere in particular ways with relations between masculinity, femininity and the development of androgyny. The ambivalent/ preoccupied individuals' doubts about themselves and self-mastery might interfere with the development of masculine, agentic traits, while dismissive/avoidant people's preference for interpersonal distance and their tendency to suppress emotions might create discomfort with exploration of feminine, expressive traits (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Bernier & Dozier, 2002). Finally, an attachment framework helps draw attention to the importance of secure attachment patterns, the influence of the parental relationship and it's quality and particularly for my study the important influence fathers have on men's masculine gender role identity formation (Brannon, 2002).

The Gender Role Identity Paradigm and Sex Role Theory

The gender role identity paradigm dominated the research on masculinity for over 50 years (1930-1980). This paradigm assumed people's optimal personality development hinged on the formation of a gender role identity that was an internal, developmental quality (Levant, 1995). The paradigm is based on what some have called, "the hazardous influences of sex role theory of socialization" (Courtenay, 2000, p. 1387), a theory that has been criticized for years because it implied that gender represents fixed, static and mutually exclusive gender role containers (Kimmel, 1986, p. 521), and that women and men have innate psychological needs for gender-stereotypic traits (Pleck, 1987). Sex role theory advocates the notion that people have a singular male or female personality that is rooted in their biology as male or female. This notion has been effectively disputed, because it obscures the various forms of femininity and masculinity that women and men can and do demonstrate (Connell, 1995). Never the less, it continues to be represented in many research projects and debates about gender-role theory.

Terman and Miles (1936) were the first to publish a psychological inventory of masculinity and femininity and coded these constructs as bipolar opposites. Masculinity was operationalized as powerful, strenuous, active, steady, strong, self-confident, with a preference for machinery, athletics, working for self. Masculinity was also characterized by a dislike of foreigners, religious men, women cleverer than they, dancing, guessing games, being alone and thin women (Smiler, 2004). For the next 35 years, tests such as the Strong's vocational interest bank (Strong, 1936) and the MMPI (Hathaway and McKinley, 1951) maintained similar descriptions of masculinity. Masculinity and femininity were consistently positioned as opposites operating on an interval scale with masculinity theorized to mitigate against mental illness and predicting higher intelligence (Smiler, 2004). Terman was a well known intelligence researcher

in educational psychology who helped develop the Stanford-Binet intelligence test and believed high intelligence to be conflated with health, masculinity, and heterosexuality (Hegarty, (2007).

Spence (1984) continued to construct gender role rooted in this theory. He suggests that, although the terms masculine and feminine and masculinity and femininity have rarely been defined, they have two types of meaning both for psychologists and for the community as a whole (Spence, 1984). First, Spence (1984) represents the sex role theory of gender socialization by defining masculine and feminine as empirical and as labels that identify specific objects or qualities associated with what it means to be male and female. Second, masculinity and femininity are used as theoretical constructs that refer to a fundamental property or an aspect of the individual's self-concept that is not directly observable. In this second sense, masculinity and femininity are conceived as bipolar opposites with men having a firm internal sense of their psychological masculinity and women having a similar sense of their femininity. Spence (1984) proposed that masculinity and femininity, as they refer to individuals self-concept, should be re-conceptualized as gender identity which he defined as a basic phenomenological sense of one's maleness or femaleness that parallels awareness and acceptance of one's biological sex and that this is established early in life.

Bem (1974), who researched in the field of personality and social psychology, revolutionized sex role theory by challenging this perspective and operationalizing masculine and feminine constructs differently. She went on to develop one of the most well known sex role inventories, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem, 1974). This inventory treats masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions rather than bipolar opposites. In this way, Bem's inventory makes it possible to characterize a person as masculine, feminine, androgynous or undifferentiated and this characterization is a function of the difference between his or her

endorsement of masculine and feminine personality characteristics. In spite of these radical

changes, the Bem inventory remains conceptually rooted in sex role theory. The BSRI

operationalizes masculinity as an instrumental orientation characterized by a cognitive focus on

getting the job done while femininity has been operationalized by an expressive orientation and

an effective concern for the welfare of others. Approximately 200 personality characteristics

were compiled that were deemed to be a positive value and represented either a masculine or

feminine tone. This served as the pool from which masculine and feminine items were selected.

The BSRI was designed to measure the extent to which a person divorces themselves from the

characteristics that are considered to be appropriate for the opposite sex (Bem 1974).

The development of the BSRI represented a step forward and distinguished the BSRI in

several ways from other commonly used masculinity femininity scales up to that time. First,

BSRI is distinguished from the masculinity and femininity scales of inventories like the

California Psychological Inventory (CPI) (Gough, 1957) because it contains 20 personality

characteristics for both the femininity and the masculinity scales. Previous inventories like the

CPI actualize masculinity as a single coherent construct and femininity as it's negative opposite.

To be high in feminine qualities meant a person must be low in masculinity qualities. This was

considered to be problematic because the latent assumptions of this bipolar scale were found to

be untenable. Second, the BSRI, was founded on a conception of the sex typed person as

someone who has internalized society's sex type standards as a desirable behaviour for men and

women. These personality characteristics were selected as masculine and feminine on the basis

of sex typed social desirability and not on the basis of differential endorsement by males or

females, as most other inventories before this had done. Third, Bem's scale characterized a

person as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated, as a function of the difference

between his or her endorsement of masculine and feminine personality characteristics (Bem, 1974). For Bem, (1974) masculinity and femininity were clusters of socially desirable attributes, stereotypically considered to differentiate males and females. These attributes were referred to as personality traits. In spite of these differences and even though practically, the social cultural influence on gender was obvious, theoretically Bem remained consistent with past theorists and positions that viewed gender as an essentialist, individually based construct (Smiler, 2004).

According to Bem (1981), gender identity formation involves the exploration of femininity (expressive, communion oriented traits) and masculinity (agentic, instrumental traits), and their integration into a mature, flexible, and adaptive gender role identity, while resisting rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles that may be encouraged by family or culture. The successful resolution of this task results in a unique, personalized mixture of femininity and masculinity. This healthy mix results in an androgynous gender role identity that allows a person to engage flexibly in expressive or instrumental behaviour when it is situationally appropriate.

Broadhurst (2002) is an example of how the BSRI continues to be used to research masculinity, social processes and the link between parental relationship patterns and gender identity formation. Like attachment security, androgyny is viewed as a desirable mixture of self-confidence, autonomy, and healthy capacity for intimate relationships (Bem, 1981).Broadhurst (2002) used the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem 1974) and the RQ (Bartholomew, & Horowitz ,1991) to investigate the relationship between gender, gender-role identity and attachment style. Broadhurst proposed to: (a) explore, by gender, the masculinity effect in gender-role research along the dimensions of dominance and affiliation; (b) differentiate cross-sex gender-role-types (i.e., masculine females and feminine males) from same-sex gender-role-types (i.e., masculine males and feminine females); and, (c) distinguish, by gender,

undifferentiated gender-role types from the remaining gender-role types). Broadhurst found that secure attachment types endorsed parity with dominant and affiliative traits reflective of androgynous gender-role identity. As well, this finding suggests that preoccupied attachment types and feminine gender-role types endorsed more affiliative traits than remaining types (Broadhurst, 2002).

In another example, Haigler, Day and Marshall (1995) used the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment and the BSRI with 218 primary middle-class college students. The study used a 2x4x2 univariate factorial analysis of variance to examine the association of attachment level with gender, role identity, and a within subjects factor of attachment figure. The study reported that feminine and androgynous individuals reported significantly higher levels of secure parental attachment than those classified as masculine and undifferentiated (Haigler et. al., 1995). Numerous studies like these have found that secure attachment styles correlates with higher levels of psychological androgyny, as assessed with the BSRI. Based on Bem's (1981) measures, men and women who are securely attached to their parents seem to experience their gender as androgynous. These studies suggest that men and women who have a securely attached relationship style are more likely to experience their gender as flexible, differentiated and adaptive.

Furthermore, several studies using the BSRI inventory found that adults with a anxious/preoccupied attachment style associated with lower scores on measures of masculinity, whereas those with a avoidant/dismissing are associated with lower scores on femininity (Aloso-Arbiol, Shaver, & Tarnoz, 2002; Collins & Read, 1990; Shaver, Papalia, Clark, & Koski., 1996). The BSRI measure has helped researchers deduce that men who have formed an anxious/preoccupied attachment style may have an internal association with feminine attributes

and experience a conflicted masculinity. Their anxious attachments style experience seems to be further aggravated because they see themselves as unable to live up to masculine ideals. On the other hand, men who tend towards an avoidant/dismissing attachment style may overly identify with rigid, traditional masculine roles. These men are more likely to experience their masculinity as narrow and inflexible avoiding self and others perceptions of them as feminine or androgynous.

The BSRI continues to be used in research and discussions related to gender role identity and other gender related constructs (Hoffman & Borders, 2001). It has been unmatched in stimulating thought regarding sex role socialization and the sex role theory. Yet, the sex role theory and the gender role identity paradigm approach to understanding human gendered behaviour is limited and may no longer be as efficacious (Hoffman & Borders, 2001). There is a fundamental problem with the BSRI that relates to the question of what is actually being measured. Instrumentality and expressiveness are inadequate measures to effectively quantify masculinity and femininity. According to Hoffman and Border, (2001) the BSRI engages in two fallacious processes. First, it inappropriately defines and labels men and women in terms of their masculinity and femininity. Second, it suggests that there is a relationship between masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated individuals and other various traits, roles, or behaviours (Hoffman & Borders, 2001).

The construct of androgyny has been very useful to social psychologists who are trying to understand the way relationships influence how we construe ourselves and our social worlds (Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett, 2006). Although it has provided a rich alternative to bipolar presentations of masculinity and femininity, the theory has serious limitations.

In fact, some believe adopting the gender role identity paradigm and the sex role theory of gender socialization should be considered to be hazardous to men's health (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). The failure of researchers, who assume sex role theory, is that the way they try to explain things, like men's risk taking and violence, has perpetuated the false, yet widespread, cultural assumption that risk taking and violent behaviours are natural to, or inherent in, men (Levant, 2006). Similar assumptions like, "real men don't seek help," prevent society from defining men's under-utilization of social services and health services as a problem, when there is nothing natural about the fact that men make poor healthcare decisions (Addis & Mahalik, 2003).

The Gender Role Strain Paradigm

In contrast to the gender role identity paradigm, the gender role strain paradigm (Pleck, 1981, 1995) sees gender roles not as biological or socially fixed givens but as constructions that can change with social contexts. Pleck (1981, 1995) understands gender roles as psychologically and sociologically constructed entities that can bring advantages and disadvantages. For Pleck and others, the 1970s marked the beginning of the study of men as men and no longer as idealized non-gendered humans (Lisak, 2000; Thompson & Pleck, 1995).

While acknowledging the biological differences between men and women, the gender role strain paradigm argues that it is not the biological differences of sex that make up the essence of masculinity and femininity. Rather, these notions are socially constructed in order to serve some particular purpose (Levant, 1995). This paradigm is the forerunner of the new psychology of men. It represents modern critical thinking about masculinity and has spawned a number of major research programs that have produced important data that is deepening our understanding of the strain men experience when they attempt to live up to the impossibility of masculine ideologies (Levant, 1995). Pleck (1981) effectively demonstrated that the gender role

identity paradigm poorly accounted for the observed data and promoted the patriarchical purposes of society on the basis of stereotyped gender roles.

Studies of masculinity ideology approach masculinity as a socially constructed gender ideal for men. Rather than attempting to measure gender orientation (Bem, 1974), Thompson and Pleck (1995) gathered evidence to support the notion that gender orientation and gender ideologies are independent and have different correlates. In this paradigm there is no single standard for masculinity nor is there an unvarying masculinity ideology. Masculinity is a social construction, and ideals of manhood may differ for men of different social classes, races, ethnic groups, sexual orientation, life stages and historical eras. In spite of this diversity, Pleck (1995) asserted, "there is a particular constellation of standards and expectations that individually and jointly have various kinds of negative concomitants" (p.20). Levant (1996) points out that in the literature it is common to refer to this as traditional masculinity ideology. This, he says, "was the dominant view before the deconstruction of gender that took place beginning in the 1970s" (p.260).

The gender role strain paradigm approach to gender is conceptually interwoven with the view that gender roles are determined by prevailing gender ideologies. Gender ideologies are operationally defined by gender role stereotypes. Stereotypes like these are imposed on individuals by various cultural transmitters that pressure people to subscribe to the prevailing gender ideology (Levant, 1996).

Several scales were developed to measure traditional masculine ideology. For example, The Macho Scale, measured extreme forms of masculine behaviour or hyper masculinity (Bunting & Reeves 1983). The Attitude Towards Men Scale (Downs and Engleson, 1982) was developed to measure the public attitudes towards the roles and status of men. The Attitude

Towards Masculinity Transcendence Scale, was intended to be a general purpose inventory of attitudes towards changing societal norms and values defining masculinities (Moreland & Van Tuinen, 1978).

Brannon (1976) regarded traditional masculinity ideology as a multidimensional construct. He identified four components of traditional masculinity ideology; 1) men should not be feminine; 2) men should strive to be respected for successful achievement; 3) men should never show weakness; 4) men should seek adventure and risk, even accepting violence if necessary (Brannon, 1976). Brannon and Juni (1984) assessed these dimensions by developing the Brannon Masculinity Scale (BMS).

The BMS (Brannon, & Juni, 1984) was developed to measure individual's approval of the norms and values that define the male role. The self-report scale is based on Brannon's (1976) analysis of American culture's blueprint of what a man is supposed to be, to want, and to succeed in doing. This presumes that masculinity centers on the four themes mentioned but centered on including avoiding femininity and concealing emotions. The scale contains both prescriptive and descriptive statements presented in the first or third person and are rated on a seven point strongly disagree to strongly agree Likert format. Scoring measures an individual's endorsement of traditional masculinity. The major strength of the BMS includes the scope of masculinity standards included, and the effort to assess attitudes towards the expectations men face without direct comparison to women. (Thompson, Pleck, & Ferrera, 1992).

The Male Role Norms Scale MRNS (Thompson & Pleck, 1986) is founded on the masculine ideology that was identified by Brandon (1976; Brandon & Juni, 1994). This scale was derived empirically by factor analyzing the 58 item Brandon Masculinity Scale. The MRNS identifies three basic dimensions underpinning the male role, status norms, toughness norms, and

anti-femininity norms. This 26 item self-report scale uses a seven point, very strongly agree to very strongly disagree format.

Masculine gender ideologies are imbedded with the idea that masculinity has a distinctive set of underlying tenants that delineates masculine behaviour (Smiler, 2004). This idea is present throughout the gender role strain paradigm. Thompson and Pleck (1995) present the concept of masculinity ideology as a way to conceptualize the existing research that addresses attitudes towards men and male roles. In their review of 18 extant scales developed in the last three decades that are dedicated to mapping masculinity ideologies, they identified 12 of the 18 masculinity measures as ideological measures (Thompson & Pleck, 1995).

Understanding the presence of masculine ideology within Pleck's (1981, 1995) male gender role strain theory is important because it is a backdrop that contextualizes his thinking and the conceptualization of gender role strain. Pleck (1995) hypothesized that "male gender role strain is related to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards of male behaviour" (p.19). When men endorse and internalize the cultural belief systems about masculinity and male gender they are adhering to a "masculinity ideology" (Pleck, 1995, p.19). Masculine ideology may involve overly rigid gender role standards that can be dysfunctional and have negative consequences. Rigid masculine ideology can contribute to gender role strain. Pleck (1981, 1995) theorized that the masculine gender socialization process is accompanied by three kinds of male GRS that can be detrimental to psychological health. Pleck (1995) termed these three GRSs as, "discrepancy-strain", "dysfunction-strain" and "trauma-strain."

Pleck (1995) hypothesized that discrepancy-strain exists when individuals internalize a masculine ideal but have failed to live up to the expectations around that ideal. Typically this

ideal is a close approximation to the traditional societal code. Failure to conform to these stereotypical standards may lead to the experience of negative consequences such as hyper-masculine behaviour, self-devaluation and devaluation of others. Discrepancy-strain may produce negative social feedback as well as internalized negative self-judgments (Pleck, 1995).

Dysfunction-strain is the notion that fulfilling gender role norms can be dysfunctional because the behaviour and characteristics these standards prescribe can be inherently associated with negative outcomes (Pleck, 1995). Brooks and Silverstein, (1995) argued that living up to prevalent masculine ideology may result in violence against men, women and families including rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment; sexual excess and addictions; socially irresponsible behaviour such as chemical abuse, physical self-abuse, absent fathering, risk taking, and relationship dysfunctions like inadequate emotional partnering; non-nurturing fathering. O'Neil (2008), citing early men's liberation writers from the 1970's, refers to dysfunction-strain as the "hazards of being male" or the notion that "male gender role may be dangerous to our health" (O'Neil, 2008, p.366). Dysfunction-strain refers to the negative outcomes that come from endorsing rigid masculine ideologies and their subsequent behaviours.

Pleck (1995) called the third GRS trauma-strain. It applies to groups of men who experience harsh and traumatic masculine gender role strain (Pleck, 1995). Trauma strain may involve professional athletes, Vietnam veterans, and survivors of child abuse, sexual abuse and many gay and bisexual men who experience trauma-strain by growing up in a heterosexist society (Levant, 1996). GRS trauma-strain is of particular interest to me because my research topic addresses the kind of trauma-strain that sons experience in relationship to their fathers. O'Neil (2009) believes trauma strain involves three covert fathering contexts. They are: masculinity ideology; the father wound, defined as unfinished business with one's own father;

and men's patterns of Gender-Role Conflict (GRC). These three covert contexts are discussed as dynamic forces that shape men's fathering problems and psychological functioning.

Pleck (1981) helped pave the way for other theorists and researchers to study masculinity as a changing process and not as a single standard or unvarying construct. In contrast to the gender role identity paradigm and sex differences, Pleck (1981) emphasized that the ideals of manhood may differ for men of different social classes, races, ethnic groups, sexual orientations, life stages, and historical eras (Lavant, 1996).

O'Neil (1981, 2008), approaching gender role from a counselling psychologist perspective, provides a major contribution to the field of men's studies and masculine ideology through the development of GRC theory and the GRC scale (GRCS; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986). More than 232 studies examining GRC with men have been completed using the GRCS. GRC is demonstrated to be theoretically related to Pleck's (1995) GRS paradigm but research has not fully explained this relationship. O'Neil suggests that the, "the patterns of men's GRC are defined as negative outcomes of GRS" (O'Neil, 2008, p.364). GRS is construed as pressure, tension and constriction, which are inner processes. In this view, GRS is limited because it does not convey attitudes or behavioural outcomes. GRC is hypothesized by O'Neil (2008) as concrete outcomes of gender-role dysfunction strain that is observable and measurable which he demonstrated through the development of the GRC scales. GRC theory represents an extension of Pleck's (1981) gender-role dysfunction strain to observable measurable behaviours.

GRC theory focuses on the hypothesis that rigid, restrictive, and sexist attitudes toward gender roles can have negative consequences for men (O'Neil, 2008). This includes negative consequences for personal and interpersonal relationships, family, health and career. GRC is a

cognitive, emotional, behavioral and unconscious experience of gender role restrictions, devaluations and violations. O'Neal (2009) states, "The ultimate outcome of this kind of conflict is the restriction of the human potential of the person experiencing the conflict or a restriction of another person's potential."

O'Neil (2008) reports that "GRC is operationally defined by four psychological domains, three situational contexts, and three personal experiences." The four psychological domains of GRC are cognitive, emotional, unconscious, and behavioural. GRC theorizes that gender conflict overlaps in how we think about gender, how we feel about gender, how motivations beyond our awareness affect our behaviour and how we act out our gender and respond in our environment (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, Stillson, David, & Wrightsman (1986).

GRC is experienced in numerous situations (see O'Neil, 2008) but can be simplified when it is viewed within three situational contexts: (1) Within the man through negative emotions, thoughts and unconscious inner reactions as gender role devaluations, restrictions, and violations; (2) GRC expressed toward others by the man, when a man directly or indirectly devalues, restricts, or violate someone else as a result of gender role problems, and; (3) GRC experienced as any interpersonal experience of gender role conflict that results in being personally devalued, restricted, or violated (O'Neil, 2008).

Men experience GRC in three ways; gender role devaluations, gender role restrictions and gender role violations. Gender role devaluations are the negative judgments of others or oneself that result in a lessening of status, stature, or positive regard. They may result in conforming to, deviating from, or violating stereotypic gender role norms of masculine ideology. Gender role restrictions are limitations imposed by masculine ideology and stereotypic norms that limit and confine people's behaviour, personal potential, and human freedom. Harming

oneself or being harmed by others when deviating from or conforming to gender role norms is considered to be a gender-role violation (O'Neil, 2009).

The major concept of GRC theory relates to men's fear of femininity in men's gender role socialization and masculine ideology (O'Neil, Helms, Gable & Wrightsman, 1986; O'Neil, 2008). The fear of femininity results in masculine ideologies that are rigid standards that define and restrict interactions with men's gender role socialization. This is associated with strong, negative emotions that are associated with stereotypic feminine values, attitudes and behaviours (O'Neil, 2008).

This fear gives rise to four patterns of GRC, namely: (1) success/power/completion, (2) restrictive emotionality, (3) restrictive affectionate behaviour between men, and (4) conflict between work and family relations. These patterns emerge in a context of personal and institutional sexism and GRC and GRS are overarching realities that men face. Person and institutional sexism contextualize and shape men's lives, interacts with men gender socialization and directly relates to men's GRC (O'Neil, 2008).

GRC has been assessed over the past 26 years through the Gender-Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil, 2008). This scale was constructed through psychometric analysis and is theoretically related to the psychological domains, personal experiences and situational contexts of the GRC. In order to appreciate the formation of the GRCS, it is important to understand the relationship between Pleck's (1995) three strain subtypes and the GRCS (O'Neil, 2008). GRS was a primary stimulus in the conceptualization of GRC. The GRCS only measures Pleck's (1981, 1995) dysfunction strain and is based on the hypothesis that prescribed gender roles are psychologically dysfunctional. Although it is conceptually linked to discrepancy and trauma strain it does not measure these constructs (O'Neil, 2008). In fact, as O'Neil (2007) points out,

the question is whether research documents that GRC significantly relates to men's psychological dysfunctions because by design, as a correlational measure, the GRCS is limited and it cannot determine causality.

The gender role strain paradigm (Pleck, 1995) and the measures that are based on this theoretical model are important because research using a variety of these measures is helping to show that aspects of traditional, masculine stereotypes have destructive elements that affect things like men's health, domestic violence, substance abuse, and men's help seeking behaviours (Roberston, 2007; Bartholomew & Allison, 2007). In my research I am interested in the way early relational experiences between fathers and sons affect masculine gender role socialization, the consequent gender role strain and men's help seeking behaviours. Learning more about the relationship between parents, attachment style and masculine gender role conflict and masculine gender role strain is a helpful window into the transgenerational transmission process of passing masculine ideologies from fathers to sons. Therefore, I review several studies that compared attachment style measures with masculine gender role strain measures.

In a 1998 study investigating the perceptions of parent-child relationships and masculine role conflicts, Fisher and Good found men's perceptions of secure, positive and conflict free relationships with both fathers and mothers were related to a less degree of masculine role conflicts and stresses (Fisher & Good, 1998). Gender role conflict was operationalized with the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, Wrightsman, 1991) and the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (MGRS; Eisler, & Skidmore, 1987). These measure men's conflicts with their gender roles constructed in the GRCS around four factors: a) Success, Power, Competition; b) Restrictive Emotionality; c) Restrictive Affectionate Behaviour Between Men; and d) Conflict Between Work and Family Relations. The MGRS measures conflict around five

factors: a) Physical Inadequacy to meet masculine standards of physical fitness, sexual power and other manly appearances; b) Emotional Inexpressiveness – love, fear, hurt feelings and crying; c) Subordination to Women; d) Intellectual Inferiority; and c) Performance Failure – work, sex. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) and the Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Kenny, 1987) are both based on classic attachment theory and are used to measure men's attachment to their parents (Fisher & Good, 1998).

This study found that men who reported a lesser degree of conflict (e.g. guilt, anxiety, or resentment) with both parents also tended to report a lesser degree of masculine gender role stress associated with being in a subordinate position to women and feeling intellectually inferior and physically inadequate. They also found that men who experienced their fathers as a greater source of security also tended to report lesser masculine role conflict regarding emotional expression and less concerned with performance failure and intellectual inadequacy (Fisher & Good, 1998). Men's experience of security with their fathers relates to decreased masculine role conflict.

In a follow up study, Schwartz, Waldo and Higgins (2004) used The Relationship Questionnaire (RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) and the GRCS (O'Neil et al., 1986), finding that participants with a secure attachment style scored significantly lower on the Restrictive Emotionality subscale than did those with the other three attachment styles. They also scored significantly lower on the Success, Power, and Competition subscale than those with a fearful attachment style. These findings suggest a relationship between attachment style and men's masculine gender role development. Because they are correlational studies, however, it is

not clear if traditional gender role affects attachments with parents or if attachment styles influences masculine role identifications.

In another study, DeFran and Mahalik (2002) hypothesized that men's own gender role strain, and estimates of their fathers' gender role strain, would be associated with less attachment to, and more psychological separation from, their parents. Using the GRCS (O'Neil et al., 1986), the MGRS (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), the PAQ (Kenny, 1987) and the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984), they found that men who perceive their fathers as having less gender role conflict and stress, and who view themselves with somewhat less gender role conflict and stress, report closer attachments to both parents, particularly their fathers. The results suggest that men's own gender role conflict and stress are related to lesser levels of attachment and greater degrees of separation from both parents. Sons' gender role stress was significantly related to psychological separation from both parents. These findings are consistent with previous research of Fischer & Good (1998) (DeFran and Mahalik, 2002).

The results of DeFran and Mahalik (2002) support the hypothesis that son's gender role strain would be related to the son's estimates of his father's gender role conflict and stress. In fact, a son's estimate of his father's gender role conflict and stress were negatively related to attachment, especially paternal attachment. It would seem that as a son perceives his father to be more rigid in traditional masculine roles or stressed when unable to live up to gender ideals, he felt less of a bond with both parents, but especially with his father. Positively, when a son perceived his father as less rigid about traditional masculine roles and less stressed when not meeting gender ideals, he reported a stronger bond to both parents, especially his father (DeFran & Mahalik, 2002).

These studies provide evidence indicating that parental attachments correlate with gender role adjustments. Closer secure relationships with parents and less gender role conflicts seem to interact, providing sons with better relationships with their parents and flexibility and comfort with an exchange of masculine and feminine identifications. These finding give credence to the idea that the way in which a father enacts masculine gender roles influences his son's ability to form enduring affectionate relationships (Pollack, 1995) and that fathers who have less gender role conflict and are more accepting of feminine traits are perceived by their sons as more loving, attentive, and not rejecting (DeFanc & Mahalik, 2002).

In these studies, insecurely attached men were more likely than secure men to feel strain, conflict and stress by failing to live up to masculine ideals. Indeed, it seems that attachment insecurities can influence the way men experience their masculinity and to over identify with traditional, rigid masculine ideologies. Both anxious and dismissive attachment styles seem to predict gender role conflict and stress, conflictive romantic attachments, a fear of appearing feminine and a tendency to form negative attitudes toward women that can contribute to relational violence and abuse (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Bartholomew & Allision, 2006; Mahalik, & Aldarondo, et, al. 2005).

Even though the gender role stress paradigm is located within a postmodernist, constructionist, epistemological framework there are only a few studies that incorporate a qualitative design to investigate the lived experience of men's gender role stress. In one example, Silverstein, Auerbach and Levant (2002) used grounded theory procedure to analyze data collected in group interviews to investigate how contemporary fathers restructure their masculinity. They were interested in the clinical implications of gender role strain and how fathers describe the way they have renegotiated their gender role as contemporary fathers. They

interviewed three different groups of men and were able to identify three distinct themes that summarized men's experiences.

The first group consisted of Haitian Americans who live with their families in the United States. Through these interviews researchers identified "bicultural gender role strain" which highlights the conflict between the traditional Haitian fathering role and the more progressive fathering role associated with some aspects of culture in the United States. These Haitian fathers were negotiating a new fathering paradigm that researchers called creolization. These men reconstructed their fathering paradigm by creating an easy blend of the old and new. They were making a change by drawing on the nurturing father paradigm that is a part of American middle-class culture to soften the emotionally disconnected and authoritarian fatherhood paradigm modeled to them by their own fathers.

The second group consisted of men from The Promise Keepers, an evangelical Christian organization that focuses men on keeping their marital promise and their promises to be responsible to their sons and their families. This group found themselves trapped in the definition of fathering solely in terms of the breadwinner role. By trying to live up to the image of the independent, self-reliant man, they saw themselves as having become estranged from their children and their wives. The new fathering paradigm researchers coined to describe this group was, "father in terms of relationships". These fathers had to find an alternative to the traditional model of fatherhood in order to become the kinds of fathers they wanted to be. Defining fathering in terms of relationships, rather than in terms of being a provider and at work, constituted a restructuring of their fatherhood role.

The third group consisted of gay fathers who had children after establishing an openly gay lifestyle. This group suffered from gender role strain the researchers called "heterosexist

gender strain" because mainstream cultures define being gay and being a father as incompatible. These gay men internalized mainstream culture so these men also experienced this incompatibility. The new parenting paradigm that emerged for these men was de-gendered parenting and a power-sharing. In these men's relationship there are no roles defined by gender. De-gendered parenting requires power-sharing because there is no longer a female parent everything must now be renegotiated.

According to Silverstein et. al (2002) the gender role strain paradigm suggests that loosening strict gender rules is a necessary part of therapy. Their study provides multiple illustrations of how increased gender flexibility can be accomplished in a therapeutic relationship. They believe the first step in any intervention is to make clients unaware of the process and results of gender role socialization and gender role strain.

The development and use of gender role strain theory and measures continue to advance researchers understanding of the ways masculinity effects men's mental health. The incorporation of qualitative research methods further strengthens this cause particularly when these efforts are directed at understanding how men engage in therapy. Developing effective qualitative designs that effectively research gender role strain, gender role trauma in therapy with men are very important to counselling psychologists because they can advance our knowledge about how men engage treatment and how they understand and perform their masculinities.

Critique of the Current Status of Gender Role Research

     The critique of social constructivism.

One of the criticisms of gender literature that was detailed in the early 1990s was the recognition of the influences of social cultural factors on theories and measures (Connell, 1989; Smiler, 2004). Historians and sociologists have described the changes that lead to the

individualistic, unemotional, self-made man who is focused on work and success. Other authors have documented the presence of particular masculine forms that exist today (Smiler, 2004). Still, the relevance of status, power, non-emotionality, anti-femininity, and anti-homosexuality is evident. Competition, status, and dominance were limited to specific contexts and this suggests that these behaviours are only enacted as needed. There seems to be great promise in investigating masculinity as it is contextualized within social environments. In contrast to the ideology perspective, which does not address individual variation in the endorsement or rejection of different elements of masculine ideology, a constructionist orientation supports the idea that there are multiple ways to be masculine. Masculinity may be better understood as purposeful, goal-orientated behaviour that can only be fully known within the social context that it occurs. This framework fits well with the idea of multiple masculinities, which has been well received and widely adopted among masculinity researchers (Smiler, 2004). It is somewhat surprising that theorists like Pleck (1995) situate their theory in social constructionist notions of gender, yet the use of empirical, positivistic research methods dominate the research designs that are still used to substantiate these theories.

The critique of masculinity theories.

Masculinity theories have sought to provide a mechanism that can identify men whose masculinity is problematic (Smiler, 2004). Before 1970 being insufficiently masculine was explicitly identified as the source of many psychological problems. Since the early 1970s and mid-1990s most masculine theories identified hyper masculinity as problematic and hypo masculinity as preferable. Since the late 1990s the problem has shifted from being overly masculine to be overly rigid in one's adoption of masculine behaviour. The measures created during this time have changed in accordance with the relevant theories (Smiler, 2004).

Masculinity research has been fruitful and has provided empirically grounded descriptions of this construct. Some researchers describe masculinity as in internalize construct that is bounded by a small number of underlying tenets (Mahalik, et al., 2003). One of these tenants specifies that masculinity is the opposite of femininity. Differences in the underlying theoretical framework that describe masculinity as a role or as identity, the identification of an ideal, and the identification of problem masculinity reflect important distinctions between these theories (Smiler, 2004).

The critique of research methods.

Whorley and Addis (2006) conducted an extensive review of the literature in order to examine the dominant methodological trends in masculinity researched over the last 10 years. Their findings suggest that mainstream journals in North America are dominated by quantitative, correlational, non-observational research. In fact, over 80% of the studies they coded use quantitative methodologies and almost 60% were primary correlational with over 94% using no observational methods. They note that reliance on these methods severely restricts the types of questions researchers can ask. Overall, quantitative methods may lead to a more general tendency of placing value and importance only on those phenomena that can be quantified.

Although many researchers in the US and other countries utilize a range of qualitative methods to explore various aspects of masculinity, few of these studies have found their way into the major outlets that dominate mainstream research in this area. This represents a philosophical contradiction between the positivist, empirical methods that are employed and the postmodern social constructionist theories that are now being espoused.

Over relying on correlational methods, produces four important consequences (Whorley, & Addis, 2006). First, correlational methods are limited because they only examine simple linear

relationships. It simply addresses the question of how are two or more are variables related? This simple approach stands in stark contrast to the complexity of gender embedded with meaning, values, and behaviours that are performed within a set of social contexts, formations and processes. The proclivity for studying simple linear relationships has the effect of limiting the relevance of findings. Second, correlational research designs are limited because they do not allow us to test theories of causality and the direction of influence between masculine norms and other psychosocial processes. Third, studying linear relationships does not treat contextual or demographic variables affectively. Race, ethnicity, gender, social class and age are variables that need to be managed instead of meaningful mediators of men's experience. Finally, correlational methods presume the existence of stable individual differences. This fails to give account for the theoretical assumption that the social construction and social learning of masculinity is a historical, developmental, and fluid process. Assuming stable individual differences may be at odds theoretically with some of the most basic assumptions about the psychology of men and the social context in which masculinity develops (Whorley, & Addis, 2006).

In Whorley and Addis' (2006) review, they found that the overwhelming majority of research participants in the study were European American male undergraduates. Clinical samples were used in only 1.5% of the studies that were coded. This limited population also predicts a limited understanding of the diversity of men's experiences. That means we may be ignoring the possibility that what it means to be a man, or the role of masculinity in one's life, changes over time. Furthermore, neglecting to include racial and ethnic minorities in research means that we are limiting our understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in men's experiences (Whorley, & Addis, 2006).

Whorley and Addis (2006) concluded that men and masculinity researchers who published in widely read journals were not taking advantage of a range of methodologies including sampling of diverse populations, use of experimental and observational methods, and multiple measurements. With the publication of the journal *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, the number of empirical articles published on masculinity has increased dramatically. Yet, experimental and qualitative research is rarely utilized; the tendency is to select from a small group of comparatively popular measures, and there is an underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and women (Whorley, & Addis, 2006). Their review highlights the importance for researchers to make greater use of diverse kinds of research methods including qualitative methods. Hopefully, Whorley and Addis' (2006) findings will serve as a starting point for researchers to examine their research methods and consider how they influence and limit both the kinds of questions addressed and information produced. Perhaps quantitative researchers will introduce more diversity in the selection of participants, methods, and measures for future studies aimed at understanding masculine gender roles.

In spite of these limitations, the last ten years of research has produced a wealth of information and gender issues and dominant ideals of masculine ideology have emerged as reasons for men's reluctance to admit and seek help for psychological problems (Oliffe & Phillips, 2008; Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2000). Over these years, researchers have come to recognize that the way men construct and perform their masculinities conflicts with traditional models of therapy and is now contributing to the current crisis in men's health (Levant, 1998, 2006). Incorporating qualitative research methods will help counselling psychologists gain a fuller understanding of gender trauma, the process of repair and how to construct effective treatment process for men, in the language of men.

Conclusion: The Significance of a Qualitative Study Investigating Therapy with Men

Tracing the development of the key constructs and critiquing the methods, designs and measures used to investigate gender role identity paradigm and sex role theory, and the gender role strain paradigm and masculine ideology theory, shows how gender role research has been dominated by a narrow selection of research methods and designs. These methods are poorly suited to capture the full experience and meaning of how men's masculinity effect therapeutic outcomes for men. In the light of the limitations of empirical correlational designs and because of the documented need to know more about how men recover from gender role trauma, I have chosen a collaborative narrative method CNM (Arvay, 2003) design for my project. As I explain in Chapter Three, this postmodern qualitative design will provide a fuller and richer description of therapeutic repair because it can capture the meaning of this experience for men in their context and in their language.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

I designed a research project to address the research question and problem by adapting

Arvay's (2003) collaborative narrative research method (CNM). I constructed a research design

that enabled me to assemble the narrative themes of men who have recovered from a trauma they

experienced in their relationship with their fathers. I examined and described the values,

meanings and raw experiences of 6 men's experiences and subjective narratives of repair from a

trauma caused by their fathers. Through this study, I engaged men in the process of constructing

narratives that describe the process of therapeutic recovery from this psychological injury. The

results provide us with full narrative descriptions of what the process of recovery from a gender

role psychological injury is like. This description is embedded with and reveals the social

context, language, and stories that men use to describe and understand their experiences. This

design enabled me to co-create, with these participants, narrative representations of their

experiences and produce with them co-constructed themes of therapeutic repair. The outcome of

the study is a clear description, by men, with firsthand experience of this phenomenon, of the

process of recovery from gender-role trauma in the language and narratives of men.

In this chapter, I describe the study design, method and the topic of my investigation,

providing a rationale for selecting a narrative method, while mapping out precisely how the

method will be used to investigate men's process of therapeutic recovery from gender trauma.

The point of this chapter is to show how this design and the CNM (Arvay, 2003) can produce a

rich description of the way men understand and experience the process of therapeutic recovery

from a gender-role trauma experienced in their relationship with their fathers.

In order to build my rationale for this research design, I will introduce the Collaborative

Narrative Method (Arvay, 2003), show the suitability of this method for this research question,

and explain how the CNM (Arvay, 2003) procedurally addresses the research problem and the

research question. Like all research designs, the philosophical assumptions of the scientific

method need to be made explicit so that the reader can observe consistency between the

philosophy of science and the procedural approach. Accomplishing this will involve moving

through several key interrelated topics.

First, the historical development of social constructionism, the philosophical

underpinnings of the paradigm and the basic tenets of narrative research are introduced and the

appropriateness of using this method for this investigation is discussed. Second, the paper

explains the role of narrative, reflexivity and the researcher in CNM, showing how they function

within this study and discusses the relevance of CNM to masculine socialization theory. Finally,

this paper will describe the procedural steps involved in narrative methodology design

addressing topics such as: The selection of co-researchers, data collection, analysis, transcription,

as well as the results, validation and the significance of the study. Attention is given to show how

these procedural steps fit into this particular investigation and are consistent with a narrative

approach.

Epistemological Assumptions and Social Constructionism

In human and social research projects it is particularly important to explain the research

paradigm and philosophical assumptions of the study because they guide the researchers, the

design, the methodology, the context of the study, the procedures, and how the results are

evaluated. Narrative research method is situated in a post- modern qualitative paradigm and a

social constructionism epistemological framework that investigates and holds to the idea that

reality is relative and knowledge is constructed. A paradigm can be defined as a "set of

interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual

framework for the organized study of that world" (Filstead, 1979, p. 34). In this section, the

chapter introduces the historical development of qualitative, social constructionist thought and the philosophical underpinnings of this paradigm. As well, the basic tenets and distinctive emphases of CNM are introduced and situated within a narrative investigative framework. Further, the fit and rationale for using a CNM design to organize this research project and address this research question is provided.

Social constructionism emerged from a combination of influences from a number of North American, British and continental writers dating back more than thirty years (Burr, 1995). But the roots of constructionist thought date back to Giambattista Vico, the Italian philosopher who wrote in "The New Science" in 1725, "to know is to make" (Personal communication Buchanan, 2011). Immanuel Kant (1781) also argued that the human mind is an active organ which captures, molds and transforms sensations and the chaos of experience into an ordered unity of thought (Personal communication Buchanan, 2011). In Gergen's (1973) paper "Social Psychology as History" he argues that all knowledge, including psychological knowledge, is historically and culturally specific and contextualized (Burr, 1995, p. 11). Burr (1995) suggests that Gergen's paper marked the emergence of social constructionism in psychology.

The historical, cultural and intellectual backcloth against which social constructivism has taken shape is post-modernism (Burr, 1995). Post-modernism is a rejection of the positivist assumption that there can be an ultimate truth and that the world as we see it is the result of hidden structures. It rejects the idea that the world can be understood in terms of grand theories or meta-narratives (Burr, 1995). It is often defined as a reaction, critique and a departure from at least four main tenants of modernism (Personal communication Buchanan, 2011):

1) The notion of a rational, autonomous subject;

2) The notion of foundationalist epistemology, that is that the scientist can know

absolutely or with certainty that the knowledge claims are the truth;

3) The notion of reason as a universal, a priori capacity of individuals;

4) The belief in social and moral progress through the rational application of social

scientific theories to the arts and social institutions.

In contrast, some assumptions of social constructionism are (Brown, 2002):

1) It is impossible to separate subject from object or people from their environment;

2) Humans cannot be reduced to laws or principles, and cause and effect cannot be

inferred;

3) Human behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurred;

4) The only legitimate source of knowledge is the subjective frame of reference of human

beings. Human beings live within and define themselves and their environment within

events.

Constructionism proposes that individuals mentally construct the world of experience

through meaning making, and language creating cognitive processes (Ponterotto, 2005).

Although some use the two terms interchangeably, Young and Collin (2004) distinguish

constructivism from constructionism, noting that the latter emphasizes that the social and

psychological worlds are made real and constructed through social interaction and cultural

processes (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999). Burr (1995) adopts a model that recognizes no single

description and best understands constructionism writers as a "family" with many differences but

some common key assumptions (Burr, 1995, p. 2). It is beyond the scope of this paper to address

these technical ambiguities. From our perspective, intra-psychic and inter-psychic construction

processes are interrelated and interactive. In this paper, I will adopt Young's distinctions

between constructivism and constructionism when I am aiming to explain a more precise and differentiated definition. Otherwise, I will refer to constructionism and constructivism as overarching general terms representing both intra-psychic and inter-psychic social construction process because this is consistent with the "Collaborative Narrative Method" (Arvay, 2003).

Post-modern constructionists opt for relativist ontology as the best explanation of human and social phenomenon. Constructionists contend that there are multiple constructed realities rather than a single true reality. This is because constructionists regard reality as subjective and influenced by the context of the situation, the individual's experience and perception as well as the social environment. Unlike positivism, post modernism rejects the notion that the scientist can know with certainty that the knowledge claims are the truth and represent a singular reality.

Constructionists approach the role and values of the researcher in the scientific process as inseparable from the process (Ponterotto, 2005). In fact, in this paradigm, the researcher's values are not only assumed to exist, they are even embraced (Morrow, 2007). Therefore, the researcher must acknowledge, describe, and "bracket" his or her values, but not eliminate them (Ponterotto, 2005). As Ponterotto (2005) states "the epistemology underlying a constructionist position requires close, prolonged interpersonal contact with the participants in order to facilitate their construction and expression of the 'lived experience' being studied. Therefore, it is a fallacy to even think that one could eliminate value biases in such an interdependent researcher–participant interaction" (p. 131).

Firmly embedded within a qualitative, post-modern research paradigm, constructivism represents an epistemological perspective, concerned with how we know, and by implication, how we develop meaning and representations of meaning, identifying the way meaning making internal processes function within the individual. This includes exploring how experience is

integrated as meaningful knowledge and then represented in language and stories.

Constructivism adopts the idea that, what one knows and how one comes to know, is determined

when these individually activated processes are engaged in a social context (Young & Collin,

2004). Therefore, social reality is constructed and the positivist notion of a rational, autonomous

subject is considered naive. Discourses are heterogeneous, different and often fragmented

subjective experiences of individuals and culture. Narrative research methods approach the

rigour of scientific procedures such that it remains consistent with epistemological assumptions

of a postmodern Constructionist philosophical paradigm (Bur, 1995).

Understanding the Collaborative Narrative Research Method

Arvay (2003) outlines the main epistemological assumptions that underlie the CNM,

summarized as follows (Arvay, 2003):

1) No objective truth can be ultimately known in subjective human experience.

2) People make their lives known and understand the lives of others through the stories
   that we tell.

3) Reality is internal, pluralistic, contextualized and subjective.

4) Coherence and continuity is achieved through the narratives.

5) There can be no singular unitary reading or interpretation of a text by a universal
   reader.

6) Our stories are representations and recollections of our experience.

7) Stories are embedded with personal meaning and intention.

8) We create our stories within a cultural discourse. Cultural tales impinge on our stories
   regarding what can be told, to whom, and under what circumstances.

In order to show how the CNM (Arvay, 2003) is situated in the narrative family, I discuss three the central suppositions within narrative research that CNM shares and emphasizes; the role of narrative, reflexivity and the person of the researcher.

Narrative research and the stories we tell.

These philosophical underpinnings highlight the importance of narrative and storytelling to the CNM (Arvay, 2003). Narratives and language provide human beings with the most basic structures to make sense of raw experience. These breathing stories are representations of participants' lived experience and are embedded with the meanings they construed from these experiences. Stories provide access to the social and cultural context of people's everyday lives because they offer insight into the personal constructions of individuals' worlds. Human beings are by nature storytellers who make their lives known through the stories they construct (Polkinghorne, 1988). Our lives are lived in a storied sense framed by birth, life and death.

Our narratives reveal our intentions and are efforts to make meaning from our life experiences. Narrative modes of knowing are an attempt to contextualize local life experiences and construct meaning from them as they occur within broader social discourses. Based on Arvay, (2003) notions, narratives are meaning making processes that provide structure to human experiences and enable people to know themselves, others and the world they live in. This perspective and the methodological steps consistent with it, provide researchers with an open, flexible approach that enables researchers to explore a range of human experience including masculine gender role identity formation, masculine gender trauma, and therapeutic recovery.

Understanding an individual's life stories in this way is central to narrative research methods and locates the CNM method firmly within narrative inquiry (Bruner, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 200; Denzin, 2000; Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993). Polkinghone (1991) writes:

"Narrative is the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful. Thus, the study of human beings by the human sciences needs to focus on the realm of meaning in general, and on narrative meaning in particular" (p.11). McAdam (1993) says, "human beings are storytellers by nature" (p.27). The idea that stories meaningfully link our lives together and reveal who we are, is central to narrative research because stories represent the primary form of how and what it is that we have come to know.

Finding out more about men's narratives of gender-role trauma and therapeutic repair will help counselling psychologists understand the language and structures men use to describe their own therapeutic processes. It will help psychologist make sense of men's experience as it occurs within their social context. It will reveal more about how they construct their masculinities and how the processes of successful help seeking unfolded for them. Their narratives will reveal who they are as men, how they have come to know what they know about themselves, the ways their experiences have shaped their values and how they construct meaning from these contextualized local life experiences within the broader social discourses about masculinity.

Narrative inquiry attempts to demonstrate the co-construction of knowledge as it is produced through human and social science research (Arvay, 2003). The CNM acknowledges that multiple perspectives influence knowledge production. As a result, questions of how to re-present the voice of the participant in the research text are abundant. As we shall see, when I outline the methodological steps of this study, the CNM is flexible and the way the participant's stories are represented to the research community can be adapted. This is because the CNM highlights the important place that collaboration and reflexivity holds in narrative research and is

organized around the research process rather than the ridged implementation of research procedures.

Reflexivity and the dialogical nature of knowledge.

Reflexivity, according to Lax (1992) is the act of making one's self an object of one's own observation. For the researcher in the collaborative research approach, reflexivity permeates the researcher's process. Throughout each stage of the research, the researcher is engaged in the reflective process and facilitates the reflective process of the participants. Reflexivity is present in the collaborative research relationships that are established and the in-depth interpretive processes of analyses (Arvay, 2003)

Reflexivity in the CNM is collaborative because both the researcher and the participants are engaged in the reflective process. It is through this process that the narrative is changed and takes on fuller representations of meaning. The researcher must hold two perspectives simultaneously. The researcher must hold his/her own processes while, at the same time, remaining attuned to the reflexive process that the method invites participants to engage in. In this study, I held participants in an interactive collaborative process that reflected on and elicited stories about their recollections of therapeutic change. The process also engaged participants in recollections of the times and events of traumatic injury that occurred in their relationships with their fathers. I asked men to reflect on the process of change and recovery of other participants. Through this process each of the participants were asked to reflect on the experience and language that men used to describe therapeutic recovery and notice similarities and differences in the way they constructed their individual stories. The process of reflectivity and collaboration are central facilitating processes that elicit the sharing of stories.

The role of the researcher.

Reflexivity in the research process means the researcher attends to the power relations that exist both within the research relationship and in the construction of the research narratives. The differences in power cannot be completely mitigated, however, CNM attempts to acknowledge the different roles, and the power embedded in those roles, that each person has in the research project. By reflecting on and acknowledging these differences, researchers can consider how their position affects the kind of information participants will share. For example, throughout this study, men will be talking only with other men. That means the language and stories may be selectively "edited" by participants to fit the social context in which they will be told. As men, participants may tell their stories in ways that could be different if there were women present. It is important that researchers attend to the potential silences and the way the social context of the research project itself can shape the ways men construct and share their narratives.

 In this study, one of the ways I create a desirable social context is to be transparent about my own stories with co-investigators. I am interested in the process of help seeking, recovery and therapeutic change, as told in the language and culture of men. My own life experiences and the meanings and the way I have constructed in them become a part of the research context and can influence how I hear the stories of men as they are told within the culture of men. Therefore, my own gender, age, culture, ethnic background and my own relationship with my father are an important part of the social context and must be considered as a part of my distinctive role in the research process. Reflecting on my own place in the research means I explore and acknowledge my place in the research design, identifying the ways my experiences can positively benefit the

study while I engage procedural steps that help ensure the authentic voices of the participants are be heard.

It is impossible for the researcher to disengage from the research process (Arvay, 2000). The researcher is not neutral. The researcher's background, personal history and relationship with the research topic will inform how the results will be analyzed and written up. All this means that the role of the researcher is approached in a way that is consistent with the epistemological base of social constructivism. The role of researcher needs to be transparent and approached without the inherent sense of power. Telling the participants the reason for this study, what I am interested in, and why I am interested in this topic are all important disclosures. The person and approach of the researcher becomes engaged with participants in the process of construction. In fact, the reflective interaction between the research and the co-researchers is the place where the inter-psychic and intra-psychic meaning making processes are activated and where the narratives are formed and take on a new shape. The person and experiences of the researcher hold a critical place in the creation of this collaborative reflective interaction.

The Collaborative Narrative Method and the Gender-Role socialization Paradigm

The constructionist philosophical underpinnings and Arvay's epistemological assumptions explained here focus this current study and directs the researchers to reflect on the participants' relational contexts, experiences and internal meaning making processes of: 1) gender role injury (within the context of the father/son relationship), 2) therapeutic repair (within the social context of the therapeutic relationship) and 3) the representational narratives that are emerging through the process of the research (within the social context of the research/ co-investigator relationship). The aim of the study is for the primary researcher to have a first person encounter with men's recollections of therapeutic repair by engaging them within a social

context that activates the internal process of constructing narratives, or the stories of their repair. The researcher activates this process by reflectively "inviting their stories to be told" and attending to their narratives (Arvay, 2003).

The appropriateness of the method to investigate the research question.

Narrative is regarded as the primary structure by which humans give meaning to events in their lives so it is philosophically consistent chose a narrative research design to investigate the narratives and meaning of therapeutic change for men (Hones, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1988). This postmodern qualitative design can provide a fuller and richer description of therapeutic repair because it can describe what this experience means for men in the social context of their own stories and in their language. Annandale and Hunt (2000) reinforce the need to incorporate qualitative approaches to help understand the way gender affects people's experiences within social contexts.

The question I have addressed: How do men construct the process of therapeutic recovery from trauma experienced in their relationship with their fathers, is a question about the meaning making process of how men recover. The CNM addresses this process and offers the best match between the philosophy of science, research design and the research question. Furthermore, the subject of inquiry matches the type of data that I analyzed and the results I present because both can be regarded as social constructions. Moreover this method ideally fits my research question because the question aims at understanding psychotherapeutic process of change. Citing Hill (2005) and Hill, Thompson, and Williams, (1997), Morrow (2007) points out, "that because qualitative methods are so effective at examining processes, they are ideal for understanding psychotherapy process in depth" (p.211). In addition, because I have investigated the process of therapeutic repair for men who have experienced traumatic gender strain in a relationship with

their fathers and I want to learn more about how men describe this process in their language, I needed to utilize a research approach that pays attention to the form and personal narrative accounts of men who can reflect on this experience. Finally, the CNM entails attending to the narrative accounts at both the micro-level of the individual experience of the narrator, and at the macro-level of cultural discourse (Arvay, 2003). This means this method not only matches the research question but it also has the power to investigate and produce results that fit the subject of inquiry. For all these reasons the narrative method and the CNM (Arvay, 2003) was particularly well suited to investigate the research question and process of therapeutic repair for men who have experienced traumatic gender strain in a relationship with their fathers.

The appropriateness of the method to investigate GRS.

This method is also well suited to explore the qualitative experience and meaning of GRS (Pleck, 1981, 1995). Masculinity can be understood as a process that is actively created and confirmed by men within a social context (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Both CNM (Arvay, 2003) and the masculine gender-role socialization paradigms (Addis & Mahalik, 2003) assume the advantage and insights of a qualitative paradigm of social science research and are epistemologically compatible with a postmodern, social constructivism's epistemological perspectives. Pleck's (1981, 1995) GRS paradigm rejects an essentialist nature to masculinity. Instead, Pleck (1981, 1995) views masculine gender roles as socially constructed from stereotypes and norms. As a result, masculinities can be multiple and contradictory. Both CNM and GRS theory would posit that masculine ideologies and men's gender roles are learned, understood and constructed within a social framework. Because the CNM pays attention to the individual's self-organization processes that are embedded in social and symbolic contexts, it is well suited to the research aims of this project.

Pleck (1995) hypothesized that "male gender role strain is related to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards of male behaviour" (p.19). When men endorse and internalize the cultural belief systems about masculinity and male gender they are adhering to a "masculinity ideology" (Pleck, 1995, p.19). Masculine ideology may involve overly rigid gender role standards that can be dysfunctional and have negative consequences. Rigid masculine ideology can contribute to experiencing different kinds of gender role strain. Pleck (1981, 1995) theorized that the masculine gender socialization process is accompanied by three kinds of male GRS that can be detrimental to psychological health. As explained previously in Chapter Two, Pleck (1995) constructed a model of GRS to represent what he saw as three ways men experience GRS; "discrepancy-strain", "dysfunction-strain" and "trauma-strain."

Pleck (1995) called the third GRS "trauma-strain". This is the GRS of particular interest within this research project. This GRS applies to groups of men who experience harsh and traumatic masculine gender role strain (Pleck, 1995). Pleck believed that any traumatic injury inflicted on a son by his father would constitute trauma strain. This may include sexual, physical or emotional abuse. Because of the key role fathers play in men's gender role socialization, this kind of trauma may have a particularly devastating but subtle effect on son's masculine ideologies (Dadson, Westwood & Ollif, (2013)). For example, some boys who are socialized to be strangers from their own emotional lives must separate from their mothers while having absent fathers, an experience that has been theorized to be traumatizing for boys (Levant, 1995). Other examples of gender-role trauma strain may involve professional athletes, Vietnam veterans, and survivors of child abuse, sexual abuse and many gay and bisexual men who experience trauma-strain by growing up in a heterosexist society (Levant, 1996).

Using the CNM this study has the opportunity to look closely at the ways in which gender-role trauma has affected the way men have constructed their own masculine identity and the way that has been influenced by masculine ideology. Furthermore, by investigating the process of recovery and the narratives of change for men who have experienced this trauma, the study will be able to describe, in the language of men, the process of change. This will provide counselling psychologists with a unique view into the nature of therapy with men, the way men construct their masculinities, and the effects of the father/son relationship context on this process.

The CNM matches the research question because of their shared philosophical and epistemological perspectives. As well, narrative research has a particular interest in the same internal meaning making and constructive processes gender researchers are actively investigating in masculine-identity formation (Bohan, 1997). Thus, this CNM design will advance our understanding of both masculine gender role development and "gender trauma as strain" as it occurs within the social context of the father/son relationship. Further, it provides a way for researchers to describe the process of recovery from this injury directly through studying the narrative representations of the participants who experienced it within the therapeutic context. This is because CNM researches subjects through a lens that is consistent with the masculine gender-role paradigm. The study will explore the way men give narrative representation to these meaningful events in their lives as they construct and perform their masculinities.

The CNM is philosophically congruent with the Role Socialization Paradigm of gender (Pleck, 1981, 1995; O'Neil, 1981, 2008) because both are rooted in social constructivism. CNM allows for a more complete account of how men internalize language, construct, and perform their masculinities. In addition, both CNM and Role Socialization Paradigm emphasize the role

of an intrapsychic framework to explain how people shape their view of reality (O'Neil, 2008). It is through this intrapsychic framework or the "third space" that people construct their reality (Shotter, 1999).

The appropriateness of the method to investigate men's help seeking experiences.

Addis and Mahalik (2003) recognize that the insights gained from social constructivism on masculinity allow for a more complete account of the influences that shape men's help seeking behaviour. They suggest that the first step towards this end is to develop research models that can identify the determinants of men's behaviour that account for both the socialization and the social construction of masculinity in a help-seeking context. They add that, "these models should allow for the possibility that masculinity and help seeking are not stable properties of individuals, but are patterns of situated actions that may become more or less likely depending on particular person-environment transactions" (Addis & Mahalik, 2003, p.9).

This CNM design is well matched for this endeavour because this perspective recognizes that men's masculine and help seeking behaviour, as human behaviour, is best understood as meaningful, contextual and dynamic. Moreover, this study will examine the way men construct meaningful narrative representations of recovery that results in a positive outcome. That will give us access to understand how men see themselves, their masculinity and how this fits their reparative experiences. Furthermore, the study is able to address recovery from an injury sustained in the significant social context of the father son relationship, a relationship that has a key role shaping masculine ideologies and gender roles socialization. Gender is widely agreed to be a verb, actions that are done in specific contexts rather than a property of individuals (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Other studies have shown, the father son relationship influences the way men see themselves and perform their masculinities (Dadson, Olson & Young, 2010; Dadson,

Westwood & Ollife, 2010; O'Neil, 2008)) The way the CNM will be used in this study will help address the relationship between the father son relationship, masculine ideology and men's help-seeking actions in a way that is useful to the counselling psychologist because the study is designed to give a meaningful account of an these experience within the social context in which they occur.

The Collaborative Narrative Method

In this section of the paper, I further detail the suitability of this method for this research project by explaining how the CNM (Arvay, 2003) procedurally addresses the research problem and the research question. I show how I applied the CNM approach to the research topic, the design, and the procedural steps of the research project. Topics such as: the selection of co-researchers, data collection, analysis, transcription, as well as the results, validation and the significance of the study are described. Attention is given to show how these procedural steps fit into this particular investigation and are consistent with a narrative approach. The following stages of a CNM study are outlined by Arvay (2003, pages 164-173) but I have adapted them here to fit with the research aims of the study I am proposing.

The selection of participants.

The sample consists of 6 men 21-75 years of age. All the men were Caucasian and from a European descent and live on the West Coast of British Columbia. The men volunteered and were able to provide retrospective narrative accounts of their lived experience of therapeutic repair from a traumatic event(s) they experienced from their father. I recruited men who were recommended to this study and directed toward a web page I created that summarizing the project and provided contact information if interested. I contacted several counsellors and urban agencies that specialized in treating men who have experienced trauma and asked them to

consider directing individuals to the web page for further information. I chose this number for

my sample because the goal of the study is not to generalize findings to all men as a population

but rather to produce in-depth knowledge about the lived experience of men who have been

injured in this way. I am interested in the shared (and unshared) experience of men who have

sought help and recovered from a traumatic injury with their fathers and the language and stories

they use to represent this experience.

The selection criteria and recruitment.

The selection criteria for participation in this study included being male, being a son who

has been psychologically traumatised by his father, sought help and experienced repair from this

trauma in a therapeutic relationship. I sought out participants from various therapeutic

communities in the Lower main land of British Columbia. Through my contacts with other

psychologists, therapists and agencies, particularly agencies that specialize in treating men, that

participants will welcome the opportunity to participate. Participants contacted me directly

through email, voicemail and phone. In this preliminary contact I explained the criteria and

monitored participants suitability for the study. Suitability was based on the preceding discussion

of criteria for selection. This contact required that even in these first interactions I assume a

reflective, inviting stance that begins their preparation to engage in the telling of their stories.

Stage 1: Setting the stage for a reflective preliminary interview (Arvay, 2003, p. 164-
165).

Once the potential participants have been recruited it is important to meet with all the co-

investigators to engage in a pre-interview conversation and to facilitate contemplation about the

research. It is important to build on the initial rapport that began in our first contact. I will

explain to participants the philosophical values that guide the research and talk about the storied

nature of our lives. I will talk about the way stories can be transformative experiences and that stories have a way of changing with each retelling.

In this preliminary interview, I will begin to dialogue about the research question and explain the research process. I will provide an overview of what I hope we can accomplish and how I plan to facilitate the process. That means that I will explain that the purpose of the study is to help therapists and psychologists learn how to communicate more effectively with men who are in need of psychological services. I will inform them that in this study, I will be asking them to write about the trauma they experienced in the past and to explain what happened to them. I will ask them to consider what it was like for them before they were able to seek help from a therapist for the trauma they experienced. I will place myself and my own experiences with my father in the study and let them know about my story, why I am interested in how they experienced recovery and the role the therapist played in that change. I will also inform them that I will be asking them to write a narrative of their relational trauma and the process of recovery in whatever form feels comfortable for them. I will ask them what it would be like to read that narrative in front of other men who have had a similar experience and to consider if that is something that they feel could further benefit or hinder their current process of recovery. I will ask them if they still have a relationship with a therapist and to describe for me the people who are now supportive of them.

Once the stage is set, my research team and I will assess whether the co-investigator has the time, interest and energy for this kind of research method and carefully consider if the participant has the resources to explore this topic with me. If so the co-investigator will determine whether they are able to provide informed consent (See Appendix A).

Upon selection, I will read through with co-researchers the kinds of questions that I will ask them to consider as they prepare a written account of their experience of recovery from gender-strain trauma (see Appendix B). I will provide a handout of the questions and ask co-researchers to write about their experiences in such a way that they capture the essence of what happened. I will let them know that I will need a copy of the manuscript that they prepare and that I will need them to attend a meeting with the other co-researchers.

Stage 2: The performance (Arvay, 2003, p. 165-166).

I see the process of collecting the research and reflecting on the data as a "joint action" I will share with co-researchers (Shotter, 1999). Although I am conscious that I have a particular role as the initiator, facilitator and designer of the final script, I want to level the research process as much as possible. This is particularly important here because I want to hear the raw language of men as they describe the process of therapeutic repair. This means I need to engage men in the process of attunement and reflexivity such that the act of co-constructing the research narrative is collaborative. The goal of the researcher in this stage is to facilitate the telling of stories because it is in the telling of stories that meaningful narratives are constructed. In light of this, I have chosen to have men read their stories in a joint group interviewing process with 6 men. In this way I gain the advantage of asking men to reflect with me about how the stories all come together. I can ask them if they observe common patterns and themes. Together we can look for the similarities and differences in each other's stories and notice any silences. This provides rich narrative data in the manuscripts, the readings and the videotape of the group interview.

The guided review of significant life events like the experience of therapeutic recovery from a trauma in a father/son relationship will provide a reflective social context where participants can externalize some of their internal representations the self and will help them

concretize the event or recovery. It is a structured way to have co-researchers address this important event in their lives. By guiding a review of this event as it is shared in a group interview context, the study will provide a context whereby the narrative reflective approach will stimulate mutual awareness, understanding, and meaning (deVries, Birren & Deutchman,1995).

I will begin the group by reminding co-researchers about the orientation of the study, the problem, the research question and the narratives I hope that we will construct. I will tell them my story and how I came to be interested in this research question and why I am interested in their experiences. I will let them know that our role as co-researchers is to reflect on our own experience of the phenomena and that comments need to be limited to our own experiences and the way other men's experiences effect our own. I will not take notes but may adjust questions to the immediate context. Video recording interviews will free me to attunement and simultaneously reflect on my own and the other men's experiences without concern for missing the language or narrative that emerge. I will invite each co-researcher to tell his story with the principal question, will you read for us in your own words, your story about the trauma you experienced in your relationship with your father and the way a therapeutic relationship with a counsellor helped you recover from this injury." After each participant tells their story I invite other co-researchers to describe for the group the way this man's story has effected them.

Stage 3: Collaborative reflection on the data and the transcription process (Arvay, 2003, p. 167-168).

After the men provide an account of their experiences, I asked each member to break away from the group and write out their reflections on the themes that emerged in the group. I am interested in the private reflections of each co-researcher on what they have just heard and experienced. I want them to write about the common themes they have heard. What is the

dominant story? What is the main theme of their experience? After they have done so I ask them to read over their own narratives and comment on the things they may want to add to or take out of this narrative. During this time, I will reflect on what I have heard and write my own notes and personal reflections. I will consider where the power is held in these men's stories? I will consider reflective questions like; what is influencing my interpretations? What is the large cultural story that is making men say what they say and say it that way? I will collect the video tapes and written narratives for me to review and analyse.

The transcription of the narratives and the co-researchers' reflectivity is an interpretive practice and this underscores the epistemological assumptions about the research (Arvay, 2003). Arvay (2003) relies on the models of transcription described by Susan Chase (1995) and Catherine Kohler Riessman (1993). In light of the theoretical and epistemological assumptions about what research is, it is important to recognize three things about the transcription process. First, an exact reproduction of the co-researcher's experience and process of reading the text through the transcription process is impossible (Arvay, 2003). Even though co-investigators narratives are in written form, the actual lived story of the participant is being changed through the process of the research. Second, their stories are not an exact reproduction or a mirror of past events (Arvay, 2003). The co-researchers themselves are reporting their own subjective perspective and not a set of objective facts about their experience. Third, because the process of transcription is interpretive, the person of the researcher continues in this process their role as a co-constructer of the narratives and the performances. As I review the videotapes and written narratives, I code the written narrative transcripts for tone, gestures, volume, inflections and silences. I consider and make notes about what is said and what is not said.

Stage 4: The collaborative interpretive reading of the narratives (Arvay, 2003, p. 169 -- 171).

In this stage Arvay (2003) emphasises the collaborative participation between the co-investigators and the researcher to engage the narrative text in a meaningful way. Fundamentally, I will rely on my own transcription and reflections from stage three to guide this process but I anticipate that it will follow similar procedural steps as Arvay (2003, p. 169 -121). In the stage co-researchers are asked to engage in their own text in a meaningful way and interpret their own transcript in four readings. I have videoed the co-investigators reading their narrative and will include watching this reading as part of the interpretive process.

In the first reading, co-investigators will be asked to read for the content and to comment on any changes or additions they may want to make. I will ask them if they thought about the changes they made or did not make after the group interview and what they think about those decisions now.

In the second reading, co-investigators are asked to read for the narrator's self. That means that they read for the narrator's various I positions and how they situate themselves in the story. During this reading I will play the video of this co-investigator as they read to the group and to read along in the text. I will ask them to consider what parts of themselves they recognize in the narrator's voice, appearance, tone and gestures. I will ask them to comment on what he is feeling in the story? What is it like to tell the story? What they are feeling as they read the narrative? What does the narrator want the reader to know? Who is the person in the story? The co-investigator reflects on the self that is being constructed through the dialogue with other men who have a similar experience of gender-role trauma and recovery.

In the third reading, I ask co-investigators to read their narrative for the research question and their response to it. Again I will review with them the video of the reading and I will ask co-investigators to find the place in the narrative where they talked about the trauma that occurred in their relationship with their father and their recovery in therapy. I will instruct them to make written notes and that we can pause the tape if necessary. I will ask them to consider questions like: What meaning does the narrator make of this recovery? How does he address the research question? What is not said or implied in the story? Arvay (2003) is looking for the co-investigator to talk about the details of their personal experience with the research question and to observe layers of tacit knowledge in the co-investigators experience in this reading. Shotter (1999) refers to moments where co-investigators pause or shift in conscious orientation that are moving or arresting. Within these moment there may exist new possibilities or perspectives that can give birth to new forms.

The fourth reading is critical for the collaborative narrative approach but also critical to this study. That is because the focus of the research question address gender role socialization, masculine ideologies, the power these hold in the lives of men and their help seeking and recovery behaviours. In this reading the co- investigators are instructed to read the text for suggestions of power or gender imbalances (Arvay, 2003). Again, co-investigators will be shown the video and as they watch and read I will ask them to consider the places where gender inequities are evident? Where they are not? How is he silenced by the influence of masculine ideologies? What does the story tell us about what it means to be a boy; to be a Man? In this reading, I will attempt to articulate with the co-investigator how family norms and traditions represented in the story are set in cultural discourse and how they are at work in the text.

As these four interpretive readings are completed by the co-investigators, I interpret their transcriptions as well as my own interactions with the transcripts using these same four reading as guidelines. I attempt to know the ways in which I influence the process of interpretation.

Stage 5: The interpretive interview- A collaborative interpretation of the text (Arvay, 2003, p. 171).

In this stage, the researcher with the co-investigators retrospectively, collaboratively and reflectively discusses the interpretations from the four readings. This is important in this study because the study aims to understand the narrative accounts of repair in the language of men. Retrospectively reflecting on the previous interpretations together helps to further that end. In this stage we make attempts to comprehend the ambiguous parts of the narrative accounts. We struggle to see the cultural implications of our interpretations. Some of the questions Arvay (2003) considers important at this stage are: What do you think this means? Where do you think you learn that? What are your feelings about that? There seems to be something left out here- something not said. What do you think this section is about? What do you wish could have happened? What do you learn from this experience? Is there something that I see in this reaction, what do you think? This is an interactive, dialogical process of co-construction. The interpretive interview is an intensive, complex process that may be done best one to one.

Stage 6: Writing the stories (Arvay, 2003, p. 171-172).

Now that I've compiled a collaborative interpretation of the co-investigators individual narratives the next step in the process is summarizing and blending our interpretive readings into one text. It is hard at this point to speculate the form that that might take. It is possible that I will organize a series of clips from a collaborative group interview. The narrative themes that emerge may have a natural symmetry and organization or they could be chaotic and disjointed. The

narratives themselves and their content will guide this process. Just as there is no final version, there is no designated form for the final text. These narrative forms may contain contradictions and ambiguity. Again, collaboration with co-investigators helps set the final form of the narrative accounts. Whatever form is selected, the aim of the final accounts is to bring back to life co-investigators narrative accounts of repair from a traumatic injury sustained within a father-son relationship.

If there is enough coherence and organization in the final blended text the next step in this research project is to develop patterns of recovery that adequately represents this group of men's experience of therapeutic repair in a language they can endorse. The purpose of presenting the patterns of therapeutic repair for men who've been injured in their relationships with their fathers is to present with as much clarity as possible the full experience of these men's recovery and not to attempt to represent "the truth" about men's experience. The development of patterns of recovery has the power of the collaborative process, accesses the culture and language of men, and arises from the actual representational accounts of men who have a first person experience. The patterns of recovery may loose some of the valuable living experience of men who have recovered from gender role trauma but organizing the narrative themes of men's experience summarizes the content of men's experience in such a way that makes it transferable to healthcare practitioners. This can be a complement to the blended texts, because the patterns arises from men's actual narratives, stands alongside as a different way of constructing the results, and can further enhance our understanding of men's experience of therapeutic repair from this injury.

In science it is commonplace to represent the same subject matter in different ways. Weizsäcker's liquid drop represents the nucleus of an atom in a manner very different from the

shell model (Frigg, & Hartmann, 2006). Humans create representations of various different forms for different purposes. Developing conceptual patterns of recovery simplifies the narrative representations and presents more abstract themes in order to compare them with other theories or conceptualizations. These simple themes still only represent the more complex reality of the men's experience and their narratives (Frigg, & Hartmann, 2006). What is important in this study is to recognize that developing patterns of recovery is extending the constructive process to an abstract conceptualization and is a step away from the actual narrative accounts. This is helpful because this process enables me to re-present men's experiences in a simplified form that facilitates communication and organization in way that allows for comparison. Although very valuable for counselling psychologist and researchers the themes of recovery produced are still nothing more than the collaborative co-constructions of the co-investigators and the primary researcher.

Stage 7: Sharing the stories.

The final sharing of the stories of men who have experienced therapeutic repair from a traumatic injury incurred from their fathers represents our cumulative efforts to give voice, authority, and authorship back to the men who know their own stories best. In the telling of the tale, I take on the challenge to embody the results and to represent the meaning these men have made of their experience of therapeutic repair. In this final descriptive narrative, there is an acknowledgment that this co-construction fully represents the experience of the co-investigators but also now resides in the researcher. The researcher not only gives voice but also gives shape, form, and meaning to these men's knowledge of their experiences.

Evaluating the Worth of the Study

I have used the four criteria set out by Arvay (1998) to evaluate the worth of the study. Her criteria are built around Reissman's (1993) discussion on the criteria of worth such as: persuasiveness, resonance, coherence, and pragmatic use. These criteria are very different from concepts that are commonly used to address an empirical positivist's inquiry. In a post-positivist, narrative study such as this, it is inappropriate to evaluate narrative research with positivist methodological criteria for rigor such as reliability, internal validity or generalizability because these ideas are based on philosophical assumptions that are incongruent with the philosophy of science upon which narrative research is based. Rather, the process of evaluating post-positivist narrative research is guided by the worth or worthiness of the knowledge created. That means other questions that show the value and worth of the study are more important to Narrative researchers. Questions like: How convincing are the final results? How well does the experience embedded in the story resonate with others who share this experience, does the narrative hold together as a cohesive whole? And how useful are the results?

    Persuasiveness.

Riessman (1993) considers persuasiveness or plausibility to be an important criterion upon which to determine the worth of the study. If the kinds of experiences that are outlined in the study are not convincing or it seems unlikely that someone could have the kinds of experiences outlined in the narrative then it is reasonable to question the value of the study. Persuasiveness will be achieved in this study by asking participants to read and reflect on the narrative and to offer their own review. Their editorial comments will be further integrated into the final narrative and. Furthermore, all the narratives will be subject to a peer critique. That means outside professionals in the field of counselling psychology will be asked to critique and

review the narratives for their persuasiveness. The final evaluation of persuasiveness is achieved when the reader reverberates with the "trueness" of story.

Resonance.

Arvay (1998) expands on Riessman's (1993) notion of correspondence as a criterion of worth. Correspondence implies that the researcher brings the results back to co-participants for the purpose of having the participants authorize that the narratives accurately reflect her story. Resonance, as a criterion of worth according to Arvay (1998) expects that the narratives will resonate not only with co-researchers but with outside review persons who had or have direct or indirect related experience with this topic. To accomplish resonance in this study, narratives will be given to outside review persons who have experience with father/son injury and trauma and they will be asked if these narratives resonate with their experience. Resonance addresses questions like: Does the narrative resonate with your own personal experiences of this phenomena? Does the story touch you? What kind of emotions does the narrative evoke in you? Do you experience the narrative as true to your experience?

Coherence.

Agar and Hobbs (1982) identify three kinds of coherence: global, local, and themal. Global coherence concerns the larger goal or goals the narrator is trying to achieve in the telling of the story. Local coherence is a term used to describe the way the narrative connects the related events in the narrative. Themal coherence is about the simple content of the narrative. Narrative content can be grouped together to form a theme or themes that run like a thread throughout the story. Riessman (1993) believes that an interpretation shows its coherence when it covers all three of these levels (p. 67). I will establish coherence in this study by asking participants about the flow of the events and the ideas and if they seem logically connected. I will also recruit the

comments of peer reviewers to determine if the stories they read communicate a sense of the person in the story.

Pragmatic use.

Pragmatic use a criterion of worth is related to the extent that the knowledge gained in this study usefully informs others in such a way that sheds light on this part of the human condition. Pragmatic usefulness is based on the idea that the information gained will make a future contribution in the field of study or in professional practice (Riessman, 1993). The participants themselves will help establish the criteria to pragmatic usefulness and will be asked to comment on the usefulness of the final narrative. The study will also be examined by counselling psychologist reviewers who work with men in therapy and will include their comments about the role the study's findings may have in counsellors' work with men.

Independent review.

The aim of a review is to have the narrative accounts evaluated by independent sources to determine their persuasiveness, coherence, resonance, and pragmatic use. In this study and important step is to enlist independent reviewers who have a have achieved a high standard of competence in the field of study. In this project, I will enlist reviewers who hold either a doctorate or are in the process of completing a doctorate in Counselling Psychology. Each reviewer will be provided with a written narrative and will be given the following instructions:

Read each narrative two times. In the first reading aim to gain an overall understanding, to feel for what is being said and to familiarize yourself with the story. The second reading is to address the following questions:

1) Is this a coherent story? Does it have a natural flow? Can you formulate the essence of what the person is saying in the narrative?

2) Does the story resonate with your personal experiences? Does it ring true for you? Is it believable?

3) Is this a useful story? Does this story have utility to be used at a workshop? Does this story contain useful information for therapists who are working with men?

Significance of the Study

These results of this study will be vital to counselling psychologists because counselling psychologists need to know not just the facts of an experience but the impacts and meaning of an intervention or a process of change. The process of therapy and recovery involves the client and therapist coming to know each other in such a way that both client and therapist contribute to and are changed by the interaction and communication present in a therapeutic relationship (Lambert & Barley, 2001). Understanding narratives of repair for masculine gender role injuries like these are particularly crucial because counselling psychologists need to understand what an experience is like in order facilitate that experience in a therapeutic setting. This is critical in order for counselling psychologists to help men out of the silent crisis caused by rigid masculine identifications (Levant, 2006; O'Neil 2008). The finding of this study will be very important because it will provide new information about the link between father/son relationships, gender trauma, and the narrative themes of recovery from a specific male psychological injury. These advancements will address the "cultural gap" between counselling psychologists and men, as well as direct research and enhance therapeutic designs that are aimed to develop future psychological practice with men.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The following narratives have been constructed by following the procedural steps of Arvay's (2003) reflective narrative method. This study expanded Arvay's (2003) method by videotaping men reading their stories as a group to one another and provided a further reference for participants during analysis. The narratives presented in this chapter are the final constructed narrative form derived by step by step analysis of the data. Listen carefully to the stories of these men's recovery from the injuries that occurred in their relationship with their father.

CORY

I am glad to participate in the research project because talking to other men about my personal life is something that I know makes me feel scared and that fear is something that I want to stop because I know that it does not serve me very well. So I take advantage of opportunities like this whenever they come along. It is something that I do selfishly. I do this for myself. I take the opportunity to be vulnerable with a bunch of guys when I can because I know that is good for me. I have learned I need to face this fear. At the same time, I hope to contribute to other men and if this can help others then I am glad to help.

The Injury

I was the oldest child in my family but there was a brother before me who died. As a result my mother was very protective. When I was young my father seemed to fill the whole room. He seemed huge. But he didn't have much to do with me until I was eight years old. He was always busy with work so I don't have a lot of memories of him. Most of those are of him raging at me. He would rage but did not strike me except for physical punishment for specific transgressions which were not common. Even though they didn't happen regularly they kept my fear of him alive in me all the time. My clearest early memories of patterns with him were those of negativity and never feeling good enough. I had a nagging consistent lack of recognition from

him about my abilities and accomplishments. He was brilliant, creative, successful, with a great wit, very moody, negative and likely bipolar….he died an alcoholic 4 years ago. I craved his recognition and approval and it felt unavailable, leaving me feeling insecure, self-doubting, and unsure of my abilities. I had a constant anxiety and anger towards him and the world. I remember a feeling of being betrayed. Like you fucking prick, I can't join sports, you never wrestled with me or spent time with me. He was absent. But yet he was so big and daunting and I was so afraid.

Once when I was 12 years old my father and I were hiking in the wilderness. I had a compass, a box of matches and a chocolate bar. At one point in the hike he just told me to take off. He sent me into the bush all alone and told me to find my way back to our camp. I remember I was so pissed off at him. How can you do that to a kid? I often or I should say I always found my way back whenever he did that to me but I was terrified. So this is the way he fathered. Not much contact. But he would nonchalantly send me off.

As I got older because I was mostly raised by my mom I wasn't very tough. I was sent to a private religious school, and the first day I was brought to the front of the class and beaten. Other kids got sexually abused, but I didn't. I just got beaten. Some of the teachers actually went to jail. There I started to feel invisible. I started to shrink. My parents, being religious, couldn't understand that anything there could be anything but good for me.

When I was about 15 years old I started to get really, really angry and I stayed angry. When I went to university I didn't trust anyone. As an adult I only had intermittent contact with my dad because he was very sarcastic and not very safe. I remember going up north and working for this guy who I think was my first mentor. He gave me jobs to do and I just did it. I built things and started to feel like a man.   When I came home I saw my dad and I said, "Dad I met

this guy and he was confident in me." I remember my dad saying, "I guess I didn't do that right."

He was so dejected I started taking care of him.

When I think about who I was at that time I realize there was a civil war going on inside

of me. It was anger turned inward and very self-destructive. There is this deep sadness of missing

my dad. I felt so insecure trying to figure out how to become a man and I was lost – lost without

a compass or a rule book. There is no instruction manual telling me how to be a man. I wanted

that from my father, so I wanted to slap him and help him at the same time.

I struggled so much to try to figure out how to become a man. I made a list of male

figures like Doc Savage, John Wayne and other movie characters so that I could decide the kind

of man I was going to be, the kind of boss I was going to be, and the kind of womanizer I was

going to be.

All I wanted was for my dad to be proud of me. Once I worked for him for a short period

of time. It was so bad that I finally walked into his office and told him, "I will never fucking

work for you again; I am so out of here." I remember feeling so terrible doing that. Jump ahead.

My father died three years ago. 25- 30 years later just before he died he told me, "When you said

that I was so proud of you." I was waiting for that. That was what I wanted to hear. All I wanted

was to hear he was proud of me. I worked so hard so that he would be proud of me. I have three

beautiful children; I didn't pay much attention to them. That hurts so much. I passed on his

mistakes which became my mistakes to them. I didn't send them into the woods but I didn't

spend the time with them. I didn't know who the fuck I was. I was so busy trying to be what I

thought I should be to be a man, but I hid this by portraying arrogance.

Later my mom and dad divorced and I put my head down and didn't want to know

anything about it. But when my mom got sick and died, I found out how much he hurt her in the

divorce. I was enraged. At that moment I hated my dad so much I wanted to kill him. My brothers had to physically hold me down I was so angry at him.

In doing this review today it is difficult to correlate the high degree of my self-destructive feelings that I had with my father and his actions and attitudes towards me but I know that they are directly connected. Now looking back, the manifestation of these patterns for me was both positive and negative. I was fiercely motivated to prove myself to my father, blamed him for all of my failings, had patterns of self-injury, abuse of alcohol, mistrust of authority and non-presence for myself and my family. I was constantly driving myself to be "better than him" as a father, husband and an employer. The voice in my head was his, and it rarely approved of me but constantly criticized me. Today, thanks to the work that I have done, I have few remnants of these patterns, but still have challenges with presence and becoming overly intense and focused.

Before I addressed myself in my state of anxiety, rage and drive-ness to be "better than him" I did accomplish a fair bit in the areas that were important to me. I also came to think that inner turmoil was the normal human state if one was to accomplish anything in life. In my self-perceived successes I thought that any problems I was having were not about me but always about other people, besides having a mistrust of people who thought differently, such as those in the field of psychology. From this place I had no room for the concept that I may be at the center of my own storm or that psychological help had any value.

The Process of Recovery

A series of events opened me up to the possibilities of having inner peace. The first was a book that was given to me in 1989. The Road Less Traveled by Scott Peck had a significant impact on my willingness to explore myself. My mother had recently died, prematurely I thought, and I was starting to question my life. I think this loss made me start questioning the

meaning of my life. This book helped me see that these were fairly common questions and that there were other normal people who sought the help of experts to overcome their personal challenges. The first phrase "life is difficult" captured me. Through that book I began to recognize the possibility of change.

The next stage of my journey began in the workplace. I was having a conflict with a senior manager to whom I had given an ultimatum regarding his behavior, his questioning and my emerging openness led me to engage a gifted facilitator to assist us in the conflict. The experience was profound for me. From a place of impasse we moved to connection in a couple of hours, a miracle in my books at the time. This facilitator became one of the most important teachers and mentors in my life. From Jim I learned to facilitate conflict for myself and others as well as have a cathartic experience that profoundly changed my life.

Besides facilitation, Jim also led a program called "Come Alive" at the Haven on Gabriola Island. After having "sent" several of my staff, I finally relented to Jim's urging and attended the five day residential program. This was the first real therapeutic type experience I had ever had. My "breath work" in the circle and the week of personal contact with others left me feeling so physically and physiologically shifted that I was sure that I had been given drugs. I know that I had not, I was just very ready to outwardly express my pent up rage at my father and experience the sadness at the lost father-son relationship that I craved.

The experience was the most frightening thing I had ever done. Releasing with the intensity that I did felt like I was jumping off a cliff and it felt like I would surely die. But I trusted Jim so I took the leap. Without the years of contact and friendship that I had with Jim, I doubt that I would have taken such a leap. The focused emotional release, the acupressure that triggered vivid childhood memories of my father, deep breathing, the group witnessing and

emotional music all combined to create a powerful healing experience for me. That was huge for me.

I remember one flashback memory like a vision came back to me in therapy was the time the neighborhood bully followed me back to my house when I was about seven years old. My dad was on the patio and when I ran up to him he pushed me back toward the bully and told me to go get him. When he pushed me I fell forward on the concrete and smashed my face and there was blood everywhere. That story was like a metaphor of life for me. No preparation, no teaching me about life, just pushing me forward. Releasing my emotions about that in that group changed me.

Although many shifts from that experience are still with me twenty years later, the dramatic-ness of it lasted only about a month before the anxiety began to creep back into me. I continued to take many months of programs at the Haven over the next ten years, as well as do personal counseling with a therapist. I made progress the whole time although never regained the deep sense of well-being that I had for those weeks after that first Come Alive.

Another thing that I did, mostly on my own, that also made a deep and lasting change to the nagging blame and resentment I held towards my father and to my sense of self-worth, was to have a series of one on one "clearings" with him over the course of about three years. A clearing is a structured conversation to clear a specific resentment with another person. I learned from my experience both with Jim as the facilitator and from my facilitating with others that it was often possible to resolve that which felt irresolvable. I learned communication skills and conflict resolution skills. I practiced communicating my emotions differently. I wanted to do this with my father so I started a series of conversations with that commenced with my earliest childhood memories of my resentments towards him. The result of this was that by about 1993 my father

and I were very, very close even during his bouts of alcoholism and final dementia, until he died in 2007. I will be forever grateful to him for his courage and willingness to hang in with me when I must have sounded crazy.

As a result of my quest for happiness, I had made a lot of headway managing and coping with my remnant inner turmoil but was still not attaining much consistent inner peace. Although I had very little anger anymore my background anxiety was still about a 7 on a 10 scale. In my journey I had learned how to resolve serious conflict, do Riechien breathing, Buddhist active meditation and a few other techniques. I was doing intern training at the Haven and attending workshops as well as reading a range of books on inner peace. I still struggled with self-doubt and anxiety.

A friend urged me to try something that I had never heard of called Excellanation. This four session process was profound for me and had a similar impact as that first Come Alive, except now six years later I still enjoy a significantly consistent inner peace that I had thought was not really attainable. My maintenance is a 15 minutes a day meditation and an update session about every 18 months. This is a therapeutic type process that is made up of several disciplines.

The most significant part of this process is that it accessed those sabotaging memories that felt like they were below my conscious memories and seemed to almost delete them at the same time activating my spiritual connection, all very quickly. From this process I regained a spiritual sense that I had lost very young and today is a foundational component of my sense of inner peace. I became a person who has more optimism, a guy who knows that a chaotic life is not that uncommon. Through my experience of Jim, his strong character, his respect, his caring, his support. I started to believe that I could care back and I want to learn from him. I developed

an awareness of my internal distance from others and that I could become close, not just to others, but close with my dad.

In my recovery, I see myself as a guy who has a growing awareness that there is a possibility that he could be close with his dad. He starts to develop language and communication skills that he needs and experiences personal hope. I see a guy who is learning to have an experientially different kind of relationship, one that embraces confrontation and closeness. I have become a man who is a warrior and a hunter who wants love hanging in his meat house.

My current thoughts of my father are now only of the positive parts of my relationship with him, forgiveness does not really fit as it does not feel like there was anything to forgive. He was just a flawed man doing his best. Today I have a strong faith in my life; I am not religious but feel a sense of connection to my spirit and my journey that is being human.

Today I am grateful. I really like myself. I like my life and I don't look back at what happened to me as an injury any more. They were hard things but they are now just a part of my journey. I once heard a parable or a story about a man who found a butterfly struggling to get out of its cocoon. The man helped the butterfly out but soon it died. Apparently butterflies need to fight their own way out of the cocoon in order to survive. That is the lesson my father wanted me to learn and I know that now. I am not angry at him any more even though I don't like the way he tried to teach me that lesson.

My story tells me that boys need to be able to look to our fathers to find how to be men. Sons need a balance between a caring gentle father opposed to only a tough masculine way of being. That is what I need to learn. I experienced an imbalance between the cultural expectations that fathers are not supposed to show gentleness to their sons and only show the tough masculine side. But both are necessary for boy's self-esteem. Boys need an honest caring loving experience

of their fathers and they need to learn the tough masculine stuff. Boys need to learn both from their fathers. That is what turns boys into men.

Now I see myself as someone who has a deep sense of spirituality. I feel the best I've ever felt. I see something beyond myself. The question, "Who am I?" is no longer there. I have a strong sense of gratitude and a sense of being grounded with myself. I have a felt assurance in the continuity of my life and a strong assurance in the continuity of who I am. I am not lost. I am connected to others. I am not isolated. My identity is not a fixed identity but it is fluid and flexible. I am embracing the void and accepting it as part of who I am. I am not filling it.

I would summarize the narrative of my recovery in six movements. In the first movement, which is really the beginning of the story, there is an awareness of an injury. The second movement is the death of my mother. This loss makes me question the meaning of life. One of my employees gave me the book the Road Less Traveled. The first phrase of the book "life is difficult" captured me. Through the book I began to recognize the possibility of change. The third movement is when I met Jim who became a mentor to me. I trusted Jim and Jim believed in me. I could receive help because I respected and believed that Jim was able and willing to help.

The fourth movement in the story is when I entered into a variety of workshops, personal counseling, and began having hard conversations with my dad. Through the workshops I began to experience emotions in a new way. I became emotionally expressive, developed internal skills of self-awareness, self-reflection self-regulation, and developed external skills like communication and conflict resolution skills. This forth movement was emotional. As my anxiety dropped my ability to feel close and present to others increased. I experienced intimacy in a way I never knew possible. This was because I learned to express my emotions especially

my anger more effectively. I became more integrated with my sadness and I learned how to connect and received support. In the fifth movement of the story I became more capable of making my own choices. I explored a variety of different kinds of transformational techniques. Some had profound changing effects and some didn't but my anxiety continues to drop.

The sixth movement is where I see myself now. I'm in a place where I can live with shit when it happens. In the beginning of my story I am in a boat in all the windows are sealed, it's dark inside, all the lights are out, and there's a storm raging outside. I can feel it because the boat is being pushed and rocked and the wind is raging. Then it's like the blinds are taken off and I can see out the windows. I can see the storm raging. I can start to navigate the boat through the storm. But now it's like the weather has changed. I can see where I'm going and the storm is no longer raging. I still see the odd squall but their small storms and I can manage my way through them.

ROBERT

The Injury

I was born Jan 9, 1975 in the blue collar town of Windsor, Ontario. As a child I remember fearing my dad. He did many awful and sad things during my childhood and my adolescence. Early in my life, maybe when I was around ten years old, I remember being angry with my dad for his drug use. Often his excuse that money was unavailable or tight would make me angry because I figured he was spending lots of it on alcohol, drugs, and partying. On one occasion I stole some money. When my father found out he made me bend over a chair, pulled my pants down and beat me with his belt. It was a severe beating. I know he learned that from his father/mother but still that doesn't make it right. I remember him being out of control once and I was thrown into a lake when I was screaming and scared begging for him not to. Threats

were common with bursts of raging language from my father. When I cried things were said like, "I will give you something to cry about" with a threatening hand, or I was often sent to my room to cry alone. I can feel myself getting angry and reactive writing this. Even now when I remember these things I want to be aggressive and use aggressive language towards my father. I wish I could tell him how I am still affected by these memories. I still feel a wall or a block as a result of the emotion and I imagine this is what keeps me from connecting with people when I have a real or perceived threat happening. When I feel this rage now though I don't feel so stuck and it can move me to sadness when I am in a place of safety and am grounded.

I feel as though I grew up quite independently, for instance, by the time I was in grade three I had my own house key to return home after school and wait alone for my mother to get home. My dad was supposed to be home but was unreliable. (Thanks for the independence dad - I appreciate it.)   I know that because of neglect I shut down emotionally at an early age so that I would not need to rely on my parents, especially rely on my father. That made it hard for me to accept help from others. I would not want to ask for anything out of fear of owing them something or because I should or could do it on my own.

I was so neglected that I recall desperately wanting attention from my parent(s). At one point, around age ten or eleven, I threw myself down a flight of stairs and hoped that someone would notice. When no one noticed I walked back up and through myself down again. I know now this was my voice asking for some kind of attention.   I did the best I could to ask for what I needed and it didn't work. What I mean is I just didn't roll over and die. I was fighting for what I needed. I needed love and attention and I tried to get it. When I write that now it makes me feel like a pretty capable child. I am still that way as an adult. Around this time in my life I was sexually abused on two different occasions by two different neighbourhood men (strangers to my

parents). As I grew up I held my parents to blame for not looking after me better and allowing this to happen to me. Now I recognize that the neglect was their fault but I know they didn't want the abuse to happen to me. I still feel angry at the failed system and destructive family dynamics I faced as a little boy. I feel now more that society as a whole let me down rather than my parents. My problems were a lot bigger than just them.

My parents moved around a lot and my dad was boozing, drugging it up, and sleeping with hookers so my mom finally left the family. From there it went downhill. We went from crashing this car to the next, from losing this house to another. I just went on a tear. I started doing drugs, drinking, and sleeping around. I was about 15 years old. Even at that age I was looking for something.

We moved to a different province and my sister and I lived with him. He was smashing up cars and drinking. I was doing the same, stealing, drugging and living self-sufficiently but still managed to stay in school. When I was almost 16 the family got split again because my dad got into trouble with the law and I was in trouble with the law, so we packed up quick and got out of the province. The trouble is my sister who was 17 got left behind and she was pregnant. When we were on the road he met up with a woman in Vancouver. My dad was drunk and she was drunk. Anyway he tried to get me into a threesome with them. I was so angry and disgusted! We got into a huge fight. Drove back east and stayed with a stripper he knew. Lots of anger and we got kicked out of there. Then we lived with another woman but she died of a drug overdose within months. Finally, at that time my mom called me and said she had found a place and wanted to know if I wanted to come to her. I jumped on a plane and came here (crying). Since then my relationship with my dad is still estranged. I worked hard here, even arranged for him to come out here. I sent him the cash but he kept it and never came.

The Process of Recovery

So I am an alcoholic sober for five years. After I got sober and I got a clear head I got started on recovery. I know that part of my recovery is because I have had an inner resiliency that has kept me going and keeps me from giving up. It was in AA that I saw some models of other people and saw their support. I found healing in the love and the connections I have learned to have with others. Since getting into AA I have done some EMDR and group stuff and two chair. I also did a process group and I am in school training to be a counsellor.

When I first entered group therapy I found it refreshing that others would speak so truthfully about themselves. My parents gave me this gift of search because of their neglect. I know how to look for what I need and I don't give up. Even though this is a result of their dysfunctional parenting I am pretty grateful for that. In therapy, I found it awkward to have all the focus on me, especially in a room full of people where it was not a cross talk of chaos.

In therapy, I soon realized that I had an emotional "shut off valve" that was connected to some belief and fear that if I opened up I would get hurt and exposed. I had this belief that as a male I should not cry because that was a sign of weakness. What kept me coming back to therapy were the difficulties I had with life including interpersonal relationships, intimacy problems, commitment, and the lack of a sense of my authentic self.

One of the most healing events that happened for me in therapy was some two chair work with my father and also my sexual abuser. Processing the anger, rage, sadness and confusion was a valuable thing. It helped me free up some "emotional stuck-ness" within me and then find the powerless little boy inside me. Now the anger I have about the sexual abuse is not directed at my father instead it is directed towards the abuser – the cock sucker – child molester fagget (by that

don't mean gays I mean scum bag of the earth, low life. It is not a word about sexual orientation it is represents and symbolizes an emotional expression of disgusted!).

The process of healing could have never occurred without the trusting relationship I had with my therapists' and the support from my peers. They helped me experience people as trust worthy. I am not nearly as angry with my father as I was about six years ago, however I still often get triggered when I am near him (he lives in a different province) and I feel he is being untruthful about his working life or he is drinking. Only recently have I felt a new and rekindled sense of connection to my father, sister and other family members.

Below is a submission I provided after a therapeutic group experience.

The first time I attended group process I quickly found out the respectful, loving and trusting energy that resonated in the room. It seemed that there was an origin of where that energy had existed (the group leader). The ambiance that was created with the help of his assistant was one of peace and serenity with her works of arts. Having being seated at a low level with half heighten chairs allowed for an already equal and unguarded place; I had already shed one wall of defensiveness. My army of subconscious warriors was at ease. There is something about the earth that supports realness, a connectedness that supports vulnerability.

I had experienced two journey's now and therefore two processes where I was the focal point of each.

What a great way to live together, eat together, and reside on the same grounds together to breath the trust and energy we all create with love, support and feedback for one another. The therapy gave me this knowing that there are people that I can trust. It is possible to create a loving trusting community and just because I haven't experienced it growing up doesn't mean I can't learn to be comfortable in it as an adult.

In the first group process I had been able to explore my internal self with regards to my fears of intimacy and trust in my relations with others. I had come to know that I fear that others want to take from me. I imagine it has to do with my innocence being taken from me as a child. How for all these years a part of me deep down inside behind the eyes of even my knowledge, I was holding all others suspect. I was expecting that they would hurt me eventually. I became aware that many times I provoked that hurt by my own hand because maybe somehow I believed that I was not worth having a loving connection with others. This part of recovery was big for me – to learn what happens to me subconsciously when I make eye contact with other people.   I learned I have a fear based reaction that feels people want to harm me. So I spoke from that core of fear and I don't know what happened but it didn't vanish but I was aware of it and that allowed me to work on it.

The second process I had been able to tap into the little boy that had been abused at the age of ten and since angered at my father for not protecting and being with me and the abuser whom I had a fist full of rage for. It's simply the trust that I had in [the group leader] to not abandon me and be with me in my rage. The non-judgmental love and acceptance for what I had gone through and the trust; I knew he would hold me in my vulnerability keeping me from harm's way as I summonsed my innermost fears and expressions that I knew I needed and wanted to regurgitate. My soul broke as the tears started and I was asked to come down into the ocean to ground level and safety. To journey inside with [group leader] as my holder and helper to exert my pain and expression. I was in and out of feeling with what seemed to be an automatic shut off valve of my emotions. I was prompted to love and hold acceptance and patience for the process. The time came that I was to experience the wave of emotion that with an angry pounce of my fist followed by [group leader] mirroring of my action the flood gates collapsed as I

pounded, cried, screamed and cursed as an expression of pain compounded over the years. I

repetitively and fiercely pounded a pillow with my fist until I was exhausted and sobbing. Those

around me watched with sadness and joy no doubt of my cathartic experience. The conclusion

found myself surrounded by men with intentions of love and support and I cuddled myself into

the arms of [group member] and [group member], an experience so memorable that a

photograph was taken to hold that moment visually forever.

After I did this healing work I went back to see my dad and my grandmother who was

dying and I was a different person. I had started my training to be a counsellor and had some

good skills. All I wanted from my dad was for him to see me and say he was sorry but I didn't

get that. He just wanted me to be the child and give me advice – which I was not really into. My

grandmother died then and my father and I were standing there at the open casket. I just stood

there with him waiting. You know all I ever really wanted as a child was just to be loved. I still

get chocked up whenever I see a child loved and I just look and want to be that child. So I am

standing there waiting and finally the moment came. My dad and I finally hugged each other

there at the casket of his mother. I just held on to him. When he tried to let go I wouldn't let

him. I just hugged him. For just that moment I had my dad back. That was very healing for me.

I was back where I came from. I came from this "don't fuck with me" tough, hard background. I

was there but I was not like that anymore.

I now live a life of transparency. I don't feel stuck but so many members of my family

are still stuck. I still don't have the relationship I want with my dad and I might never have that.

It is better than it has ever been. He is starting to be more honest but part of me still feels like

"you bastard you". You fucked me up and fucked up our family. All I just wanted was that

love. I have to work my skills and know that if I do that I can talk to him. Still, I get angry that I have to work harder than he does to make this relationship work.

I want to include an extremely short synapse of my family history because learning it has helped me to understand the way the transgenerational effects have contributed to my father's and my injuries. My father was one of six children, I believe the second youngest. I realize that my injury didn't start with me but started with my grandfather. My dad told me his father fought in the Second World War and eventually returned home suffering heart conditions as a result of pneumatic fever and never fully recovered. Knowing about my grandfather's struggles helps me feel compassion and understanding for my dad. I would say that I resent him less after learning about it. My grandmother was left to raise all the children and even gave the one born while my grandpa was away at war up for adoption. My grandpa as a prideful man who was humiliated in the prison camps and returned home at 100 lbs which was 50 lbs below his original weight. My father reports that his dad drank alcohol on the weekends, would binge drink for three days straight with his army buddies, although my dad says his father was not an alcoholic. I realize that use of alcohol was learned as an acceptable behaviour and this is how my dad allowed it to play an "it's not such a big deal" attitude in his mind. Again this creates more understanding and lessens the resentment factor I have.

Other stories include a layer of fear that penetrated through the household from his personality and anger. My dad's family was chaotic. I still hear my relatives talk about the abuse, manipulations and threats that were regular occurrences for my dad growing up in that family. My father's older brother and best friend died from a gunshot wound and it is unknown if this was accident or suicide. I now feel love and sadness for my father and now have the sense that

his harm towards me is not in the forefront of my thoughts but rather I am more concerned for his well-being.

Being a part of this project by telling my story to the research group and seeing the experiences of other men who have recovered from injuries from their fathers has provided me with the opportunity to identify myself in their experiences. This gives me a sense of normalcy, belonging, inclusion and relief. After all, these men seemed very well adjusted. I thought one guy was a facilitator but I came to find out they all have problems like mine and they weren't different or odd men. The biggest part of my experience the is normal feeling I got listening to their stories. I was normal and didn't feel defective. By listening to them I grew in confidence, simply by engaging and socializing while connected to our emotions.

So I know from this that I need more. I need more sessions and relationship building with men to really reveal and know myself. Now, I wish I would have cried more and allowed my emotions to really expose themselves. These men were accepting and were unlike typical "socializing by sarcasm" or just plain banter I get with many men. I did not get the healing and connection I needed and wanted from the men around me while I was growing up. The men in the group were accepting. I saw that these guys were different from each other in outward appearances both in how they were dressed and in the kind of cars they were driving. It made me realize that any man anywhere may have had an experience like mine. The awareness I got from listening to them speak about their father and their life experience helped me become more whole and integrated on the inside. I realized that I have learned to love men and more fully accept that not all men are abusive. I can trust some men. I can trust some men and "some" is the key word, because I don't know if I will ever become fully trusting of men I don't know. Hearing other men helps me accept that what I have lived through and accept that it has affected

me and rather than saying, "It's no big deal," "I should just get over it" and ignore the adverse effects. Instead seeing the recovery process of other men helps strengthen the realization that it did affect me and I can see a way towards fuller healing.

I think that the main themes I see in my story are resiliency, transformation through therapy, transformation through emotional expression, acceptance and forgiveness, changing perceptions, and the support and presence others. I see my own inner resiliency in my story and I think that comes from my own family history and strengths. I know that I was able to experience inner transformation through the therapy by trusting others and expressing my emotions. This helped me accept the limitations of my dad, his own painful history and helped me forgive him even though in many ways he has not changed. I have changed but I know that I couldn't have done that without the love and support of others. The genuineness of my therapists and the other group members helped me discover that I can trust some people and get the love I long for from others.

My story is filled with emotions of sadness anger, confusion, disgust, wonder, awe, amazement, success, rage, fear, love, gratitude, confidence, sorrow, sadness, and grief. I see myself as an amazing man who has been through many psychologically, emotionally, and physically demanding experiences and yet I am still perseverant. This is a story of triumph and the person in the story is a hero because he is used his injuries as a spring board to help himself and others in a meaningful way.

In my story I see a boy who is powerless, susceptible to injury, abuse, and neglect, but I also I see a boy who is resilient flexible and adaptive. The story tells us that being a man is not about meeting popular social expectations. Being a man doesn't fit what society and media depicts and what I was taught when I was young. Instead it shows that men are emotional, they

need nurturing, they need love, they need support and they need acceptance. If they don't get that their past hurts will keep on effecting their present functioning. The rough and tough Marlborough man is actually not ideal and really hurts men. It keeps them from being human and keeps them from healing. The big thing is, my story shows that men can change. That is the word where I live today. Men can change! As a result of that, even though I don't know what the future holds, I have an inner knowing that it is going to be great!

<div align="center">DEAN</div>

The Injury

I was pre-school age, 4-5, when my father first significantly injured me. I had a problem not wanting to go to the bathroom so I consistently messed my diapers /underpants. One day my father got so frustrated that he yelled, "If you like it so much, eat it" and he shoved my own shit into my mouth. 60 years later I still relive the experience, feel the shit in my mouth, taste it, smell it, and see the bathroom, the toilet bowl I was kneeling at. I still do not like going into bathrooms, have a hard time cleaning toilet bowls or picking up the dog's crap in the back yard.

That was the only time that occurred, but over the years there was a gulf between us. He could never say anything supportive of me. He was supportive in that he drove me to athletic practices through high school but his comments, when he made any, as he did not talk much, were negative. "Why did I do this or do that?" Complicating things was my mother who also abused me and tried to control my dad, my brother, and I. Maybe her abuse when I was young was why I kept messing my pants. She was very abusive and she emotionally castrated my father. She used her voice to dominate everything and that was like the shadow that made his lack of support more evident. I lived in a dark place. I lived in the fear of her and his inability to help.

Although the shit in the mouth was very significant looking back on my life, his lack of positive, affirming support and lack of a father son relationship was also very damaging. But his wife, my mother, was instrumental in not letting that happen. It hurts to remember this and now makes me cry. My desire to have a positive relationship with him has been so strong and it is hard to accept that is forever lost now. I have regained some of that now with my own son but I can never regain that with my father. I have come to realize the pressures he was under from an ultra-controlling wife, and his own insecurities and emotional make up. I believe that the shit in the mouth episode was a one off. Before he died, we were able to talk about it and he was genuinely sorry. That helps, but it still hurts so much that he hurt me and did not support me. It hurts more that he did not protect me from my mother and my mother did not protect me from my father. Life has been very unsafe for me. Every day my mind dwells on all the bad things that could happen.

As a result, I have been a very lonely person with few friends, hiding behind a friendly, outgoing façade. I am afraid to get close to anyone, as they will most likely hurt me so my marriage has not been great; I have deeply hurt my wife. I have fought against insecurities and fears every day and night of my life and I am very tired. I believe that I am not good, it is always my fault, and I turtle. Often I did not/could not fight back as a man. I worry that I will not stand up to others who may try to hurt my family or me now. Part of my fear is that I am afraid of the pent up anger that exists in me. I can laps into violent daydreams where I beat the crap out of three or more people at once. I have daydreams where I take an axe and chop my mother up into pieces and stuff her down a hole. I have to be in control. I have to control the rage and keep my sense of self together. If I don't I hold me together I will fly apart, hurt others and cease to be.

Now though, I have learned over time that although I am not aggressive, I will stand firm if pushed.

The Process of Recovery

It was difficult for me to seek help because for some time I couldn't remember the abuse. As I got into my teens and early 20's I just buried the memories. I thought that I came from a loving family that had a few problems with communication. It was only after my parents died that I began to remember some of the abuse. After I was married and moved to Edmonton, I began to get severe headaches so I went to a counselor and actually saw my father in-law as a pastoral counsellor. He and his wife were much more the affirming parents than my own were. My trust in him as a man/father figure allowed me to see him. Over the years, I have seen a number of counselors depending upon where we lived. Each time I was driven there by physical and emotional pain. I would feel like I was running up against a wall. It was only then that I realized I need help and actually the paint drove me to go for help. I knew that I could not do it on my own and I wanted to save my marriage. Saving my marriage is a big part of what keeps me going to counsellors. However, I could only go for so long because there was so much pain and I could only handle it so long so would stop.

I found it very scary to enter therapy because they would find out about the real me and reject me. I want everyone to like me. Therapy was good because I was able to unburden myself and felt understood and cared for. I found acceptance, encouragement, and reassurance that I was not alone. I want to emphasise the importance of trusting the counselor. Even though the time I spent with the counsellor each week was short it is really, really important to be able to trust them. That initial first meeting and the impression I would get was critical for me and the process would not have continued if I couldn't trust them. It was very important to me that I felt

heard and understood. Somehow feeling heard, not necessarily agreed with, helped me recognize my perspective and my responsibility for it. It didn't just feel good but it helped me take ownership of myself.

I feel pretty compelled to keep going to counselors now because I have not yet reached my goal, to be open and have less fear as a person. I wanted and needed more intimacy in my life. I still do. I found acceptance and encouragement from most of the counselors I saw, and I got some relief from my anxieties. It has been like pealing back the layers of an onion, layers of pain and tears. For so many years my emotions have been so jammed up and now they just keep coming out. I still hate crying about what happened in front of other people – especially guys. It can be very uncomfortable. Even though I see and hear people tell me they see me with admiration and respect for having the courage to tell my story and show my emotions it is hard to take that in.

I cannot remember all the specifics about what helped me most in therapy but there have been times of deep inner understanding and insight that seem to be moments of change. In addition, I am visual so there have been a number of pictures that speak to changes in how I view myself and the world around me.

The most healing events for me come in pictures that show a shift inside. One really strong picture represents my changing view of myself. I am walking through a landscape. The land is desolate, the trees are black without leaves and the branches are like claws coming up. Everything is gray. There is a road with a ditch and the sky is dark. In the ditch there is this Golem like creature that is pail and tortured. It is the real me. Through therapy there has been a ongoing shift in the image. There appeared a strong tall guy who came and took the creatures hand. I keep sobbing as I tell this. As he took the tortured figures hand the creature transformed

into a small boy. They began walking down the road together. It is like I am both the boy and the man in the image. I am both protecting and taking care of the small boy and I am protected and taken care of. Now as the boy and the man walk together further down the road they look and see an orange glow and in the distance some green leaves on the trees ahead. I hold on to that image now every day. Every once in a while I have an image like that and it is a healing image.

Many times in therapy, I have experienced great emotional pain and tears, and that is hard. It is very hard to process the emotional pain. It is overwhelming and takes days or longer to recover, I have headaches, feeling vulnerable. I hate being weak and emotional. My parents and our culture taught me well not to show too much emotion - keep control, do not be weak, do not cry, be tough, hold your stomach in, and don't stride so much when you walk.

A slow, gradual change in my thinking and how I see myself is how I notice the way I am changing. The relationship with my therapists has been very important because if I don't trust them I will never open up. I think in terms of where I am in the recovery process if 10 is complete recovery I am at about a 6. In my future, I hope to be a more open person who is not immobilized by my fears. Reading my story to this group of guys reinforces for me that I am not alone with my fears and feelings and I can experience support and encouragement from other men. I notice my fears go down in this group. These men are so accepting and supportive even though they have never met me before. I observed others being vulnerable, open and honest I discovered that I can be supportive of them.

My story has an interesting shift when it moves from the past abuse to the affects that abuse has on me today. The story moves when I start making attempts to recover and I noticed that recovery is about how that makes me feel now. The shift to the present occurs as I try to put into words my present inner pain. What happened in the past has emotional power today but

what I am learning as I think about this right now is that I am interested in my recover for today. I am interested in how I am now. I know that the past contributes to today. The past is important because it effects who I am but it is today that is most important. Life today would be more secure if I had less abuse and more support growing up. I would have less fear today but recovery is about healing today. I can't change the past so I have to somehow, recover in the present. I have to give learn what I missed out on then and give it to myself in my present.

I am glad I was able to open up and have eye contact when looked at the other men. I am glad that I was able to express my inner feelings. In my story I see myself as someone living with a lot of pain. Life would be hard living in the shoes of the guy telling this story. There is no joy or peace but still I feel drawn to the guy, drawn to myself as I read my own story. I want to help him and support him. I wish I had a magic wand and could take all that crap away so that he could have some peace and joy in his life.

I think he should let his emotions out even more as I see my story. It is a good story. I don't feel repulsed at all by myself as I think about myself in my story and that is surprising. I think he should let more out. I don't believe that emotions are wrong and expressing them can feel good. I always question letting my emotions out because of my dad. He hated emotions and got angry even at my mom for expressing them. I see the guy telling my story and all he wants is care and support. He wants some affirmation. Showing my emotions has always been difficult for me.

One time in elementary school I got beat up. I came home and climbed a tree to cry there. My mom was having tea with her sister. She saw me and left me there crying alone. My mom was dangerous so I wouldn't go to her but I wanted someone to come to me. I wanted someone

to understand my pain. There is still conflict inside about showing emotions and conflict with liking this guy who is telling others about his pain.

What I learned growing up about being a man is that I need to always be in control of myself. Men are like the lone ranger, cowboys don't cry. Men solve all their own problems. Things seem to be changing for me on some of that and there is less competition and more cooperation. Our culture is becoming more open to men sharing emotion but then others still criticize that and say men are become feminized as a result of these changes. So how do we maintain our masculinity and still become emotionally more open? What bugged me about the movie, "tree of life" was that the grace side and the ultimate answer had no grit, no guts, no meat….Like there was nothing for me as a man there. I think men need to be more rounded and not necessarily lose their toughness. Men need to just expand a bit and grow some emotional balls. I like the character Rooster Cogburn who cared himself to exhaustion carrying Mattie Ross to safety in the movie "True Grit".

My story tells me that to be a man means I need to have love for my kids. Loving my kids is more important for me than my own comfort. For me loving my kids means showing more patience and finding the reason behind the problem as opposed to flying off the handle. It takes strength to be patient and care. Being a man means that I look for and provide opportunities for communication. That means that I am willing to talk about whatever needs to be talked about and that I initiate time and space to talk to my kids. Talking to them is doing something and while I do it I need to be patient, share my feelings, ask questions, and keep open. That kind of communication and being in relationships like that is an important part of being a man. This applies to me in two ways; it applies to me as a father and applies to me as a son. This kind of openness is a way of being with my kids and with the younger parts of me.

DANNY

The Injury

I grew up as a young boy feeling chronically anxious. In some ways I was an unsure weakling with many limitations. I was scared of other boys beating me up, scared that other boys were going to see me doing something and publically shame me for it afterwards. I was scared of getting rejected by girls. One time I remember being scared that an ongoing fog was actually poisonous smog that was now covering the earth. So much fear was inside of me and constantly projected onto my experience of others and the world. Trying to deal with all this fear made collapse into depression. I was so scared I didn't know what I needed, and I didn't have confidence in myself. But because I never remembered anything else than being scared and depressed, I just assumed it was the way I was.

I remember missing and idolizing my father throughout my childhood. He spent 7 days a week working making sure that we would not experience the poverty that he grew up in and was ashamed by. After work, he spent lots of time with friends drinking beer, unwinding, and having fun. To me, my dad was so cool, a real man. Into cars and drinking beer, he was a happy drinker, he was so much fun. I tried to imitate my dad and be a man the way he was. I was trying to fit that mode of being a man but I was so anxious I couldn't.

I was also really scared of my dad- really scared of him. My mom was pretty soft so my dad was by default the enforcer. My dad had a nick name and he was called the "The Whip". One time I bit my sister on the arm, my dad bit me for it. When I demolished my sister's toy, he took my favourite toy and me out to the driveway, and drove over it; crushing it in his truck while I watched. Not a lot of sensitivity in the way he went about discipline. I remember doing something bad and my mom was upset with me and she said, "Just wait until your father gets

home – you are going to get it!" I remember being so scared, coiling up into a ball on my bed and sobbing in fear of what he was going to do to me. The objective content of what was done does not seem huge to me now, yet the fear in me was so strong that I often felt threatened and unsafe.

I had a paradoxical fear and idealization of my father. I grew up wanting to be my dad – I wanted to work in his mechanic's shop and be just like him. As a teenager I imitated him sometimes as he was my model for masculinity. In my early twenties, I noticed how taking on this role was not a fit for me, how I was living a life that wasn't really me. I started getting interested in critical social analysis – looking at exploitation and oppression through class, gender, and race. As I dropped the role of imitating him, I started to project anger at my father. Now I started interpreting him as an exploitative capitalist who was cruel in many ways. As a young man I moved across the county to get away from him. Apparently I needed space to try to define myself.

I was away for about 3 years focusing on social activism. I was in a relationship at the time and did not realize how deeply dependent I was on her. After about 3 years, she broke up with me and my life seemed shattered. I went into a crashing crisis. Everything had built up inside and boom it came crashing down. I was pushed to look inside and see how much I was hurting and my life is not a fit for who I am. No more could I prevent self-reflection and be centered on the world at large. Inside I had to acknowledge that I was hurting, that I had just contributed to the downfall of our relationship, and that I needed to work on myself inside and relationally. I sought out help following period of deep depression. I eventually decided to become a counsellor. I would find out what was helping me to heal and grow and then share this with others. This all felt very meaningful to me. On that journey I realized how much I had been

trying to be like my dad but because it wasn't working it became a "fuck you" "I am not going to be like you". But both are not a fit and both came out of pain. This led me to a crashing point that became the opportunity for a turning point.

The Process of Recovery

Eventually I got into a Master's program in Counselling Psychology. One day in a class a teacher asked the class if anyone had a memory that they wanted to work on in a group based modality. A memory came out of the distant corners of my mind, vague and long forgotten. I didn't know the significance of the memory. It was a memory of my grandfather yelling at me and I was very afraid. The teacher chose me to re-enact the piece through Therapeutic Enactment, a form of group based PsychoDrama.

Although the memory was vague when I initially told the teacher of it, during the day of my therapeutic enactment the details came out strong and so did my emotional process. I felt sick and was sobbing as I presented it. The memory was of a time when I was about 3 years old at my grandparents' house and my grandfather yelled at me. I was so shocked and scared that I completely shut down. My grandmother saw this but she didn't speak up – I didn't know at the time that my grandfather had for many years physically and emotionally abused her. As I addressed this memory in the therapeutic enactment, I was able to work through my bodily process and find my assertive anger, to grieve what I needed to, and to protect my vulnerable child self. After that, I felt like I was walking differently in the world. The anxiety wasn't there. This was an amazing experience. I found an assertiveness and strength inside. I felt like my place in the world was now different. My anxiety dropped significantly and something shifted. I could trust myself to protect myself. I was able to get in touch with a part of my rage and anger

and that was very helpful. I went through years of other therapeutic work which helped me here and there, but was nothing like that first experience.

The therapeutic enactment is a moment of heroicness for me. It is a moment of not knowing what was going to happen. In that moment I could see a synchronicity about everything that happened to make this incredibly powerful transformative event happen. Even though I created some of the conditions, there was something larger than just me and those conditions involved. It was a moment of heroic triumph for me.

And I am proud of it. I have awe and gratitude for the situation in which there is something larger at work. "Like WOW" this is my place and this is bigger than me. It is like I kind of stumbled half-wittedly, into this beautiful opportunity.   Now I have a sense of humour about it. I was OK and it worked out.

Unfortunately, although the experience was amazing and meaningful; I stumbled back from the moment. I touched something beautiful but I felt like it slipped away and I have not ever fully recaptured it again. Not quite like that moment. As a result, I began invalidating my assertive anger and went into old patterns again. I have and I am still working through is anger and how that works in my life. I am so opposed to violence and now I have this internal conflict between my anxiety and my anger.

Through this therapeutic intervention, I worked with feelings and memories with my father as well, but largely, I held onto resentments of my father. Even in that therapeutic enactment, although it transformed me, I still held anger and resentments towards my father. I held a story that he had abandoned me, wasn't there for me, and couldn't express his Love to me. After this, a painful memory of a deeply shaming event came back to me. It was a time when he was drunk and insensitive to me. My father, I still feel shame with this , he took me and his

friend and his friend's father and I don't know why but I went swimming in the ocean and when I came out he was teasing me and I was embarrassed. It is hard to remember but it was like show us you dick or something where I felt shame and embarrassment. He just kept heaping on the shame and embarrassment while he was drinking. I still feel some of that shutting down in my body and I still deal with that.

But in this past year or so, things have started to strongly shift. I started seeing that my resentments to my father were damaging me more than him, so I started on actively working to let them go. I also started to challenge my story, and see how now, I was the one who was abandoning my father. Now I wasn't there for him. Now I was the mean/cruel one. What has helped me, move away from the resentfulness of what I didn't get from him, was understanding more about him and his intergenerational context. Seeing the heroic nature in my patrilineal line, how they each overcame something tremendously detrimental from the previous relationship. My great grandfather being so abusive that my great grandmother escaped and changed her name, to my grandfather being abusive yet staying to raise his family, to my father who was never physically abusive to any of us, and then to me who will overcome my father in some ways, and if I have a son he will overcome me in some ways.

I am at peace with this now. There is no entitlement to having the perfect father. It feels natural in its evolutionary sense. My father cannot say the words "I Love You". I would like him to, yet I accept him as he is with that. As I free up my heart chakra and become more easily available to voice those words, I can really appreciate that ability and that evolution in myself. It helps me to see that seems to be a way in that my whole fatherhood ancestral line all fucked up in their own way but seemed to do better from one generation to the next. That has been tremendously healing for me and has helped me to let go of resentments and blame towards him.

His limitations are less and less desirable but at the same time they a no longer fuel for resentment and anger. It has been healing for me to recognize that my old expectations of who my father should be have come from my own inner father hungriness and the elder male mentor that I have yearned for. If I had a different past and my father had embodied and lived some of the changes I wanted, I would have loved and savoured this. However, even with this, I don't believe my father would have completely fulfilled the yearning and image of the "ideal father" I had inside me. My father is my blood line. There are resonant soul male elders out there who are the milk line that I deeply crave. My blood father could never have satisfied this. I see this and accept this. I take responsibility for my yearning, and the particular qualities that I am yearning for. There is also a growing understanding towards my father that in many instances just as it was hard for me to relate to him, he probably had a very hard time relating to me. I remember my father once wanted to take me out on a trip to Lytton, where the Fraser River and Thompson River meet. He absolutely loved this when his father showed it to him. Yet for me, I was bored with it. Here he was trying to do his best, but I didn't connect with it. He tried. He wasn't a mind reader. Probably if I was clear on what I wanted and voiced this to him, he would have tried to meet me there.

There was a big shift one day in a conversation with a friend I was really hit by how deeply I admired my father when growing up. In making my father the enemy I had supressed my love and admiration for him. I have started to see how much all of the resentments were not about him being mean and cruel and depriving, rather it was an expression of just how much I had looked up to and admired the man; how much more time I wanted him to spend with me. I realized that my "fuck you" was actually "I love you so much and wish I could have had more time with you." Why weren't you there for me?" That has helped me feel more like a total man. I

am still working on it. The most emotional part right now is my appreciation for the relationship we do have.

I found when I could stop the blame I could move towards responsibility and I feel I am more available. I think I am more loving and appreciative with both my parents. I still get triggered but I am pretty good with it overall. I have been enjoying my father in many ways, really appreciating his humour and happy-go-lucky spirit. I feel like this is a real new stage of our relationship, and a precious opportunity. Deep down, I know that when my father dies if I had never taken the opportunity to spend time with him now and get to know him anew, I would deeply regret this. So instead of that regret, I have chosen to re-engage and to start living out a new chapter of our relationship. My father seems open to it and enjoying me being around the house again. Who knows how this goes and whether this new honeymoon time for us gets shaken up. But however it goes, deep down I know that this is such an important life opportunity, and I am happy that it is being realized. I really Love my Dad. This time feels so precious to me – probably even more so because I demonized him for so many years – it is a return to love with one of the most important persons of my life.

I have done a tremendous amount of healing work in relationship to my father, feel an increasingly sense of love for him, and have let go of so many resentments, yet we still have dynamics that trigger me. I still sometimes go into passive silence with him not sharing myself or challenging him, or get stuck in my head. It's not perfect - we're still very human - but he's not the enemy anymore.

My healing journey with my father is by no means complete. Rather, I am at a point where I am much more available now for relationship with my father. I have done much work with counsellors/therapists and in self-help groups re this, yet now is a time in which for me to

move my relationship with my father and my healing journey to the next level, I need more direct conversations with him, sharing with him what has been important in my past with him. I think I am in a maturation phase in this past year with a deeper sense of responsibility and stepping out of victimhood. There is a heroic nature to that to for me. I am still learning to step into that heroic full claiming of my life. Claiming my life potential and taking more responsibility for that. I will not buy into the past imposing limitations. I feel that I have a forward momentum that growth is very possible and I am making that happen. I feel that is heroic. As I talk about this now I see there is a cyclical nature and times of heroic phases and stumbling times. Now I am in a heroic time.

I am really proud as I see myself maturing. I am breaking through old stories that were limiting and that is not an easy thing but I have broken through. It is easier to believe that I am totally limited by my past so there is some level of courage to step out and make changes. I have a lot of hope for myself and feel a sense of maturation, heroism and courage. This where the story is right now?

There is some new hope and opening for something new for the son and his father. I am in a place where I am ready for a new phase in my relationship with my father and that is connected to me taking more responsibility. I am the creative force who is going to make that happen and that is beautiful.

There is emotion behind that. It is tears but not sadness. It is a moment now right now of appreciation and knowing the preciousness of all of this. My anger my struggle my sadness - there is a preciousness that all is not lost.   I used to feel that if my dad had died I would have been so unfulfilled. But now I can have some of those yearnings fulfilled and we have moments

like that now. Seeing this now helps me to be at greater peace with the past. Even though I didn't get what I wanted then we can still create some of that now.

As a boy I was required to be tough and strong and I did not fit into that. I was not able to ask for help or to even say I don't know how to ask for help. That was isolating for me. The part of my story that I think is a very, very powerful is the gender role idealization around my dad. Strong, drinking beer having fun, "He is like the poster boy of what it means to be a man". I am totally inadequate to live up to that and developed a core belief I am inadequate as a man. There was this interplay between this idealized picture of my father and who I was at that time as a little boy with anxiety and didn't even know it. I felt like the opposite of him and the ideal man he represented. Some part of me was asking what is wrong with me and feeding a shame cycle with self-hatred towards myself as a man.

There was this power dynamic between me my father that played itself out with the females in my life. My father had the power and ruled with an iron fist. I tip toed around him. The message in my family was men are supposed to have more power and power over females. I was disconnected with the masculine because I saw this violent face. So even though I idealized him, I associated the masculine with violence. It was the men who could lash out who were strong. So I wanted to be a man but there is another part of me that said, "I will never be like that". I am scared of being a man. I am scared I will end up doing violent things. I so want to be a man but I am scared of being a man. What a fuck up!

My awareness of this is deepening even now as I talk about this. I have a deepening awareness of that inner conflicted-ness. What a gendered trap. It is a trap. There is a way that as a boy I was connected with the inner feminine and felt safer here because I wouldn't be violent. At the same time felt really ashamed of that. It is like my options are be violent or to be

feminine. What a trap. This is still a theme for me to explore. How do I have a healthy sense of being man? How can I be open hearted but still be masculine. This is huge, huge, huge! I don't trust myself to be connected to my anger and my masculine energy! It might not be safe! Anything around anger is primitive. That is why I had such a mixed reaction inside to the other guys rage. It was like WOW that is out of control.

As I think about this I am realizing that my responsibility and taking charge of my own life feels like the active force of my masculinity. Not in the old box but outside of that. It comes from inside of me. To say, "I love my dad" that breaking down the old role social contest where I am not allowed to say that. But now I am able to say that. I am breaking down that social rule. That feels like a courageous act. That is huge because that is one of the scariest things. It is an ironic masculinity because it takes courage for me as a man to say, "I love my dad".   The courage part of that is a new connection as I hear myself say this. It is an ongoing act of courage as a man to challenge that masculine ideal.   This is a juicy part of this for me that I am seeing here now. Courage and compassion – they are a curious mix. It is an ironic masculinity where it takes so much courage to be open hearted and compassionate especially with other men. That is supposed to be the feminine but in actual fact it is such an act of courage to say that. It is a union between both.

<div align="center">SID</div>

The Injury

My story might be a little different. I suppose they all are. The reason I'm writing this narrative about recovery from an injury from my father is because my injury concerns my lack of having a biological father. I've had an adopted dad since I was one year old but biological father will be the nature of my story here. Although the dad who reared me was loving and created a

positive experience for my upbringing, my biological father has left me with some recently

discovered losses.

When he and my mom found out that I had been conceived, he became nervous and

afraid of the implications for him as a church-man. So he left my mother, and me. I feel sad

saying that because I was actually rejected before I was even born. I am told he even encouraged

my mom to have an abortion. Somehow, knowing this makes me feel apathy, resignation and

confusion. So, for me, there is my biological father and the person I refer to as my dad. As I grew

up, I was always told I have a biological father. He was out there somewhere but he was always

an invisible figure. I kind of refer to him as this guy who, "once upon a time passed me this

football and left". I also joke with friends and call him the "sperm donor".

It is a weird injury. There are no particular events to orient around. What I have is

confusion, questions, and absences of things which I'm told could relate to the event of my

biological father leaving me before I was born. I would say that my injury is best described as

was the prolonged state of one event. I grew up without the dad who gave me my DNA, facial

features, humour, and mannerisms. The non-event is the absence of the guy who is the biological

stuff that has shaped who I am. This absence has left me at times feeling like I have invented a

lot of my own characteristics, cleverness, and mannerism. I grew up not feeling just like a fish

out of water but wondering if I am a fish at all.

I have since met my biological father 3 times and each time that has been difficult. The

first time I recall ever meeting him was when I was around 16 during a small family reunion at a

lake. He happened to be at the clubhouse and my dad and uncle invited him over. I had been

asked and was given permission to decline meeting him if I wanted to but I said it was OK.

Somehow I didn't want to be adverse to the idea. I was swimming and went up to him in my

bathing suit. When I got in front of him I felt aware of how exposed and vulnerable I felt. I shook hands feeling naked in front of him. I didn't know what to say so I turned and went back to the lake. I had hoped for more I guess. We just shook hands and said, "Hi" and that was that. It was the most awkward greeting of my life. Here was a complete stranger who was my sperm donor. He had given me so much in life – that is, my existence - but other than that I shared no affection no stories and no memories. It was serial. The feeling I had was a feeling of being so exposed. Afterwards I had vague feelings of alone and confused. I had never met him for fifteen years and then – that was it!

So fast forward eight years. The first time at 16 then again 8 years later came meeting # 2. My parent's whole network of friends gathered together for a tragic funeral and the sperm donor was there. We talked for a bit and it was odd because it was nice. I could see myself being like him. My humour and looks. I saw a blood line that I never saw before. It was actually fun. I didn't see him again for another 5 years but between meeting #2 and meeting #3 I attended a cousin's graduation. During the graduation one of the other students turned out to be my sperm donor's son. It was really weird seeing my half-brother – the half-brother I never knew I had - on stage. As it turns out I also have 2 half-sisters that I have never met.

At meeting #3 he actually contacted me to engage with him. We drove to the town where he lives and met. I introduced him to the girl who was engaged to become my wife. He and I both had questions and it was enjoyable. He said there at the restaurant where we met, that he wanted to come to my wedding and pay for lunch and introduce me to his father. I guess that would be my grandfather? He wanted me to meet him because he was getting on in years. It seemed to be really important for him to connect these worlds. He wanted to make sure that I knew that he loved my mom even though he left her when I was zero years old. That was a little

strange. I think he felt guilty. So at lunch I told him we would bump someone off the wedding list to make sure he could come and I would also come down to meet his father. We started some correspondence over the next month. By the end of that month he told me by email that his wife was uncomfortable with his past and didn't feel right about his contact with me. It wasn't going to work for me to meet his father. Then at the last minute he pulled out of the wedding because, "something came up." This is all just numb and serial to me as I say this. I try to deal with non-emotions. I am so detuned to it. Generally I think I deal well with my emotions but it is strange that I feel so numb about this. It is like I feel nothing - just a blank non-feeling.

I grew up wondering if one of my brothers would ever use this against me. It only happened once. I am crying as a tell this. My brother said during a fight, "He is not your real dad you know". I had prepared myself for this for years. I grew up expecting it but I still reacted and stumbled. I didn't know what to say. But my dad was right behind the door and immediately stopped it. I never forgot that. He called my brother out. He said you will never do that again; such a strong defense of me. It still makes me cry. My dad is large and I just loved it when he defended me like that.

My way of coping was to just be invisible. Just be alone and don't be seen. I have not felt safe for much of my life. Some of my friends would say they are afraid of their own shadow but I am afraid that if I turn around I won't have a shadow. I still don't have a sense of what this all means to me as a boy or as a man. I don't really think about what it means to be a man, I think of myself as a person. As a person I have struggled with acceptance, rejection, identity, and confidence (among other things). I have always felt this weird need for acceptance and insecurity and don't really know why. Conversely, in my life there has been no other higher form of friendship to me than loyalty and feeling defended. I am experimenting with tracing these back

to the absence of my biological father.

The Process of Recovery

I didn't directly enter therapy knowing this was an issue. I started looking for mentorship and doing family genograms in undergrad. When my parents got divorced when I was 19 it was like all remaining absolutes went out the window for me. I began some soul searching. Even a year before this I was craving a sense of identity. I wanted to know who I was so I could know what to do in life. I was uncomfortable doing the basic normal things in life more than anyone else I knew. I quit university after a semester and traveled the world. I saw 30 countries and latched onto people who seemed to have something good to offer me in terms of answers and experience.

I started counselling more because of patters of anxiety and my need for acceptance. The thing that kept me coming back to the therapist was how understood I could feel. One of the most healing events in therapy was when, at the right moment, a counsellor asked me where I find rest. I blabbed on about, who knows what, for who knows how long, and he countered with that same question. At first it seemed out of left field but eventually it hit me and I realized how restless I am and much of my ambition is driven by a desire to feel seen and accepted by people. I realized that at the end of the day, I feel exhausted because I haven't done anything for myself. At that time, I even choose hobbies based on what other people liked not based on what I liked. Realizing this changed my modus operandi and it took me 2 years to work out how to feel motivated about things that give me satisfaction. I began to shape my identity around things that felt good and around things that I liked and valued. I began to link my identity and personhood with my internal wants and likes. I remember going on a date at this time and experimenting with it. Instead of just looking at the date for what the girl liked. I went asking, "Does Sid like this

event?" "Does Sid like this food?" I used to just go with what other people wanted. I started to

experiment with the idea that I had skin and I could try to be comfortable in it. I have linked this

identity problem to the early abandonment of my biological father.

Another healing time in my life came out of an ongoing relationship with 4 other guys in

my M.Div. candidacy. The more of my crap they got to know the more I felt they accepted me. I

knew they had my back and that we would bleed for each other. I have never forgotten the men

in my life whom I felt accepted me deeply. I have called it true friendship, but recently have

begun to label it as loyalty and immense acceptance. Something about having good loyal friends

is extremely important to me. I would say the same material came up for me when I lived in a

community house for 2.5 years but they weren't all men so it wasn't quite the same. Having that

acceptance and respect from men seems to give me something that is really important to me.

There is this sense of comradery that I really needed, especially back then. I often have wondered

if this all relates to the hole left by my biological father and the attempts I've made to feel

accepted.

I found all of these healing times very illuminating. I cannot directly relate my healing

process to my therapist because I didn't know him. What he did give me was the question,

"What do you like to do?" I spent 6 months asking that question. I reshaped my world to

incorporate activities and friends that fit in with what I wanted. In sessions, I kept trying to figure

out the counsellor but I couldn't. I couldn't figure out who he was and that was different for me.

Looking back, I wanted to be able to translate myself to his framework and shape myself to who

he was. That way I could make sure he would accept me. He kept putting it back on me and in a

variety of different ways he kept asking me to look and consider who I am.

I know my ability to share and engage in counselling began in the moment I felt safe,

accepted and that I belong. This is an insight that stands out now. That is a switch track. When that happens I am able to shut off some of the mental feelers and my defenses lower and I can put more emotional energy into self-examination. I can go deeper into myself that way. This is a label I can now put on that was happening. Even being in this research group has helped me move forward from just narrating my story to self-disclosing my vulnerability.

As a result of that work I can say that I now feel much more comfortable inside my own skin. I now feel hope where before I was walking through life with a limp. I don't need to walk through life missing a sense of my identity and can now see the kind of me I will model myself after. I need to keep walking in this process. I am walking towards becoming the person who I want to be and I have a greater sense of how to do that. I am surprised sometimes when people complement me on being myself. I have worked hard on that but don't know if I will ever get there. I am more comfortable than I have ever been. I still feel like a fish out of water but at least now I feel like a fish.

I wish I knew what it is that I attach myself to with my biological father. I was willing to have him at my wedding and to do an awkward meeting with his father. He wanted me to understand that he loved my mom. I want to say, "You make sense." "What do you need?" I wanted to ask him questions about his career. I want to know who he is and why he does things. I have lots of questions and I am still surrounded by ambiguity. I wonder if I had more answers if I would feel more comfortable. I would have wished for something from him but I don't know what it is and I know I can't expect it.

One of the other gentleman said he felt angry when he heard my dad cancelled out on the wedding. It is interesting but I feel nothing. I still don't know. I still feel distance from my own emotional response to that. I think one day it might cause me to feel angry but I still don't know

why. I liked it that he felt angry on my behalf. That feels helpful because I feel so confused in that place. I know now that my place of recovery is trying to emotionally connect with what this all means. The main thing I get right now is the question, "Who am I?" I need to get to know a sense of self that I believe in. That is hard when I know that my biological dad is not going to be a help in that. Therapy has helped me see the injury. Counselling has helped me consider the question "Who am I?" and realize that the question, "Who do I want to be?" is a part of my answer. I now see the process of developing a sense of my identity as more central to my recovery. It is nice to consider who I am in the story. I feel warmth coming from myself and I like looking at myself – seeing myself. I feel compassion. I see the person in my story as someone who is reaching, trying to find something. I am reaching for answers and reaching for an identity.

I see myself in some ways like a little boy who is still asking 7 or 8 year old questions. I have words now that help frame my questions. "My identity?" "My origins?" I respect my own journey and I can hear myself in the story. I really like seeing myself from this angle. I have tears of pride for myself when I see what I am doing here examining myself like this. This is a rare feeling that I feel for myself right now doing this. I am moving along in the story even now as I look at myself in my story. I am seeing who I am. I have to pause right here. I need to stop and realize that looking at myself in my story like this is moving me along in the story; moving me along right now! I like this! The guy in my story could not have said this stuff 5 years ago. I feel touched with feelings of hope.

I valued hearing what some of the stories the other guys shared. Some of these guys seem to have carved a way - especially Cory and John. It is like they have cut out a path that I might be able to follow. They have add-ons that I envision I need for myself. Now though, I see

myself asking questions not out of a place of a broken self but out of a larger sense if identity. I have a larger sense of who I am. I am starting to see that I do not need to be limited by my patterns and triggers and this may not always define me. I can keep working and one day they may no longer define who I am. In my future I need to shape my identity around things I like, around people I like, and around people I want to be like.

RICK

The Injury

My relationship injuries in relation to my father took three main forms: separation for long periods of time; being unable to win his attention and approval and experiencing demeaning remarks that made me feel small. I was three years old when my father left to join the air force. He was home occasionally for two or three day visits until his service ended six years later. I remember him coming home on those visits in his uniform and hugging my mom. I just watched. I was not in it. I felt little, small and needy. I just wanted to be loved and held like that by him, but that didn't happen.

When he returned home for good it didn't take me long to realize that he was a hell of a lot more interested in the cute three year old girl who lived next door than he was in me. I found that I had to compete for his attention. I was 8 or 9 years old. It seemed wrong to me then but I didn't really know why. What the hell is that all about? I didn't get the same attention as a girl next door. When I was 10 or 11 I went to the park to try out for a ball team. I returned home having failed in my attempt and feeling pretty down hearted. He ignored me as I came up the drive way. I was down. He just told me to get to work. My uncle arrived a few minutes later. He read my distress, asked me for details and sort of got me over it. There was this contrast. I thought holy shit someone talked to me. I never forgot that.

In general, my father was very busy getting his business going. He left home early in the morning, came home for supper, quite often worked after supper, and always on Saturday morning. We didn't do much of anything together, although I do remember he helped me learn how to ride a bike so that he could get me started with a paper route. He was all about me making money. I remember his amazing dedication to his work. He seemed to love it. In his spare time he worked in his garden. He didn't really have much of anything left for me.

He was the perfect model of what society says a man is supposed to be. He was the, "man of the house" and as the man he was the "Boss" of the family. The women take a limited role in decision making in my family. He was bright, hardworking and strong. He started his own business and made millions. He was so powerful he was scary.

For quite a while he had a habit that hurt me a lot. When he arrived home from work he would see me and then carry on through the house calling out to my mother, "Where's the goat?" He would do that as if he had not seen me. There was no none else around so clearly the goat was me. I was pretty young so I just acted as if I didn't hear him. Occasionally my mother would tell him not to do this but it went on for some time. This was just baffling. That really hurt. It was such a painful negative judgement on me. It was so belittling and made me feel so small.

By the time I was 15 years old I was drinking a lot. My father never spoke to me about this although I was pretty sure he knew. Sometimes, late at night, I would make a very noisy, stumbling passage down the back hall and past their bedroom door on my way to my room. It was like they didn't notice. In September of that year my mom announced we were going shopping for clothes for boarding school. That was the first I heard of it. I received two weeks' notice from my mother that I would be moving away from the family and would live in a boarding school. I cried and cried in disbelief. I couldn't believe this was actually happening. It

was like, "Fuck! I really don't count!" I broke down and felt like such a child. I didn't relate the move to my behaviour at the time because no one ever addressed that with me. I felt so alone and scared shitless. My older brother was sent in to comfort me. I knew there was something wrong about that. I wanted to tell someone to fuck off. I wanted my dad there because I knew he was the one who made all the decisions. There was no discussion about any of this from my parents. Two weeks later they drove to the school and dropped me off on the appointed day.

I knew at the school I needed to be tough. It was a male only school and it was supposed to teach us how to live in a "man's world". I refused to show vulnerability or weakness there. I sent the message, "Don't fuck with me!" I felt isolated. For the first year it was kind of surreal. My dad would pick me up on Sunday at noon and take me home but I had to be back by 7:00 PM that evening. This was maybe an hour drive both ways. After a while they had me take the bus and after that I lost interest in home and just stayed at the school. In my five years at boarding school I played hockey or football six days a week, including a game against another school on Saturdays. My father came to one game. As I write this, I see that my general injury was my ongoing experience of my father choosing to be absent from my life and, in general, not knowing how to make connection with me. I have been angry about that for most of my life.

I learned to demonstrate fearlessness in sports and to take risks at school. Not emotional risks though, just physical risks. I learned to drink more and fuck girls. I learned that men need to have power over women and I did. I graduated as a jerk with a narrow range of experience.
 When I was at university around age 22 my dad and I got into a disagreement. I was still living at home. I challenged one of my father's political opinions. I wasn't rude or anything but he got very angry. He said to me, "When you are a man you can speak to me like a man; as long as you're living here you will listen to me". This reduced me to tears. I cried and cried. I just

wanted to matter to him. I was so lacking in confidence that it never occurred to me to get a job, find a place and get out on my own.

Overall, these experiences made me feel very inadequate and confused about who I was. I could sense that many young men were more self-assured than I was. My only basis for pride as a man was in my reasonably successful performance as an athlete in high school. As a young adult I played the role of a savvy, somewhat reckless, impulsive guy and found that that attracted some women. Underneath that I was very insecure, but would do anything to hide that. When I did get a job my boss was a big, very, very powerful model of a man. I wanted to be like him. I didn't know how to be a man but he sure seemed to have it down. The trouble with him was that he manipulated those around him to do what was best for him. I watched as he left a trail of hurt people in his wake. I was one of them. I picked the wrong kind of guy to try to model myself after. The guy was a sociopath but that is what I thought I should be as a man; powerful, in control, in charge, non-caring, and non-emotional.

Early in my marriage my wife wanted me to go for help because of my flirting with other women. That is an understatement. I messed around. I didn't go for help because I was afraid it would get back to the university where I was studying to be a social worker and a therapist. Studying and then becoming a therapist made it difficult for me to enter therapy at first because I was afraid of people knowing what I was doing. I thought for sure I would be reported to the college if I went in for therapy. I was scared shitless of ruining my career. I finally entered therapy with my wife when I was in my 50's. It was at her initiative. I felt compelled to go because I was guilty about my affairs and I was afraid I would lose her if I didn't go. Over time I found relief in talking about some of the difficult truths I had been hiding from and lying about.

At first I felt heard and understood. In retrospect I can see that the therapist was unskilled in working with couples. He met with us separately and in the end I felt he was pretty judgemental toward me and seemed to see my wife as a victim. He failed to see that my wife had some part in us getting to this desperate place. In the end our marriage failed and we were divorced. I lost that relationship with my wife and I lost my relationship with my kids. I was a lot like my dad. I drank too much. I was not there for them the way they needed me. I tried but I realize now how impoverished I was. Those relationships are still not what I wish they could be.

The Process of Recovery

After that all my experiences of seeking help were at my initiative and were based on my awareness that I had a lot of unfinished business from the past plus difficulties or at least limitations in current relationships. I also knew lots of people in the business of offering therapy and now it seemed pretty easy for me to seek help. A few years later I entered training in a therapeutic method known as Hakomi. The training process was done in a group setting with all of us taking our turns as client or therapist in one on one situations. I participated in training weekends and week-long retreats over a period of approximately 3-4 years. This work helped me to understand how wounded and fearful I was, how that determined much of my behaviour. This got me started on making changes in my life.

What made this experience work for me was the way our leader and his colleagues consistently demonstrated that they held no judgement on us, were compassionate about our wounds and our self-defeating behaviour, knew something about how to help us heal ourselves and, in the process, become better healers. There was also a pretty consistent feeling of in the group of "we're all in this together".

I think the most healing event was for me was the ongoing, consistent experience of being heard and received with understanding and compassion. There were many such events over time. I came to know, love and understand the wounded parts of me and developed more productive ways of dealing with all that (i.e. conscious awareness allows you to stop "acting out").

A few years later I married a woman I met in this training. We have shared a similar therapeutic experience as we were trained in a method of couple counselling known as "Imago Therapy". This has taught us to be direct in dealing with issues in our relationship and has given us very practical skills in doing this. Once early in our relationship I became annoyed and raised my voice My wife stopped me and said that if you raise your voice with me we will not continue in our relationship. I knew she wasn't kidding. She called it and would not let the relationship be about power. I needed to learn other ways of dealing with my anger and talking though conflict. I appreciate my wife and the relationship we have so much now. I am very grateful. I have this sense of pride. I am blessed by all my relationships now.

Maybe 3-4 years ago I saw a therapist with the hope I might learn how to better improve or deal with my somewhat limited relationships with my kids and perhaps deal with some of the negative self-judgement and guilt I lived with. He was a very nice guy, wise, experienced, but I think I kept waiting for him to challenge me to go deeper, into what I'm not sure. That didn't happen and we agreed to stop after 5-6 sessions.

Over the past two years I have been on a path of spiritual awakening and healing. Over time, my experience in my church and with my spiritual director (we meet monthly) has helped me to have a sense of my spiritual core and a sense of profound support through my relationship with a loving God and my church community. This provides a basis for ongoing work with the

question of who am I, who do I want to be and what values will guide me? The result is that I feel much clearer about my purpose in life and how I can go forward day to day in fulfilling that purpose. This has helped my marriage and my relationship with my kids. The possibility of arriving at a sense of resolution with my "Ex" has given me greater peace within myself. I feel like I have a consistent core to work from and a very happy sense of being accountable for who I am.

There was this powerful guy I met early on in therapy. He was a different kind of man. He didn't use people. He could tear up when he hurt and he knew how to show compassion. He saw into me and challenged me to drop the bullshit. I felt loved by him. I learned a whole new orientation about what it could be to be a man. He listened to me and helped me develop my own values and I become self-determining. I learned to listen to my insides and become the man I wanted to be. I developed my own framework. I listened to the feedback of others but I listened from the framework of, "Who do I want to be?" In the past I would ask, "Who am I?" "What does it mean to be a man?" Now I just look inside and reflect on, "What kind of man do I want to be?" I evaluate how I am doing from my own template. At the end of our group one of the young guys Robert came up to me and said, "I think I would like you to be my dad." That for me is a lovely moment and a deep complement. It helps me because I can see I am growing and I have overcome many of the injuries. I can be a model for other men and that is exciting.

Cross Narrative Analysis

After transcribing, analyzing, editing and writing the narratives an across narrative thematic analysis was conducted. Each narrative was independently re-read several times and meaning units were separated. Patterns of the process of recovery emerged and meaning units organized around these patterns. Common patterns within the recovery process emerged and

these represented shared themes across each of the participants' narratives. In the following section I present the patterns of recovery for the men who have been injured in their relationship with their fathers as represented in this study. The recovery process for these men involves a six stage progressive pattern: 1) Awareness of the injury; 2) Preparation to enter the process of recovery; 3) The value of the therapeutic relationship; 4) Facilitation of emotional expression while processing memories of the injury; 5) Developing internal and relationship skills for daily living; 6) Transformation of the self and masculine identity.

Process of Recovery Pattern 1: Awareness of the Injury

All six of the participants engaged in the discourse of describing the circumstances, situations and results that came with their awareness that they were injured by their fathers. These injuries include; neglect, rejection, emotional abuse, physical punishment and abuse, drug abuse, involvement in criminal activity, and invitations to engage in inappropriate sexual activities. These seem to organize as three kinds of injuries: Rejection and neglect; violent and frightening actions and demeaning and critical words. This is coupled with two kinds of result: Identity confusion and masculine identity confusion.

  Rejection and neglect.

Various forms of neglect and rejection play a significant part of each participant's experience. Cory described his father as, "*always busy with work*" and *"most of my memories are of him rejecting me"*. Cory recalls that specific event to explain the neglect he remembers. *"Once when I was 12 years old my father and I were hiking in the wilderness. I had a compass, a box of matches and a chocolate bar. At one point in the hike he just told me to take off. He sent me into the bush all alone and told me to find my way back to our camp. I remember I was so pissed off at him. How can you do that to a kid? I often or I should say I always found my way*

back whenever he did that to me but I was terrified. So this is the way he fathered. Not much contact. But he would nonchalantly send me off."

Robert remembers his neglect and extreme measures he would take to be noticed. *"I was so neglected that I recall desperately wanting attention from my parents. At around 10 or 11 years old I threw myself down a flight of stairs and hoped that someone would notice and when no one noticed I walked back up and threw myself down the stairs again."* Dean recalls neglect in the form of his father's inability to protect him and help him. *"I lived in fear of my mother and his (my father) inability to help."* Further, he reports, *"his lack of positive, affirming support and lack of a father-son relationship was also very damaging."* *"It hurts so much that he did not support me, that he did not protect me*." Danny idolized but feared his father even though he spent "7 days a week working."

Sid refers to his biological father as a "sperm donor" because he has only seen him a few times in his lifetime. He says, *"I would say that my injury is best described as was the prolonged state of one event. I grew up without the dad who gave me my DNA, facial features, humour, and mannerisms. The non-event is the absence of the guy who is the biological stuff that has shaped who I am."* Sid feels he has been, "rejected before he was even born." When contact did occur his father's actions only reinforced Sid's experience; like when he pulled out of Sid's wedding at the last minute because "something came up."

Rick remembers his father ignoring him. *"I returned home having failed in my attempt (to make the team) and feeling pretty down hearted. He ignored me as I came up the drive way. I was down. He just told me to get to work."* When he was sent off to boarding school the first he heard of it was two weeks before he was to leave. Rick reveals he "cried in disbelief" and" broke

down". He confesses he felt, "Alone and scared shitless" and the result was "My brother was sent in to comfort me."

Violent and frightening actions.

Some of the participants reported part of their injury resulted from physical punishment for specific behaviours (Cory, Robert, Dean, Danny). Cory would see his father "rage" and use physical punishment. Robert remembers with anger that, *"on one occasion I stole some money. When my father found out he made me bend over a chair, pull my pants down and beat me with his belt. It was a severe beating."* This was followed by other examples of aggressive, abusive behaviour, *"I remember him (my father) being out of control once and I was thrown into a lake when I was screaming and scared begging for him not to. Threats were common with bursts of raging language from my father. When I cried things were said like, 'I will give you something to cry about' with a threatening hand, or I was often sent to my room to cry alone.* Robert also talked about his father's boozing and buying sex with hookers and how that resulted in some frightening and disgusting situations *".... we met up with a woman in Vancouver. He was drunk and she was drunk. Anyway he tried to get me into a threesome with them. I was so angry and disgusted...."* *"Then we lived with another woman but she died of a drug overdose within months."*

Dean remembers a violent event that deeply affected him, *"I was pre-school age, 4-5, when my father first significantly injured me. I had a problem not wanting to go to the bathroom so I consistently messed my diapers /underpants. One day my father got so frustrated that he yelled, 'if you like it so much, eat it' and he shoved my own shit into my mouth."* Danny talked about the fear that he felt because of the way his father approached discipline. *"One time I bit my sister on the arm, my dad bit me for it. When I demolished my sister's toy, he took my favourite*

toy and me out to the driveway, and drove over it; crushing it in his truck while I watched. Not a lot of sensitivity in the way he went about discipline."

Demeaning comments.

In addition to the violent and frightening actions some participants talked about subtle and pervasive forms of critical statements. For example, Danny remembers that his father's nickname for him was "The Whip". He remembers a time when he felt shame and embarrassment, "*My father, I still feel shame with this – he took me and his friend and his friend's father and I don't know why but I went swimming in the ocean and when I came out he was teasing me and I was embarrassed. It is hard to remember but it was like show us you dick or something where I felt shame and embarrassment. He just kept heaping on the shame and embarrassment while he was drinking."* Rick remembers his father arriving home after long absences walking through the house calling to his mother, "Where is the goat." When he was older he challenged his father's opinions and his father said to him, "*When you are a man you can speak to me like a man; as long as you're living here you will listen to me"*.

Identity confusion.

As a result of these injurious actions of their fathers, participants described emotional reactions such as confusion, aloneness, fear, sadness, anger, numbness, shame, embarrassment, exposure and inadequacy. Much of the languages they choose to describe the way the injury affected them indicated profound identity confusion and especially masculine identity confusion.

Sid says his father's absence resulted in a limited sense of himself. For example, he said that, "*His absence has left me at times feeling like I have invented a lot of my own characteristics, cleverness, and mannerism. I grew up not feeling just like a fish out of water but wondering if I am a fish at all."* As a person he feels afraid and confused*, "as a person I have*

struggled with acceptance, rejection, identity, and confidence. I have always felt this weird need for acceptance and insecurity. My way of coping was to just be invisible." Sid vividly captures his fears and confusion when he says, *"Some of my friends would say they are afraid of their own shadow but I am afraid that if I turn around I won't have a shadow."*

Rick's reaction at being sent to boarding school was charged with emotion, "I cried and cried in disbelief." "I felt so alone and scared shitless." The result was the formation of the belief that he didn't matter. *"It was like, fuck! I really don't count! I broke down and felt like such a child."*

Cory recalls the self-destruction of deep anger turned inward, *"when I think about who I was at that time I realize there was a civil war going on inside of me. It was anger turned inward and very self-destructive."* Danny experienced overwhelming fear of his father's discipline, *"I remember doing something bad and my mom was upset with me and she said, 'Just wait until your father gets home – you are going to get it!' I remember being so scared, coiling up into a ball on my bed and sobbing in fear of what he was going to do to me…. I often felt threatened and unsafe."*

Masculine identity confusion.

All six of the men identified confusion about their masculinity, in relationship to themselves or others, as part of their injury. Cory says he was lost. His words bring back memories of the times his father sent him into the wilderness without a compass. *"I felt so insecure trying to figure out how to become a man and I was lost – lost without a compass or a rule book. There is no instruction manual telling me how to be a man. I wanted that from my father so I wanted to slap him and help him at the same time."* He struggled to figure out how to become a man so he looked to popular media figures. *"I struggled so much to try to figure out*

how to become a man. I made a list of male figures like Doc Savage, John Wayne and other

movie characters so that I could decide the kind of man I was going to be, the kind of boss I was

going to be and the kind of womanizer I was going to be."

Danny tried to imitate his father and be a man the way he was even though his father was

terrifying to him. "*I was trying to fit that mode of being a man but I was so anxious I couldn't. As*

a teenager I imitated him sometimes as he was my model for masculinity. In my early twenties, I

noticed how taking on this role was not a fit for me." Robert believes he has moved forward in

his recovery because he can now trust some men. He is more able to, *"fully accept that not all*

men are abusive." Even after his recovery he says, *"I don't know if I will ever become fully*

trusting of men I don't know."

Rick saw his father as society's perfect model of what a man is supposed to be. *"He was*

the man of the house as the man he was the boss of the family. The women take a limited role in

decision-making in my family. He was so powerful he was scary." Rick recounts a time when he

as a young man challenged his father. *"I challenged one of my father's political opinions. I*

wasn't rude or anything but he got very angry. He said to me, 'when you are a man you can

speak to me like a man; as long as you're living here you will listen to me.' This reduced me to

tears. I cried and cried." He goes on to say that because of these experiences he can feel very

"*inadequate and confused about who he i*s*"* and the only basis for pride for him as a man was his

reasonably successful performance as an athlete in high school.

Dean talks about his fear of not being able to protect his family, a role he identifies with

himself as a man. "*Often I did not/could not fight back. So as a man I worry that I will not stand*

up to others who may try to hurt my family or me now. Part of my fear is that I am afraid of the

pent up anger that exists in me . . . . His fear was not just that he will remain passive but that he

will lose control of his rage and become violent. ". . . . *I can lapse into violent daydreams where I beat the crap out of three or more people at once. I have daydreams where I take an axe and chop my mother up into pieces and stuff her down a hole. I have to be in control. I have to control the rage and keep my sense of self together. If I don't hold me together I will fly apart, hurt others and cease to be.*"

Sid only makes one reference to masculine identity confusion. He acknowledges that he still as an adult doesn't think about his masculine identity, *"I don't have a sense of what this all means to me as a boy or as a man. I don't really think about what it means to be a man, I think of myself as a person."* Sid says, *"I see myself in some ways like a little boy who is still asking 7 or 8 year old questions."* What Sid does not say reveals some of the injury and Sid's confusion. Sid does not refer to himself as a son or as a man once through his discourse. He only refers to himself as a guy once, when he is reflecting on his narrative and is in the process of considering his success so far and looking towards his ongoing progress in recovery. Otherwise, throughout his discourse he talks about himself as a "person."

Process of Recovery Pattern 2: Preparation to Enter the Process of Recovery

Participants described two main issues that precipitated them entering into therapy. The first is the loss of or the fear of loss of a relationship. It was after the death of Corey's mother that he began questioning the meaning of life and that opened him up to seek help. When Rick lost his relationship with his wife and his relationship with his kids he realized that he was a lot like his dad. This motivated him to seek therapy. Danny entered into therapy when he suffered depression at the end of a long-term relationship. Dean said he kept working at therapy and wouldn't give up because he wanted to save his marriage. Robert suffered multiple losses. He became estranged from his mother, moved away with his father sister. After a few months his

father moved again and left his pregnant 17-year-old sister behind alone. The woman he and his father lived with died of an overdose before his mother finally invited him to move back with her.

The second issue that precipitated participants entering into therapy was the deepening awareness of the pain and the injuries. Cory says he started examining himself and he *"became aware of the injury."* He started *"considering the possibility of change and having inner peace".* Robert simply states that *he got sober and got a clear head.* Dean was *"driven by headaches and emotional pain to seek help.* Danny had to acknowledge that inside he was hurting, that he had *"contributed to the downfall of his long-term relationship and that (I) needed to work on himself inside and relationally."* *"I sought out help following a period of deep depression."* Sid started counseling because of *"patterns of anxiety and the need for acceptance."* He stated, *"I was creating a sense of identity. I want to know who I was so I could know what to do in life."*

Process of Recovery Pattern 3: The Qualities of the Therapeutic Relationship

The participants highly valued the qualities of the therapeutic relationship. First, they valued how the therapist viewed them as a person and how the therapist treated them. Cory was drawn to the therapist because, "he believed in me." Dean recalls that entering therapy *was "very scary." "I was afraid that the therapist would see me and that I would be rejected."* Therefore Dean says, "*It was very important to me that I felt heard and understood. Somehow feeling understood - not necessarily agreed with - helped me recognize my perspective and take responsibility for it." "Trust was critical for me and I would not have continued if I didn't trust the person of the therapist."* Robert highlights that *the nonjudgmental, love and acceptance* of the therapist's was critical.

Sid points out that *not seeing the therapist was important.* "*I couldn't figure it out because he wanted to know me. I was so used to shaping myself to who I was with but he kept putting it back on me. The counselor listened to me.*" The result was, "*I felt accepted and that I belong.*" Being engaged in this way enabled Sid to *"switch off the defenders and engage in self-examination and go deeper into myself."* Experiencing consistently a non-judgmental compassionate stance towards his wounds and self-defeating behavior is what made this experience work for Rick. He says, *"I think the most healing event for me was the ongoing consistent experience of being heard and received with understanding and compassion."*

Second, the participants valued the proven competencies and earned trust that their therapists were able to demonstrate. Cory's discourse shows that when he experienced the effectiveness of his therapist facilitating a conflict resolution he began to trust him. His trust for his therapist grew as he experienced greater degrees of his therapist's competencies. Robert noticed that the therapists were able to speak truthfully about themselves and they were able to facilitate trusting, loving, respectful relationships. Dean says, *"Therapy was good because I was able to unburden myself and felt cared for. I found acceptance and encouragement that I was not alone."* As Rick worked with his therapists and trainers he realized that they knew something about how to help heal. They also were able to communicate their own vulnerability. *"There was also a pretty consistent feeling in the group of we are all in this together."*

Process of Recovery Pattern 4: Facilitation of Emotional Expression While Processing Memories of the Injury

The facilitation of emotional expression and experiencing memories of the injury are a pattern of recovery that occurred after becoming aware of the injury and establishing the therapeutic relationship. Participants described releasing the intensity of the emotions, expressing

and processing anger, rage, sadness, confusion, and disgust. As well as emotions like wonder, awe, love, and gratitude also were expressed.

Cory remembers one event that was particularly healing. *"I remember one flashback memory like a vision came back to me in therapy was the time the neighborhood bully followed me back to my house when I was about seven years old. My dad was on the patio and when I ran up to him he pushed me back toward the bully and told me to go get him. When he pushed me I fell forward on the concrete and smashed my face and there was blood everywhere. That story was like a metaphor of life for me. No preparation, no teaching me about life, just pushing me forward. Releasing my emotions about that in that group changed me."* Releasing the intensity of these emotions, he says, *"was like jumping off a cliff, the most frightening thing I've ever done."* He describes this as a new way of experiencing emotions.

Robert says he was able to, *"find the powerlessness that fueled my anger."* As a result he felt *"less emotionally stuck"* because he was able to process his anger, rage and disgust. Not only was he now able to access and express these painful emotions but he was also able to access and express "*wonder, awe, love and gratitude.* " Dean says, *"It is like peeling back the layers of an onion – layers and tiers." "My emotions have been so jammed up and now they just keep coming out."* This directly contradicts what says he was taught by his parent and our culture, *"(they) taught me well not to show too much emotion - keep control, do not be weak, do not cry, be tough, hold your stomach in, and don't stride so much when you walk."* Recovery for Dean involved experiencing, *"great emotional pain and tears and that is hard…it is very hard to process emotional pain.*

Danny reports that as a result of working through his bodily processes and finding assertive anger and grief he was able to find an assertiveness and strength inside. *"After that, I*

felt like I was walking differently in the world. The anxiety wasn't there." "As a result of letting go of the blame and shame and by getting in touch with a part of his rage and anger something shifted." Sid became aware that his lack of rest and that his driving ambition was fueled by a desire to feel seen and accepted by people. *"I realized at the end of the day, I feel exhausted because I haven't done anything for myself."* Rick says that it was through a therapeutic process that he came to understand how wounded and fearful he was and how that determined much of his behavior. "This got me started on making changes in my life.

Process of Recovery Pattern 5: Developing Internal and Relationship Skills for Daily Living

Participants developed internal and relationship skills like: New ways of being with others, new interpersonal relationship skills, new ways of being with themselves, new intra-personal relationship skills.

Cory says he learned how to be close to others, how to experience intimacy, and how to receive support. He has developed effective conflict resolution skills, mediation skills, and communication skills. Through therapy he has learned how to communicate emotions differently. He has also developed internal skills like self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-regulation. He also cited specific examples of using these skills; particularly in his relationship with his father. Robert has learned how to trust others and is now comfortable asserting and inviting closeness with others. He's able to explore his internal self and live a life of transparency. Further, Robert has developed an understanding of the transgenerational causes that have contributed to his father and his own injuries.

Process of Recovery Pattern 6: Transformation of the Self and Masculine Identity

All of the participants recognized that recovery involves the transformation of their identity. Just as each of the participants recognized that their injury affected the way they experienced themselves as a person and as a man, they talked a great deal about the ways the process of recovery affected how they experience themselves as a person and how they have now come to see themselves as a man. These are differences in how the participants experience themselves but as we shall see they reveal some significant insights about what recovery from this injury means for these men as persons and for men as men.

Transformation of the self.

Cory tells us that, "*I'm grateful. I really like myself. I like my life."* Robert reports, *"This is a story of triumph and the person in the story is a hero because he used his injuries as a spring board to help himself and others in a meaningful way."* Danny tells us he is now proud as he sees himself maturing. *"I'm ready for a new phase in my relationship with my father and that is connected to me taking more responsibility. I am the creative force that is going to make that happen and that is beautiful."* Rick says that, *"I came to know, love and understand the wounded parts of me and developed more protective ways of dealing with all that. I feel like I have a consistent core to work from and a very happy sense of being accountable for who I am."*

Sid spoke most extensively about how therapy affected the way he experienced his identity. Additionally, Sid also spoke the least about how his recovery affected his masculine sense of self. Therapy helped Sid recognize that there was a link between his identity problem and the early abandonment of his biological father. As he entered into the recovery process his understanding of what is at the core of his identity began to change. *"I began to shape my identity around things that felt good and around things I liked and valued. I began to link my*

identity and personhood with internal wants and likes. I used to just go with what other people

wanted. I started to experiment with the idea that I had skin and I could try being comfortable in

it. I still feel like a fish out of water but at least now I feel like a fish." Therapy helped Sid to

recognize that he needs to get to know a sense of self that he can believe in. *"I see the process of*

developing a sense of my identity is more central to my recovery."

Stage four of the CNM (Arvay, 2003) involves four readings of the participant's narrative

by the participant. In this second reading, Sid was asked to read for the narrator's self. That

means that as Sid read his own narrative he read for the various I positions. During this reading I

played a video of Sid as he spoke to the other participants and asked him to read along in the

written text. As he considered himself he was asked to consider what parts of himself he

recognized in the narrator's voice, appearance, tone and gestures. This is how he responded, *"It*

is nice to consider who I am in the story. I feel warmth coming from myself and I like looking at

myself – seeing myself. I feel compassion. I see the person in my story as someone who is

reaching, trying to find something. I am reaching for answers and reaching for an identity…In

this project, I see myself in some ways like a little boy who is still asking 7 or 8 year old

questions. I have words now that help frame my questions. "My identity? My origins? I respect

my own journey and I can hear myself in the story. I really like seeing myself from this angle. I

have tears of pride for myself when I see what I am doing here examining myself like this. This is

a rare feeling that I feel for myself right now doing this. I am moving along in the story even now

as I look at myself in my story. I am seeing who I am."

Sid further commented on the positive effect the other guys had on him as he constructed

his own understanding of his process. *"I valued hearing some of the stories the other guys*

shared. Some of these guys seem to have carved a way - especially Cory. It is like they have cut

out a path that I might be able to follow. They have add-ons that I envision I need for myself. Now though, I see myself asking the questions not out of a place of a broken self but out of a larger sense if identity. I have a larger sense of who I am. I am starting to see that I do not need to be limited by my patterns and triggers and this may not always define me. I can keep working and one day they may no longer define who I am. In my future I need to shape my identity around things I like, around people I like, and around people I want to be like."

Transformation of masculine identity.

Although Sid is creative and thoughtful about explaining how his identity is changing, he says little about masculine identity transformation. He says, *"I still don't have a sense of what all this means to me as a boy or as a man. I don't really think about what it means to be a man, I think of myself as a person."* He doesn't refer to himself as a man in his narrative and the only other place he uses the word "man" in his narrative is when he references his biological father as a church-man. Otherwise he refers to men only three times when talking about the men in his life with whom he felt accepted. *"I have never forgotten the men in my life whom I felt accepted me deeply. I have called it true friendship, but recently have begun to label it as loyalty and immense acceptance something about having good loyal friends is extremely important to me. I knew they had my back and that we would bleed for each other. Having that acceptance and respect from men seems to give me something that is really important to me."* He calls the other men in the study as "the guys".

In contrast, Dean says little about identity transformation as a person, but uses powerful imagery to tell us how he sees himself changing as a man in relationship to himself. *"One really strong picture represents my changing view of myself. I am walking through a landscape. The land is desolate and the trees are black without leaves and the branches are like claws coming*

up. Everything is gray. There is a road with a ditch and the sky is dark. In the ditch there is this Golem like creature that is pail and tortured. It is the real me. Through therapy there has been an ongoing shift in the image. There appeared a strong tall guy who came and took the creatures hand. I keep sobbing as I tell this. As he took the tortured figure's hand the creature transformed into a small boy. They began walking down the road together. It is like I am both the boy and the man in the image. I am both protecting and taking care of the small boy and I am protected and taken care of. Now as the boy and the man walk together further down the road they look and see an orange glow and in the distance some green leaves on the trees ahead. I hold on to that image now every day. A slow, gradual change in my thinking and how I see myself is how I notice the way I change."

Dean remembers that what he learned about being a man growing up is that he always needs to be in control, that men are lone rangers and Cowboys don't cry, men solve their own problems and they don't show their emotions. He asked the question, *"How do we maintain our masculinity and still become emotionally more open?"* He says, *"I think men need to be more rounded and not necessarily lose their toughness. Men need to just expand their masculinity a bit and grow some emotional balls."* As Dean reflects on the story he tells us, *"to be a man means I need to have love for my kids. Loving my kids is more important for me than my own comfort, being a man means that I look for and provide opportunities for communication. I need to be patient, share my feelings, ask questions, and keep open. That kind of communication and being in relationships like that is an important part of being a man."*

Rick recognizes that in therapy he learned a whole new orientation about what it could be to be a man. *"There was this powerful guy I met early on in therapy. He was a different kind of man. He didn't use people. He could tear up when he hurt and he knew how to show compassion.*

He saw into me and challenged me to drop the bullshit. I felt loved by him. I learned to listen to my insides and become the man I wanted to be. I developed my own framework. I listened to the feedback of others but I listened from the framework of who do I want to be." Before therapy Rick felt the injury in relationship to himself as a man and looked outside of himself to find the answers to those questions. As he says, *"In the past I would ask, "Who am I?" "What does it mean to be a man?" Now I just look inside and reflect on what kind of man do I want to be? I evaluate how I am doing from my own template."*

Danny says that when he was a boy he was required to be tough and strong and he couldn't fit into that. He was not able nor did he know how to ask for help. He felt isolated and inadequate as a man and that became a core belief. This contrasted the view that he had of his father as the ideal man. As I asked him to think about this he says, *"I'm realizing that my responsibility and taking charge of my own life feels like the active force of masculinity. Not in that old box but outside of it. It comes from inside of me. To say, 'I love my dad' and that breaks down that old social rule where I was not allowed to say that."* Danny recognizes that he has gotten to know and accept a different part of himself. He searches for words to give shape to some of his new reflections, *"It is an ironic masculinity because it takes courage for me as a man to say, 'I love my dad'. This is a juicy part of this for me that I am seeing here now. Courage and compassion – they are a curious mix. It is an ironic masculinity where it takes so much courage to be open hearted and compassionate especially with other men."*

As Robert reflects on who he sees in the story he says, *"I see a boy who is powerless, susceptible to injury, abuse, and neglect. But I also see a boy who is resilient flexible and adaptive. I see myself as an amazing man who has been through many psychologically emotionally and physically demanding experiences and yet I'm still perseverant."* Robert

recognizes that his story tells us that being a man is not about meeting popular social expectations, what society and media depicts. Nor is it about what he was taught when he was young. He says, *"Men are emotional and need nurture, love, support and acceptance. The rough and tough Marlborough man is not actually ideal and really hurts men. It keeps them from being human and keeps them from healing."*

Cory told us that he was grateful and he now likes himself and he likes his life. Cory creatively illustrates through metaphor his story and that he now has as a clear sense of direction and a better understanding of who he is. *"The question who I am is no longer there. I'm in a place where I can live with shit when it happens. In the beginning of my story I'm in a boat and all the windows are sealed and it's dark inside and all the lights are out and there's a storm raging outside. I can feel it because the boat is being pushed and rocked and the wind is raging. Then it's like the blinds were taken off and I can see out the windows. I can see the storm raging. I can start to navigate the boat through the storm. But now it's like the weather has changed. I can see where I'm going and the storm is no longer raging. I can see the odd squall but their small storms and I can manage my way through them."* This is in direct contrast to the story he tells us earlier about his father sending him into the wilderness without a compass and that this extended to the way he experience life - as a man without a compass. He now believes that becoming a man is a very different process. He summarizes this well for us, *"Boys need to be able to look to our fathers to find out how to be men. Boys need an honest caring loving experience of their fathers and they need to learn the tough masculine stuff. Boys need to learn both from their fathers. This is what turns boys into men."* He continues, *"I experienced an imbalance between the cultural expectations that fathers are not supposed to show gentleness to their sons but only show the tough masculine side. But both are necessary for boy's self-esteem."*

Now he identifies himself as an integration of these two sides of masculinity, *"I have become a man who is a warrior and a hunter who wants love hanging in his meat house."*

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

I have conducted a investigation into the narratives of recovery for men who have been injured in their relationship with their father using the collaborative narrative research method (Arvay, 2003). In this chapter I will contextualize and discuss the research findings of this study with current conceptualizations of masculine gender role trauma, developmental trauma, and treatment. Then I will examine the limitations of the study and consider the worth of the study. The chapter will conclude with the researcher's personal reflections on conducting a study investigating gender role trauma in the father-son relationship using the CNM (Arvay, 2003).

The convergence of trauma: An intersection between developmental trauma and gender-role trauma.

The findings in this study support the natural convergence between gender role trauma theory (Pleck, 1995) and current conceptualizations of developmental trauma (Ford, 2009). There is independent and parallel research that documents the effects of interpersonal trauma on early childhood development (Ford, 2009; van der Kolk, Pynoos, Cicchetti, Cloitre, D'Andrea, Ford & Teicher, 2009). Few studies have shown how these findings inform current conceptualizations of masculine gender role trauma (Pleck, 1995). Yet, there is a natural convergence between Pleck's theory (1995) and developmental trauma (Ford, 2009; van der Kolk, et al., 2009) that is mutually informative and promotes the treatment of traumatized men. The narratives and patterns of recovery described in this study help show the link between these two conceptualizations of trauma. Pleck (1995) theorized that some kinds of trauma will have particularly damaging effects on boys and men because the nature of the trauma thwarts healthy masculine gender role formation and increases gender role strain. Each of the participants in this study described the nature of their injury as having this effect and that their repair transformed

their masculine identity. Understanding the implications of developmental trauma and gender role trauma on men's symptomotology and gender role formation is important for trauma counsellors if they hope to engage men in effective male orientated treatments. Conversely, it is important for male orientated counsellors to understand the complexities of treating men who have a history of developmental trauma.

The findings in this study facilitate a clearer understanding of how recovery and therapy can be experienced by men and can help counsellors work optimally with men suffering a developmental injury that is incurred by their father. At the same time, understanding the convergence of these two conceptual frameworks of trauma will help counsellors increase their efficiency treating traumatized men. The findings in this study serve as an important bridge between these two theoretical orientations and treatment approaches. With this in mind, I present an integration of these two theoretical models of trauma with an aim to show how the findings in this study can inform therapists who work with men within an established trauma treatment framework. Knowing more about the unique ways developmental trauma and gender role trauma effect men can help counsellors and counselling psychologists provide the therapeutic treatment men need.

Developmental trauma.

There is a significant body of research that suggests that exposure to chronic traumatic stress throughout childhood may set the stage for developmental trajectories characterized by multiple forms of cognitive, emotional and behavioural difficulties (van der Kolk, et al. 2009). Adults with this kind of history often come to therapy with complex symptoms that not only match many of the symptoms of PTSD but can extend them often producing a fragmented sense of the self (van der Kolk, et al. 2009). Having a previous history of traumatic experiences during

childhood is considered the fundamental predictor not only of PTSD but of a variety of psychiatric conditions, such as: depression, anxiety, dissociative disorders, and personality disorders (van der Kolk, et al., 2009).

According to Ford (2009), adverse interpersonal traumas in early childhood, including the following events, disrupt childhood development and can be conceptualized as developmental trauma: sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, abandonment by caregivers, chronic and severe neglect, domestic violence, death or gruesome injuries that result from community violence, terrorism or war. Some childhood developmental psychologists believe that early childhood traumatic experiences are a fundamental predictive factor in PTSD (Ford, 2009; Shore, 2002). The participants' narratives of recovery and their description of their injury include many of these events. Neglect, rejection, emotional abuse, physical punishment and abuse, drug abuse, criminal activity, and invitations to engage in inappropriate sexual activities, violent and frightening actions, demeaning and critical words, are all a part of the injury participants described. The participants in this study clearly experienced various forms of developmental trauma.

In essence, childhood psychological trauma such as these interferes with normal psychobiological development (Dadson, 2010; Ford, 2009). Early childhood experiences lay down tracks that permanently alter the neural structures that promote learning. The stress response system, including the autonomic nervous system and the immune system, are over activated so that the individual becomes pre-wired to anticipate, prevent, and protect against the possibility of potential or actual dangers and is driven and reinforced to search out and identify threats. The stress response system overrides and reduces the functionality of brain systems that are necessary for learning, including brain systems that promote seeking rewards, managing

distress, and making conscious judgments and plans (Ford, 2009). The neurobiological system of the individual becomes pre-wired for trauma in such a way that it places them at significant risk for PTSD when a future adult trauma is combined with this developmental history (Dadson, 2010; Ford, 2009).

Developmental trauma is based on the concept that these multiple exposures to interpersonal trauma have consistent and predictable consequences that affect many areas of functioning (Ford 2009; van der Kolk et. al., 2009). These experiences engender intense but predictable affects, such as rage, betrayal, fear, resignation, defeat, shame, and efforts to ward off the recurrence of those emotions, including the avoidance of experiences that precipitate them or engaging in behaviors that convey a subjective sense of control in the face of potential threats. These individuals tend to re-enact their traumas behaviourally, either as perpetrators (e.g., aggressive or sexual acting out against other children) or in frozen avoidance reactions (Ford 2009; van der Kolk et. al., 2009).

In adult populations, when psychological trauma has disrupted formative developmental periods, survivors are at risk for persistent forms of self-dysregulation that have been described as disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified and complex trauma (Van der Kolk, Roth, Pelkovitz, Mandel, & Spinazzola, 2005). The various kinds of deregulation involved in complex trauma are dysregulation in consciousness (e.g. pathological dissociation), emotion (e.g., alternating between rage and affective emptiness), behavioural self-management (e.g., dangerous impulsive risk taking), bodily functioning (e.g., somatoform disorders), self-perception (e.g., believing oneself to be permanently damaged), interpersonal functioning (e.g., alternating between enmeshment in and devaluation of primary relationships), and sense of purpose in life (e.g., loss of sustaining spiritual beliefs) (van der Kolk, 2010).

The men in this study manifest various forms this kind of dysregulation and identity confusion including emotional reactions like confusion, aloneness, fear, sadness, anger, numbness, shame, embarrassment, exposure, and inadequacy. As Sid recounts, "I grew up not feeling just like a fish out of water but wondering if I am a fish at all." Or Rick, "I felt so alone and scared shirtless. It was like fuck! I really don't count! I broke down and felt like such a child." Cory recalls the destruction turned inward and the Civil War that was going on inside. But the participants also talked about their struggle to figure out how to become a man. Cory recounts, "I struggled so much to figure out how to become a man I made a list of male figures like doc Savage, John Wayne and other movie characters so that I could decide the kind of man I was going to be." Danny, "I was trying to fit that mode of being a man but I was so anxious I couldn't." Rick says "he (his father) was so powerful he was scary. He tried to act like a man but. "This reduced me to tears. I cried and cried." Dean described his fear of not being able to protect his family while simultaneously being afraid of that the pent up rage that exists inside of him will become violent. Sid sees himself "like a little boy who is still asking 7 or 8 year old questions." This study shows that men who suffer an injury in their relationship with their father may be at risk of both suffering the symptoms of developmental trauma and likely will be at further risk of suffering the symptoms of masculine gender role trauma.

Masculine gender role trauma.

Let's briefly revisit again masculine gender role trauma theory (Pleck, 1995). Masculine gender role trauma occurs when men or groups of men experience harsh and traumatic events that invalidate, restrict, or violate their internal or culturally defined standards of what it means to be male. Masculine gender role trauma is one kind of gender role strain theorized by Pleck (1995) as internal conflicts that arise in men and are caused by rigid masculine ideologies.

Pleck (1995) believed that masculinity and gender roles are social constructions and yet they create powerful expectations that are designed to outline what is acceptable behaviour for men. Masculine gender role socialization process means that gender roles are developed in accordance with the expectations of society and the particular culture in which a man was socialized (Thompson & Pleck, 1995).

Understanding the presence of masculine ideology within Pleck's (1995) male gender role strain theory and gender role trauma is important because it is a backdrop that contextualizes his thinking and his conceptualization of gender role strain. Pleck (1995) proposed that "male gender role strain is related to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards of male behaviour" (p.19). When men endorse and internalize the cultural belief systems about masculinity and male gender they are adhering to a "masculinity ideology" (Pleck, 1995, p.19).

Some messages of the masculine ideology are; men must be stoic, stable and independent; men never show weakness; boys are not to grieve, cry, or openly share pain. Boys can be shamed and feminized if they are considered to have broken this guideline for instance, if they whimper, cry, or complain they can be told that they "cry like a girl" or are "gay" or that they need to "man up". Popular male role models in the media often personify the male hero as emotionally restrictive, independent, daring, having bravado, and being attracted to violence.

Meja (2005) points out that men and boys are socialized to avoid shame at all costs and to wear a constant mask of coolness. This pressure to maintain a posture as though everything is under control even if it's not drives boys and men to repress feelings of failure, inadequacy, and unhappiness. Perhaps the most challenging and dangerous message placed on boys and men is the idea that feelings like dependence, warmth, and empathy are feminine (Pollack, 1998). When

boys and men do behave differently they are often met with ridicule, taunts, and threats that shame them for their failure to act and feel like real men. As a result, they learn never to act that way again (Kimmel & Mosmiller, 1992; Pleck, 1995; Pollack, 1998). These are important examples of how masculine gender role socialization is linked to shame and the shutdown of emotional and communicative coping capacities in boys and men (Meja, 2005).

Masculine ideology holds up rigid masculine gender role standards that can be dysfunctional and have negative consequences. Ridged masculine ideology and the gender socialization process results in three the GRSs, "discrepancy-strain", "dysfunction-strain" and "trauma-strain" (Pleck, 1995). The men in our study experienced trauma-strain.

GRS trauma-strain applies to groups of men who experience harsh and traumatic masculine gender role strain (Pleck, 1995). Trauma strain may involve shaming initiation rites of professional athletes, survivors of child abuse and sexual abuse. It can also involve the experience of sons with absent or abusive fathers. O'Neil (2009) believes trauma strain in this context involves three covert fathering contexts. They are: masculinity ideology; the father wound, defined as unfinished business with one's own father; and men's patterns of gender role conflict. These three covert contexts are dynamic forces that shape men's fathering problems and psychological functioning (O'Neil 2009). The themes of recovery and participant's narratives of change reveal their experience of trauma-strain and show us the devastating effects that father-son injuries have on the psychological health of men.

An intersection of trauma for men

Given the profound effects of developmental trauma and gender role trauma, the conflict that the participants in this study faced and the recovery they achieved is particularly significant. According to Mejia (2005), the ideology of masculinity has always been to confront and to train

men to disregard their biological signals to run in fear or to cry when in pain. This produces extraordinarily useful fighters and protectors, members of a culture who will do very dangerous things despite their fear. But the cost of inclusion into this group is the ongoing struggle to reject within themselves vulnerability, any sign of fear, and emotional expression (Mejia, 2005).

One can see in the results of this current study and the participants' narratives what this ideology does to men and boys who are not only subjected to this socialization process, but also have other forms of victimization like developmental trauma. The experience of traumatization produces intense states of fear, grief, and overwhelming distress; the very states that masculine ideology is designed to expunge, and the very states that the participants in this study described. Developmental trauma predicts that these dysregulated states are "prewired" in traumatized men's biological rhythms. The man who has experienced this kind of mistreatment in his relationship with his farther is now subjected not only to the intense physiological and psychological reactions of developmental trauma, but also an irresolvable conflict between his biology and the ideology of masculinity he has internalized (Levant, 1996).

This intersection between masculine socialization ideology, gender role trauma, and a developmental trauma trajectory leave these men with little internal capacity to cope or regulate their internal states. In Cory's language, "there is a civil war inside." Treating this population requires a solid awareness and sensitivity to the unique challenges men face. These men must not only cope with the overwhelming effects of developmental trauma, but concurrently attempt to regulate the strain produced from masculine ideology, the masculine socialization process, and gender role trauma, all the while attempting to form an adaptive masculine sense of self. Entering and engaging these men in counselling can be particularly difficult given that the masculine socialization process systematically shames men into adapting a power based,

emotionally restrictive, individualistic, and competitive stance towards relationships. Learning

from the participants in our study the process and patterns of recovery can provide therapists

with a valuable map of recovery and direct therapist about how to engage men. This is important

because health care services often fail to adequately identify, assess, and treat men's

physiological and psychological health care concerns (Addis & Mahalick, 2003).

Implications for treatment

The narratives and patterns of recovery presented in the results of the study here invite

therapists to pay attention to the rules of masculine ideology as relevant for assessment and

treatment of traumatized male clients, particularly men who been injured in their relationship

with their fathers or have experienced other forms of masculine gender role trauma. Men may

have difficulty containing the overwhelming effects of trauma and the gender role strain they

experience. This can cause men to externalize distress and react with inner and outer anger,

aggression, and isolation (Noleen-Hoeksema, 1990; Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2002). Men's

underlying anxiety, depression, grief, and identity confusion may be overlooked and more

obvious behavioural issues such as violence, substance abuse, and sexual compulsivity may

receive exclusive therapeutic attention (Brooks, 2010).

Brooks (2010) recommends that counsellors should assess men for gender role strain at

the start of therapy. He suggests this initial assessment can be accomplished in several ways.

First, the male client could take any of a number of masculinity inventories like: the Gender Role

Conflict Scale, Male Role Norms Inventory, and the Conformity to Be Male Role Norms

Inventory (Levant & Fishcher, 1998; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, &

Wrightman, 1986). Second, the male client could be asked to respond to specific provocative

questions about his views of manhood. This qualitative assessment is one way to generate

information that can not only inform therapy but also stimulate a male client to reflect on the material he may have never before considered relevant. Third, questions that explore the male client's ideas about what it means to be a man can be incorporated into the three phases of trauma therapy explored further below.

Some treatment options like group therapy and therapeutic enactment begin by pre-framing the structure of the therapy with an awareness of the effects of rigid masculine ideology (Westwood et al., 2010). For example, the language of "group work" is chosen over "group therapy" and "dropping the baggage" is preferred over "processing trauma". Through the early establishment of group norms, men are empowered to help each other. Giving and receiving help is modeled and normalized. Building on these social norms in the group facilitates the spontaneous sharing of emotions. Careful consideration of the language counselors choose to describe what will happen in the counseling process with the male client is important because it can facilitate or hinder the establishment of a therapeutic relationship that can acknowledge male issues.

Participants in this study described two main issues that motivated them to enter into therapy. The primary motivators were the fear or loss of a significant female relationship and the recognition of the pain and discomfort. They did not enter into therapy with a clear recognition that they had suffered an injury in their relationship with their fathers. Nor did they recognize the implications of that injury on their identity confusion, their relationship challenges, their difficulties with emotional expression and regulation, and the limitations of their intra-relationship and interrelationship skills.

It is not surprising, given the challenges that men who suffer developmental and masculine gender role trauma face, that the participants in this study highly valued the qualities

of the therapeutic relationship. How the therapist viewed them as a person and how the therapist treated them was critical. As Rick says, "I think the most healing event for me was the ongoing consistent experience of being heard and received with understanding and compassion."

Ford, Courtois, Steele, van der Hart, & Nijenhuis, (2005) describe a three-phase sequential integrative model for counseling complex posttraumatic self-dysregulation: The three phases are conceptualized as flexible, intermixed, and cyclical throughout the process of therapy while maintaining a cycling forward movement toward recovery and overall wellbeing.

Phase 1 emphasizes the importance of building a positive therapeutic alliance Ford, et al., 2005). This involves the formation of a physically and emotionally safe, stable therapeutic relationship. Phase 2 emphasizes trauma processing. This phase of therapy is more directly "trauma-focused," actively involving the client in recalling traumatic memories as well as related body states, emotions, and perceptions in amounts and at a pace that is safe and manageable. Phase 3 emphasizes functional reintegration. This frequently involves intensive work on the difficult task of learning what to hope for or expect from life after symptom reduction, and facing the fear of change. This phase focuses on fine-tuning the self-regulatory skills developed in phase 1 and increasing a conscious understanding of the impact and costs of past traumatic experiences addressed in phase 2, while applying these skills to understanding and address life's problems, to the end of deriving a growing satisfaction in daily life (Ford, et al., 2005). The current study and the narrative themes and patterns of recovery described here can help therapists understand and apply specific interventions within the three phases of treatment. For example, exploring masculine identity and questions about what it means to be a man may be addressed differently in each phase. This can be a particularly useful strategy when the male client is highly guarded or intimidated during phase 1 of treatment and there is a need to move slowly in

approaching sensitive issues. Phase 2 may provide the opportunity to more explicitly address the effects of trauma on men's masculine identity while reflecting about changes that have resulted from treatment and consolidating client's new experience of themselves may be effective during phase 3 of treatment.

Furthermore, the patterns of recovery reported in this study support the three-phase treatment orientation of Ford, Courtois, Steele, van der Hart, & Nijenhuis, (2005). For example, phase 1 establishing safety: studies have shown that men are often extremely reluctant to seek help for physical and psychological health care concerns (Addis, & Mahalik, 2003). The demands of the perceived client role, at least superficially, seem to conflict with the primary tenets of the traditional male. That is, traditional masculine ideology predicts that many men need to be in control, to suppress emotions, to be self-reliant, and to engage in action orientated activities. Assuming the client role can exacerbate gender strain when it is perceived to contradict with this ideology. Relationships for these men are often framed by power. One male client voiced his reluctance to enter therapy because "he didn't want someone else telling him how to be and what to do." Men who are victims of masculine gender role trauma and are injured in their relationship with their fathers simultaneously face increased GRS that manifests in identity confusion, while also coping with the symptoms of developmental trauma.

This present study helps us understand the importance of building safety with men in phase 1 of treatment. The therapeutic relationship helps men move progressively through the patterns of recovery. As well, by recognizing the convergence of trauma and the kinds of symptoms these men suffer as a result, reinforces the importance of the person and the competencies of the therapist. Just as Robert noticed, "The therapists were able to speak truthfully about themselves and they were able to facilitate trusting, loving, respectful

relationships." Cory experienced the effectiveness of his therapist facilitating a conflict resolution and it was then that he began to trust him. The therapists of these men seemed particularly competent and capable of demonstrating both their own strength and vulnerability to the men who were in therapy. That helped men move forward in an atmosphere of safety in phase 1 of treatment.

When counselors are attuned to the concerns of men who have experienced a convergence of trauma they can reframe the counselling process, validate men's need to internally and externally struggle with their masculine identity while maintaining their need for personal power. The counselling relationship can be contextualized as a process of supporting and building on that need. Counsellors position themselves as expert facilitators who have specialized skills that support and maintain men's power and their responsibility. By helping reluctant men experience counselling as a "teamwork" process that aims to replace ineffective false control with a more meaningful, genuine, empowerment. As Rick framed it, "They (the therapists) were able to communicate their own vulnerability. There was also a pretty consistent feeling in the group of were all in this together."

The embarrassment and shame men can feel when they are vulnerable and seeking help can be tempered by an acknowledgment of the normativeness of male distress and a shared comradely and compassion for men's situation. Sadly, many men avoid help seeking because of the mistaken idea that their problems are unique, that help seeking is something that no man does (Addis, & Mahalik, 2003). If they do seek help some men believe they must give up control, accept that they are deficient as men and now must accept what they are told about how to be different. This belief is embedded in the masculine ideology that men who suffer a masculine trauma seem to embrace. This belief can interfere with the development of an empowered belief

in their capacity to learn new ways of being, new ways of relating, and a stance of emerging competency.

The goal of safety in phase one is furthered by acknowledging the particular kind of inner gender role conflict men can face when they engage in seeking help learning expressing difficult emotions. The counselor begins by engaging men in a relationship where they are able to acknowledge this inner conflict, explore its source, and express their distress in ways that keep pace with the man's relational style and comfort range. Pacing this process is particularly important because it builds a foundation that will establish the secure and emotionally safe relationship needed to process traumatic events.

Phase 2 processing trauma: One devastating consequence of developmental trauma is the compromising effect this can have on a person's self-perception and identity (van der Kolk, 2009). This can manifest in painful shaming beliefs like believing oneself to be permanently damaged. Our study shows that the effects on men's self-perception and identity when they have experienced a convergence of developmental trauma and masculine gender trauma may manifest in in masculine identity confusion. The counselors who helped the men in our study recover were able to facilitate emotional expression and the re-experiencing of memories of the injury that participants described as a way of releasing the intensity of the emotions, expressing it and processing anger, rage, sadness, confusion and disgust. This at times was directed at their fathers. In order to do that, counsellors must be sensitive to the ways men's past traumatic experiences have affected their inner self identifications as men. This process demands a highly attuned, nonjudgmental, and empathetic therapeutic presence combined with the willingness and ability to monitor one's own emotional reactivity. Men may have never expressed this kind of range of emotions and their core distress and their inadequacy, embarrassment, and fear that may be

mixed with aggression, sarcasm and resistance. These defensive expressions may signal a lack of safety rather than an unwillingness to participate.

Phase 3 functional reintegration: Ford et al (2003) emphasizes that "the goal [of this phase] is for the client to acquire experiential evidence of safety and empowerment, and to thus to gradually replace constricted or self-defeating beliefs, schema, and goals that have resulted in a constricted lifestyle with a more flexible, specific, and self-enhancing personal framework." (p.441)

The participants in this study developed internal and external relationship skills for living. They learned new ways of being with others, new interpersonal relationship skills, new ways of being with themselves, new intrapersonal relationship skills. They experienced new skills like self-awareness, self-reflection and self-regulation. These are the kinds of skills that therapists can expect men who are recovering from developmental trauma to develop.

The narratives and patterns of recovery described in this study also highlight or focus the therapist on the distinctive, devastating results of the father-son injury. Perhaps what needs to be a critical focus of phase 3 for men who have experienced and convergence of developmental and masculine gender role trauma, is to assist men in examining the growth that they have achieved and consider how therapy has transformed the way they now thinks about themselves, experience themselves and perform their masculinity. The narratives and patterns of recovery highlight the importance of the transformation of the self and the transformation of masculine identity as a result of therapy. As Cory says, "I have become a man who is a warrior and a Hunter who wants love hanging in his meat house." Dean also has a new way of thinking about what it means to be a man. He says, "I think men need to be more rounded and not necessarily lose their toughness. Men need to just expand their masculinity a bit and grow some emotional balls." It will be

important that the therapist look for ways to directly address masculine identity confusion for men who have experienced an injury in their relationship with their father based on the findings of this study. This needs to be considered as a goal and a focus of the recovery process.

This focus complements other important goals of phase 3 such as fine-tuning self-regulatory skills through enhanced emotional awareness and expression. Enhanced emotional expression is a potential gain for men who are recovering from a convergence of developmental trauma and masculine gender role trauma. These gains can be validated to help reinforce the changes that have taken place. Counselors can reinforce the man's expanded understanding of masculinity and how that has changed his emotional processes, beliefs, activities, and interpersonal relationships. Like Dean says, "To be a man means I need to have love for my kids. I need to be patient, share my feelings, ask questions, and keep open. That kind of communication and being in relationships like that is an important part of being a man." In this way the therapist can emphasis the gains the man has acquired as pertains to phase 3 goals: new skills in relationships, solving life problems, and his growing satisfaction in daily living (Ford, et al., 2005). At the same time, the therapist can consolidate the masculine identity transformation that has taken place.

Summary

Adverse interpersonal traumas in early childhood disrupt childhood development and can be conceptualized as developmental trauma. Masculine gender role traumas are events that invalidate, restrict or violate men's internal or culturally defined standards of what it means to be male. When men experience the convergence of these two of traumas the results can be devastating. The masculine socialization process creates conditions that can mean men must contradict masculine norms in order to engage in treatment. This study provides a rich, in-depth

description of the recovery process for men who have experienced and convergence of masculine gender role trauma and developmental trauma. Understanding the way these two conceptualizations of trauma intersect for men is important for both trauma specialists and therapists who want to work with men, as they can gain valuable insights into men's internal conflicts, the barriers they may feel about engaging and participating in therapy, the challenges that men face as they process trauma, and what recovery for these men looks like. Considering these challenges is vital if counsellors are to help men recover from trauma and establish an adaptive perception of their gendered self.

The Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to the study. Inherent in the CNM (Arvay, 2003) are epistemological foundations that, although sound, do not fit into the dominant discourse of what many researchers believe scientific research looks like. Some scholars are more accustomed to a presentation of data as a statement of propositional truths or facts that are clear, observable, and predictable. The study examined the question: How do men construct, in their own language and culture, the process of therapeutic recovery from trauma experienced in their relationship with their fathers? This study is investigating the experience men have of recovery. As such of human experience, this study is research that must acknowledge that it is being conducted within a particular cultural context. That means that the study does not claim to produce propositional truths or observable and predictable facts. This is a limitation but a necessary limitation because focusing this study on the experience of the participants, not just the facts of their story, enables us to fully examine the research question and acquire men's description of their narratives of repair.

It also means that the results of the study are specific to the context in which the research occurred so they are not generalizable to other populations. Because of the variety of extraneous factors that are present in the examination of human experience attempting to generalize the results would prove to be fraught with error. Rather, the results of this study are transferable. They describe narratives of men's recovery from injury experienced in their relationship with their father. This is relevant in that it helps us know more about the way men recovery from this injury. As illustrated earlier, these results are useful because the process and themes of recovery described in this study identify important aspects of men's recovery to current treatment and conceptualizations of developmental trauma and masculine gender role trauma.

Another limitation of this study is that it is impossible to replicate. The study took place within a particular context and the exact conditions of that context cannot be reproduced. That means that the study is not reliable in the sense that it cannot be repeated and therefore it cannot be tested. This in no way invalidates the findings of the study because the CNM does not unearth propositional, fixed information (Arvay, 2003). In a post-positivist, narrative study such as this, it is inappropriate to evaluate narrative research with positivist methodological criteria for rigor such as reliability, internal validity, or generalizability because these ideas are based on philosophical assumptions that are incongruent with the philosophy of science upon which narrative research is based. Rather, the worth of the study can be evaluated using the four criteria set out by Arvay (1998).

The Worth of the Study

Narrative research is guided by the worth or worthiness of the knowledge created. That means other questions are more important to Narrative researchers. Questions like: How convincing are the final results? How well does the experience embedded in the story resonate

with others who share this experience, does the narrative hold together as a cohesive whole, and how useful are the results? The four criteria set out by Arvay (1998) to evaluate the worth of the study are built around Reissman's (1993) discussion on the criteria of worth such as: persuasiveness, resonance, coherence, and pragmatic use.

Persuasiveness: Riessman (1993) considers persuasiveness or plausibility to be an important criterion upon which to determine the worth of the study. Persuasiveness was achieved in this study by asking participants to read and reflect on the narrative and to offer their own review. Their editorial comments were further integrated into the final narrative. The findings readily fit within and expand the broad framework of therapists who are working therapeutically with men and with current trauma treatment practices. The men also related to each other's experience.

Resonance: Arvay (1998) expands on Riessman's (1993) notion of correspondence as a criterion of worth. Correspondence implies that the researcher brings the results back to co-participants for the purpose of having the participants authorize that the narratives accurately reflect their story. Each participant reviewed their story and authorized that the narratives accurately reflect their story. Resonance, as a criterion of worth according to Arvay (1998) expects that the narratives will resonate not only with co-researchers but with outside review persons who had or have direct or indirect related experience with this topic. Others who have experience with father/son injury and trauma reported that these narratives resonate with their experience and effect them emotionally.

Coherence: the results meet the criteria of coherence because the narratives reflect an overall goal or purpose to the telling of the story. The narratives interconnect with related events within the narrative itself. Furthermore, the narratives content is grouped together to form a

theme or themes and we see threads running throughout the stories. The overall events and ideas of the story seem logically connected in the stories communicate a sense of the person of the narrator.

Pragmatic use: Pragmatic use as a criterion of worth is related to the extent that the knowledge gained in this study usefully informs others in such a way that sheds light on this part of the human condition. The men voiced appreciation for the study. Participating in the study helped to normalize men's experience of this injury. Here are a few of their comments.

Robert: *"The study gave me a sense of normality, belonging, inclusion and relief. Listening to the stories told me I was not defective. I need more relationships with men like this in order to continue to get to know myself. Participating in this study helped me to realize that any man can have an experience like mine. I came to realize that not all men are abusive. I can trust some men even when I am not in a therapy group."*

Dean: *"I'm glad I was able to open up and have eye contact when I looked at the other men. When I look at myself talking to the other guys I don't feel repulsed at all by myself as I think about myself in the story. That is surprising."*

Sid: *"Being in this research group has helped me move forward from just narrating my story to self-disclosing my vulnerability. One of the other gentleman said he felt angry when he heard my dad canceled out on the wedding. It's interesting but I still feel nothing. I still don't know. I still feel distance from my own emotional response to that. I think one day it might cause me to feel angry but I still don't know why. I liked it that he felt angry on my behalf. That was helpful because I feel so confused in that place."*

Rick: "*At the end of our group one of the young guys Robert came up to me and said, 'I think I would like you to be my dad.' That for me is a lovely moment and a deep complement. It*

helps me because I can see I am growing and I have overcome many of the injuries. I can be a

model for other men and that is exciting."

This study has helped us to understand more about the significant life experiences of men who've been injured in their relationship with their fathers. It has provided insights into the psychological impact failed fathers have on their sons and what it takes for men to recover from these experiences. These results will help counselling psychologists understand more about the way men recover from being injured by their fathers. The study describes in men's own language the way that fathers can hurt their son's understanding of what it means to be a man and narrates the process of recovery from this injury and the role that masculine identity transformation can play in that recovery.

Finally, this study has provided new information about the link between father/son relationships, gender trauma, and the narrative themes of recovery from a specific male psychological injury. These advancements are very important because they address the "cultural gap" between counselling psychologists and men. Dean asked and answered one of the questions men face, *"How do we maintain our masculinity and still become emotionally more open?"* He says, *"I think men need to be more rounded and not necessarily lose their toughness. Men need to just expand their masculinity a bit and grow some emotional balls."*

Considerations for Future Research

Developmental trauma is the cause of predictable attachment difficulties that are linked to lifetime relationship problems and result in persistent challenges with dissociation and emotional regulation in individuals (Liotti, 2006; Liotti, 2004). Future research should consider the relationship between gender role trauma strain and the implications of developmental trauma on

attachment styles. Liotti (2006; 2004; 2011) considers trauma and dissociation through an attachment model and is curious about how this this can apply to therapeutic practice.

Liotti (2011) argues that there is a predictable relationship between developmental trauma and disorganized attachment style that result. There are two disorganized attachment styles that are considered controlling types (Liotti, 2006). The first disorganized type, controlling punitive, results when the child, who suffers ongoing developmental trauma like our participants reported, finds advantages to controlling his outer world through aggressive punitive interactions with others. This strategy becomes a limited, rigid but effect method of regulation distressing experience and gaining some effect on the other environment. The second disorganized type, controlling caring, emerges in a similar way. When the developing child gains advantages in managing their distressing environment in the parental attachment system by outwardly controlling the actions and behaviors of others through caregiving behaviors the pattern becomes internally procedural and unconcious (Liotti, 2006). As reviewed in chapter 2 research supports the relationship between the development of masculine gender identifications and attachment style. Dismissive attachment style orientations tend to correlate with "gender role dysfunction strain" and preoccupied attachment style orientations tend to correlate with "gender role discrepancy strain". Future studies should explore the possible relationship between "gender role trauma strain" developmental trauma the disorganized attachment styles that result as well as their adult developmental sequels (Liotti, 2011).

Liotti's (2011) therapeutic interventions aimed to treat the disorganized attachment types and their corresponding adult presentations. Future studies should consider how these therapeutic interventions and treatments strategies can be informed by the narratives of men's repair and the themes of recovery discovered in this research project. Considering the significant role that

men's masculine identity has in the recovery process for men who been injured in their relationship with their fathers is an important consideration for future research and therapeutic practice. As counselling psychologists continue to advance our knowledge about how to treat men we need to learn how to develop and apply interventions that are precisely designed for this specific symptom presentation in traumatized men's.

Future studies could explore the possible relationship and influence of gender role trauma strain on the two controlling disorganized attachment types and consider interventions relevant to each disorganized type for men. For example, Liotti (2011) points out that empathy is not an effective intervention with the punitive controlling disorganized type but may be more effective with controlling caregiving. When the devastating effects of gender role trauma strain are also considered within this kind of treatment strategy therapist may be able to make some significant gains in the effective treatment of men who face an intersection of trauma.

The Experience of the Researcher

I would like to conclude this study with a few of my own reflections and experiences as the researcher. My experience as the researcher really begins with my participation in a couple of weekend process groups for men. In those groups I became particularly interested in the research question of the study: What are the narratives of recovery for men who have been injured in their relationship with their fathers? That question has guided many aspects of my research throughout my PhD program. First, I began to learn about the distinctive challenges men face when entering into therapy and the invisible barriers that therapist can unknowingly create. Second, I became familiar with the particular and unique psychological challenges that men face and how those challenges can disrupt their masculine identity and lead to serious psychological and physiological health risks. Third, I conducted interviews and was given the opportunity to meet

men, read their narratives of recovery, facilitate the process of men reading their narratives to each other in a group setting, interviewing each man individually, and finally construct with them the narratives and patterns of recovery for men who have been injured in their relationship with their fathers. This third process contrasts the first two in the kind of information that I was exposed to. Rather than theoretical and fact-finding, the process of interviewing men and experiencing with them the power of each-other's story was meaningful and personally transformative.

I was personally impressed with the way that the participants in this research project were able to come together as strangers form a common bond, support each other, and validate each other's narratives. Each of us expressed tears, compassion, and celebration for one another as each man recounted his story of recovery. I was aware as I gathered the data in the group setting that I was operating as a researcher, a facilitator, and as a man who could identify with many elements of the other men's story. There were many times during the interviewing process when I felt extremely honored to be welcomed into these narratives.

I still hear Sid saying that he not only feels like a fish out of water but sometimes he wonders if he is fish at all. And the idea that his friends might be afraid of their own shadow but he was sometimes afraid that if he looked you would see that he didn't have a shadow. The profound struggle with his identity that Sid expressed and the anger the other men held for him still moves me to tears because of the power and love in that moment. I remember listening to Sid read his narrative and listening to the men responding thinking, "I'm watching the process of repair unfold in this moment." That is what our group was like. The emotional expression in the reading and the supportive, powerful, nonjudgmental response of the other men facilitated a shared experience of truth about our-selves as men. I saw that these men have the capacity to be

competitive, aggressive, and even violent; but they also have the capacity to be emotional, supportive, and nonjudgmental. We embodied Cory's description himself, "I have become a man who is a warrior and a hunter who wants love hanging in his meat house." I'm still moved by the participant's courage and resiliency. I think Dean would say that we collectively grew our emotional balls that day.

As a therapist I believe that these men have taught me invaluable lessons about the process of recovery for men who been injured in their relationship with their fathers. First, it seems to me that the time has to be right for men to enter into therapy. Each man described some key circumstances that facilitated their entry into the therapeutic process. Further, as a therapist, I've always been convinced that the therapeutic relationship and the person of the therapist are the keys to building a successful alliance. My involvement in this study has reinforced that. I think these men would agree with me, though when I say that demonstrating competency, humility, and teamwork are also particularly important for therapists who want to work with men. I think those therapists who are equally confident in themselves and confident in the men they are working with, plus have the competencies to construct the kind of relationships that can facilitate the recovery process, will have the most success working with men. I also see in these narratives a process of recovery. Some men seemed very aware that they were not as far along in the process as some of the other men. Others seemed aware that they were further along in the process. Only one man felt that he had completed the process of recovery, but even he said that he needed to do further work on his relationship with his own sons and to grow in his ability to nurture and develop them along their own path.

Throughout my experience as a therapist, I have continued to develop a specialization in the treatment of trauma and have presented workshops, symposiums, papers at conferences, and

enrolled in advanced treatment training opportunities. This study has helped me realize the limitations and the need for specialized training and experience for therapists who want to work with men who have experienced masculine gender role trauma. Most discussions about developmental trauma address the shattered identity and fractured sense of self that results but few identified the shattered sense of the masculine self. The way participants described their transformed sense of themselves as men is a valuable contribution to understanding more about men's recovery process.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this study with Dean's wonderful portrayal of what the recovery process is like for him.

"One really strong picture represents my changing view of myself. I am walking through a landscape. The land is desolate and the trees are black without leaves and the branches are like claws coming up. Everything is gray. There is a road with a ditch and the sky is dark. In the ditch there is this Golem like creature that is pail and tortured. It is the real me. Through therapy there has been an ongoing shift in the image. There appeared a strong tall guy who came and took the creatures hand. I keep sobbing as I tell this. As he took the tortured figures hand the creature transformed into a small boy. They began walking down the road together. It is like I am both the boy and the man in the image. I am both protecting and taking care of the small boy and I am protected and taken care of. Now as the boy and the man walk together further down the road they look and see an orange glow and in the distance some green leaves on the trees ahead. I hold on to that image now every day. A slow, gradual change in my thinking and how I see myself is how I notice the way I change."

"I think men need to be more rounded and not necessarily lose their toughness. Men need

to just expand their masculinity a bit and grow some emotional balls."

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title:
Stories of our fathers: Men's recovery from intergenerational wounds.

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Marvin J. Westwood – Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education University of British Columbia, BC, Canada.
Contact:

Co-Investigator:
Michal R. Dadson M.A. - Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education University of British Columbia, BC, Canada.
Contact:

This study is part of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology.

Purpose of the Project:
The purpose of the current study is to discover the narratives of change of men who have experienced therapeutic recovery from a psychological injury experienced in their relationship with their father.

Confidentiality:
Any and all information provided by participants will be held in the strictest of confidentiality via the use of pseudonyms and coding for all names and places that might reveal the identity of participants. Also, raw data in hard copy form will be kept in a locked cabinet, while any computer information will be kept in a password protected file on the researcher's hard drive.

Time Requirements:
The study will require the participant to engage in an in depth discussion/interview with the co-investigator to tell their personal story of their experience of recovery from a paternal injury. Writing the story will involve 1-2 hour commitment. The group interview will involve an additional time commitment of 3-6 hours for each participant, which will be split into two periods of time of 2-3 hours for group reflection and 1-2 hours for each individual narrative review. Each of the interviews will be videotaped and audio taped for transcription purposes.

Questions of Concerns:
The principal investigator and co-investigator, as named above, will be available to answer any questions and address any concerns participants may have regarding the study procedures.

If participants have any concerns regarding their rights or treatment as research participants they may contact the Director of the UBC office of Research Services and Administration at 604-833-8598.

The Right to Refuse to Participate:

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse

to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without consequences of any kind.

I have received a copy of the consent from for my own records.

I consent to participate in the study: Stories of our fathers: Men's recovery from

intergenerational wounds.

_____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____
Signature of Witness   Date

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I would like you to prepare 2 typewritten (or 4 handwritten pages) about your relationship with your father and the process of repair that you experienced in psychological therapy. Don't be put off by or feel limited by the questions! These are given as a guide to promote and encourage your reflections. Therefore you may find you won't answer all of the questions provided. That's fine.

Writing and engaging in self reflection is the first step in this research. What you feel about what happened is important and what matters so feel free to write what best represents how you experienced the process of recovery from a psychological injury that you received from your father. When we all meet together as a group to hear each other's stories we may or may not see common themes and differences but we will have the opportunity to reflect on this together. It is important that we all have our narratives complete so that is why I'm asking that you have this turned in to me prior to our group meeting. I hope you will soon discover that this is the most enjoyable research project that you have ever participated in! This is YOUR story! I am honored to participate and hear the telling of it.

Reading your story, being heard and reflecting on the stories of each other will be the next step in our project. Often people report feeling self-conscious the first time they read aloud. This doesn't last long however. When you read you may wish to delete some of what you've written or add to it. The choice will be yours. Either way the goal is that you feel comfortable in what you share in the group. I have asked all participants to respect the confidentiality of the stories shared and will do my best to insure equal air time contribute to our mutual learning.

Sensitizing Questions

Telling the story about the injury.

1) About how old were you the first time the relationship injury occurred?

2) Did it occur over time or was there one significant traumatizing event?

3) If there were several which one stands out as the most difficult? Why?

4) Was there anything about the time that it happened that made it more difficult or more tolerable?

5) How did this incident affect the role your dad played in your life or his place as a role model?

6) How did the trauma make you feel as a person, as a boy, as a man?

7) Did it affect your ability to open up to other men? to women? How?

8) What kind of decisions did you make about yourself as a man as a result of this event?

Telling the story about seeking help.

1) Did it the trauma effect your ability to seek help? How?

2) What was it like to first enter therapy?

3) Was there anything in the first meeting that told you that you might find help?

4) What kept you coming back to the therapist?

Telling the story of recovery.

1) What was the most healing event that you remember in therapy?

2) What was it like to process this kind of emotional pain?

3) Where you aware of power in the therapeutic relationship? If so how?

4) What caused the process to healing occur?

5) How important was your relationship with your therapist in the healing process?