HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS:
SUCCESSFUL LIFELONG COPING AFTER TRAUMA

by

SUSAN BAUM

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1976
Diploma of Special Education, University of British Columbia, 1992
M.A., Language Education, University of British Columbia, 1991
M.A., Counselling Psychology, University of British Columbia, 1994

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Counselling Psychology)

We accept this dissertation as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
July 1999
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Department of **Counselling Psychology**

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date **July 29, 1999**
ABSTRACT

This study explored how Jewish Holocaust survivors had coped with various stress situations in their lives by identifying and articulating what were facilitative coping tactics. The goal of the study was to understand their lifelong coping process and to contribute to the field of counselling psychology by providing information on what helps survivors of the Holocaust be successful copers over a lifetime. A comprehensive category system was developed for a wide range of successful long term coping strategies.

The research method involved extensive interviews with eleven Jewish Holocaust survivors who were considered to be well-functioning. Flanagan’s (1954) Critical Incident Technique was chosen because it provided a structure to the information gathering and allows for a rigorous validation process. Participant’s interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. A total of 1,416 critical incidents extracted were identified. Twenty-three categories emerged in the critical incident data analysis as follows: (1) seeking social support, (2) reflecting, (3) positive reappraising, (4) emulating, (5) Jewish identity, (6) helping others, (7) enduring hardship, (8) participating in enjoyable activities, (9) accepting reality, (10) planful problem solving, (11) bearing witness, (12) affective self-controlling, (13) planful physical escaping from life threatening situations, (14) distancing, (15) initiating action, (16) believing in lucky fate, (17) belonging, (18) understanding context, (19) being responsible/accountable for self and others, (20) confronting, (21) believing in the value of education, (22) hope in Israel, and (23) believing in the supernatural.

The validity and reliability of the categories were ensured through: (a) the use of an independent rater, (b) the use of an expert rater, (c) participants’ cross-checking, (d) exhaustiveness, (e) participation rate, and (f) theoretical agreement in the research literature to related findings.

The findings of this study contribute to the field of counselling psychology by providing a category system with descriptions of what constitute successful coping strategies for
Holocaust survivors. Results of the study reveal how Jewish identity issues are intertwined in the coping process. Theoretical and clinical implications of the present study are explored, and suggestions for future research are discussed.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the members of my committee, Drs. Ishu Ishiyama, Peter Suedfeld and Marv Westwood. I very much appreciated their support and expertise in this undertaking.

The 11 Holocaust survivors need also to be acknowledged for their time, energy, and openness in sharing their lives with me. I felt honoured by being told their stories. They were inspiring and became my role models. Although I was deeply affected by the sorrow of their stories, I was enriched through their coping abilities and strong sense of who they are.

Many thanks to my niece, Nadine Walker, for her faithful and prompt transcribing of the interviews and thereby sharing this experience with me.

As always, my daughters, Melina and Simone, for undertaking this journey with me.

This work is dedicated to my family.
PROLOGUE

A year after my Mother passed away I felt driven to go to her native city, Vienna, Austria to find out more about her and our family. She had always been mysterious about the past and I was intrigued by that. Together with my daughters I returned to Vienna.

I discovered that my mother's — my — family is Jewish. And so began my search into issues related to this discovery. I began to piece together new family history with stories my mother had told. There were many unanswered questions, both personal and historical. I had a great longing to speak to my Mother, but these conversations could not be.

Upon my return home I read extensively about Jewish history, psychological issues related to the Holocaust, and second generation and identity issues.

The following year, I began a Ph.D. program in Counselling Psychology at U.B.C. and I was thinking about a dissertation topic. As I was focussed on Holocaust/Jewish issues in my personal life I decided to incorporate that interest in my academic life. Also as a school counsellor, I worked with immigrant children and their families who had left war torn countries. Through research on Holocaust survivors I could examine immigration, war, and adjustment throughout life as well as Jewish identity issues. The personal and professional areas combined.

In my master's thesis I had become acquainted with the interview process. I wanted to use this process in the dissertation. Through the interviews I would be able to have the conversations I had missed out with my Mother — the personal story. My desire was to talk to people similar to my Mother and ask them the questions I could no longer ask her. Telling their story was a way of putting pieces of a puzzle together to hear my mother's story and therefore also make sense of who I am and was becoming.

I was influenced by positive coping literature such as Dr. Suedfeld's research — how could people not only survive severe trauma, but cope and live well-adjusted lives? I was also interested in how survivors coped who had retained their Jewish identity as opposed to my Mother who had hidden hers.
In total, I interviewed 11 Jewish Holocaust survivors. I felt honoured by being told their story. They were an inspiration and role models to me. Although I was deeply affected by the sorrow of their stories, I was enriched through their coping abilities and strong sense of who they are. In the process I integrated a Jewish identity into my own and an unfamiliar familiar world become known. What an experience!
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

More than fifty years have passed since the Second World War and the Holocaust. There are still many survivors of varying ages alive. These people may offer researchers in psychology an ideal population in terms of learning how one successfully copes over a lifetime after experiencing severe trauma. Jewish Holocaust survivors may offer special insights into how identity affects the coping process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand the coping process as it applies to Holocaust survivors. The intention of the study was to contribute to the field of counselling psychology by providing information on what helps survivors of the Holocaust be successful copers over a lifetime. I developed a category system to reveal successful long-term coping strategies of survivors. The category system may be an aid in helping Holocaust survivors.

Rationale of the Study

There are many reasons for conducting this study. First, research has focused on pathology for survivors of severe trauma and in particular Holocaust survivors. Participants of the studies have mainly been patients who are in treatment. Research has revealed the negative impact of patient survivors. There is little research on how survivors, not patients, were able to adjust to life and what the factors were that helped in the adjustment; for instance, personal characteristics, coping strategies, and community resources. There is little research on the strengths and positive coping strategies of well-adjusted survivors. This study will add to a growing area of research. The predominant theory through which Jewish Holocaust survivors has been examined is the psychoanalytic theory. To date this examination has been confined to pathology. This study will broaden the research through an examination of well-functioning copers and focusing on positive coping.

The theory of stress and coping has mainly focused on stress. This study will be examining survivors of trauma and not just stress. There may prove to be important differ-
ences which need to be taken into account in the therapeutic process as well as in further research.

The examination includes lifelong coping in the mature years. This has not been the norm. There may be differences in coping strategies or patterns that are more evident by examining long-term coping in the mature years. Many components of coping may arise when the examination concerns long-term coping. For instance, there may be character factors, identity issues, or cultural components evident in long-term findings. Long-term coping also offers a view of resiliency — how it develops, what it looks like, what enhances it — that short-term coping cannot provide. Long-term coping also allows for the examination of how one copes in the mature years after experiencing trauma.

Survivors of severe trauma may need to be treated with different techniques and strategies in the counselling process than those who have experienced stress. These survivors may also need to be treated differently in the short and long term. This study reveals components of what is helpful for survivors of severe trauma in order to develop a framework for assisting counsellors working with such clients.

Prevention measures may prove to facilitate healing after the experience of severe trauma. Identity issues play a role in facilitation. This study helps generate ideas in the development of programs and community resources that facilitate healing of survivors of severe trauma.

This study is part of a small but growing trend of research focussed on positive coping strategies of Holocaust survivors in the long term. Results are intended to help counsellors facilitate healing, short-term and long-term, with this population both within the counselling setting and throughout the community.

**Approach to the Study**

Research on coping with trauma over longer periods of time and the mature years is a growing area of research. A qualitative method of examining long-term coping is advantageous as it offers an in-depth view of the experience. It helps reveal the richness of detail of the phenomenon in terms of thoughts, feelings, and behavior of the participants.
An approach that is noted for rigor and still allows for the capacity to offer richness is the Critical Incident Technique. This technique has been used in many different kinds of research, therefore it has proven to be flexible to work with.

I used Flanagan's (1954) Critical Incident Technique as it best served my interests and allowed the participants to tell of their experience in their own words. The technique was influenced by phenomenology by allowing a depth and richness of experience to be elicited from the participants. The context of the study concerned how one coped over a lifetime. This was extracted through a life narrative interview. A lifetime is a vast and complex area to cover. The critical incident technique was a means of structuring what seemed an overwhelming amount of information. As the CIT was concrete, it was able to focus participants in their explanations in terms of specific actions, thoughts, and feelings; not psychosocial truth. The technique also offered a way of allowing the participants to reflect, in their own way, on their experience and understandings. The technique offered an unbiased means of exploring how the participants experienced severe trauma and were then able to adjust and succeed in life.

History

The Diaspora has marginalized Jewish identity and social existence. In the Diaspora there has always been movement in Jewish minority status from relative acceptance to isolation and rejection. Prior to World War Two, European Jews had different living conditions. Western Europe offered more freedom and acceptance than Eastern Europe. Assimilation was a dominant process. Many Eastern European Jews fled to Germany and Austria prior to the 1900s in search of freedom. Those that remained in Eastern Europe lived in shtetls (villages), ghettos, and to a much lesser extent, assimilated in the broader society. Life in the ghetto included many restrictions such as not being allowed to own land. Many assimilated to assure further acceptance and the fruits that that brings (Dimont, 1962).

It was not until the 1870s that the term anti-Semitism began to appear. Jews had experienced persecution before, but religion was the basis of the persecution. Anti-Semitism was novel in that it included the idea that being Jewish meant belonging to a particular race of
people; therefore conversion to another religion would not mean that one was no longer a
Jew.

Jews had experienced trauma for many years before the Holocaust (Dawidowicz, 1984). As Jews did not have a country of their own, they were always a minority amidst other nations. Although this brought negative restrictions many times, the long history of Diaspora may have enhanced the identity and coping of being Jewish (Dimont, 1962). The community has mainly provided a strong support system for Jews in many situations and times. There is also the idea that Jews have always survived.

During the thirties in Germany, the Nazi political party took control and a process began that Leach refers to as the warning period before trauma occurs (1994, p. 18). Emigration was encouraged, the Nuremberg Laws (1935) came into effect and the Jews were officially segregated. Loss of residence, finance, business, and freedom resulted. During the thirties the violence escalated. Violence against Jews was constant and permissible and perpetrated by both the government and civilians (Goldhagen, 1996, p. 14). Many Jews committed suicide as their only escape (Hill, Lecture, 1997). The persecution began later for Eastern European Jews, where the process was condensed. This occurred as a result of the Nazi invasion of Eastern European countries. Deportation to concentration camps and the Final Solution came next.

Most Jews who survived the war emigrated. Some returned to their home after the war only to find rejection and hostility (Dawidowicz, 1984). Others went to displaced persons’ camps to wait for visas and others tried to emigrate to Palestine. Many that went to Palestine in 1948 found their passage interrupted and they were sent to internment camps in Cyprus. Internment camps and the immigration experience caused further stress. Most survivors left Europe and emigrated to varying parts of the world, clustered mainly in Israel and North America (Hass, 1990, p. 15) where the process of assimilation began. Coming to a new country includes adjustment difficulties at the best of times, but one could surmise that the Holocaust experience intensified this. Jewish emigrants had suffered years of starvation, hard labour, or torture and were weak and penniless.
There were relatively few Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. Meichenbaum cited research maintaining that 350,000 Jews survived concentration camps (1994, p. 20). Only one third of the Jewish population in Europe survived; 2,927,900 are the estimated number of survivors. (Dawidowicz, 1975, p. 403).

Jews who experienced the Holocaust included those who experienced living in concentration camps, those in hiding, those who hid their Jewish identity, those who were in the resistance, and those who left Europe before and during the 1930s, and during the Second World War. These experiences would have different impacts on the survivors, as would the ages at which they were experienced. After the war and until recently, many survivors did not come in contact with health care workers or researchers; therefore what is known of survivors pertains to only those who sought, or were brought in for, psychological or medical help. Of the approximately three million Jewish Holocaust survivors in 1945, therefore about 600,000 are still alive. This includes 300-350,000 in Israel, 150,000 in North America and 100,000 in the remainder of the world. There are approximately 300 to 400 survivors living in the Vancouver area (Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 1998).

Survivors have had many different experiences, countries of origin, and were dispersed to many parts of the world.

Jewish survivors adapted to post-war conditions in many different ways. Some of the choices were: returning to the country of origin, emigrating to Israel or other countries, remaining a part of the Jewish community and having religious affiliation to the community, not affiliating with Jewish religions or community, converting to other religions, and denying the Jewish heritage.

Survivors made many choices concerning their Jewish identity that would have been woven into the coping process. What is the meaning of being labeled Jewish and how would this affect adaptation? Is being a Jew a religion or an ethnic group? There is no consensus on the answer and so viewing survivors' coping as intertwined with Jewish identity makes it difficult to assess.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Holocaust Survivors — What Label Applies?

Holocaust survivors who sought treatment were first diagnosed as having different forms of psychiatric disorders and physical symptoms. Rosenberg (1984) points out that the conditions were treated separately and not seen, necessarily, as pertaining to the Holocaust experience. There was a range from no visible symptoms to physical ailments and/or psychological disturbance and mental illness. There were also Holocaust survivors who did not seek treatment and were adapting. As there is a range of disturbance so has there been a range over the life-span; many survivors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, coped well immediately after the war, but experienced distress sometime later, others coped well over the long-term, becoming well known “survivors,” but committed suicide in old age. This may or may not have been related to the Holocaust experience. Some coped well, but felt like “damaged goods” (Krell, 1988, p. 2). The span ranges from those who become very skillful copers throughout life to those who were completely psychologically destroyed.

There is little consensus on labeling the experience that Holocaust survivors who sought treatment have and little is known about how Jewish identity issues affected coping. Different theories have been applied to their conditions with varying results. During the 1960s, due to further research in war trauma from the Vietnam war, the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was coined by the American Psychiatric Association. It became a clinical diagnostic category introduced in the Third Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) in 1980.

PTSD resulted from trauma. Trauma is referred to as relating to “extreme or severe events that are so powerful, harmful, and/or threatening that they demand extraordinary coping efforts. Such traumatic events are neither rare, nor unusual” (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 32).

The label PTSD came to be applied, after the fact, to Holocaust survivors. Holocaust
survivors and other trauma survivors can also exhibit other clinical and subclinical forms of disorder in addition to or instead of PTSD (Leon, 1999). There continues to be debate if this diagnosis is appropriate for survivors who sought treatment and debate over what constitutes PTSD (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 41). Although the phenomenon has been described, different labels with varying conditions are used. Historically, PTSD had been given many other names. It was included in the diagnostic category as a subcategory of Anxiety Disorder in the Third Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) in 1980 because "of the presence of intrusive and anxiety provoking ideation, worry over loss of control, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response, fear of repetition of the traumatic events, and phobic-like avoidance behaviors." Denial, dissociation, numbing, and blunting were also included (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 41). The category is still evolving.

PTSD is a relatively new category that is still in the process of being refined. A wide area is covered in this category because of the diversity of traumatic events, the scope or widespread incidence of such traumatic events, the multifarious impact of trauma, and the epidemiological data of PTSD for specific target populations (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 14). Meichenbaum (1994) states that the likelihood of distress is influenced by:

a. Characteristics of the trauma,
b. Characteristics of the individual's and group's reactions to the trauma,
c. Pretrauma factors,
d. Post trauma recovery factors (p. 29).

The overall term covers a wide range of criteria — short-term, long-term, Type I, and II Traumatic events. Type I Traumas are "short-term, unexpected traumatic events" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 20). Holocaust survivors could be considered to have experienced long-term Type II Trauma. Type II Traumas are "sustained and repeated ordeal stressors — series of traumatic events or exposure to prolonged traumatic events" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 20). This is prolonged repeated trauma of "intentional human design" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 18) (See Appendix C). Holocaust survivors and Vietnam veterans were the first groups researched in this area. Refugees from Latin America, Vietnamese
Boat People, refugees from Ruwanda, Kosovo, Bosnia and victims of childhood sexual abuse (incest) are the latest groups to be researched under this category.

Breiner states that there is a difference in abuses — from concentration camp prolonged abuse and other kinds of abuses (1996, p. 416). Breiner (1996) maintains that the categorization of survivors of the Holocaust experience is much more than PTSD and unique to these survivors. He found further that Holocaust survivors’ psychological aftermath is unique because of:

1. The duration of the stress; that there was no end in sight,
2. the entire world around was distorted with the protectors not able to protect them from enormous suffering and deprivation,
3. no predictability,
4. the outside world was intact as were the oppressors, and
5. the individuals in the camp were treated as if they were feces, dirt. It was constantly impressed on them not only that ‘Arbeit macht frei’ (work allows freedom) but also that they were ‘dirty Jews’ and they couldn’t be made clean, and given no opportunity to be clean.

He further notes that “in all of his studies of children” (Breiner, 1974, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1992) in various cultures and circumstances throughout history there was never a comparable situation of such psychological destructiveness as the German attempt to destroy the Jews. It was a planned psychological/sociological isolation, denigration, and dehumanizing of an entire sophisticated and productive segment of society that was not only legal and public, but known at every level of society (Breiner, 1996, p. 420).

To Breiner (1996) the Jewish experience of the Holocaust is unique and extreme (p. 420).

There continues to be much controversy over how to categorize and understand Holocaust survivors suffering symptoms. There are parallels to other marginalized cultures such as First Nations, Armenians, Kurds, Albanians or Gypsies, but the extremity of genocide against the Jews separates them from other cultures and makes their experience in the Holocaust unique.

**Immigration Adjustment**

Immigrants and refugees face unique problems in their adjustment to a new country. Immigrants new to a society may experience cultural disorientation and adjustment diffi-
culties. "Culture shock" (Oberg, 1960) is the result of anxiety due to loss. The loss includes all things that are familiar such as signs and symbols of social intercourse; customs, gestures, facial expression, and words. Adapting to a new country is a process. The process involves symptoms such as anxiety, helplessness, irritability, and longing for a more predictable and fulfilling environment. Six aspects of culture shock have been identified by Oberg (1960):

a. Strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptation
b. Sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession, and possessions
c. Being rejected by and/or rejecting members of the new culture
d. Confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings, and self identity
e. Surprise, anxiety, even disgust, and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences
f. Feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment.

Most Holocaust survivors experienced some form of immigration adjustment. Yet, adjustment difficulties have not been focused on in the literature. This may be an important ingredient to the coping and identity styles of survivors. How the immigration experience affected choice of maintaining or not maintaining Jewish identity has not been extensively researched.

Cultural differences also play a role in adjustment. Aldwin (1994) points out that "the sociocultural context affects the stress and coping process" (p. 191). Aldwin (1994) reveals four ways that culture can affect the stress and coping process:

First, the cultural context shapes the types of stressors that an individual is likely to experience. Second, culture may also affect the appraisal of the stressfulness of a given event. Third, cultures affect the choice of coping strategies that an individual utilizes in any given situation. Finally, the culture provides different institutional mechanisms by which an individual can cope with stress (p. 192).

Markus and Kitayama (1991) found that cultures have "different constrictions of the self, of others, and of the interdependence of the two" (p. 227). Cultures have distinct conceptions of individuality. "The collective or interdependent culture insist on the fundamental relatedness of individuals to each other. The emphasis is on attending to others, fitting in, and harmonious interdependence with them" (p. 224). This value can lead to "emotions
(which) can motivate genuine, other oriented, altruistic behaviors, ... (this) can serve as the important glue of interdependent relationships” (p. 248). Relationship and belongingness would have a unique form as opposed to independent cultures. This form plays itself out differently in coping strategies. Cultural values influences coping strategies. The key differences between independent and interdependent cultures can be seen in Table 1.

**Theories**

The Holocaust has been over for about 50 years. Holocaust survivors continue to seek therapy and/or to be researched. I will examine various theories that influence therapy and direct research. The theories examined are psychodynamic, learned helplessness, behavioral, stress and coping, and resiliency.

**Theories under the Psychodynamic Framework**

Prior to the 1970s the only theory that was applied to Holocaust survivors was psychoanalytic theory. The psychoanalytic theory helps to explain different responses to the Holocaust. The psychoanalytic framework offers various interpretations of coping in Holocaust survivors who sought psychological assistance. It was not until the early to mid-1960s that reports of survivors in therapy were published, but these were not many. Prior to the Vietnam War, survivors' symptoms were not understood or acknowledged by the psychiatric world. Before that time, Freud's (1916) ideas were the most common interpretation of symptoms. In his "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920, cited in Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982) a traumatic experience was defined as anything that breaks through a protective shield and is experienced in a short period of time. He theorized that a person has a mechanism that produces a shield to protect against over-stimulation. If the shield is dissolved, a breakdown will occur. Freud (1916) stated in his "Introductory Lectures" (1916, cited in Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982) that trauma can only lead to neurosis if one has a deeper level of mental problems.

Psychoanalytic theory focusses on coping strategies that have roots in defensive mechanisms. Defense mechanisms are directed toward internal conflicts that "ward off anxiety
The following table summarizes Markus & Kitayama findings (1991, p. 230).

### Table 1

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<th>Feature Compared</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Interdependent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Separate from social context</td>
<td>Connected with social context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Bounded, Unitary, Stable</td>
<td>Flexible, Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Important Features</td>
<td>Internal, Private (Abilities, thoughts, feelings)</td>
<td>External, Public (Statuses, roles, relationships)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Be unique, Express self,</td>
<td>Belong, fit in, occupy</td>
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<td>Realize internal attributes,</td>
<td>proper place, Engage in</td>
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and control over impulses, behavior, affects, and instincts” (Aldwin, 1994, p. 86). They are displayed as symptoms with rigid automatic reactions. Defense mechanisms are determined by personality structure developed in early childhood and triggered in subsequent trauma (Aldwin, 1994, p. 86).

Salamon (1994) describes a version of the psychoanalytic theory that states there are two personality configurations, anaclitic and introjective. The anaclitic personality maintains interpersonal relationships and ignores self-development; denial is one of the coping mechanism used. In this framework Holocaust survivors deny their past reality in order to focus on the positive. Introjective personality develops the self while diminishing interpersonal relationships; projection is one of the coping mechanism used. Denial is the most immature of personality organizations, followed by projection and identification (Salamon, 1994).

Denial is created when survivors are unable to express their feelings or feel unable to. This results in a breakdown of emotions about self and world. The psyche goes into self-protection by numbing emotions, or splitting the personality between the conscious and unconscious ego states with no communication between the two (Salamon, 1994). Denial allows for survival in the war, but later creates other traumas. Survivors continued to deny feelings in order to cope. Denial increases tendencies such as muscle tension, physical pain, depression, boredom, agitation, anxiety, dizziness, overeating, overspending, and substance abuse (Matsakis, 1992). Many survivors were diagnosed as being in denial. For this reason they were able to quickly enter marriage, have large families, and build careers in new countries. But, in some cases life’s ongoing challenges changed the coping capacity of survivors. According to Sterba (1968), over time, physical and mental symptoms began to appear.

After the war many survivors used projection as a coping mechanism, according to Sterba’s (1968) psychoanalytic framework. McAdams (1990) refers to projection as “a common defense mechanism in which the person attributes unacceptable internal states (i.e. rage, revenge) and qualities to external others” (p. 621). The evil that was a real part of
survivors' lives during the war was projected onto others after the war. In this manner, the horror of the Holocaust still existed and the anger that had been aroused could be projected onto others after the war. Breiner (1996) noted that adult survivors of the Holocaust also identified with the Nazi aggressor and unconsciously functioned in this way to their own children (1996, p. 41). Examples of behavior would be physical and mental aggression. Family members or others in society were seen as enemies (CIA, Nazis).

Holocaust survivors that were examined and/or researched were found to have “problems and syndromes and other deleterious effects upon mental health” (Suedfeld, 1996, p. 170). Researchers identified “negative aspects of survivors; personalities (such as survivor guilt) or of behavior within the death camps (such as “Muselmanism” and identification with the aggressor) (Bettelheim, 1979). Explanations for the symptoms were theoretically “usually psychoanalytic” (Suedfeld, 1996, p. 170) until recently.

**Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Stages**

Erikson’s (1963) Psychosocial stages incorporate the idea that “Personality development can only be understood in the context of the interpersonal-social-cultural-historical environment.” The stages are “the result of repeated transactions between the individual and society” (McAdams, 1990, p. 117).

Erikson (1963) defines development in terms of particular psychosocial issues. At each developmental stage, changes “within the individual and within the individual’s social world combine to create a central conflict which defines the stage. The conflict must be addressed, not necessarily resolved, within the given stage before the individual may move to the next stage.”

Erikson (1963) believed that one could understand an individual “through stories and in term of stories — the narrative in human lives.” Each of Erikson’s narrative stages include questions. These are;

- **Trust vs. mistrust:** Did you feel cared for?
- **Autonomy vs. shame:** Did you feel well guided through childhood?
- **Initiative vs. guilt:** Did you enjoy starting new projects? **Industry vs. inferiority:** Were you a hard working student?
Identity vs. role confusion: Did you have a sense of belonging?  
Intimacy vs. isolation: Did you establish a close relationship?  
Generativity vs. stagnation: Do you feel like you have helped the next generation?  
Integrity vs.despair: On the whole, what kind of life do you think you have had?  
(Black and Haight, 1992, p. 181).

The stages create an identity formulation that ensures “confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others” (Erikson, 1963, p. 261). This will also “bridge what he was as a child and what he is about to become, and will reconcile his conception of himself and his community’s recognition of him” (1959, p. 111).

When trauma is experienced at a stage particular kinds of symptoms develop, according to Erikson. The earlier the trauma, the more severe the symptoms (Bower, 1994). When infants experience trauma, such as separation from their mothers, they experience reactions that are mostly “somatic and undifferentiated” called “infantile trauma pattern” (McAdams, 1990, p. 117). Anhedonia results. Later in life, depression will result (McAdams, 1990, p. 118) and denial of feelings for fear of reverting back into the “infantile psychic traumatic state” (McAdams, 1990, p. 119).

This theory maintains when adults are exposed to trauma, most do not become overwhelmed but for others it may lead to a catatonic reaction. There is paralysis of initiative and varying degrees of immobilization leading to automatic obedience. Affective anesthesia may result (numbing of emotions). This in turn leads to progressive constriction of cognitive processes including memory and problem solving. Adults may suffer what McAdams (1990) refers to as a “psychogenic death or they may suffer from psychic closing off” (p. 119), and not be able to function. Later in life, hypervigilance and anxiety dreams will occur. There will either be much talk about or total avoidance of trauma. This is different from the infantile trauma because infants have no recollection of their trauma. Therefore there will be different coping strategies used depending on the stage of development.

Qualitative studies such as Sterba’s (1968) have found evidence that the age that trauma was experienced for Holocaust survivors affected development and coping. Sterba (1968)
“found children who had survived the Holocaust developed emotional disorders as soon as they become settled in a safe country, different from the surviving adults who had a symptoms-free period following their settlement.” Sterba (1968) found that survivors had some of the following symptoms; “insomnia, restlessness, nervousness, stomach aches, headaches, constant fatigue, and feelings of general weakness ... depressed.”

Kestenberg (1992) also found evidence of differences in coping depending on age at the occurrence of trauma, but his findings were quite different. She stated that “The survivors who were children during the Nazi reign have shown a unique ability to adapt. They founded their own families, established themselves in the community, pursued their professions in businesses and did well as long as they were busy reorganizing their lives. It was when their children finally left the nest that they began to feel abandoned again.” Breiner (1996) continues “As long as the individual is struggling and surviving and fighting external forces, things were relatively comfortable but once they no longer had to struggle and couldn’t rebuild their world horrible pain returns (p. 421).”

As the present study examines survivors coping over time, the age range of research participants includes what Erikson (1985) refers to as mature adulthood and old age and so an examination of issues in these stages is important in the study of how they cope. The seventh stage of the life cycle is referred to as ‘generativity versus stagnation.’ In this stage “adults seek to generate a legacy of the self that promotes the next generation. A person’s generativity script provides an envisioned ending to a life story while suggesting that the story also continues through the generation of products and outcomes that ‘outlive the self’ (Erikson, 1985).

It is in this stage that one feels the need to “bear witness” according to Erikson (1985). Bearing witness means that survivors publicly talk about and publish their stories or poems on their war experiences. Bearing witness is a means of giving survivors permanence, integration, self esteem, and well-being (Bar-Tur & Levy-Shiffr, 1994). Survivors, according to Bar-Tur & Levy-Shifff (1994), may find a purpose for themselves, feel control over their internal trauma, and heal the symptoms.

The idea of bearing witness helped some Jews survive the war. Later, survivors were able to confront their pasts and resolve issues. They feared that the Holocaust and the victims of the Holocaust would be forgotten. They wanted to leave a legacy behind.
Many felt this need to bear witness, but were unable to do so until old age. Bearing witness is part of the generativity script. This is "a predicted plot for the future through which the person plans to leave a legacy of the self to future generations" (McAdams, 1990, p. 408). A generativity script is intricately entwined with Jewish identity issues. Bearing witness usually refers, for Holocaust survivors, to the idea that the plight of the Jewish people should never be forgotten in order for it not to reoccur.

According to Erikson’s developmental theory, in the final stage, old age, people must achieve integrity by first looking back on their life in earlier stages. Erikson (1959, 1963, 1982) states "ego integrity is the cumulative product of having successfully resolved the earlier stages of development. It is ‘reaping the benefits of a life richly spent, not only in the store house of memories, but in the fruition of problems worked through, plans executed, mediation undertaken, suffering survived’." Ego integrity is a lifelong process, according to Erikson. Wong (1995) summarizes that it depends on successful management of developmental conflicts, acceptance of one’s life cycle without regrets, and harmonization of different stages of life without fear of death. The hallmark of ego integrity is wisdom" (p. 30). Wong (1995) views ego integrity as the “development of positive but realistic self schemas. In the struggle for survival, we need a self-concept that has stood the test of time and enables us to cope with the demands of the present and the uncertainties of the future” (p. 30). If this integration is not achieved, depression or even paranoid psychosis can develop (Lichtenberg & Marcus, 1994).

Some Erikson theorists maintain that integration of the past and the future means to accept the Holocaust and Hitler. This is impossible for many. Lichtenberg and Marcus (1994) maintain that survivors cannot integrate this traumatic past and may therefore lapse into a state of depression, panic, guilt, obsession, withdrawal, or even suicide.

There have been other findings which continue to refute the theory. Meichenbaum (1994, p. 19) points out that “as survivors age a variety of life events (e.g., retirement, children leaving home, death of a loved one, and other stressful events) may serve as triggers for what Danieli (1994) calls “unmasked latent PTSD” (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 21).
Danieli (1994) also maintains that appearances may be deceptive as, for example, there have been "recent suicides of such prominent Holocaust survivors as Primo Levi, Jerzy Kosinsky, and Bruno Bettelheim" who appeared to be successful copers. These survivors have written extensively about their ability to cope through writing about and remembering the Holocaust. What is evident is that there is "a pattern of prolonged disability evident in trauma survivors" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 20). Danieli (1994) notes "Survivors of trauma may be both successful in their post-trauma adaptation and troubled in relation to their survival experience." This may not be the case for all survivors.

Lazarus (1996) offers a new theory on age and coping. He maintains that context and coping are interrelated. He states "when coping changes, it is the result of changes in the demands, constraints, and opportunities available as the person ages. These have to do with social changes and losses in personal resources and roles, which force new forms of adaptation on the older person" (p. 299). Lazarus states that perhaps life stage is not causal but the "correlates of age — such as loss of health — which require alterations in the pattern of adaptation" (p. 302).

The emphasis in the psychodynamic framework is on the unconscious. The theory focusses on emotional coping not problem solving coping. The focus is on poor adaptation. Aldwin maintains that stress and trauma may be beneficial — "stress generated by unfulfilled (or unfulfillable) demands requires the development of new and more adaptive psychic structures" (p. 247). She points out that "individual achievements often stem from compensation for defects" (p. 247) or in the case of Holocaust survivors compensation or coming to terms with the horror they experienced. Jung, she also points out, saw stress as a challenge where the "unconscious generates a crisis which occurs to individuals who have a very strong potential for growth and individuation" (p. 248). Examples of great achievements can be seen in the work of Victor Frankl, Bruno Bettelheim, and Elie Wiesel, all concentration camp survivors. Suedfeld (1996) points out that "clinicians and clinically-oriented scholars devoted themselves to identifying the negative aspects of survivors' personalities ..., and explaining their theoretical — usually psychoanalytic — origin and sig-
nificance” (p. 170). Suedfeld (1996) notes that there is now a small minority “that challenged this diagnosis and emphasized the impressive adaptations made by many survivors” (p. 170). Leon et al. (1981) is one such study.

Danieli (1980) found that it was not the age of survivors that accounted for particular coping behavior, but the conditions of the Holocaust experience. She delineated “four different types of survivor families: ‘fighter’ families, families of ‘those who made it’, ‘victim’ families, and ‘numb’ families (in the sense of families suffering from a psychic withdrawal or ‘closing-off’).” Each type learned to cope in a different manner. Fighters and those who made it were “filled with an intense need to build and achieve. Feelings of dependency and weakness were not tolerated.” They put a high value on bearing witness to the Holocaust and on finding constructive ways to transform their guilt and mourning ...” into action, educational projects, attending collective rituals.” In victim families, Danieli noted more “depression, anxiety, worry, fear of the outside world and overprotectiveness: ‘Family members seemed to cling to one another, and guilt was the mechanism whereby children were kept from becoming angry and also from questioning their parents about war experiences.” In numb families there was a “severe constriction of their emotional expressiveness, spontaneity, and fantasy life.” Danieli also notes that there is a range of adaptation in these types. Recent research, such as Danieli’s, on survivor families, is revealing a different perspective, other than self-reports, on how survivors coped. Danieli’s theory and the stress and coping theory reveal different perspectives to the psychodynamic interpretation of the coping strategies of Holocaust survivors.

**Learned Helplessness**

Another prominent theory that has been applied to the various symptoms of Holocaust survivors is learned helplessness theory. Learned helplessness theory is a cognitive approach to depression. Seligman (1975) maintained that “human beings subjected to uncontrollable negative events in life will eventually learn to be helpless and will become chronically depressed.” They link helplessness and depression to cognitive attributions and maintain that “depressed people experience the world in a helpless fashion by virtue of
their characteristic patterns of assigning causality and explaining events.” Internal, global, and stable causes are attributed to the negative events in life. Negative events are accentuated due to the uncontrollable and generalized forces.” There has been considerable research on Seligman’s attributional approach to learned helplessness.

The learned helplessness theory integrates the history of Jews in Europe to the learned helpless condition of survivors. The negative pattern of thinking began, for European Jews, as early as 1870 with the rise of anti-Semitic views and writings (Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982, p. 51). A general sense of rejection and loss of status resulted, especially for assimilated Jews who lost the strength of belonging to a community (Dimont, 1962). Having left their Jewish identity behind, they found that they were not accepted by non-Jews. Jews knew that anti-Semitism existed, but most did not imagine that anti-Semitism would result in the death of six million Jews. They did learn to feel helpless and hopeless in eliminating the negative effects (emotional and material) of anti-Semitism.

According Bergmann & Jocovy, (1982) survivors believed that they were “victims” and therefore helpless to control their fate (p. 52). Survivors then helped to create negative results. Depression and/or suicide (Matsakis, 1992) may result from this negative pattern of thinking.

The learned helplessness theory has been applied in particular to Jews in the Nazi era. In the 1930s German Jews were advised to emigrate to other countries and many did. For the ones who remained, there were numerous restrictions on their freedom. When the Nuremberg Laws (1935) came into effect, Jews were officially segregated from the rest of society. They were made to wear identity badges of the Star of David, and had to identify their residences and businesses as Jewish. Their names were changed. All females were called Sarah, and males were called Israel. The Jews were no longer treated as individuals, but a mass degraded group. A hopeless pattern of thinking developed (Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982, p. 52).

The Holocaust experience involved “total abandonment and total genocide” (Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982, p. 52). There was no escape for the Jews; conversion was not accepted.
The Jews could not control their present or future situations. Deportation to ghettos began and led to deportation to concentration camps and labor camps. Jews were contained in unsanitary environments and segregated from the rest of the world. They did not know their own fate or the fate of their loved ones. Under-nourished, over-worked, emotionally drained, and in constant fear of death, the Jews clung to life. Psychological distress was experienced; coping mechanisms and belief systems were shattered. Previous views of religion, justice, and society could not explain the situation (Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982, p. 53). Survivors were subjected to a process of degradation that made them physically and emotionally helpless. The long process of trauma and dehumanization created a feeling of worthlessness that continued after the war. The process ended in survivors learning helplessness (Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982, p. 54).

This interpretation of the learned helplessness theory does not take into account that Jews, as a group, did cope and survive. During the Holocaust there was Jewish resistance. For instance, there were ghetto fighters, camp uprisings, and Jewish resistance groups. For some Jews, there was a loss of belief in the Jewish religion, but for other Jews there was a strengthening of the Jewish religion and new religious interpretations also were developed. Meichenbaum (1994) points out that there is a "tendency to adopt a collective identity, namely that of a 'Holocaust survivor'" (p. 20). There are positive effects to this collective identity such as solidarity and pride.

New research is adding to the theory of learned helplessness. For instance, Aldwin (1994) found that "Acceptance may prove to be a buffer against stress and may mitigate against stress and excessive self-blame" (p. 124). In a test of the learned helplessness theory of depression, Coyne, Aldwin, and Lazarus (1981) found that chronic depressives were no less likely to try to exert control over their environment than nondepressives were. On the contrary, "depressives were less likely to accept that some situations are not amenable to control and more likely to try to exert control over ungovernable situations. The depressives were apparently less able to perceive which situations were amenable to control and
to adjust their activities accordingly; consequently, they were more likely to blame themselves for things going wrong” (p. 210).

The learned helplessness theory applied to Holocaust survivors does not take into account that the collective experience can also be healing. It is through the rituals of the collective that “a significant source of both advice and social support for individuals who are undergoing a crisis or who may have problems of adaptation in general” (Aldwin, 1994, p. 213) is derived. It is for this reason that Jews who emigrated to countries other than Israel had a more difficult adjustment than those emigrating to Israel. Hass (1990) points out that “According to some reports, twenty or thirty years after the close of World War II, survivors who settled in Israel displayed fewer pathological symptoms than those who emigrated to North America” (p. 15). In Israel, where the largest population of Jews lives (U.S. being second in population) (Hass, 1990, p. 15), Jews were afforded an opportunity to develop positive self-images as pioneers building a homeland and refuge for Jews. The precarious military situation allowed an outlet for personal anger through supporting of a national cause, with the subsequent victories over the Arabs providing a boost to self-esteem damaged by past feelings of helplessness and loss. ... Israel has provided opportunities for supportive mourning outlets — special programs and commemorations on Holocaust memorial days, the museums and educational centers at Yad Vashem and Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetao (Hass, 1990, p. 15).

Some people subjected to short-term natural disasters, like the Buffalo Creek Flood in West Virginia in 1972 (Leach, 1994, p. 181) suffered psychological distress that matched the symptoms of Holocaust survivors. Years later, there remained evidence of “despair, apathy, aimlessness, depression, and a constricted living pattern amongst survivors” (Leach, 1994, p. 181). These people were not subjected to years of dehumanization and helplessness and yet many had the same disorders as Holocaust survivors. There are perhaps other factors, such as individual appraisal patterns, that could account for this. Aldwin (1994) points out that “generalizing from a population risk to an individual risk is not possible” (p. 47).

Behavioral Theory

Behavioral theory places emphasis on the “interplay between the individual and the
environment. Cognitive factors and the subjective reactions of people to the environment now have a place in the practice of cognitive behavior therapy" (Corey, 1991, p. 311).

According to behavioral theory, survivors suffered symptoms of PTSD (and other psychiatric conditions) as a result of lack of reinforcement, rewards, or recognition by others and themselves (Matsakis, 1992). This lack of acknowledgment occurred after the war. It created secondary wounding, more painful than the original trauma (Matsakis, 1992).

Secondary wounding occurred for Holocaust survivors when their experience was not acknowledged. PTSD was not a well known phenomenon (other labels were used) after the war and most survivors did not seek treatment or were treated inappropriately (Bergman, Martin, Jucovy, Milton, 1982, p. 7). For instance, the German Government offered reparation to the survivors but only if they could pass psychological and physical assessments that many survivors felt were humiliating and degrading (Bergman, Martin, Jucovy, Milton, 1982, p. 7). Survivors felt they were not believed or the trauma was minimized. Misunderstood by society and the psychiatric world, many experienced secondary trauma. Secondary trauma is caused when society responds to survivors with disbelief and denial or inappropriate diagnosis and treatment (Bergman, Martin, Jucovy, Milton, 1982, p. 7).

When the community blames the victim, there is an increase in survivor’s self-blame and a decrease in their self-esteem. They became further stigmatized when society negatively reacted to the survivors’ reactions, situation, and symptoms. In North American society, importance is placed on self-sufficiency, and vulnerability and reliance on others (government, medical system) are seen as a weakness (Matsakis, 1992). This philosophy made it difficult for the community to accept the neediness of survivors as a healthy response. Society thus branded survivors as victims (Bergman, Martin, Jucovy, Milton, 1982, p. 9).

In response to society’s negative attribution to their reactions, some survivors became conditioned to internalize the victim label. They began to act and think as if they were still victims and to continue with their survival tactics such as black and white thinking, good
versus evil, and intolerance of their own neediness. Society's indifference and hostility continued the distress for survivors (Bergman, Martin, Jucovy, Milton, 1982, p. 10).

Society's devaluing the effects of the Holocaust is one factor in creating secondary trauma. Meichenbaum (1994) points out other factors that may contribute to long-term distress in survivors. There is the potential for secondary victimization and possible stigmatization. Meichenbaum (1994) points to the potential dangers of adopting a collective identity for both Holocaust victims and survivors of the atomic bomb in Japan (p. 20).

Meichenbaum believes that "it is not only the exposure to the traumatic events, but the narrative constructed (attributions) around the event that influences the adaptive processes. Such narratives can be transmitted cross-generationally and can lead to vicarious exposure in the offspring" (p. 20).

Behavioral theory, similar to the learned helplessness theory, does not take into account coping styles, personality, and makes many broad generalizations. In addition, the impact of trauma on survivors is not heeded, but only after effects. There is evidence that survivors needed support and acceptance to move on (Matsakis, 1992, p. 28). The theory does not take into account that PTSD may develop years later or in old age. Behavioral theory applied to Holocaust survivors also does not cover all the symptoms of PTSD in all its severity and variations. The theory does not explain why survivors had varying physiological and psychological reactions. Survivors are seen as powerless, yet some survivors suffered few symptoms or none at all. Long (1996, Personal communication) states that stress enhances group solidarity. Group solidarity is supportive in many ways (Yalom, 1985). This function is not taken into account.

Stress and Coping Theory

Lazarus (1996) offers a new theory on stress and coping. This theory has only recently been applied to research on Holocaust survivors and when applied, it has been focussed on pathology. The stress and coping theory views coping in terms of conscious decision making.

The stress and coping theory is a relatively new theory. Stress and coping refer to "a response that enables the individual to reduce physiological disruptions of homeostasis and
psychological negative affect caused by an environmentally imposed challenge" (Suedfeld et al., 1997, p. 156). Coping consists of a process called “primary appraisal in which one evaluates coping resources in order to address the question, What can I do?” (McAdams, 1990, p. 129), the secondary appraisal. After the appraisal process, coping strategies such as problem solving or emotion focused are employed. The coping process is defined by Folkman and Lazarus (1984) as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 141). Lazarus (1996) adds that coping includes an interaction of coping style and coping process; “The two approaches ask different but valid questions, process focussing on changes in coping over time and across transactions, style focussing on consistency in the person’s coping strategies” (p. 290). This emphasizes the individual and situational context of coping; it is a “contextualist assumption” (Lazarus, 1993, p. 235).

Appraisal is pivotal in the personal meaning and choice of coping strategy in a crisis situation. Lazarus (1993) states “An appraisal-centered approach to stress directs our attention not merely to environmental stressors but to how these stressors are construed by a person. I am confident that personal meanings are the most important aspect of psychological stress with which a person must cope and they direct the choice of coping strategy” (p. 244).

Coping tendencies may be influenced by “demographic characteristics, personality traits, and situational factors” (Suedfeld et al., 1997, p. 156). There is concern about the relative influence of each and how they may change. Monat & Lazarus (1991) maintain that “a process approach that studies particular coping behaviors and processes makes more allowance for situational factors either as main determinants, or — perhaps more realistically — as intervening variables that may overwhelm individual predispositions.”

Research is showing that gender plays a role in coping, with women using social support and self criticism more than men, who employ problem-solving more (Labouvie-Vief, Hakim-Larson, & Hobart, 1987). Developmental stages have been noted as being a factor
in coping behavior. Older people display more problem solving in controllable situations than younger ones, who rely on emotional focused coping in both controlled and uncontrolled situations (Folkman, 1991). But, Folkman (1991) points out that environmental stress and context may be more important than developmental factors.

The relationship among stress, appraised control, coping, and depressive mood was examined by Folkman et al. (1993) in 42 HIV+ and HIV — men. Involvement coping (such as problem solving) was evident when stress was perceived as controllable. Involvement coping resulted in a decrease in depressed mood. Detachment coping strategies and increased depression were evident in individuals who felt not in control. Their findings are consistent with research by Namir, Wolcott, Fawzy, and Alumbaugh (1987), and Nicholson and Long (1990).

The stress and coping literature has not focused on extreme, long-term stress. There is debate over the idea that stress and coping theories can be applied to severe stress. Perhaps there is a drastic change in coping in extreme trauma like the Holocaust. Suedfeld et al. (1997) point out the negative affective dimensions of major life events:

undesirability, event magnitude, or intensity, uncontrollability, and unpredictability (Thoits, 1983). Such situations of extreme stress disrupt all aspects of life, place the person in a life-threatening, temporally open ended, and incomprehensible environment, and severely restrict his or her ability to change or escape the situation (Kahana et al., 1988). There is a high level of perceived arbitrariness and unpredictability (Torrance, 1965) and the shattering of the assumptive world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992)” (cited in Suedfeld et al., 1997, p. 158). Perhaps in these extreme conditions, one’s usual coping capacities change.

Most investigations of stress and coping among Holocaust survivors have been on “pathogenic” (Antonovsky, 1979), effects (e.g., Dimsdale, 1974, cited in Suedfeld et al., 1997). Findings from these studies reveal six major categories of coping behaviors: “(1) various forms of compliance with the persecutors, (2) manipulation or outwitting of the system, (3) resistance, (4) altruistic behavior, (5) social affiliation, and (6) aggression” (Kahana et al., 1988, cited in Suedfeld et al., 1997, p. 158). Suedfeld et al. (1997) point out that they are all problem-oriented coping (p. 158).
Suedfeld et al. (1997) study applies stress and coping theory to survivors of the Holocaust, focusing on what was helpful. They use the process approach (Monat & Lazarus, 1991), "in which subjects are asked to reconstruct their memory of stressful situations and then provide information about what they felt, thought, and did in and about the problems they faced" (Suedfeld et al., 1997, p. 159). The quantitative study assessed survivors who were functioning well in the community to evaluate the factors that helped them cope in a time frame that included immediately before, during and after the Holocaust. Oral history tapes were analyzed in order to find how survivors coped with the problems that they experienced. Content analysis was performed on 30 videotaped autobiographical interviews of Holocaust survivors, comprised of 5 men and 5 women in each of 3 age groups (child, adolescent, or adult at the end of the Holocaust). The analysis included 13 coping categories and definitions. These were:

1. Confrontation — Effort to resolve situation through assertive or aggressive interaction with another person.
2. Distancing — Effort to detach oneself emotionally from the situation
3. Self-Control — Effort to regulate one’s own feelings or actions
4. Accept Responsibility — Acknowledging that one has a role in the problem
5. Escape/Avoidance — Efforts to escape or avoid the problem physically
6. Planful Problem-Solving — Deliberate (rational, cognitively-oriented) effort to change or escape the situation
7. Positive Reappraisal — Effort to see a positive meaning in the situation
8. Seeking Social support — Effort to obtain sympathy, help, information, or emotional support from another person or persons
9. Endurance/Obedience/Effort — Effort to persevere, survive, submit, comply with demands
10. Compartmentalization — Effort to encapsulate the problem psychologically so as to isolate it from other aspects of life
11. Denial — Ignoring the problem; not believing in its reality
12. Supernatural Protection — Attribution of survival to religious or superstitious practices; efforts to gain such protection (e.g., prayer)
13. Luck — Attribution of survival to good fortune

(Suedfeld et al., 1997, p. 174).

Suedfeld et al. (1997) found significant time period (pre Holocaust, Early, and Late Holocaust, post-Holocaust) differences in the appearance of 8 coping strategies; age differences in 2 strategies, and 2 significant age x time period interactions. Holocaust survivors
coped through the use of direct problem solving strategies. The investigators noted that the use in coping of religious faith, superstition, and luck also increased during the Holocaust. Seeking social support decreased temporarily during the Holocaust. Suedfeld et al. (1997) concluded that “differences in coping behavior are primarily influenced by situational factors rather than by age (Billings & Moos, 1981; Ilfeld, 1980; McCrae, 1982; Keefe & Williams, 1990; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980)” (p. 174).

There is controversy in the research literature over context and developmental influence. Suedfeld et al. (1997) surmised that “an overwhelming event such as the Holocaust can elicit broad similarity in changes of coping strategy over time. If we view the material as reconstructed personal myth (as opposed to historical truth), it appears that survivors tend to develop similar ways of viewing and understanding their reactions to the problems that they had faced” (1997, p. 174). Suedfeld et al. (1997) conclude that “These survivors, who have successfully transcended not only the Holocaust but the vicissitudes of post-war recovery, emigration, and the re-creation of their lives, see themselves primarily as problem-solvers. Although they accept that luck and (in some cases) supernatural protection had a role in their survival, they downplay purely emotional strategies of dealing with challenge and instead structure their stories around self-control, persistence, and above all, planful problem-solving” (p. 176).

The Suedfeld et al. study (1997) examined salutogenic characteristics as related specifically to the Holocaust period. This focus reflects a broadened perspective in psychology: a growing appreciation of characteristics that enable people successfully to overcome a wide variety of even very severe stressors. This school of thought, allied to social and health psychology rather than to clinical psychology, addresses both the kinds of coping behaviors exhibited and the personality characteristics positively related to coping: resilience, hardiness, optimism, self-efficacy, resourcefulness, and the like (Suedfeld, 1996, p. 169).

The study of Holocaust survivors may reveal one’s potential to overcome severe stress and become more skillful in adaptation.

Suedfeld’s et al. (1997) study focusses on successful copers from their earliest memories to the time of the interview — a life-span. The study is quantitative. Research has so far
Resiliency

Research on resiliency is a relatively new and growing field and if applied to Holocaust survivors may help provide a more comprehensive picture of coping in terms of severe trauma and successful aging. Resiliency research places an emphasis back onto personality. It includes the resources within an individual that allows one to cope successfully. The belief is that one can recover from trauma, and have the active flexible strategies to do it. Warschaw & Barlow (1995) maintain that flexibility, adaptation, support, guidance from others, independence of spirit, self awareness and positive reappraisal are what resilient people do.

Early childhood experience and personality traits foster resilience. These maybe important factors to identify when researching Holocaust survivors — did they have nurturing early home lives and what personality traits do they have? Werner (1989) found some protective factors to be “dispositional attributes of the individual such as activity level and sociability, at least average intelligence, competence in communication skills (language, reading), and an internal locus of control” (p. 80). Beardslee (1987) found that certain temperaments may be evident in the resilient (p. 266).

Luthar and Zigler (1991) reported higher levels of empathy and social problem solving among the resilient (p. 15). Werner (1990) suggests these factors may “have a more generalized effect on children’s adaptation than those of specific risk factors or stressful events” (p. 111).

Resiliency to life’s stressors, including severe stress, may be influenced by developmental factors. Holocaust survivor experiences range from those affected during childhood to adulthood. How one copes and how resilient one is may be affected as a result of developmental factors. Holocaust survivors have not been studied extensively in terms of developmental factors and resilience. For this reason, I examined the findings of Rae-Grant,
Thomas, Offord and Boyle (1989) in their quantitative study that looks at developmental stages affecting resiliency.

The study reveals the influence of various risk and protective factors on the presence of one or more behavioral or emotional disorders. Subjects included 3,294 children and adolescents between the ages of 4 and 16. Multivariate analyses showed that family problems and parental problems heightened the risk for disorder, whereas being a good student, getting along with others, and participation in activities reduced the risk of disorder. There were some interaction effects between various factors (p. 260).

The use of Rutter’s (1985) protective factors was included as: “those factors that modify, ameliorate or alter a person’s response to some environmental hazard that predisposes to a maladaptive outcome.” Developmental stage, temperament, and problem-solving ability are examples. Protective factors as viewed by Garmezy (1983) include: “1. positive personal dispositions; 2. a supportive family milieu; and 3. an external societal agency that functions as a support system for strengthening and reinforcing the child’s coping efforts.”

Developmental and context factors were included. Child factors include positive temperament (Rutter, 1985), above average intelligence (Rutter et al., 1970b), and social competence (Garmezy et al., 1984). Measures of social competence include academic achievement, participation, and competence in activities, as well as the ability to relate easily to others. Favorable family factors include supportive parents (at least one), family closeness and adequate rule setting. Community factors include the relationships that children develop outside the family with peers, significant other adults, and with the institutions with which they come in contact.

The Rae-Grant et al., (1989) study may shed light on factors of personality, homelife and developmental issues for Holocaust survivors and how they coped. But, there are limitations to the study. Results may be very different for children exposed to severe trauma. The study is important in that many subjects were involved and it examined developmental issues and resiliency.

Resiliency may also come about through having dealt with previous stress. Rutter (1985) refers to this as the “steeling experiences at earlier points in people’s lives.” Rutter found stress to work both positively and negatively. However, animal evidence indicates
that “Acute physical stressors lead to lasting neuroendocrine changes that are associated
with increased resistance to later stress” (Hennessy & Levine, 1979, cited in Rutter, 1993,
p. 629). Rutter goes on to state

we may suppose that steeling effects are more likely to arise when people have coped
successfully with stress experiences. For example, Elder et al., California studies (22)
of young people growing up during the Great Economic Depression, older children
who had to take on increased responsibilities and did so successfully tended to fare bet­
ter as a result whereas young children who were less able to cope with all that was
involved tended to suffer (p. 629).

Rutter (1987) suggests that this is ‘stress inoculation’ and that it fosters resiliency.
Werner maintains “Children who encounter stressful situations are able to successfully
negotiate their way through these events become more stress-resistant. These children are
more likely to seek out opportunities for growth in the future” (1990, p. 220). Rutter (1993)
maintains that “resilience may be fostered by steps that make it more likely that people
will feel in control of their lives and become effective in shaping what happens to them”
(p. 628). Masten and Coatsworth (1998) reviewed the research on competence and resilien­
cy in children and adolescents. They found “Converging evidence suggests that the same
powerful adaptive systems protect development in both favorable and unfavorable environ­
ments” (p. 205). They maintain that “Children who do well have adults who care for
them, brains that are developing normally, and, as they grow older, the ability to manage
their own attention, emotions, and behavior” (p. 215).

To be resilient, Rutter summarizes, is “to approach life’s challenges with a positive
frame of mind, a confidence that one can deal with the situation, and a repertioire of
approaches that are well adapted to one’s own personal style of doing things” (p. 630).
Holocaust survivors who had coped well over their lifetime may have a strong self con­
cept, positive outlook, and active problem solving abilities. These factors would appear in
the early part of life and throughout life. Table 2 summarizes the factors contributing to
resiliency.

**Resiliency and Reflection**

An important factor in resiliency, especially pertaining to older adults, is the ability to
The following table summarizes Masten & Coatsworth's (1998, p. 212) findings:

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td>Good intellectual functioning, Appealing, Sociable, Easy-going disposition, Self-efficacy, Self-confidence, High self-esteem, Talents, Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>Close relationship to caring parent figure, Authoritative parenting: warmth, structure, high expectations, Socioeconomic advantages, Connections to extended supportive family networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extr familial context</strong></td>
<td>Bonds to prosocial adults outside the family, Connections to prosocial organizations, Attending effective schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reflect on oneself and the context of one’s life. Through research on the life review method, the use of reflection as a coping strategy is being verified.

Beardslee (1987) found self-understanding to be a resilient factor. He defines self-understanding as, “an internal psychological process through which an individual makes causal connections between experiences in the world at large and inner feelings. The process of self-understanding leads to an explanatory and organizing framework for the individual. This organizing framework develops over time and eventually becomes stable part of the individual’s experience. Self-understanding requires not only the presence of thought and reflection about oneself and events, but also action congruent with such reflection. In mature self-understanding there is an emotional importance tied to the organizing framework that has evolved: the individual believes that self-knowledge is valuable, takes the process of self-understanding seriously, and devoted time and effort to it” (p. 266).

Self-understanding has many dimensions, such as appraisal of stressors — circumstances, self, and consequences of action. Part of self-understanding includes “A sense of identity and of continuity is necessary for an individual to be able to exercise this capacity” (Beardslee, 1990, p. 271). This combines with “a broad sense of control coupled with the capacity to recognize one’s limits” (p. 271). There is a developmental perspective in which understanding changes over time and a recognition of continuity in oneself and one’s actions. This leads to

Over time, all these individuals gradually came to find some certainty and predictability in their world and their sense of themselves, they were able to build on their past experiences to anticipate future experiences ... Their sense of themselves once established was not altered by subsequent negative events. Part of this was due to fundamental changes in confidence and self-esteem which allowed them to view the future with hope (p. 272).

A secure sense of identity fosters resiliency.

There is growth in cognitive capacity. One perceives the world in more complex terms and differentiated levels. Realistic action results. Beardslee (1987) summarizes by stating that there is a combining of “theoretical understanding and an action orientation” (p. 274). Self-understanding leads to resiliency through a combination of “perceptual, cognitive, and
affective responses ... total organizers of who they are and how they came to be” (p. 275). Beardslee does point out that “it may be that self-understanding is important in intense stressors and not ordinarily” (p. 276).

Research on life review is revealing that older adults who are successful copers use reflection. Wong (1995) defines life review as involving cognitive processes. These are a:

“Search for early memories:
Basically this is the process of confronting past traumas and unresolved conflicts in order to recognize the events and forces that have shaped one’s present condition.

Reconstruction of memories:
The past self does intrude into the present without distorting it. In restructuring one’s life history the mind actively seeks to fill in missing gaps and rearrange events so that life begins to make sense and take on personal significance.

Revisions of self schemas:
The revision of self schemas is the main part of working through the past. In this process, one has to revise existing schemas and beliefs in such a way that the negative sides of the past are integrated with the positive aspects.

Search for personal meaning:
This process includes searching for past experiences and acquired values that make life meaningful. In essence, the main functions of active life review is to achieve and protect ego integrity. An active life review includes processes that serve one’s need for coherence, meaning, identity, and self esteem and facilitate the struggle to be free from psychic pain and conflict” (p. 31).

Hagberg (1995) found “In general, a positive life history report also leads to a positive old age evaluation” (p. 70) which includes maintaining identity and increasing well being (p 70).

J.E. Birren and Deutschman (1991) reviewed the literature on human development and autobiography and found that there were a number of benefits, “obtaining personal fulfillment and integrating or making sense of a life as it has been lived; maintaining a sense of the continuity of the self, acceptance of one’s heritage, and the need to ‘connect’ with ancestors; reviewing confidence in one’s capacity to adapt; and increase understanding of one’s personal agenda, forming the basis for successful future choices.” (de Vries Birren &
Duetschman, 1990, p. 172). Cognitive functioning is also affected in the areas of “personality, spirituality and social, family and intergenerational interactions” (p. 172).

Reedy and Birren (1980) did a study that examined the effects of Guided Autobiography with 45 participants and found that participants showed greater self acceptance and personal integration (i.e. greater congruence of their real, ideal, and social selves), decreased anxiety and increased energy (i.e., a cathartic and antidepressant effect), and a change in their perceptions of other people after Guided Autobiography. In particular this latter finding suggests that Guided Autobiography may have an effect on one’s sense of social connectedness, willingness to interact with others, and willingness to disclose to others (p. 172).

Bearing witness as a coping strategy in old age would be a means of achieving some of these benefits.

Research is revealing that there are different kinds of reflection, and not all facilitate coping. Watt and Wong (1991) developed a taxonomy of six reminiscence types based on function; “integrative, instrumental, transmissive, narrative, escapist, and obsessive.” Watt and Wong (1991) found that certain types were more adaptive to successful aging using a critical incident approach for reminiscence for 71 elderly people. Integrative and instrumental reminiscence were used more. Integrative reminiscence focusses on constructive reappraisal of the past and instrumental on past problem-solving experiences and coping activities. These appear to be “associated with indices of psychological well-being and mental and physical health.” They state, “Instrumental reminiscence with its focus on the recall of successful problem-solving strategies used in the past can be applied to current problematic situations encourages individuals to use the active problem coping responses.”

Self-understanding and reflection have been studied as part of the life review process. This is proving to be an important factor in resiliency in old age. Resiliency is a factor that has not been studied extensively in Holocaust survivors. Leon et al. (1981) has conducted such a study. Well-functioning Holocaust survivors may be resilient and therefore use successful coping strategies. If this were the case, one may find that many of the well-functioning Holocaust survivors use reflection as a coping strategy emphasized in old age. Erikson’s stage of old age in which one tries to achieve integrity by looking back on earlier
stages of life would parallel the need for reflection in the mature years as a successful coping strategy.

**Research**

There has been much research on the long-term impact of the Holocaust on both survivors and their children (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 28). This has concentrated on the pathogenic reactions of survivors in mainly qualitative studies.

Controversy about research methods in this area continues. Kuck and Cox (1992) have conducted a study that revealed “46% of the total sample met criteria for PTSD some 50 years after the Holocaust” (p. 25). Other than this study, Falk et al. (1994) reviewed the literature on PTSD and Holocaust survivors and found that “the extensive remaining studies are primarily case demonstrations on selective clinical populations” (p. 34). Lomranz (1994) reviewed 110 articles on survivors. He noted that there were “extremely small samples and the majority were of clinical case studies.” He concluded that the “mere experience of the most extreme traumatic events does not necessarily result in a disorder” and that “transmission of trauma did not always occur” (cited in Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 18). Meichenbaum concludes that “clinical studies are often juxtaposed with methodological critiques. Adequate studies are few” (1994, p. 18).

Suedfeld (1996) summarizes the state of research to date:

- Domination by psychoanalytic or psychodynamic theoretical orientations; limited mainly to intrapsychic dimensions; lack of empirical data; based on extremely small samples and clinical case studies; disregard for the importance of sample selection procedures; patients as the main source of subjects; overinclusiveness and lack of specification of the exact nature of the trauma; lack of control groups; and a focus on deficiency, symptomatology, psychopathology (p. 171).

The combination of different kinds of methodology (quantitative and qualitative) would enhance research.

Measurement of coping has been difficult. For instance, Aldwin (1994) points out that in self-report data “it is impossible to determine whether an event was due primarily to environmental happenstance or an individual prior maladaptation” (p. 47). Self-report data are highly labor intensive and do not have many usable instruments for measurement.
Aldwin points out that "Assessing coping strategies presents unique challenges ... as no one scale attempts to measure all of the facets of coping" (1994, p. 107). She also points out that review of the literature on coping has only modest returns. Situation and personality play some part in coping but, she maintains "we are far from the goal of being able to identify the optimal way of coping for a given individual with a given problem, and we have few new interventions that make a major difference in people's lives" (Aldwin, 1994, p. 108).

The focus of coping has been on development and the individual, which has led to the neglect of environmental considerations. This has also led to the "difficulty in developing generalizeable measurement techniques" (Aldwin, 1994, p. 98).

Breiner (1996) points out that many researchers (Hoppe, 1965-55; Wangh, Chody, & Krystal, 1968) found that "therapists have had a variety of emotional reactions from denial to over identification which makes it difficult for them to effectively work with these problems" (p. 416).

Holocaust research literature, although plentiful, has major gaps. The psychoanalytic framework and idiographic methodology have dominated. Research participants have mainly been from a clinical population and the focus of studies has been on pathogenic reactions. The context of many studies has been for medical or legal purposes (German restitution).

Holocaust survivors are a heterogeneous group made up of people from different countries of origin with varying degrees of religious affiliation and Jewish identity, who experienced the Holocaust at different ages and in very different kinds of circumstances. They have coped in many different ways in the short-term and in the long-term. It has been difficult to make generalizations about the population in terms of their experience and coping. Examining how Jewish identity affected coping is even more difficult. Only recently have some Jews who hide their identity become known. Cornwall (1997) in her book "Letter from Vienna" describes one example. As an adult she discovered that her father was Jewish. Jews who denied their identity are only recently being studied as perhaps the cur-
rent "safe" environment and time allows for this exploration or disclosure. Wiszniewicz (1997) and Melchior (1997) presented papers on coping and hidden identity, indicating that this is a new area of research.

Survivors of the Holocaust provide excellent examples of how one copes with long-term stress and trauma. Through an analysis of stress, coping and resiliency among survivors, new information may provide important clues about how to help those affected before and those affected today. Preventive measures may be developed for both the short and long-term. Examining survivors’ coping in terms of how they maintained or did not maintain their Jewish identity as a support may provide new insights in coping and identity issues.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This section addresses the rationale for and description of research participants selection, interview procedures, data collection, and classification.

The methodology I chose attempted to understand the nature of successful coping of mature Holocaust survivors throughout their lives. It included examining how they coped with significant life challenges. The coping strategies instigated by the challenges were labeled critical events. I examined critical events through Flanagan’s (1954) Critical Incident Technique which was influenced by a phenomenological perspective (Valle & King, 1978, p. 14). This allowed participants to state a wide-range of coping processes that involved more than the critical incident and covered a lifetime.

Previous qualitative methodology concerning Holocaust survivors has not looked at differences in behaviours, coping strategies, characteristics of the survivor, or the influence of the pre-Holocaust home and cultural environment or that of identity issues. This methodology has not focussed on the coping strategies of adults ranging in ages from the late fifties to the mid-eighties. This research project examined how one perceives one's coping over a lifetime from the vantage point of an older adult who has experienced significantly stressful events such as the Holocaust, immigration, death in the family, career upsets and identity issues.

Critical Incident Technique

Flanagan’s (1954) Critical Incident Technique was chosen because it gives the researcher a means to study specific event-related behaviors of participants. In this study evaluation of stress and coping strategies associated with significant challenges was the aim or purpose. Critical incidents were defined as any event deemed significantly stressful and/or traumatic to the participants. The focus was on how one coped with significantly negative experiences. The reason for not exploring positive life experiences, which can also be stressful, is to better understand coping strategies of negative experiences for participants who had experienced the Holocaust. Coping strategies may be different for posi-
tive experiences. Participants were asked to relate their life narrative and then to describe significant stressful events and how they coped with them. The richness of a life narrative interview could be shaped and a rigorous validation could be implemented through an expanded Critical Incident Technique. One can determine coping through actions apart from “psychosocial truth” and still allow for an in-depth understanding of coping by offering a richness of detail.

The Critical Incident Technique was created to generate descriptive and qualitative data of a significant experience (Flanagan, 1954). It consists of a set of procedures for collecting information from research participants about their direct observations of their own behaviors. Incidents are critical in that the participants deemed them important and directly observed or experienced them. The Critical Incident Technique, as described by Flanagan, focusses exclusively on reporting facts regarding behavior, rather than reporting on the thoughts and feelings and the meaning of the experience as in this study. This approach has been expanded in order to “give participants the opportunity to talk freely about their experiences” (Borgen & Amundson, 1996, p. 31).

The Critical Incident Technique has been used to investigate a wide variety of topics that included: work motivation (Herzberg, Manseur, & Synderman (1959), group process, (Cohen & Smith, 1976), critical features of the quality of life of Americans (Flanagan, 1978), the experience of unemployment (Borgen & Amundson, 1984), theory development on emotions and cognitions in achievement-related contexts (Weiner, Russell, & Lerman, 1979), nurses’ perception of their psychological role in treating rehabilitation patients (Rimon, 1979), evaluation of the clinical practicum setting (Dachelet, Wemett, Garling, Craig-Kuhn, Kent, & Kitzman, 1981), helpful behaviors for assisting the widowed in bereavement (Easton, 1986), decision-making process after divorce (Proulx, 1991), facilitation of healing for the First Nations people of British Columbia (McCormick, 1994), and methods of coping with depression associated with HIV diagnosis (Alfonso, 1997).

**Expanded Critical Incident Procedure and Analysis**

According to Flanagan (1954), there are five steps in the critical incident procedure.
(1) determining aim of the critical event (purpose of study)
(2) setting plans and criteria for the information to be observed
   (thought, feeling, action, outcome)
(3) collecting data (interviews)
(4) analyzing the themes or categories induced from the data
(5) reporting the findings

The researcher defines the general aim or purpose of the critical incident. This aim needs to be extracted from authorities in the field - individuals who experience the general aim. Authority is defined as having observed or experienced an event (Flanagan, 1954). Objectives need to be clearly stated and agreed upon by participants. A plan must be developed with specifications for collecting factual incidents about the activity. Instructions need to be specific and respect the common standards used in evaluating and classifying the behavior observed. Collection of the data may be reported in an interview or written up by the observer himself/herself. Ishiyama (1997) suggests writing a detailed interview guide before starting the data collection. Stress is put on the objectivity and preciseness of the reporting of (a) who makes the observations, (b) which individual or activities will be observed, and (c) which specific experiences or behaviors will be investigated (Alfonso, 1997, p. 50). Cochran (1998) notes six basic parts of the interview as follows: (a) statement of aim; (b) recall of incident that facilitated aim; (c) criterion check; (d) what happened; (e) what led up to it; (f) why it was so helpful?

The Expanded Critical Incident Technique was developed to allow me to have an in-depth look at stress and of coping experiences among the Jewish Holocaust survivors. A rich meaning of the experience of coping after trauma was elicited, while still providing a framework that helped participants state the facts of the event in terms of thought, feeling, behavior and outcome. A second interview was a validation procedure and provided for additional information.

The expanded methodology involved establishing rapport before the interview and during the interview process. Rapport needs to be developed between the participant and the
researcher to build the trust necessary for a rich and in-depth interview.

Eleven participants were included in the lengthy interviews in order to provide an in-depth understanding of their experience - any less would have limited the findings and any more would have diminished the lengthy in-depth nature of the interview process.

**Extraction of the Incidents**

All interviews were audiotaped and number coded. Incidents were typed out in the words used by the research participants. Critical events were examined in the following manner:

(a) The research participant's account was stated — incident and thought, feeling, behavior, and outcome related to it.

(b) The event was identified.

(c) The outcome of the critical incident was related to the purpose of the study.

Critical events were divided into three parts: (a) the source — the narrator and the context of the event; (b) the action — which explains what happened and how; and (c) the outcome — which is the effect that followed the incident. Cochran (1998) has suggested that the researcher elaborate on: "What led up to it? What exactly happened? How did it turn out?" When all the incidents were extracted in this manner, the process of formulating thematic categories began.

**Forming the Categories**

The purpose of the study was to discover coping strategies of well-functioning Jewish Holocaust survivors. Categories resulted from this main aim.

Flanagan (1954) states that the categorization process is "more subjective than objective," and requires "insight, experience, and judgement" on the researcher's part (p. 344).

Categories were formed in terms of variations in coping strategies. Coping refers "to the person's cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage (reduce, minimize, master, or tolerate) the internal and external domains of the person-environment transaction that is appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources" (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986). Coping strategies are defined as "conscious and to involve specific think-

There are two general categories of coping strategies according to Lazarus, Folkman, and their colleagues: (a) problem-focussed and (b) emotion-focussed. Problem-focussed strategies involve direct alternation of the challenging environment. Emotion-focussed coping includes the regulation of negative feelings related to the challenging situation.

In the present study the data comprised the total number of critical incidents derived from two interviews. I had all interviews transcribed. I read the transcripts completely a few times before critical incidents (coping strategies) were extracted. The extracted critical incidents were rewritten on cards. Each card had the number of the participant on it, the page the incident was taken from, and the critical coping incident. Each coping incident was described in terms of thought, feeling, and behavior of coping as well as outcome.

Each transcript contained multiple themes. I sorted the themes until all the incidents from the transcripts fell under the same themes. Although all critical events were used, some initial themes were discarded as not having enough incidents and other themes were grouped together to form one theme. New themes developed in this manner. Cochran (1998) maintains the process of categorization involves consistent focus, use of paradigm cases, and progressive refinement until stabilization.

The thirteen categories proposed by Suedfeld et al. (1997) provided a framework for coping themes at the beginning of the process. These were eventually altered as there were not enough incidents in the emotion focussed strategies of (a) denial, (b) compartmentalization, and (c) distancing, to warrant these single categories. They were combined to form one category instead. Many new categories were developed from the original thirteen to a total of twenty-eight. Categories entitled flexibility, vigor, and intelligence had too few incidents for this study (i.e., flexibility, vigor). I noted these characteristics of the participants during the interview sessions, but participants did not state enough particular coping incidents that revealed such characteristics.
The process ended by a final reading of all the critical coping incidents in each category to ensure that they related to the same theme. Some incidents were put into different categories. Some incidents could belong to a few categories, but only one was chosen. The category chosen depended on the greater context from which it was taken. An example is a participant enjoying Hebrew dance. The incident could have been placed in the category ‘participating in enjoyable activities’ or under ‘Jewish identity.’ I chose the one that seemed to best represent the context from which it was taken. The choice was checked and supported by the research participants.

Validation Procedures

The validation procedures include: (a) independent rater — unbiased researcher trained to extract the incidents; (b) research participants cross-checking the critical incidents and categories; (c) exhaustiveness — saturation of categories; (d) participation rate — how many times participants used the categories; (e) expert rater; and (f) theoretical agreement according to research literature (a matching of themes). Cochran (1998) describes the validation procedures as: “reliability, comprehensiveness, presence of opposition, participation ratios, expert validation, category generation, comparison with previous research” (1998).

Anderson and Nilsson (1964) found that the critical incident method was valid and reliable (1964, p. 398) in research. They found that critical incidents were slightly affected by different interviewers. They also found that collecting data through questionnaires vs. interviews did not affect the structure of categorization to a notable extent.

The direct type of questioning concerning actions and the specific details called for in the answers (concreteness) enhanced validation. I sought consistency and comprehensiveness in the categories. Each category and every incident related by the participant under the category is read to the participant. New incidents are stated, eliminated or expanded at the time. Categories and labelling are refined in this process.

An interrater check is a reliability measure based on the percentage of agreement. In this procedure a proportional category is shown the rater for agreement. There is a random selection of incidents.
Exhaustiveness of categorization was revealed in the following manner. I held back ten percent of the critical incident cards. If no new categories emerged when these cards were finally sorted, the categories were seen as reasonably exhaustive.

Participation ratios consisted of the percentage of the number of participants in the study and how many reported events there were in any one category. This was calculated by adding the number of participants that used each category to the number of incidents. A percentage of participation was then reached. There needed to be a participation ratio of 50% of incidents reported in each category. According to Cochran (1998) and Flanagan (1954), the higher the participation rate the higher the level of validation of categorization. Categories are not considered valid if there were too few responses from participants in any one category. Frequency relates to the total number of critical incidents in a category. Participation rate is the percentage of participants in a specific category.

Commonality of experience is another cross-validation method suggested by Cochran (1998). It looks at many independent events experienced in terms of — thought, feeling, and action. "It reveals how broadly a category is supported by participants. It is examined in more detail because it is clear and plausible and the participant is firm to include it" (Cochran, 1998).

The categories were reviewed by asking experts in the field (counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists) if the categories were helpful and relevant for survivors in overcoming trauma and in successful coping.

Finally, there was a verification check to compare results with previous research to find if the results were reliable in the research literature. Flanagan (1954) proposed a method of validation through comparison with relevant literature. Before research would begin, a review of the literature reveals relevant themes. This could provide a means of checking construct validity and for the possibility of discrepancies. After the results were completed, a review of the research literature was made to seek agreement/disagreement with the results. Categories were clustered together to compare to relevant literature.
**Description of Research Participants**

To recruit research participants I placed a poster at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center in Vancouver, B.C. I contacted the director of the Outreach Program and she phoned potential participants to ask if they would like to volunteer. Participants needed to: (a) be Jewish, (b) have experienced the Holocaust, (c) be well-functioning, and (d) be able to articulate the experience. Such criteria were necessary in order to understand Jewish identity issues and, after having had experience of a severe trauma, were successfully able to function afterwards. Volunteers needed to be able to articulate the experience because the research relied on their interpretation of the experience. Ten of the eleven participants had interview experience related to the Holocaust.

I conducted interviews and audiotaped with participant’s consent. Survivors included; those who were children at the end of W.W.II (born between 1933 and 1940), adolescents (born 1925-32), or adults (born 1924 or earlier) (Suedfeld, 1997, p. 162). The first eleven volunteers were chosen and included different ages, gender, and countries of origin. Background of research participants included the experience of concentration camp, emigration, in hiding, among resistance fighters, and under false identities.

Table 3 summarizes participant’s country of origin, birthdate, gender, marital status, experience during the war, and religious orientation of self and partner to provide an overview of the different experiences of the participants.

**The Interview Context**

The context was “one of recording the truths of the Holocaust, mostly for the education of future generations” (Suedfeld, 1996, p. 155) and as a means of “bearing witness.” The narrative included before, during, and after the Holocaust to the present.

The restrictive context of the research interview has changed. As Suedfeld et al. (1997) pointed out, interviews may take place in a “relatively neutral context” where “one is recording the truths of the Holocaust, mostly for the education of future generations” (p.154). Generally speaking, many non-clinical survivors (those who did not seek psychiatric help) are coming forward for interviews. Holocaust archives include hundreds to
### Table 3

#### Demographic Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Birthdate</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Experience during war</th>
<th>Religious Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>ghetto, in hiding,</td>
<td>Liberal Jew —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>false identity</td>
<td>married Jew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poland/Austria</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>concentration camp</td>
<td>Conservative Jew —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>married Jew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>emigrated during the</td>
<td>Reformed Jew —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>war</td>
<td>married Jew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ghetto, labour camp</td>
<td>Orthodox to Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jew — married Jew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>emigrated after the</td>
<td>Orthodox to Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>war</td>
<td>Jew — married Jew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>in hiding</td>
<td>Not religious —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>married non-Jew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>concentration camp,</td>
<td>Liberal Jew —</td>
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<td>emigrated during war</td>
<td>married non-Jew</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>in hiding</td>
<td>Liberal Jew —</td>
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<td>married non-Jew</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>ghetto, in hiding</td>
<td>Liberal traditional</td>
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<td>Jew — married Jew</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>concentration camp</td>
<td>Conservative Jew —</td>
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<td>married Jew</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>in hiding</td>
<td>Secular Jew —</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>married non-Jew</td>
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thousands of recordings including: Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yale University, individual institutes in other cities in North America and Europe, Steven Spielberg’s Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, videotape archives of the Vancouver Holocaust Documentation Project under the direction of Dr. Robert Krell, etc., (Suedfeld et al., 1997, p.173).

There has been an increase of interest in Holocaust survivors, perhaps due to the fiftieth anniversary of Liberation. Survivors are coming forward with their stories, “resulting in a sample that is probably quite representative of those Holocaust survivors who are functioning adequately in Canadian society” (Suedfeld et al., 1997, p. 154). The survivors were chosen as being well-functioning. All participants were part of the Outreach Educational Program; an educational anti-racist program created through the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center and were involved with many volunteer activities.

There are two major conceptual frameworks in recall and reconstruction in narratives, as Suedfeld (1996) has pointed out. Recollections may be regarded as essentially accurate or as representing the “personal myth” of the individual and have proven to be both reliable and valid (Suedfeld, 1996, p. 159). Suedfeld points out that

Previous research has also shown that the scoring of autobiographical memories from a variety of psychological constructs is valid as compared to standard psychometric instruments measuring the same constructs, and life themes assessed from autobiographical narratives match closely with the judgment of knowledgeable significant others (Howard et al., 1992). Childhood memories (Ross, 1991) and in particular Holocaust experiences (Wagenaar & Groeneweg, 1990) are well remembered. (Suedfeld, 1996, p. 159).

Recollections may be seen as “personal myths.” A personal myth refers to a coherent, integrated life story that has “psychosocial truth” (McAdams, 1993, p.12). This can be compared to historical or factual truth. The methodology I chose was able to examine this difference as it looked at actual behaviors as well as the research participant’s “psychosocial truth.” A retrospective study is advantageous in that it offers a perspective that is “reflective of what was and was not important” (Cochran, 1998).
The Interview Procedure

Two audiotaped interviews were conducted per participant. There was an orientation at the beginning by the researcher as follows:

"Hello, X. The purpose of this study is to discover how you have coped over your lifetime with particular reference to the Holocaust experience. My goal is to identify the thoughts, feelings, and actions of Jewish Holocaust Survivors as they dealt with critical incidents in their life. My hope is that it will help other survivors, going through severe trauma, learn the personal strategies that were successful in coping. Thank you for your willing participation."

Participants were given time to discuss the nature of the study with the interviewer and ask questions to clarify issues such as my interest in the subject. A consent form was presented explaining the purpose of the study, the type of questions to be asked, confidentiality, and the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The research participant signed the consent form when an understanding was reached. The major part of the first interview consisted of the narrative of critical events that were the aim of the study. Each interview took between three and five hours. The following questions were asked:

1. What were crisis times in your life (events that were extremely challenging)?
2. What happened and what did you do?
3. To what would you attribute your coping?

They also received the following instructions: (a) There will be a second interview in which any information left out in the first interview may be given; (b) Categories will also be checked to ensure further validation.

A second interview was required in order to enhance validation. At the beginning of the second interview, the researcher stated as follows:

"Hello, X. The purpose of the second interview is to check the categories I have defined and find out if there are any more helpful critical incidents that were left out of the first interview. We will go over each recorded incident. I will read them to you, please tell me if you agree with the category under which they have been classified. Please feel free..."
to add to or delete categories. After we have verified each incident, time will be allowed to add any further information concerning coping. Do you have any questions?"

Further questions were prepared if necessary to help participants elaborate on the experience. These were:

1. What were crisis times in your life?
2. What happened and what did you do?
3. What do you attribute your coping to?
4. What helped?
5. How important was this incident at the time?
6. What made this incident so helpful?
7. How did you know that it was so helpful?
8. What was the outcome of what you did?
9. What was meaningful about this incident?
10. What did you learn about yourself from it?
11. Was this incident so challenging that it changed your attitude towards other things — Jewish identity, values, religion?
12. Has your coping style changed over your lifetime? How?
13. What would others say about your ability to cope?
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Coping strategies of the eleven adult men and women were identified through an exami-
nation of transcripts of extensive interviews and an extraction of themes. Each participant
was interviewed between five to ten hours. The nature of coping strategies over a lifetime
was elicited. This chapter will present the categories, subcategories and examples from
each, followed by a summary, a life narrative and validation procedures.

Part 1: Description of Categories

The 1,416 incidents of coping strategies were identified, and 23 categories and sub-
sumed subcategories were developed. Incidents could have been coded in more than one
category, but only one category was chosen, depending on the context of the incident
taken. I described each of these categories and subcategories in detail with examples for
illustration given. Examples of statements derived from the second interview are included
and labeled as such. The categories are given in order of frequency from most to least fre-
quent. Examples under each category are in numerical order; each participant’s name was
changed to a number. The numbers given to the participants were in the order that the
interviews were taken.

Table 4 contains a list of all categories and the frequencies with which they were used.

Category 1: Seeking Social Support

Having had a loving, stable, original, family life was foundational to a feeling that
needs are met through others and to recreate a world of love and security connected with
others. Family, friends, or others in some manner provided support. There was a sense that
emotional needs were provided for through the support of others, and through this a mean-
ingful and purposeful life was achieved. Suedfeld et al. (1997) described the strategy as
“Effort to obtain sympathy, help, information, or emotional support from another person or
persons” (p. 163). Examples of social support include: through family life, through the
direct actions of saving the participants during the war, or helping establish life after the
war, through love and marriage and the creation of a family, through marriage partners,
Table 4
List of Categories and Respective Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Seeking Social Support</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reflecting</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Positive Reappraising</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emulating</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jewish identity</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Helping others</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Enduring hardship</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Participating in enjoyable activities</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Accepting reality</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Planful problem solving</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Bearing witness</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Affective self-controlling</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Planful escaping/life threatened</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Distancing</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Initiating action</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Believing in lucky fate</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Belonging</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Understanding context</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Being responsible/accountable</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Confronting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Believing in value of education</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Hope in Israel</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Believing in the supernatural</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Participants: 11
Total: 1,416 Critical Incidents

*100% means all 11 participants listed items under a respective category.
parents and grandparents — finding fulfillment and purpose in having one another, through having friends that one can relate to, socially or to talk through similar painful experiences with, and for a sense of belonging to family, friends, and to the Jewish people in general.

**Examples.**

Participant 1 — Assisting in escape during the Holocaust (during the war)

*My father arranged for me to escape.*

Participant 2 — Strength through connecting with family (before, during and after the war)

*I wasn't alone. I wasn't alone. I never had to care all by myself. I can't say I did it all alone because I had all this family, always. From early childhood on as far as I remember, that my family helped.*

Participant 3 — Through marrying (during and after the war)

*I told my children about my story, about how we (husband and wife) had each other. We were never lonely because we always had each other. I never was without somebody who took care of me all my life.*

Participant 3 — Through having children (after the war)

*I had so much fun with them (children) when they were little. I enjoyed them so much. I would always say I don't care what they became. I will always remember them — that I enjoyed them when they were little.*

Participant 4 — In having memories (after the war)

*We were a very happy family, not rich, poor. ... We were a very close family. I got one brother, three sisters, a mother, a father and lots of relatives. Every Saturday they (family) came together — maybe twenty to thirty people to my grandmother.*
Participant 4 — Supporting in survival (during the war)

You stick to each other especially in that war time — all the people were helping each other.

Participant 5 — In grief seeking the support of others (after the war)

I was more aware of what you can and what you cannot do. Not totally knowledgeable, but more aware. I knew I could be in court (concerning daughter being killed by drunk driver). I went with a friend of my daughters. They were rear ended and she was killed instantly. When we finished we went to the coffee shop. I called my husband and I told him where I was. He closed the store and came. It is painful to see the indifference. My daughter wasn't ever mentioned there; like she didn't exist.

Participant 5 — In grief wanting to support others (after the war)

With MADD it was eight months into my grieving time. I was suicidal at that time. I had no purpose — no meaning to my life. At one point when I was close to the end I couldn't think of leaving my husband or my son with another tragedy.

Participant 6 — Sharing a common bond of grief (after the war)

We (child survivor group) have a lot in common. In the group of hidden children; more than half of it are in the same situation I am in.

Participant 6 — Socializing (after the war)

My wife and I have six couples who've been friends for thirty year. We do a lot together. I am a social person.

Participant 7 — Surviving in a concentration camp (during the war)

He saved me a lot of times from physical abuse. He knew how to.
Participant 7 — Beginning life in a new country and feeling accepted (after the war)

I went to the YMCA. It was a very good counsellor there who got me involved in social education, gave me jobs; was arranging things. Saturday night dances. Then I started to feel more accepted.

Participant 8 — Enhancing self-esteem (after the war)

I really didn’t have a good self-image. I thought people looked at me as failure because I was getting on. I was 28-29. I lived with my parents, for a short period with my son. Then I met my present wife. She took us on.

Participant 8 — Enhancing self-esteem and achievement (after the war)

People were drawn to me; approached me to do more. They believed more in my ability than me. They asked me to be President of the College. I didn’t want to say no. I learned a lot. It was a wonderful experience.

Participant 8 — Finding emotional support during illness (after the war)

I have just been diagnosed with cancer. I get a lot of support from my family and friends. I need it.

Participant 9 — Sharing (after the war)

She (mother) never found what I was looking for which was people, friends who would share things with her. I tried so very hard to do that. I have already made a few friends in Montreal and now I’m about to leave them and go to Regina — I met some other friends. I met so many little pockets of friends. I have kept them till this day. More than people, they don’t understand how I do that or why. I think I do it because they are like family from a special area in my life. I have always felt a sense of yearning — like my life has holes and I need to fill it. I keep looking for anchors in my life. I have actually gone out personally and found these people.
Participant 9 — Finding a structured, secure life through family (after the war)

*I have been married for 40 years and have three children and five grandchildren. I spend a lot of time with my family. I do a lot of stuff there with my family; twice a week we get together — Friday night dinner and Sunday night dinner.*

Participant 10 — Caring and being protected by others (during the war)

*I was in the barracks with my friends and they looked after me because I was the youngest.*

Participant 10 — Protecting during the camp (during the war)

*So she liked me, for what reason I don't know (Nazi guard). She was good to me (in the barracks). She wasn't a good woman. She was hitting people. She was slapping. She was kicking. She was very aggressive. She was going to lunch in the canteen. She came back and like I said I had a desk with drawers. She put her sandwich in the drawer for me and she passed by me and she said 'L.' Very often she brought me a sandwich.*

Participant 10 — In the attempt to get back home seeking support (after the war)

*There was a group of five of us. We stuck together. We are hungry for family. We didn't have any. Besides this aunt and uncle I had two uncles.*

Participant 11 — In forming an identity (before the war)

*... a lot better when I went to the M school. I was much happier at school than at home. I had more of a sense of identity and acceptance. They were the most loving people that you could imagine. My identity was affected; my personal identity.*

Participant 11 — For love in hiding (during the war)

*When I was with these people — on a goat farm there was this boy who I was crazy*
about. We were crazy about each other. We went rowing together. I think for the first time, I think I really fell in love with this kid.

Category 2: Reflecting

Reflection involved the need, ability, and curiosity to think about self, others, and situations in the past and the present. It involved perspective taking, analogous thinking, and finding reflection purposeful. There was a fluidness of thought, an openness and curiosity to other perspectives. It involved taking the time to reflect. There was an ability to tolerate pain and anxiety and thereby overcome denial. It involved the acceptance of reality with the thoughts and feelings that were aroused from this. There was a willingness to learn and an acceptance of responsibility in making appropriate changes. There was the ability to change, either thought or action, to make the best of what is or has been.

Reflection involved self-understanding and understanding of the context. There was power through the knowledge and awareness of reflection. It helped create an internal locus of control. There was an emphasis on positive reappraising and being proactive. Reflection helped participants find meaning in their lives, especially over a lifetime. Reflection was the process of finding a deeper meaning and purpose in life and a means of integrating identity.

Examples.

Participant 1 — Attempting to understand the situation (during the war)

*In the village I remember watching the ghetto burning and some of the peasants would come out and say ‘Oh, the Jews are frying’ you know, this kind of thing and I remember feeling horrible. At that point I felt I was on the (Jewish ) side. I realized these people were evil because it didn’t matter what we were in my mind. I was a big reader ... I was serious and knew anybody who could say that had to be evil because you don’t want anybody to, what do you mean, frying. Why should anybody laugh or make fun of people who are suffering? So I realized that there was an injustice being done to Jews.*
Participant 1 — Reassessing negative labeling (after the war)

... they treated me as a failure (in Canada) not as an immigrant who didn't know English ... there was no ESL and no help for immigrants. So my mother kept on going with me to the principal and talking about me as if I were a miserable student failure. No one understood that I had no arithmetic; that I did not know English, that I could not understand what was said in class. I was treated like a village idiot — literally. Not like someone who can't cope because she doesn't have the skills.

Participant 1 — Using analogy to try to understand the Holocaust (after the war)

... there’s a little story written by Antione De Super. It’s out of a book called Mozart’s assassination. De Super talks about being on a train full of Polish workers who were transported to a place in France to work very hard for their pennies and they were lifeless. They were so worked out that they were completely resigned and tired and had no life in them. And among these people he sees a child, a beautiful child sitting there with a couple ... and he’s comparing the heart and vivacity of the child and his potential. What if it were a Mozart? What if this kid was talented or great? Could these people in their situation and with what they could offer him help him recognize ... realize himself because they are poor, tired, no means to educate themselves ... to think that this child should go to school to learn or whatever. So he will just grow in the village beside them and become like them and then his potential would be assassinated. And that's my analogy to what happened to us (the Jews).

Participant 1 — Attempting to understand one’s personal struggle (after the war)

I think I would have become a great writer because I would have ... I may not have had the experience but I would have had the language and the skills with which to express myself which I have always had — come very hard for me in English. ... I think what I would have had would have been learning in how to be in society, in relationships. This was all wild ... eruption. This was misplaced and I didn't get a
chance to go at a normal pace...at my own pace and to fit myself into somewhere where I feel I belong. To find my own life, my own friends, my own kind of existence. I was always pushed from one place to another because we were so unsettled and I did things because of things so I didn't have a chance to normally grow up. Everything was finished and pushed and compressed and strangled and somewhere along the way my expression got strangled.

Participant 1 — Using metaphor to describe the frustration of language acquisition (after the war)

...a stunted oak because language develops. There's one thing that this experience which I had, I experienced in another language; and then the end of that experience, the thing stopped somewhere, so the thing doesn't grow, that got stuck in that and here, translating it has never worked.

Participant 1 — Analyzing and making sense of one's life (after the war)

I think my whole life is based on it (Holocaust) so it's been a source of how I see life, how I see the world. How I see a lot of evil...I became a philosopher...in that I analyze things. In a way it was bad but in another way it helped me. I tried to analyze things a lot to understand them and I question the meaning of life a lot and the meaning of things. So I want to make sure that everything I do has meaning and when I do things that have no meaning I become frustrated...I search for deeper meaning. I go beyond the surface and my life is a life of contemplation. It's not a life of just doing and running and sweeping things under the carpet. So that is what I think I got out of the experience...that's one side...the other side is that it left me cynical in a sense. I do believe that things could be better, but I see Nazism and Hitlerism embedded in so many things and people.
Participant 1 — Willingness to learn about oneself (after the war)

I'll give the interview because I always learn something more about myself. It helps.

Participant 2 — Using metaphor (after the war)

I was so hungry to live, just as I was hungry to eat a piece of bread, the same hunger.

Participant 3 — Reviewing memories and making sense of what one thought (after the war)

On the 1st of Sept. the war did break out. The Polish government had started to prepare the people when they heard a siren to hide. We didn't have a shelter, but we had a cellar in the apartment blocks. They were terrible cellars, dark, and the air musty. They were just ordinary cellars and many people had lived in these cellars. So the government tried to prepare the people. They told us to buy black paper to cover the windows. Everyone was afraid of gas war. Not enough masks to go around, so they buy cheese cloth. Get a few layers of cheese cloth and put some tape on it and put it on your nose. Have that prepared just in case. I wasn't so worried. I wasn't so afraid. When a person is young they have a completely different outlook; it's more adventurous. There was so much excitement. It was like playing. We didn't understand.

Participant 3 — Perspective taking (after the war)

... So then we had to get out of the country and we didn't have much money. Many people like to listen to my story, but I didn't it so ... like nothing when I hear about what people went through in the camp. Ours was just nothing. I never suffered. Maybe discomforts, but I wouldn't say we were so bad. What people went through ... it puts mine in perspective for me. And I admire those people and respect them.
Participant 3 — Understanding the context (after the war)

*If you know the history of Poland. It's a very violent history because Poland was only independent after W.W.II.*

Participant 3 Second interview — Understanding how people survived (after the war)

*People came from different countries and backgrounds. They learned to survive. They were mentally and physically strong. Those from the shtetl were poor and used to hard life and so could survive in the camps. Those who had money got out before — they had vision. I survived because I had no material things. It was easy to leave. Material things killed people. My father did not listen and leave because he could not leave everything. It was impossible.*

Participant 3 Second interview — Perspective taking (after the war)

*I was devastated when my daughter divorced. It was a terrific blow to me — that is my pride. But what happened to my daughter and her children was worse. I had to stop thinking of myself and think of them.*

Participant 3 Second interview — Comparing oneself before the Holocaust and after (after the war)

*I had a very shallow life. I never thought of problems only about friends. I didn’t belong or anything. I am a better person now than I was. I am aware and care about the world. It is not only me.*

Participant 5 — Needing to have a purpose in tragedy and finding one (after the war)

*I had no purpose in life (daughter died) ... so if I am going to live. I need something in my life. Another lady had lost her son. She brought some literature from the States of MADD. I was listening constantly to her ... the two of us co-founded and signed*
the associates and brought it to Victoria and we cofounded MADD there. Tragedy
does a lot to your life. Changes.

Participant 5 — Understanding self (after the war)

My parents never got involved like I do. I didn’t learn to be involved from them. I just
needed more stimulation in my life.

Participant 5 — Accepting feelings (after the war)

If I had a bad day I let it be bad. I feel I am entitled to have a bad day. I don’t have
to answer to anyone. If I have a bad day, I know I will also have a good day. In the
beginning I didn’t think that was possible. I'll never laugh again. I will never enjoy
again.

Participant 5 — Learning to focus on what is helpful (after the war)

I was told to hear the laughter. The things that give you strength. Lots of losses in
our family. Sometimes loss give you strengths and values. My values changed. They
change when we lose something so precious. All the material things don’t count.
Trivial things don’t count. Even my friends which I still adore, when they start talking
about things they are so petty and so trivial that it is boring. It’s not them, it’s me.

Participant 5 Second interview — Understanding how one is affected by different phases
in life (after the war)

Thinking of me now and what happened after the first. We put all our mental and
physical energy into work and the family — rebuilding in a new country. Now that I
am settled — retired, I reflect back on family traditions, have memories. This is help­ful and sad.
Participant 5 — Second interview — Open to experiencing (after the war)

You learn from life and what it brings. Ten years ago I did not have the awareness. Today in the world I am more open. I have taken part in Holocaust exhibits, speakers, music. I have more exposure therefore I cope better. It is easier. The more I talk about it the easier it is.

Participant 6 — Understanding the why of one’s feelings (after the war)

The funny thing about my Mom (his aunt) ... I loved her very much, but there was always something missing. I didn’t really belong. I couldn’t hurt her because she did everything. And she reminded me of that. But there was something missing. There is a different love that some will have for an aunt or uncle rather than a mother or father. No matter how much I loved her and how much she did for me. I’m not ungrateful, but she was not my mother (parents killed during Holocaust, brought up by aunt and uncle).

Participant 6 — Understanding others (after the war)

Later on when I look back at my family life, I realize that all the yelling and fighting had to do with my parent’s experience in the concentration camp. I know why they were that way.

Participant 6 — Understanding self in relation to other (after the war)

My father never really bonded with me until his deathbed. Because he was so weak, he let go and allowed me to help. How sad. Look at him. I thought that I wanted to do things differently with my son. I would not be ashamed to say I love you. Dad was uncomfortable to be close. I see it as natural. When I was growing up it was very different than how it is for my son.
Participant 6 Second interview — Knowing oneself (after the war)

*I need to understand things. This really helps in my work. I like to take complicated things and make them simple.*

Participant 7 — Understanding how one survived (after the war)

*We tried to cheer them up (in camp). They said how can you be cheerful? I cannot understand. Have you no feelings? It was us, on the positive side, who would be benefiting from the black humor. I'm sure it was one item that kept my mind sane; not too depressed.*

Participant 7 — Understanding one's needs (after the war)

*When I first came (to Canada) if you look at the change — that I wanted to retreat in a hole ... be left alone and have peace ... after all the experiences I had. I just wanted a quiet life and be happy, satisfied with it.*

Participant 7 — Finding meaning in the suffering (after the war)

*Having overcome (education) — climb the mountain, some make it and some don't. Bad as it was. It was just awful. I don't wish it on anybody. Sometimes I wonder if that does help me to sweeten the present time because I know one side and know the other.*

Participant 7 — Realizing the changing nature of feelings (after the war)

*I'm suffering more now than I did two to fifteen years ago. There was a period when it was much better.*

Participant 7 — Understanding one's needs (after the war)

*I will always stay in my house as it provides the security and safety I need and a memory of a happy childhood. The furniture was brought over from Germany. I was born with it and grew up with it.*
Participant 7 Second interview — Reflecting on past experiences (after the war)

*Looking back I feel proud that I carried myself with dignity which was particularly difficult when they wanted to degrade you at every turn.*

Participant 7 Second interview — Using comparison to feel better (after the war)

*I wrote a diary about my experience in the camp and in the preamble to myself in life situations arise where one easily says I would do all sorts of things — promises if I only get out of this predicament. Later you forget about the intentions to myself. In order not to forget I wrote this diary. Later in life, if the situation is really bad, I think of that time and so just compare it to that time and realize it is not so bad.*

Participant 7 Second interview — Finding openness (after the war)

*I never wanted to do an interview of my life. I enjoy talking but I have a problem with memories which have subsided. Talking brings it back like yesterday. It is very personal. It takes about a week to get over those feelings that come up (only started talking about the Holocaust 3 years ago).*

Participant 7 — Reviewing and positively concluding (after the war)

*I am now 81 and looking back at the end, it was quite successful. I am quite pleased, in a way proud, in what, in the end, has materialized.*

Participant 8 — Realizing why the Holocaust was harder to understand (after the war)

*If at least you know that these things had happened before and you had a Jewish identity. I didn’t.*

Participant 8 — Realizing how the impact of the Holocaust still exists (after the war)

*It was difficult to adjust to the fact that danger wasn’t there anymore. One of the*
things that has haunted me, I think it comes from my experiences, is I can easily experience the feelings of abandonment, even today.

Participant 8 — Understanding self (after the war)

(divorce) I felt failure, disappointment and abandonment. She wasn’t Jewish, nor is my wife today. I had very few relationships with Jewish women. I was usually out of the Jewish community. I’ve known Jewish women, but for some reason, it wasn’t meant to be. That was really a bad episode which really reinforced — for a long time I felt like a failure. It has a lot to do with not having roots here or there. Not having a certain foundation and childhood maybe was critical.

Participant 8 Second interview — Reviewing life (after the war)

I led a sheltered life before the Holocaust. I was well-adjusted and accepted. What has happened to me in my life and how I coped reveals I am resilient. I am stubborn. You cope because you have to. I will continue to cope (diagnosed with cancer).

Participant 8 — Working at understanding self even when difficult (after the war)

Interviews help me deal with issues, although they make me relive the past and that is not easy.

Participant 9 — Finding theme in life (after the war)

I think my major emotion in life has been sadness, not fear. Sadness or anger ... I was sad. It happened. I wasn’t old enough to get the anger out. I feel that there are so many bad things that happened to us unnecessarily.

Participant 9 — Realizing the impact of Holocaust in later life (after the war)

I think the trauma of being given away into hiding, so much stronger than I imagined it is. Over time, one of my children turned four (age when her sister, whom she was
responsible for, died) that is when I started thinking about God. That God would come and strike them down because T (sister) was dead and when my grandchildren turned four I thought that something would happen to pay me back. There is always this thing. You know it's not there, but at the same time, it's got to be something.

Participant 9 — Realizing changes over a lifetime (after the war)

The only time I remember praying to God was when I took off my clothes and prayed (for sister to return alive) and then I stopped doing that (she died). Later, on, now in life, I start thinking of that more.

Participant 9 — Seeking where resilience came from (after the war)

I think if I hadn't had the first five years as a very good solid caring family around me. They must have given me a really good sense of myself or strength. I wouldn't have been able to survive what happened later in a positive way.

Participant 9 — Needing to find a purpose in illness (after the war)

(Cancer) made me think that I'm not to live forever and that I should figure out what I want to do.

Participant 10 — Trying to understand God (after the war)

Believers, Orthodox people, which was 99% of Jews where I came from in Poland; we were very Orthodox and believed that God will help. I don't know, I question it. I think He let us down. We believed in Him. But I am sure the Nazis believed in God too. So he didn't let them down because they were the aggressors and everything was going well for them.

Participant 10 — Questioning assumptions (after the war)

I felt God had let us down. We were hoping for something. They used to say that
Jews were the chosen people of God. Well the way I see it now, what were we chosen for? To suffer like this? To lose whole family? Some people are maybe still believers, but if you lose your whole family, you are bothered. I am the only one survivor in my family of four kids and the extended family. We had aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents. Everybody is gone.

Participant 11 — Finding perspective (after the war)

I didn't see the bigger picture. I realized what was going on, but I didn't fully.

Participant 11 — Analyzing parent's background and its influence on decision making (after the war)

The big discussion between my parents and family was should we go and hide. They said don't do it because if you get caught then they put you in the punishment barracks and then you have had it. If you stay then maybe we have a chance. Maybe we have to work hard. Don't do it. My father was hesitating at that point, having been brought up in Germany, he tended to be more law abiding. The Dutch (mother was Dutch) tend to be a little bit more rebellious in that sense... my mother said we are not going to be locked away like little sheep. We are hiding. She won.

Participant 11 Second interview — Understanding why one is the way one is (after the war)

I am very introspective. Sitting in the attic in hiding, I turned inside and reflected. I was a dreamer.

Participant 11 — Needing to know and put into a context (after the war)

So it felt good (to remember sexual abuse incident) because not being able to put my finger on any kind of trauma is much worse than knowing. It was an 'ah-ha' feeling.
I didn’t understand. It’s only in recent years that I understand (sexual abuse). We were sitting ducks for abuse.

Participant 11 — Needing to make sense (after the war)

My motive was primarily to understand why the world is the way it is and why people are the way they are. I wanted to introduce meaning in my life.

Participant 11 — Reflecting on life and changes (after the war)

If I think about it now, I have not been coming into my own until after they (parents) passed away.

Participant 11 — Comparing (after the war)

I feel a little bit ashamed about having PTSD. When, if I compare myself to some of these people, I really should not. What have I? If I compare myself with some of the others. I really am so much better off than they are.

Participant 11 Second interview — Openness to examining and discussing self and learning from it (after the war)

Interviewed two times and radio twice, CBC, video at UBC. I have many insights now. It is different every time. I learn about me. I am always interested in finding out about things. I am in a constant search for self-development and improvement which puts me out of my negative self-concept. It is a search for a better life. I am in a constant search of who I am; a constant search for self-definition.

Category 3: Positive Reappraising

Positive reappraising involved taking negative experiences and reassessing them in a positive light. Situations were viewed positively. Meaning was found in the destruction of the Holocaust or other negative experiences. Examples of this process included: some aspect of a situation was emphasized in order to find good, the next phase was looked upon
with relief, a comparison was made with situations or others who experienced more suffering, or meaning was extracted through the pain and suffering making the individuals in some way better people. In being better people they could help themselves more astutely or help others and society in general. This involved: viewing being alive as a positive thing, finding good in others or good in self (having had a good family, having a sense of humor, being able to find a positive aspect to being different, having the strength to overcome, in the ability to help others, or through bearing witness), finding emigration and Canada an opportunity, strength in knowing what was handled enabled one to handle what is and what is coming (cancer), finding meaning and fulfillment in being alive and finding a purpose for the suffering. Positively reappraising strengthened participants' ability to face difficulties and if possible to do something about it.

Examples.

Participant 1 — Benefiting from emigration (after the war)

I'm glad I got out of there because I would not want to live in a Communist regime. I agree it was a good thing to do. But (old world Poland) that world was pretty shattered, but I missed it. I missed the countryside. I missed the villa; my grandfather, the friends we left behind and I loved nature and I loved being Polish.

Participant 2 — Having children is a purpose to live (after the war)

As I told you had we waited next years (to start a family), when we had more money saved up, but ... he was killed after two years, so I would have never had children. No then there would have been no family. There would have been no life; absolutely none, absolutely none, absolutely ... so I say if all the family is dead, my children would live on ... family. I read Victor Frankl's book three times. He recalls 'if you have a why to live you can bear with almost any how.' That opened the door to me because I did have a why. You have to believe, you have to have a reason. If you don't have a reason, it doesn't make sense. It means nothing, nothing. And I was really blessed to have a reason — through my family background.
Participant 3 — Seeing the positive in human nature (after the war)

*In general, people are very nice.*

Participant 3 — Finding something meaningful to enjoy — being alive rather than not (after the war)

*When I go for a drive, I see beautiful weather. I can still remain in my house. I can do things for myself; I am lucky. So when I get down I try to think of other people and know I am lucky. My husband never had the opportunity to live today. There is always the opportunity to find a little blue sky in the gray.*

Participant 4 — Remaining hopeful throughout ghetto life and camp life (during the war)

*You always think ... you'll survive.*

Participant 5 — Concentrating on the positive aspects of immigration — freedom to be Jewish (after the war)

*It was tough financially to make a living. It was tough not knowing where your next meal was coming. You didn't have a wage. Happy was the freedom. We were free. We were not afraid to say we were Jewish. The freedom compared to much depression in the past.*

Participant 5 — Learning through suffering (after the war)

*Maybe the anger gives you strength (death of her daughter, after the Holocaust experience). I think what we went through makes you stronger. So now I know if I have a bad day I know there will be a good day. That's my strength. I let it be. S’s (daughter's) death took away the fear of dying for me. She’s somewhere there where I’m going to go to and it took away the fear (of dying).*
Participant 6 — Comparing and finding good health lucky (after the war)

*I always compare my story to others when I am down. I realize others have it ten times worse — like cancer — all of a sudden all the worries I have seem like nothing. I realize I have no worries. At work when we look at our problems then we look at the one who is in a wheel chair and realize we don’t have it so bad.*

Participant 6 — Using philosophy (after the war)

*Out of misery — there is good.*

Participant 7 — Using humor in camp (during the war)

*The only way to get out of here is to be wheeled out — another dead person. Someone in camp said ‘Oh, they are taking out another dead one’ and I said ‘It’s the only way you get out of here.’ Human beings have a funny make-up. Some say the glass is half full, others say it is half empty. The good Lord has indulged me with a sense of humor.*

Participant 7 — From struggling comes accomplishment (after the war)

*I have no regrets ... that gives me a feeling of peace and I have no reason any longer ... if I had been able to stay in Germany, no Nazis, and entered my father’s business, have an already made comfortable life. I probably would not have the pleasure and satisfaction with myself than having gone through physical deprivations but, suddenly came out of the cocoon and start to fly.*

Participant 7 — Comparing and preferring life to death (after the war)

*I always think of the alternative — others had it worse. I would not be alive.*

Participant 8 — Remembering a positive event and person in terrible times (during the war)

*(priest helped him to stay connected with social group prior to round-up of Jews) The*
priest put me right in front with him and we marched through the streets of Paris and there were German soldiers and police ... this was the first time in those days when somebody reached out and said you are okay. As far as he was concerned I was a human being — set an example to others. That was one of the good things.

Participant 8 — Appreciating and concentrating on the good in people (during the war)

These people took me in and looked after me as one of their own children (in hiding). At the time sheltering Jews was a very serious offense. I go back to France (recently). We always see and get together with the son (of family that hid him). It was like family. He's like family. I stayed three to four months.

Participant 8 — Finding a foreign accent a positive aspect of self in Canada (after the war)

My language (spoke French in English Canada) made me different, special and helped allow me to do a lot of things and get involved.

Participant 8 — Finding meaning in suffering — to teach others (after the war)

I carry scars. But with the scars also comes a lot of special things with all people who have gone through very difficult times; makes you better human beings. All the people who've gone through the Holocaust; they may be difficult — hard to get along with — aggressive, but basically I think that most of them are good human beings and can teach the world a lot of things.

Participant 8 — Having learned to cope through trauma in the past, feeling that one can cope again (after the war)

I have had a lot of things along the way — this is just one more (recently diagnosed with cancer). I'll survive.
Participant 9 — Not paying attention to the negative (during the war)

_ I don’t remember the time in the ghetto being a bad time. We didn’t have food. We were sick. We didn’t have toilets. There were outhouses. It was muddy because we were put into an area of town that was muddy._

Participant 9 — Finding the positive (after the war)

_ We had good things happening after bad._

Participant 9 — Finding purpose in life (after the war)

_ Life is precious. You need to live it to its fullest._

Participant 9 — Not concentrating on the losses (after the war)

_ I had the ability to catch up what was lost._

Participant 10 — Viewing a negative situation in a positive light (during the war)

_ Machines were not set up so we had a little holiday (recently moved from one barrack to another). We waited in our barracks that everyone was done._

Participant 10 — Having children a purpose in life (after the war)

_ I got married right away and then my two children. That is our purpose._

Participant 10 — Assessing one’s life in a positive light — most of family was killed in the Holocaust (after the war)

_ I have had a fulfilling life._
Participant 11 — Finding grandmother’s death before the Holocaust positive — was not exposed to the suffering (during the war)

*It was very sad (grandmother died). Though, on the other hand, one might say she’d been spared. It was just before the major deportations started.*

Participant 11 — Concentrating on helpful people (during the war)

*There were wonderful people all around us. They were people who would come to us and hide things for us and say they should hang all the Germans. They were very supportive people.*

Participant 11 — Concentrating on health rather than sickness (after the war)

*Gradually I stared to develop some health problems in the sense that my blood pressure was a bit up and so on. I’ve been struggling now with spells again with a bit of irregular heart. Both my doctor and I realize that it is anxiety related. As you get older your body is more sensitive to that. Despite the two major surgeries, I always recover very quick — generally very healthy.*

**Category 4: Emulating**

Emulating refers to the desire to equal or surpass others. Participants learned how to cope with stress and trauma successfully through observing others and through the direct teaching of others. From early childhood, most participants felt they had a safe, secure, satisfying, home life which they wanted to repeat within their own families. They placed importance on their early childhood experiences and positive qualities of home life which were described as; “prestigious,” “wealthy,” “moral,” “respected,” “happy,” among other things. They sought to emulate these qualities in their own family environment; for themselves and their children. Many spoke of family that existed in a country or had a successful business there for generations. There was a sense of pride and continuity derived from this. They also learned positive personal attributes and competences such as the following: survival skills, strength, cleverness, helping others, humour, ability to start afresh, media-
tion, stoicism, and the ability to fight. They learned through the direct actions of others (mainly parents) or by their teachings.

**Examples.**

Participant 1 — Emulating values necessary for survival (before the war)

*I learned values through him (father). I learned what was good and what was bad, honestly, being upright about things. I hated lying. I felt guilt about lying about who I was ... to survive.*

Participant 2 — Emulating parental acceptance of God (before the war)

*You don’t argue with God* — my mother always said. I will remember that until the day I die. You don’t argue with God. I firmly believed.

Participant 3 — Emulating social position (before the war)

*I came from a well-to-do family. I always had a governess or a nanny. ... There was a clothing business. It was in the family for generations.*

Participant 3 Second interview — Emulating modeling lifestyle (after the war)

*After my husband passed away, I became more like him. I learned from him in many things. For instance he said ‘Whatever you have to do tomorrow, you do today.’ He was right. Education helps children have a better life — don’t give him fish, teach him how to fish. What you learn, this is something no one will take away from you, my mother said.*

Participant 5 — Emulating a role model (before the war)

*I was a rebel. I think my mother was a fighter, in her quiet way.*

Participant 5 — Recreating the original family (before the war)

*I think what we went through makes you stronger. We were a beautiful family; lovely*
home, always family-oriented because in Europe you live in a small town all the family is around. Then you lose that and you make it again.

Participant 6 — Emulating a role model (after the war)

My mother (aunt) was an extremely strong person. I love her — so strong yet a tiny little thing; 88 years old even. After her operation, five days later, she is walking around. She said 'I don't know why I feel so weak.' One week after her operation!

She has spirit.

Participant 6 — Modeling charity (after the war)

My dad and mom always had an extra chair at the dinner table for the needy.

Participant 7 Second interview — Modeling survival (before the war)

Father taught me that one can live without the comforts of life. He learned that in W.W.I. He made us walk to a far away school under any weather conditions. Lots of sports ... paid a buddy from war to take us to something like Outward Bound, for two weeks. It taught me, if you have nothing, you don't die immediately. You have to cope with it. My father and the man in camp taught me how to survive. I knew from Outward Bound that exposure to elements. I could survive. I was used to this sort of thing from my father.

Participant 8 — Teaching courage by being courageous in escaping a round-up (before the war)

It took a lot of courage from my mother because there were police everywhere and Jews were rounded up. She (mother) took the yellow star off me; gave me money and said I was to go and stay with friends. She told me how to get to the subway, etc. I was really crying. I didn't want to go. I was frightened. She pushed me and said 'You must go.'
Participant 8 — Modeling how to make use of Holocaust memories (after the war)

He (friend) has devoted his life to create memories to the Jewish people who were killed during the war from France. Through these people I have a whole library of documents and so on.

Participant 8 — Modeling how to escape (during the war)

Mother saved my life. ... My mom told me not to speak to anybody, don’t look at anyone. Pretend (to not be a Jew). If anyone asks you anything on the train — you are going to visit your aunt. She told me to not stay in the section where Jews sit.

Participant 9 — Modeling and teaching courage (after the war)

We ran away from Lithuania with fake passports in 1946 into Germany. My mother was 7 months pregnant. When we came to the border the German came up and said ‘Are you smuggling anything?’ What we were smuggling was diamonds and gold pieces. It was all in the food basket, inside the food, and I was hauling the food basket. Mamma said to me get on the train. He was a little uncomfortable with her belly because she was pregnant; like something was hiding in there. I remember she said ‘You already killed one of my children — don’t you dare touch me!’ I remember how she said “R, you get on the train. You know what to do.’ So I got on the train. I am ten years.

Participant 9 — Modeling versatility and a work ethic (after the war)

My mother, who was quite educated, ended up working in a glove factory making gloves. My mother had to work hard. My father was in hospital. After my dad got better, my mother decided to become a Hebrew teacher. So she went to the Hebrew academy in Montreal. One of the things I learned from my parents is about work — that all work is important. My mother opened up a restaurant in our house. ... She was a chambermaid in a hotel. She would do toilets. She would do anything.
Participant 11 — Modeling planful problem solving and humour to preserve business assets (during the war)

_Somebody walked into my father's business and identified himself as Mr. Y. ‘This is my business now. You better do what I tell you or I shoot you.’ My father came home laughing. He managed to hide most of his assets and sent most of it to New York, to a business relation. There was not that much that this man got out of his business, so my father was not too perturbed. He was of course angry. He had not expected anything else. I remember him making light of that._

Participant 11 — Modeling survival skills (during the war)

_Once we were kicked out of the house, we had to move to some kind of ghetto in Amsterdam. It was very primitive apartments. I remember when we got there, there was hardly any furniture I remember my mother scrubbing the floors with Lysol — the whole apartment. She decided that there was vermin there. I must say that my mother and father both had strong survival skills. That's why they survived._

Participant 11 — Modeling survival (during the war)

_In those 10 days that we were in hiding, there was one night my parents were desperate. They had not been able to get the requirements to go into hiding. They thought that my sister and I were sleeping and my father said 'I think we had better put an end to it.' So they wanted to put an end to it. Meaning suicide. My mother said 'Oh no, we should not give up. It is too soon to consider that. We have to try harder.' They did._

Participant 11 — Modeling self control, responsibility, and survival in hiding (during the war)

_The farmer and his wife were fighting always like cats and dogs, and my parents were always petrified that sooner or later the whole thing would blow up and my father_
would try to play the peacemaker. I think I was brought up to some degree in a family of survivors — both my parents.

Participant 11 — Modeling planful problem solving in escape (during the war)

*Dad immediately tried to book passage away. The next ship was torpedoed and everybody drowned. He booked on the next ship. The Germans invaded Holland. May 10, we were sitting with tickets. I could not get out. So the first few days my parents had all kinds of supplies and radio and things stocked up. We were sitting in a room because we thought maybe they could shoot or bomb.*

Participant 11 Second interview — Modeling taking control and action (during the war)

*My father used say in hiding. 'We are soldiers and we need to fight this war.'*

**Category 5: Jewish Identity**

Participants focussed on their Jewish identity. Identity involved issues of ethnic identity, hiding (physical and emotional), tradition, worldview, and religion. The participants came from different countries, with differing levels of identification with Jewish tradition and religion (assimilation) and yet all were trying to understand and make meaning of the experience of being a Jew. In terms of ethnic identity there was a movement from feeling Jewish first, to feeling identified with the country they were either born in or came to. There was a tension in this multicultural movement. The same tension existed in terms of hiding Jewish identity. Many actually hid their identity during the war and continued to feel the need to hide, in some manner, today. There was an awareness of how not looking Jewish saved many. There was a pride and a fear in being Jewish and a need to expose or not expose this identity. There was a range of identification with religion, from those who had strong attachment to Orthodox beliefs to those open to spiritualism and mysticism. Some felt a separation of religion and tradition and identified with tradition only. Tradition meant many things; keeping strict kosher to non-observance of holidays to identifying only with a Jewish worldview. What remains of identity is the quest for a Jewish identity —
feeling it strongly (i.e., a lengthy rich history, strong survival attributes), individually and in the collective and yet questioning or reflecting upon what it is. For the group, identity is an ambivalent issue. A means of coping with the experience of being a Jew and being a survivor of the Holocaust was through the quest for and reflection on identity. For a people who had lost their home, family, and country, the one stabilizing concept was a Jewish identity. Reflecting upon identity was a stabilizing force and helped strengthen self-concept.

**Examples.**

Participant 1 — As a new immigrant not wanting to identify with the poor Jewish section (after the war)

*I did not like the Jewish section. People seemed poor somehow. I don’t know what was wrong, but I don’t like being poor. I don’t like poverty. I’m not very rich but that reminds me of the ghetto. It reminds me of an immigrant and all the bad connotations that I hate.*

Participant 1 — Identifying with safety of being a Christian (before, during, and after the war)

*On the one hand there was something good about being Christian. It saved my life. But, I wanted truth and I wanted justice (felt guilty about hiding Jewish identity both during the war and briefly, in Canada). Even as a young kid I was taught values that you had to be honest and truthful and then I came into conflict over Judaism and Christianity.*

Participant 1 — Hiding Jewish identity (during the war)

*I was white blond and no one could ever think that I was Jewish. I had a good disguise; natural disguise and I grew up thinking it was great to be blond because being dark and being Jewish was not good. He (father) had Aryan looks. In a most awful way that counted (saved lives during the Holocaust).*
Participant 1 — Concerned and learning what is means to be Jewish (after the war)

Then I came here (Canada) and I started learning about Judaism. I came to Montreal first and we lived in a more Jewish section in Montreal than here so I started learning there.

Participant 2 — Finding strength in identity (after the war)

I never wavered from my Jewish values. We sit around the room, the tradition — we keep the holidays. Always fasting, always — never eating bread. We all did the Jewish traditions, like everything. Hanukkah was celebrated widely. I can't be more Jewish than I am. I truly can't. We celebrated tradition, but did not keep a kosher home.

Participant 3 — Feeling ties to country of origin (before the war)

My father thought that Poland was a very good country. They have got good citizens ... and that was our country. I believed they (the family) lived in this country for generations.

Participant 3 Second interview — Losing ties to country of origin (after the war)

My ties are not to Poland anymore.

Participant 4 — Being a Jew meant being traditional in a religious sense (before and after the war)

We believed in God. We were not fanatically religious. It was everything kosher in the house and it was keeping up Friday night, Saturday — but not fanatical.

Participant 5 — Having ties to country of origin (before the war)

We were assimilated in Romania.
Participant 5 — Having a Jewish identity through traditional religious practices (before and after the war)

We were traditional. We were kosher. We did not go to synagogue every Saturday. We were traditional. I remember my brother having a Bar Mitzvah in a small synagogue ... holidays we always had our traditional holiday Passover. It stayed with me till today. Out of respect for my parents. My upbringing. We always had kosher in the house, although outside we would eat not kosher. And I’m happy we did. My son married an observant girl.

Participant 6 — Being Jewish meant splitting tradition and religion (after the war)

I make a difference between religion and tradition. To me, making candles on Friday night — that’s tradition. On Saturday not being able to do certain things — that’s religion. I don’t care. Tradition — I organize the Passover night for the whole group (child survivor group).

Participant 6 — Feeling torn (after the war)

I felt like a traitor. I let my parents down. They were killed because they were Jews and here I am marrying a non-Jew. There is a lot of guilt there. Lately I have not been accepting it (lost Jewish heritage). I feel very guilty. I’d like to belong. In my heart I’m a Jew, then I feel like a traitor. I feel like I let somebody down — I don’t know who — but somebody down for doing what I did (not being more part of the Jewish community).

Participant 6 — Focussing on what it means to be a Jew (after the war)

It’s not that I feel guilty from head to toe. To be a Jew you feel guilty about a lot of things. You hear all those jokes about guilt because of your mothers and all that. And it’s true. I feel guilty for all the craziest things. I’m stuck and there’s nothing I could do. So I do the best I can. So I seek and I search and I end up always being the
same. It's like looking from the outside in rather than being inside. ... you don't want
to agonize yourself over a situation like this (lost Jewish identity) because it could eat
you up. It did sometimes.

Participant 6 — Confusion about the meaning of being a Jew (after the war)
I don't know. If I had a normal life as a Jew then I could tell you (meaning of being a
Jew). I think that if I could have had a Jewish home and I think I would have been
happier because it's inside of me. Why do I miss it so much? I don't know. I just
know I miss it. I love being around Jewish people, and I love to experience the tradi­
tions. When I don't have it, I feel lost. It's agony. You have got to do the best you
can with what you got.

Participant 6 — Hiding Jewish identity (after the war)
Where I work they don't know the first thing about it. They don't know I'm Jewish.
It's none of their business.

Participant 6 Second interview — Hiding Jewish identity (after the war)
I want to hide the fact that I am a Jew because I don't want to face the consequences
of what will happen if others find out. It is still left over from my need to hide it
before. It is sad that in a free country I still hide the fact that I am a Jew. I have hid­
den, until three or four years ago, that I celebrate Jewish holidays. Today I will not
tell the office that I will not be in because it is a Jewish holiday. I don't tell anyone
about myself. I am a closed book.

Participant 6 Second interview — Finding meaning in being a Jew (after the war)
At the child survivor group I spoke openly about being torn by being married to a
non-Jew. It was a big issue because we discussed it for four hours. Research reveals
that the majority of child survivors are married to non-Jews.
Participant 6 Second interview — Having pride of being Jew (after the war)

*I like the Jewishness of being a Jew. Jewish people were always strong people. No matter what happened they survived. There is a lot of pride in a Jewish person. No one will keep you down. You get up — somehow again and again. By sticking together they are strong. They would not go on social assistance. They would rather die than go on welfare. My Dad took $35.00 a week to work but not $70.00 on social assistance. Pride.*

Participant 7 — Having no control in being a Jew (after the war)

*I am a universal person. The way I am as a Jew, you are a Roman Catholic and you are a Protestant — is by chance because you follow the way your are brought up. You have no choice. If you were left for years, maybe you would not even choose that. From Fiddler on the Roof: ‘Why don’t you choose somebody else for a while (to God about being Jewish) this equals the ‘Chosen’ people. If I had been younger, I would have married a Christian girl and had Christian children. I may remain a Jew. I do not like to change the flag. That is something I would not have done. That goes against my principles, that is a way of coward. I was born a Jew, brought up a Jew, the history is Jewish, but I don’t want it propagated. They are two different things; one is not to deny it the other is to restart it. The Holocaust did not make me a stronger Jew. I don’t go to synagogue more often.*

Participant 7 — Confusion over identifying with country of origin, country immigrated to, or being a Jew (after the war)

*Until Nazis we celebrated Jewish traditions and religion. In Canada we did not want to be Germans anymore and Germans were not liked here. Jewish community has not accepted us as Germans. You must be Jews first and we could never accept that. We wanted to be Canadians first and then Jews after.*
Participant 7 — Questioning fate of Jews (after the war)

 Holocaust has not made me a lesser Jew because when I had this decisive moment I asked myself, as Christ did, 'Good Lord, why have you forsaken me? We are the chosen people?' Where is the Jewish God if he can't save his people? What is the point? I start to doubt it. I am not ashamed to say that. Where was the Jewish God when I and my people needed us? Just like Fiddler on the Roof — can't you choose somebody else. Again, I use humor to help.

Participant 7 — Hiding Jewish identity (before, during, and after the war)

 I did not like it (looking Jewish) and I felt my features were too Semitic and they stuck out. That is why I felt like hiding it. All of a sudden I felt more accepted in Vancouver. Vancouver was anti-Semitic too. There were a lot of places you could not rent apartments or belong to a club. It's only since we have become so cosmopolitan, with so many immigrants, your difference, coming in with the rest of the mass, you don't stick out anymore.

Participant 7 — Identifying with country of origin (before the war)

 We never considered ourselves anything but good Germans. My grandfather fought in the war. My father was in W.W.I; from the first to last day. He went through all the battles. He was decorated. He was linked to Germany. We were Jews second, as a religion.

Participant 7 — Identifying with only one kind of Jew (before the war)

 The two types of Jews that were in Germany; those like us and the others that came after the First World War from Poland — were completely different. We were as alien to them as Chinese to Canadians. We were not that kind of Jew — the Orthodox. We were liberal Jews.
Participant 8 — The meaning of being a Jew (before the war)

*Culturally my parents were very Jewish; speak Yiddish. I was certainly exposed to Yiddish and to this day I can speak some, and understand. We did not celebrate any Jewish traditions.*

Participant 8 — Fear of being a Jew and how it affects Jewish identity (after the war)

*Later in life I did a lot of thinking about how difficult it is and how come you are exposed of your Jewishness and made some choices in that respect.*

Participant 8 — Strength of identity of being a Jew (after the war)

*I think even if my children are removed from Jewishness I think all three of them had a feel about it; maybe the same feel I have. This fear that the Jews will disappear because they don’t attend synagogue, I doubt it. There is a strength and there is a viability what will carry on religion or otherwise. They are not better than anyone else.*

Participant 8 — Focussing on what it is to be a Jew (after the war)

*I am interested and I want to understand Jewish religion. I am studying about Jewish tradition and history. I am even studying Hebrew.*

Participant 8 — The meaning of being Jewish (after the war)

*Jewish coping values* They are intangible. There is an affinity for other human beings. There is a joy for life. There is an importance placed on family values. We have a very close family. With our kids and grandchildren we get together often and there is a warmth and a very special feelings, which is very important. The special miracle — values that exist within us in our genes or wherever it is; that zest for life and wonderful intelligence and love of arts, music and all that.
Participant 8 — Confusion over the meaning of being a Jew (before and after the war)

*My mother’s was a big family. The family was Jewish and spoke Yiddish. What I thought was that they were from Eastern Europe and that was the culture there and they came here (France). This was different. I felt kind of different from my parents because France was my country. My parents had an accent, not me. I felt it was my country until this happened (Holocaust). People did not associate me with being Jewish. I did not promote it. I had nothing to do with the Jewish community. I don’t know if it had a bearing on how they looked at me or not. I was a lot more comfortable in gentile circles than I was in Jewish.*

Participant 8 — Not connecting with Canadian Jews (after the war)

*What was not so nice was the Jewish people who were here; who were greenhorns. We were considered to be awkward. They thought that we were like many of them who come from the ghettos of Eastern Europe. My parents and I were not like that. My parents liked classical music. They looked at us like we were a bunch of peasants that had just arrived. The most intolerant were Jewish teenagers — lack of understanding.*

Participant 8 Second interview — Finding meaning in being a Jew (after the war)

*As much as I had not been a practicing Jew, I feel strongly about my roots. I look at Jews as smart people as much as some people say if you are not religious you are not Jewish. Bunk. It really does not bother me my wife is not Jewish. I think that my wife is a very spiritual person. She was born Protestant. We talk about spirituality. Spirituality is something we have in common; divorced from religion.*

Participant 8 Second interview — Finding meaning in being a Jew (after the war)

*I joined the reform synagogue. I like the people and enjoy it but am devoid of religious experience. I have difficulty with the meanings. It is like a foreign language. I joined to get in touch with Jewish identity, but this is not meeting the need. I still go.*
I go to the synagogue for the social aspect — warmth, belonging. I am not a religious person, but a spiritual one. I never had a God — never connected with him. My father was strongly anti-religious. His father was strict.

Participant 8 Second interview — Fear of being a Jew (after the war)

Being Jewish is a terrible burden — a big risk especially for the children.

Participant 9 — Fear of being a Jew and strength of belonging

If you are already Jewish, these are good things to have — education — strength. But being Jewish is not a positive thing. It's a curse. I'm always afraid for me and my children because of anti-Semitism. And also because of this we have discovered many strengths — the family ties are very strong, the educational ties are strong — how to fit in and manage — being a part of the community. So you know, you are feeling sort of protected and that whether you are religious or not does not matter.

Participant 9 — Hiding Jewish identity (after the war)

I never told anybody I was Jewish; never took any Jewish holidays. I still feel uncomfortable about my Jewishness. There is always the fear if you are Jewish you are going to be wiped out.

Participant 10 — Not looking Jewish as a survival trait (before the war)

I was blond. I had blue eyes; nobody could take me for a Jew, but I never denied it. I could get away if I wanted to go without the useless arm band (Jews had to wear an arm band during the Holocaust). They would never stop me.

Participant 10 — Finding strength in persecution (during the war)

I did not think about how I felt being Jewish while this (labour roundups) was going
on. I was Jewish and that was it. Did I wish that I wasn't Jewish, no. No. I never thought that. I was born Jewish and I was Jewish.

Participant 11 — Searching for Jewish identity (before the war)

It was not a Jewish neighborhood. We did not have any Jewish traditions. I did not know but there were certain Jewish elements of course. My father used some Yiddish being into a Jewish type of business. There were definitely cultural attitudes that were there. Apart from expressions, the family would get together and they would, I think, have meals on Friday night. It was chicken soup, that type of thing.

Participant 11 — Finding identity in being a Jewish Holocaust survivor (after the war)

I never hesitated to ever say that I was Jewish or that I was in the Holocaust. I have always felt proud of being Jewish and somehow there is a message in me being Jewish and having survived, even though I am not a practicing Jew.

Participant 11 — Finding importance in Jewish identity (after the war)

When I got married, in those days it was not really done to keep your name. I would have kept my name. I am quite sure. I did not make a big issue of it. I felt a loss to get a gentile name. It bothered me.

Participant 11 — Having Jewish traditions (after the war)

I have my sons and I feel ambivalent about that too. I had my sons circumcised by the physician; not religious. Because I felt that I am a Jewish mother and it should be Jewish.

Participant 11 — Identifying with experience of persecution (after the war)

I have told my sons that they are Jews, but they have grown up in a gentile environ-
ment so it does not mean that much to them at all. The only thing that they have is an anger about racism. They are very alert.

Participant 11 — Passing on Jewish identity (after the war)

*My children know that I have never hidden anything about being a Holocaust survivor, but on the other hand they are typical second generation, are not really falling all over themselves to know. They have heard the story, but they don’t try to be part of that. They come to the child survivor group. They mingle, but they are not really interested.*

Participant 11 — Finding meaning in being a Jew (before and after the war)

*The Yiddish kind that my father introduced in our family — Jewish attitudes in my mother’s family too, enhanced by my friendships, especially the friend I had, not a religious Jew. He’s more of a conscious Jew than I. All these things influenced me.*

Participant 11 — Searching for the meaning of being a Jew (after the war)

*Many in mixed marriages. It is bad. They live two separate lives within the family life. But you are looking for some Jewish contacts; what that means. I don’t even know what that means, it is just a familiarity. I don’t feel particularly zealous about it.*

Participant 11 — Separating religion and Jewish identity (before and after the war)

*My parents were atheists, so I have no emotions. I feel free to walk into a synagogue and be Jewish or do any ritual only you have to be careful. My family would scoff at that.*

Participant 11 — Being identifiable as a Jew (before and after the war)

*What I remember about those days was that people were obviously Jewish; features
or manners, if they don't try to pretend that they were not Jewish. I felt very scornful now I understand it. Now I remember that is grossly unfair because I was not as readily identifiable as they were, not at first sight anyway.

Participant 11 — Finding a Jewish identity in the extended family (after the war)

My sister lives in Holland. Her husband is Jewish, a Holocaust survivor. They have four children and they are so removed from everything you could call Judaism. The children don't know a thing about Judaism. They don't want to be Jews. It is very ironic. He lost his parents. I have discussed this with my sister. I have married a gentile and I am far more Jewish conscious than she is.

Participant 11 — Finding stability in Jewish identity (after the war)

So people say you know Jewish identity will disappear, although I think it is a shame. Judaism is a wonderful tradition and a beautiful culture, but that is the way people in the world are. I am Jewish and that is all I feel. I have no mission about it.

Participant 11 — Finding meaning in being a Jew and in having survived the Holocaust (after the war)

I have always felt proud of being Jewish and somehow there is a message in me being Jewish and having survived, even though I am not a practicing Jew.

Category 6: Helping Others

For participants helping others was a means of feeling useful, finding a purpose in life and connecting with people. The primary ways in which the participants fulfilled their desire to help consisted of: during the Holocaust, through the family, and volunteering to make societal change. It entailed everything from cooking meals to helping the family stay together and assisting a lonely couple without family. It involved the creation of a group to stop an injustice (MADD), creating a counselling center and helping to create educational and preventative programs on racism and persecution. It involved
fundraising for Israel to running for the local school board. Because of the hardships that participants had experienced, they empathized with the suffering of others and believed that what they had learned about overcoming suffering could be made useful by helping others with their knowledge, experience, and support. Life became more meaningful when it involved making oneself useful to others and society.

**Examples.**

Participant 1 — Providing emotional and spiritual nourishment (after the war)

... to help. To make things better. To teach people how to feel. To give them what they need not just want. It's what is happening in the world that influences them and those who can't think for themselves or have no spiritual connections; they are the ones that become obstacles, to mourn things to getting healthy again.

Participant 2 — Being useful (after the war)

After my sister's death I nearly collapsed. Then I went to the Jewish Congress — you want me I'm yours. Then I went to the Holocaust Center (to volunteer). I then felt useful again.

Participant 3 — Bringing family together (after the war)

I have friends who say 'I don't get it. It's too much work (cooking dinner every Sunday for large extended family).' To me it's not work. They'll say it's too bad you have to have your family over. I cannot explain it to you. To me I do it with pleasure. It's not a chore. I want to do it. My husband was the happiest person because he was sitting at the head of the table and he would say 'Look, we came here the two of us and look.' It gave him such satisfaction. That's how I feel the family is the most important part of my life. Always was. Maybe it's because I lost my family. It's just really important to me. I hope the kids feel the same way, but it's how I feel.
Participant 4 — Attempting escape, assisting others (during the war)

100 people there ... it was three rooms — no breathing — no air. We were sure we would die there. We opened the chute and we let more in. And we was there maybe three or four days.

Participant 5 — Fighting racism and feeling acknowledged by others (after the war)

Outreach (educational group speaking against racism through the use of personal stories of the Holocaust) is very rewarding. It does do something to you when you hear some of the stories. I don't know how many times I've listened to them and it still affects me. But when I see the reaction of the students, the same thing as when I used to see the reaction of students when I spoke for MADD it was rewarding.

Participant 5 — Helping self through helping others (after the war)

... losing my daughter is bigger than the Holocaust. I went through it as a child. My husband agreed. He explained when you are in the Holocaust every day is a day that you couldn't expect. You expect to lose; you expect to die, to be taken to war, to be beaten. It's a way of life. But here it was a normal life. We struggle to give our children the Jewish education. We give up things for ourselves to give to our children.

Our education was cut. I missed the education. I always felt self-conscious about it. So we gave our children everything we couldn't have. So at the point we could do something with S. She finished her education. She had a wonderful job. She was happy. She was alive. The place lit up when she arrived. She was taken from us before we could do things with her and not for her. That was to both of as a bigger Holocaust. My husband when he went through so much (lost entire extended family), he lost so much, this was bigger.

This is how I came to facilitate the grieving group at the Jewish Community Centre. The events in my life made me do it. My daughter has been gone for 17 years. Society expects you to forget and not to talk about it; like she didn't exist
and I won't accept that and I won't apologize for that either. I think we made a difference in (founding Mothers Against Drunk Drivers). There are still too many killings. One is too many. Too many mothers grieving and fathers senseless. Some that can be prevented just by knowing. I made the promise to myself that I'll never turn away from anyone that needs to talk. They are grieving. There is very little education in how to deal with grieving or the people — what to say and what to do.

Participant 6 — Helping others less fortunate is rewarding (after the war)

... because of my upbringing and experience I have a natural way of helping. I do it because it makes people feel good and then I feel good too. I like to help others less educated — find ways to not insult them and get them to understand and get them to do it on their own. I like to help others especially lonely people who have no family. I know what it feels like and I want to help. I have helped an elderly couple who were Jewish/French. Also for four or five years I helped a lonely elderly man with no family. I cared for a First Nations boy for four years in my home. I would have paid for his education but he wanted to work. Those are the kinds of things I'm involved in more and more. Then I became a sponge for them, where they squeeze and squeeze. I don't mind. It give me lots of pleasure to do things. I don't know why, but it does. At the JFS they picked a person out of 400 volunteers who had done so much. They talked about that person and I thought they did so much. It turned out to be me. I was shocked to look at it in that light. It was good.

Participant 7 — Caring for others (after the war)

I could look after my parents. I lived very close to them. For the last few years my mother lived with me. She died at 102. I looked after my mother until she died. I was with her when she died.
Participant 7 Second interview — Finding pride in helping others do well (during the war)

I suffered for the others more than for myself. I had learned to survive. Others did not have that 'you can't do this to me' (detainment camp in Germany). It made me sick to see their pride and everything taken away from them. I was not as often physical abused than others and I know others got it worse. Even today I feel for people. I'd rather take a few hits myself than others.

Participant 8 — Choosing a helping career (after the war)

I think that it's part of my success as a professional person. That is one thing about many of us (survivors) many of us ended up in the helping field. When you have had it done to you maybe you became more caring and aware of other people. Not only that, look at me, I'm alive today because people took risks. Their lives and lives of their children. Can I do any less? No.

Participant 9 — Volunteering and career choice (after the war)

I volunteered at the crisis center. I have chosen things where I am helping other people. I like it much more (than first profession). (Counselling) is something I chose. I do well with people. I help a lot of people. I have that kind of quality. I help a lot of people individually — formally and otherwise; especially Russian refugees. I like to help the underdog — be available for others. I have a tremendous sense of altruism especially related to children and suffering (is a child survivor).

Participant 10 — Saving a life (during the war)

This older lady, she was with me. She was assigned in barrack too. She was old. She didn't have much of a chance to survive. I went to (Nazi guard that liked her) I said to her. I buttered her up a little. I said I have an aunt here and you are so good to everybody. If you could take her in here. It would be so nice — my aunt, my only relative. She said 'What can she do?' I said she could do the dusting of machinery.
She said ‘bring her.’ I went to get her and I don’t know. I pinched her cheeks so she would not look so worn out. I managed to make her up. I brought her. She said okay. She can work here ... She could nap and the guys were watching somebody was coming they got her. She survived the war.

Participant 10 — For Israel (after the war)

They honored me and my friend. They had a special luncheon where they honored us for the achievement. We have raised $70,000.00 just the two of us. We are committed (raising money for Israel). I am willing. I go every year to U.B.C. to the symposium to speak to students. Whenever they have come I come. I went to Kelowna, to the children’s camp. I talked to two groups.

Participant 10 — Helping as a purpose in life (after the war)

I can see some of my friends. They do nothing. They just enjoy themselves. They go for lunches. I can’t see what kind of life is that. Okay, they have their children. But to me, when I do something for somebody else — that is my passion.

Participant 10 — Helping to be needed (after the war)

Since my husband died I lost interest in traveling. My friends go. They travel. I never wanted. But now my son talked me into it. He lives in Toronto. He’s alone. He was married and divorced. He said ‘Mom, why don’t you come?’ I think he needs me; when my children need me. I went right away and I booked. So I am going to Toronto.

Participant 11 — Feeling connected to others through helping (after the war)

Gradually, I got to know people like R. K. and other child survivors. I was participating at the seminar at U.B.C. already quite early. That had to do with the non-profit society that I was apart of. It’s the umbrella organization for immigrant services, so I
was very involved in anti-racist work. I need to keep my hand in doing things in the community. I need the connection with people (to help). I ran for the school board.

I am in Outreach and work at the Holocaust Centre.

Category 7: Enduring Hardship

Mainly during the Holocaust, but also in establishing a new life afterwards, participants put forth great effort in meeting the requirements necessary to achieving what they wanted — either survival during the war — doing any job demanded or necessary, getting and eating any kind of food, or after the war — acquiring an education, career, and marriage. This strategy involved doing whatever is necessary to survive from taking action to remaining quiet and still. Suedfeld et al. (1997) describes the category as “Effort to persevere, survive, submit, comply with demands” (p. 167).

Examples.

Participant 1 — Lying for survival (during the war)

*I lied in order to survive.*

Participant 2 — Everyday effort (after the war)

*We built up a life. I worked 8 to 5, Monday to Friday for 25 years.*

Participant 3 — Surviving by being in the moment in the ghetto (during the war)

*... we were just living from hour to hour, day to day.*

Participant 4 — Overcoming fear (during the war)

*We traded for things with the out of the ghetto people (if caught, death resulted).*

Participant 5 — In Canada working to establish self and family (after the war)

*My husband started to work. He was making jeans. He hated it. He borrowed money*
and bought a horse and buggy and started going on the lanes; tried to pick things up but he didn’t know anything about it. Necessity teaches you. It was tough.

Participant 7 — Finding and pursuing any means of survival (during the war)

We furnished ourselves with underwear, socks, shirt — enough for 50 years (escape before the war). Some people brought cameras. They were valuable. You could only take one camera and in the end they said no. People were trying to find ways to take assets, buying it in Germany and then reselling it once they emigrated.

Participant 8 — Facing physical hardships (during the war)

We’d sleep three people on a mattress. Food was scarce. I remember wearing wooden shoes. I wasn’t going to school. I remember going out at 3 or 4 in the morning to stand in line for bread.

Participant 8 — Surviving hiding (during the war)

You are just going on basic instinct. You are not rationalizing. You are not trying to understand. You are just going every day.

Participant 9 — Taking responsibility for self and others in ghetto (during the war)

We learned to govern ourselves (14 in a room). The children would all stay by themselves through the day most of the time.

Participant 9 — Remaining unnoticed in hiding (during the year)

I had to be very quiet for a year in order to survive.

Participant 9 — Valuing work ethics for survival (after the war)

That all work is important; that any work is fine. It doesn’t matter what you do, as long as you are working. There is nothing ever to be ashamed of and you do anything
you need to survive. So the survival thing was always so strong. I can never remember ever sitting back and wallowing. Not even my parents were doing that.

Participant 9 — Committing to marriage (after the war)

If you decide that is what you want to do. Getting divorced was never an option. And if you don't have that option then you don't work on that. You work on everything else to try to make it work. In forty years you have a lot of things happen. That was never a big thing; you work it through.

Participant 10 — Enduring physical hardship and degradation (during the war)

They took us to hard work — labor (labor camp). They could tell us to take stones from one place to the other. Next thing we had to take it back; or shoveling snow, or cleaning streets, ditches whatever. It was degrading, but as long as they did not kill us, we took it.

Participant 10 — Facing death for food (during the war)

It was hard to get things in the ghetto. They had some things there you could buy. Some people worked outside the ghetto. They took them with the army men on trucks. They took them to work and they were watching them and they brought them back. Sometimes they managed to get something to smuggle in. They worked with Poles, so they got potatoes. When they brought us back at the gate there were guards checking everybody and sometimes they managed to get across. But if they found something they would kill on the spot. It was hard. We were always scared.

Participant 11 — Being philosophical (after the war)

I will row with any oars available.
Participant 11 — Enduring mundane activities in hiding

_They had 6 chickens and a cow and a pig. They had a sack of wheat, but there were mice droppings all over the wheat. So I spent the whole day separating the mice droppings out of the wheat._

Participant 11 — Enduring diet change (during the war)

... _change in food. The first morning I got a big plate of porridge and I couldn't eat a bit of it and in the evening we got a big plate of potatoes and eventually I finished every scrap of it. It was difficult for my body to adjust because I was hungry and I kept looking for food all the time._

Category 8: Participation in Enjoyable Activities

Participants found time to enjoy life in some capacity. Energies were put forth in activities that were personally fulfilling. The range included: participating and/or watching sports, participating and/or watching cultural activities, reading, writing, acting, painting, learning a musical instrument, travelling, conversing, learning, sewing, playing bridge, socializing, and daydreaming. There was a need to keep an active lifestyle and there was a curiosity and interest in the world around them.

Examples.

Participant 1 — Reading and education (before and during the war)

_I didn't go to school for 6 years so I was 12 when the war ended and I had no school._

_But I still read a lot. I was well read. I was a big reader at the age of 7 and 8._

_I could read all historical books and whatever I could lay my hands on._

Participant 1 — Writing about experiences about the Holocaust (after the war)

_..need to offer something for the soul ... I've written my second book about that and other stories._
Participant 3 — Participating in various activities (after the war)

I played bridge. I sewed. I read anything like this just to keep myself occupied. I am taking a course — writing your autobiography. I really enjoy it. I read books, talk, attend lectures, and talk about the past. I like to learn. I take courses. I try. I keep up with world events. I am interested.

Participant 4 — Participating in music (after the war)

I like music. I was singing all my life. When I was a child I was singing in a choir. In a temple. Then when I grew up, I was in a choir — 200 people. I like music. When I wake up I go right to music. I go to the opera, symphony.

Participant 6 — Participating in sports (after the war)

I run. I think running has helped me a lot. You use a lot of energy and think a lot. One of the most important ways that I helped myself was through sports. I got involved in all kinds of sports — soccer, tennis, and I always played a lot — 5 or 6 times a week. By doing these things it took away a lot of the frustration. I am physically fit. At my age, I still run marathons.

Participant 7 — Finding openness (after the war)

I could not believe the beauty of Greece ... how much there is to see. I don't want to pass through life without knowing more about it. That also was one of the reasons why I wanted to go back to learning and studying.

Participant 7 — Finding an active lifestyle (after the war)

I go skiing; I have a skiing pass (is in early eighties).

Participant 8 — Finding interests (after the war)

There are a lot of things that interest me — that I want to pursue. I have a lot of
things that I have planned; things that interest me from computers to photography. I want to do some creative writing. I started playing the cello. There is a lot of things that I didn't have time to do. My retirement doesn't mean putting the tools away and just sitting back.

Participant 9 — Educating oneself (after the war)

Always take classes or lectures — upgrading my education and just for interest.

Participant 10 — Finding time for self (after the war)

Wednesday, that is my day. I do every other day for other people but Wednesday is my day.

Participant 10 — Travelling (after the war)

We traveled even when we were in business, every year, two weeks, Christmas time and New Year. ... we went to Israel. Sometimes to Hawaii. We traveled, but after we retired we traveled more. We liked to travel by car to go places and to see places. Once we took a trip to New York, by car, through Canada and then on the way back through the States. We saw places I still remember. Things that you see and you cherish.

Participant 11 — Participating in the arts (after the war)

What went well for me was I joined the student theater. I played Emily in 'Our Town.' I'd discovered that acting was something that made me feel very good. I didn't have to be myself. I didn't have to expose myself. I throw myself into the arts. I like to write. I like to paint. When I started doing creative writing I started doing something, not openly about the Holocaust, but they were short stories that were based on my Holocaust experiences in an oblique way.
Participant 11 — Daydreaming in hiding (during the war)

*I daydreamed constantly.*

Participant 11 — Needing an active life (after the war)

*I was looking for something to consume myself.*

**Category 9: Accepting reality**

Acceptance involved an ability and emphasis on accepting what life has offered. Participants were proactive when possible, but when there were no options, there was acceptance. The getting on experience of acceptance involved the realization of limitations. There was a difference between intellectually accepting and yet, still feeling and being in touch with the painful experience. There was also the idea that the Holocaust experience strengthened participants in knowing how to cope with life's tragedies. One learns from the past and has a more philosophical stance to the events of one's life.

**Examples.**

Participant 3 — Accepting a trauma and believing in survival (after the war)

*It affected me very much (husband's death). I knew how to survive in a crisis like this because we had survived other traumas.*

Participant 5 — Splitting of emotions and intellect (after the war)

*I can accept intellectually, but the feelings fall behind. It can be difficult, especially concerning my daughter's death.*

Participant 6 — Accepting some negative emotions to not participating in Jewish life more (after the war)

*There was nothing I could do about it. So I feel trapped. No matter how I want to turn it around, there is nothing I could do about it. So that is my particular problem. I live with it best I can. I don't go crazy.*
Participant 6 — Accepting loss of hope in finding a witness to father's death in Holocaust (after the war)

'It was no one directly that has seen him die or knew what happened. Then when I grew up, I had this crazy kid notion that maybe he was alive. Then I found myself searching everywhere. I was talking. I was searching for this face. I had pictures of him. If you look at me you look at my father. That went away. It was childish to think that way.'

Participant 7 — Valuing life over material goods (after the war)

'Since you have to leave so much anyway. Your feeling — what is good about money over your life.'

Participant 7 — Accepting cruelty (during the war)

'I really thought the end had come. I asked myself, 'They couldn't do that to us?' But, I started to realize, that they do.'

Participant 8 — Accepting horror in war (during the war)

'It became routine. You become accustomed. Life was going on ... I accepted it. I guess that is the way it was.'

Participant 8 Second interview — Learning to accept cancer as he learned to accept Holocaust (after the war)

'I have had other reverses in life — I have to accept them.'

Participant 9 — Changing worldview to accept fate (during the war)

'That was definitely my first crisis (sister's death) and a very important crisis because it just changed my life after that.'
Participant 9 — Accepting illness and death (after the war)

*I had cancer in my kidney and it was removed and it was a big crisis. I felt like I was going to die. I still sometimes feel that. My mother wasn’t there any more to help me; nobody was there to really be there for me. When she was gone there wasn’t anybody. It’s not like I don’t have anybody. I have lots of friends and a very close family, but there wasn’t that thing that I had with my parents. I felt very alone and that I was going to die. It’s not a joke to have a kidney removed. Tremendous fear since then. I thought, if I’m going to die, I’m going to die.*

Participant 9 Second interview — Separating emotions from activities of life (after the war)

*I can get on with it, but emotionally it is hard.*

Participant 10 — Accepting coincidental fate facing death (during the war)

*We were standing shivering. It was Jan 17. It was my birthday. I thought, well, I was born and will die on that day.*

Participant 10 — Accepting death of husband (after the war)

*My husband is dead. I miss him every day, but I can’t bring him back and I can’t lay down with him.*

**Category 10: Planful Problem Solving**

Participants used planful problem solving as a means of creating a life and lifestyle that they desired. They had an internal locus of control and were proactive. This enabled them to see life’s challenges as problems to be solved. Participants had life goals and used planful problem solving as a means of acquiring those goals. Suedfeld et al. (1997) described the strategy as “Deliberate (rational, cognitively-oriented) effort to change or escape the situation (p. 163).” Participants achieved this through using education as a means of acquiring a profession that allowed them to have a desired style of life, through a decision to
marry and rebuild a family and profession after the destruction of the Holocaust, by creating opportunities at work, by choosing careers that were practical means of acquiring possessions, by finding meaning or purpose in life through work, or volunteering, and in finding the practical outlet of work as a means of overcoming destructive emotions. Problem solving skills were implemented in a variety of situations. Participants felt empowered and their self-concept was strengthened through achieving what they had planned.

**Examples.**

Participant 4 — Working as part of a plan in immigration to rebuild life after the Holocaust (after the war)

... build another life for themselves and everybody was ... they felt free and they were working very hard and they were happy here.

Participant 7 — Educating oneself as part of a plan to build life after the Holocaust (after the war)

I got an A average which was good enough for a first-class scholarship which paid my full first year at university. I got another scholarship to pay 75% of my second year. I knew that now was the time to carry on because I only have a few years to go.

Participant 8 — Active problem solving to find a lost relative after the Holocaust (after the war)

My mother talked about my brother (killed during the Holocaust) all the time, what happened, where, how. We knew that he was nowhere to be found. We did all kinds of searches. We only found out later, only recently, in the last few years that I really found out all the details of what really happened to him through contacts and friends.

Participant 8 — Learning the process to succeed with planful problem solving (after the war)

I learned to cross the bridges as you come to them and not contemplate the whole
thing — a step at a time. When I went back to university and dentistry — just take it as it came and it turned out all right.

Participant 9 — Making practical choices to achieve desired lifestyle (after the war)

If I chose something — microbiologist, my first degree and the reason I chose that is because I couldn’t speak English well and science is much easier — practical to earn money.

Participant 9 Second interview — Creating possibilities (after the war)

It is important to take opportunities — say yes to everything — you never know what will come of it. To survive is to have a sense of being clever — how to use the situation. To be clever is to have survival skills; to be a scrapper, to use the situation. It is a combination of intelligence and ability. Don’t just let it happen. It is foreseeing a situation and knowing about what to do. A Jewish saying is ‘The smart person is one who sees what will be born’ — foresee — prepare.

Participant 10 — Active problem solving to get out of grief (after the war)

After my husband died. I was grieving so much. We were married 38 years. It had been 14 years since he died. I was going down the tube. I don’t want to live. You know how you grieve. I thought maybe I should be busy, maybe I should take a job. A part-time job just to make me go out. And I did it. I worked for Army and Navy. I said ‘Well it’s okay with me.’ I liked the Army and Navy. I worked for four hours. I said ‘You know, I should pay you because this helped me.’ This was my therapy.

Category 11: Bearing Witness

Bearing witness involved the need to “generate a legacy of the self that promotes the next generation” (McAdams, 1990, p. 464). Participants felt a need to tell others of their personal experience during the Holocaust. Their purpose was both private and public. Private reasons amounted to the desire to have children know their heritage and therefore
understand themselves and their parents better. It also included having children know of their missing relatives as well as what had happened to the Jewish people. Bearing witness included the need to find out the facts about family and others and personally witness what had happened. Bearing witness was a way of remembering the dead — a family member to the collective people. It was a means of reconnecting with the multigenerational family.

Public reasons for telling the personal experiences of the Holocaust included the need to teach others for a preventive purpose. By sharing their experience they could touch others and teach others about the destruction of racism and persecution. Bearing witness helped make the world a safer place. There was a purpose for having experienced the horror of the Holocaust and for having survived. Also, as the survivors aged they felt a stronger need to tell their story before they were gone and their experience would be lost. The knowledge also needed to be shared to counter Holocaust deniers.

Telling their story publicly was a way of sharing the many different experiences of the Holocaust. Through the telling of the story, personal learning took place. Insights were gained. Pieces of the puzzle came together. Telling the story was healing. The healing took place by talking about it and by the positive, receptive, warm response of the audiences (See Appendix L for examples of thank-you letters related to the speeches). Bearing witness was a way of making meaning. It was also a way of solidifying their identity. As stated in the literature review, bearing witness was a means of giving survivors permanence, integration, self-esteem, and well-being (Bar-Tur & Levy-Shiff, 1994). Bearing witness was felt as an obligation; a responsibility that was acquired through survival.

Examples.

Participant 1 — Feeling connected to others in talking about personal experiences in the Holocaust for the Outreach Program (after the war)

*I talk to schools and they seem to understand.*
Participant 2 — Teaching (after the war)

*I have done many interviews; for CBC, Spielberg, you. I don’t do it to tell my story, but to teach others about the Holocaust.*

Participant 2 — Witnessing the Holocaust (after the war)

*If you don’t give the speeches, who will?*

Participant 2 — Speaking to students to end racism (after the war)

*Student said ‘Rest assured we have heard. We won’t let this happen again. (Holocaust)’ Could this student have said it better.*

Participant 2 — Memorializing (after the war)

*I got a letter, (after a speech about the Holocaust), ‘Thank you for making our town a better place.’ I thought, my God, — me a Holocaust survivor and a Jew. I am making this American town a better place. My parents should read this. They would be proud. How far we have come — in 1938 America would not accept us into the country. For all of us, that we lived to see the day!*

Participant 3 — Sharing (after the war)

*I would like to share my experience with the world.*

Participant 3 — Witnessing (after the war)

*We will soon be gone. It is up to the next generation to carry on this task of teaching about the Holocaust.*

Participant 3 — Stopping the deniers (after the war)

*You have to face the facts. We need to take Doug Collins (Holocaust denier) to court*
to show that we care. We just don’t want to put up with things like that. One has to make a stand. How can you just sit there and let it go — let them get away with it?

Participant 4 — Not forgetting (after the war)

This I’ll never forget — the children were taken away. You can’t forget it. I can’t go to schools (to speak). I can’t. If the children are not taught, it could happen.

Participant 4 Second interview — Telling the family (after the war)

I can tell my story and feelings to my friends and family. It feels good to do so, but I can’t publicly.

Participant 6 — Needing to get the facts straight (after the war)

For many years, my mother, when she died, there was a woman who was right behind her who saw her because she turned around and asked her what you think I should do. The women answered. ‘Do what you want’ (mother died). And that same woman came back to Belgium and opened up a bakery and I went to see her with the idea of giving her hell for not telling her to save her life. But I could not. You could have said stop. You could have said something, but you said do what you want. She felt guilty because she said that I came to see her and I introduced myself to her and told her who my mother was and she started crying. So when I saw a woman crying I was not going to give her hell on top of that. I ended up helping her instead of giving her hell. I went to see her a few times to talk to her about my mother and see how she was in the concentration camps. So there was a witness.

Participant 6 — Telling a personal story (after the war)

I speak about the Holocaust to make it real; to show people it really did happen so people won’t forget. I went to talk against the deniers, like Doug Collins. I want to
tell the truth — show pictures of my family who died; for instance on my mother's side out of 13 relatives 3 remain.

Participant 7 — Creating an obligation (after the war)

I feel I owe this to my relatives (Holocaust speeches). I owe it to the memory of my family that perished — to speak at schools and symposiums about the Holocaust. I preferred to talk about it. I only started telling about it a year ago.

Participant 8 — Creating a personal remembrance (after the war)

He kept pestering me. For once in my life I had not talked about it. He kept nattering at me. One day he sent me a book. He wanted me to look on the page where my brother's name appeared on the map of Jewish children taken away in France. It was a time when you started hearing about Holocaust deniers. I came to realize that if I'm not going to say something then who is? Not so much about the millions of people, but about my family, about my brother.

Participant 8 — Creating a legacy (after the war)

I have more time because my retirement was gradual. But I got involved when I was still working full time. I think that you come to a time in life when you look at what's ahead and what is past. What is important is you deal with things that have been set aside that you did not want to deal with. I want to leave something, also to my children; what my background is, where I belong.

Participant 8 Second interview — Fighting back (after the war)

After the war, I became aware of Jewish history and about what had happened to my people. We are resilient and we should fight back. I do this by speaking in schools about racism and prejudice. I go into the community and speak; before it is too late.
It is preventative work. We have an obligation to tell of people that perished and so we can understand and recognize it today.

Participant 8 Second interview — Personal healing (after the war)

I only started to speak about the Holocaust later in life — before it was a closed door.
I could not deal with it. Today I find it healing. Every time I speak I open new doors because of the questions asked or a different approach. It is different every time.

Participant 8 — Commemorating (after the war)

We need to talk of the people not here.

Participant 9 Second interview — Summarizing reasons (after the war)

I speak about the Holocaust so it will never happen again — to show what can happen and how to avoid it. When I and my generation is gone, there will be no one alive to tell; then only history books. I have a tremendous need to talk because of first-hand experience. The personal experience is powerful. Very few people know of experiences other than concentration camps such as Jews in hiding, in the ghetto, and life before the war. The main reason is for my children — should know who their mother is and how it influences them. I need to educate others to tell but I don't like doing it — despite feelings. It is emotionally heavy.

Participant 10 — Finding a purpose in survival (after the war)

I had a whole life ahead of me. If I survived this, there must have been a purpose.
There was a purpose. One person was left so we could tell the story.

Participant 10 — Preventing racism (after the war)

We can't do this because we are the eyewitnesses. After we are gone. If you educate
the younger generation; I hope that will help. I hope that it will do something to pre­vent.

Participant 11 Second interview — Making meaning of death and survival (after the war)

I need to make meaning of the experience of being a survivor and of their death. It is my obligation to make meaning of their lives. Certain responsibility there because I was luckier.

Category 12: Affective Self-controlling

There was a conscious effort to control feelings and thereby actions in order to achieve a desired result. Participants were responsible for themselves or the situation and considered that by taking control of their feelings they could affect results. Taking control or responsibility in this manner empowered participants. They might not have had control over the situation but did over themselves. They achieved this through controlling emotions in various situations such as: in the face of Nazi destruction, in working or volunteering and in order to help others. Maintaining control of self also set an example to loved ones to do the same. The final result of affective self-control was maintaining a sense of self-pride, inner self-control, and safety in a powerless situation.

Examples.

Participant 2 — Not allowing emotions to show during public speaking for the Holocaust (after the war)

You must have control to speak in front of students — never cry.

Participant 4 — Stopping flow of emotions when triggered by Holocaust museum (after the war)

I went to Washington to see the museum (Holocaust) and I was living through it again. I can't. It's too upsetting. It doesn't help in any way.
Participant 5 — Appearing strong for others (after the war)

*I had to control myself — when my daughter was killed — to protect B (husband) or it would make it worse. There were many occasions when I had to control myself. It was controlled grieving.*

Participant 7 — Protecting self from guards in camp (during the war)

*You had to be careful that it didn’t come out (laughter). Otherwise it would have been really horrible.*

Participant 7 — Finding self-respect in camp (during the war)

*I had no power to resist the punishment but I had the power and strength to deny him the pleasure of seeing me cringe and that gave me a strange strength — disregard of cowardice — found the strength to deny him the pleasure of seeing me cringe and they left me alone because they looked for someone who did cringe.*

Participant 9 — Getting on with life (after the war)

*There is not time to just fiddle around and do nothing and feel sorry for yourself.*

Participant 10 — Being forced to observe someone be killed in order not to be killed (during the war)

*We had to watch. They were hanging people. We had to go out after work and see them — how they hung. Pull the chair away. I will never forget a young boy. He was begging to let him go. 17 years old ... We were sitting at the table and working. It was day shift.*

Participant 10 — Control eating to not die (after the war)

*Some people ate too much. Their stomachs were shrunk and they died after. We were careful.*
Participant 11 — Not letting others know feelings (before the war)

I remember the first day I went to kindergarten, my Mother had arranged limousine service together with three or four other families. These other kids. This school had started in September and my mother felt she wanted to protect me and wanted me to go in January. So this little group existed and I was the newcomer. When I got into the limousine, two of the little girls sat on top of me, on my face and they tried to stop me from breathing. I pretended that it never bothered me and I never told anybody.

Participant 11 — Keeping silent in hiding

People would come in there for coffee all the time. That was normal in the countryside. There was also a warning system. There was enough distance to see them coming, then there was the warning system. If someone was on their way to the house we had to be quiet. And in the winter there was a coal stove and it would make noises. The stove would go out, so we tried it in the bathroom and if you had to cough, you had to have your head under the blankets. Those people on their second and third cup! We would muffle our coughs under the blanket.

Category 13: Planful Physical Escaping from Life Threatening Situations

This coping strategy involved action-oriented behavior focussed on escape or in efforts to avoid a life-threatening situation. It was mainly used during the Holocaust and its immediate aftermath. Incorporated in this timeframe is planful problem solving. In order to escape or avoid the situation physically, participants needed to have a plan. For many participants this plan was, in part, created by a parent or partner. I included these incidents, as participants had to have the ability to follow through with the plan in order to escape.

Participants did what was physically necessary to survive or alleviate the situation. There is the idea of being clever in knowing how to survive such as making the right connections, or knowing what it is to do in order to escape or survive. The range included taking direct action to keeping still and quiet. The purpose was survival.
Examples.

Participant 1 — Following a plan and taking on a false identity after escaping the ghetto (during the war)

I escaped. My father arranged for me to escape. I walked through an open gateway under the guns of the Nazis and the soldiers and the Polish police, but my father had bribed them. The Polish police and the Jewish policemen and both promised not to shoot but we weren't sure they wouldn't shoot. There was going to be an 'Aktion' (roundup of Jews to be deported or killed) so to avoid that they sent me out. They bundled my sister out beforehand. And I ran with Christian papers under a different name to a Catholic village to my grandmother ... and I was supposed to be a friend of a friend of someone who was fighting in the war and she (grandmother) decided to take this child in.

Participant 3 — Finding a hiding place (during the war)

I was afraid of what I didn't know, but I was afraid that someone would come to the door, something was just going to happen. There were a lot of Jewish people, but our apartment was not in the Jewish area, so we had to move from our apartment. And as it happens, my brother-in-law owned an apartment in a more Jewish area, which was designated as a ghetto. So everyone moved to this apartment. It was very hard to get places.

Participant 4 — Hiding (during the war)

In the ghetto, they (Nazis) were going to liquidate it. More and more nights they would come and take people and we would never see them again. We didn't have anywhere to go so we went there (ghetto). We were there another year. And then in 1944 when the Russians started coming closer and closer we hid in the tunnels and we
were there for about two weeks before we got something to eat. It got less and less and less and we were about 100 people. And then we came out and nobody was left...

Participant 7 — Finding and making connections (during the war)

There was always this underground line to get a visa; for example — did you hear, you can get a visa for such and such a place ... there were visas available for S, you had to pay of course. And you had to promise you wouldn’t go there, but as long as you had a visa before the Nazis knew it was fake, then they would let you out. So I got that ... I was only there for a little; over a month. I got out.

Participant 8 — Escaping and overcoming fear (during the war)

We took the train and a bus and eventually ended up in a small town ... to be smuggled across. They found a passer. A passer is a person who would take large sums of money and smuggle you. The problem was half the time they took the money and they turned people in. There were some scary moments; walking through a mine field and hearing the dogs.

Participant 9 — Silence and identity change to escape being identified (during the war)

And I certainly had these survival skills. When I was in hiding as well I knew when to be quiet ... you also needed to have a sense of what to do; what is necessary. For a little kid who is eight years to know that I had to be absolutely quiet and that I could not give myself away ... That I have to, completely within one year, change a lot become somebody else in order to save myself.

Participant 10 — Creating escape plans in an anti-Semitic incident (after the war)

After that we decided to leave Poland. No more. We had to smuggle ourselves out.

We took two suitcases and got a guide. We traveled by train to the point where we
met the guide. We couldn’t cross together. I had to go with the baby. We put money in the heels (of shoes).

Participant 11 — Making knowledgeable decisions to escape (during the war)

I remember we had a map. We had one man from the resistance, people came once a month to supply us, with money and food stamps. We would get the news from the front, so we would plot all the time. Now we are here, now we are there. That we did.

**Category 14: Distancing**

Distancing is a coping strategy of not dealing directly with the feeling or the situation at the time. Participants were either able to put the feeling or situation out of their mind directly, or become involved with either work, social activities, or using imagination to overcome. Isolation from others, separating parts of identity or experience, or not talking about the issue at the time or for a time after also helped. During moments or times of severe stress, participants detached feelings from events.

Distancing incorporates both compartmentalization and denial. Suedfeld et al. (1997) describes distancing as “Effort to detach oneself emotionally from a situation,” compartmentalization as “Effort to encapsulate the problem psychologically so as to isolate it from other aspects of life,” and denial as “Ignoring the problem, not believing in its reality” (p. 163).

**Examples.**

Participant 1 — Observing destruction and remaining detached (during the war)

*The Gestapo had (a list of names of) ... Jewish professionals, intelligentsia and business and went down the list and wrecked everything along the way. Three weeks after they got into Poland, it took them three weeks from that day or two to enter Poland, to enter Warsaw, I mean, as victors, the Nazis. And I just observed, I became an observer ...*
Participant 1 — Using creative imagination to overcome strain of false identity (during the war)

(to a friend) I told her a story out of a book about myself. I couldn’t tell her who I was, where I came from or what my name was, so I told her I was a princess in Russia. I had a favorite heroine from a book written by Russian authors and this girl was a Georgian princess whose mother died and father sent her to a boarding school in St. Petersburg for young ladies and how she overcome everything. Her mother was Tartar, in spite of the fact that her father was a prince. And she was persecuted for that. An interesting story which actually became true here in Canada for me because my mother sent me to a Christian boarding school on Vancouver Island where I lied about being Jewish for two years.

Participant 6 — Keeping active to overcome loneliness (after the war)

I keep myself busy. Well, I guess everybody to a degree, must feel alone. So I do other things.

Participant 7 — Needing peace and quiet to overcome emotional reaction to Holocaust (after the war)

You can already see the pressure from one disaster or possible disaster to the next leave a mark. All I wanted was to retreat in a hole, get a nice job. I didn’t want to come outside. I just wanted to have peace.

Participant 8 — Participating as regular in activities (during the war)

I used to go and play with friends who were Christian or Catholics; go play with a young group that was affiliated with them and go with them. There was a priest that organized things like soccer games.
Participant 8 — Separating Holocaust memories from family life (after the war)

People ask me when I talk to groups (about the Holocaust), ‘Did you talk to your family?’ I’ve barely said anything to my kids until recently. I didn’t say much to my wife. It is only in the last three years.

Participant 9 — Remembering events with detachment (during the war)

I don’t remember the feelings. I don’t know if others remember the feelings. I remember hiding when I heard someone coming, but I don’t remember the fear (during raids in the war). I don’t know if it’s something to do with age. I was detached in the ghetto — hiding when T (sister) was taken away. I was involved but detached.

Participant 11 — Remembering a fearful moment with detachment (before the war)

There was one day a big fight between my parents. My father was chasing my mother around the table with a big knife. My sister and I were standing on the stairs. I would keep asking what was going on and my sister would tell me to shut up. I do know he would never have touched her. But it was a feeling of it being fired up. That was a traumatic situation. I don’t remember what I thought. If I would guess, it was probably anger and frustration at not being explained a thing. That generally was an important thing for me.

Participant 11 — Using imagination to detach from uncomfortable reality (during the war)

As a child I had to hide things too. I had imaginary friends, and when I had the bad judgment to tell them who they were, then they would make jokes. I have to, to some degree, live separate lives; go into groups that have no relationship with my family life.
Participant 11 — Decreasing mental energy in hiding (during the war)

*What I seem to remember is that I became really lethargic, no mental energy. It was a black hole in my memory.*

Participant 11 — Not remembering what may have been sexual abuse according to the participant (during the war)

*He said ‘Shall I wash you?’ (with father of family in hiding) ‘I am old enough to wash myself.’ All I remember in the same bedroom bathroom, locking the door. ‘The lock doesn’t work,’ he said. That is all I remember. I can’t remember anything else.*

**Category 15: Initiating Action**

Initiating action was a coping strategy that involved a proactive stance. The foundation of this strategy was a feeling of being or needing to be autonomous and responsible. There is a belief that one must count on oneself in order to take action in attaining a goal. One is competent to take charge of life, take risks, and create change. Initiating action included: commitment to education, work, creating work, escaping from camp, marriage, divorce, organizing groups and societies, changing society, and to foresee what will come and pave the way for it.

**Examples.**

Participant 2 — Seeking approval (after the war)

*I knew I had to make myself better than anyone in that office (because of being Jewish). I knew it. I’ve never put so much into a job.*

Participant 3 Second interview — Being self-reliant (before the war)

*I always wanted to do something by myself. I was not afraid.*

Participant 4 — Leadership in escaping from camp (during the war)

*We made up what we were going to do. I would take out a group of people, take them right out to the opening ... I was taking out a group, when I started to take a group I*
heard shooting and I said 'Get back in there' and we went in. People were hacking in
the walls, looking. Then I jumped in the sewers. It was open. Everybody was running
after me. I said 'Come on. We'll get out of here.' Somebody heard my voice and said
'Give me your hand.' I ran to the other building. There was what looked like shelves
and wall. I came in there with about 50 people already there. They were trying to
break down the wall. And further in the middle of the room was a hole and in the bot­
tom was a piece of trim, to prevent fires. When they took away the trim there were
stairs going down. We started going down and I said 'No, I don't like it here. The
Germans already know ... '

Participant 6 — Finding work (after the war)

I was always working and was on my own at fifteen. I never had a teen's life.

Participant 6 Second interview — Creating work (after the war)

I strive in working well and a lot. I even invent work to do. I make work — do
research. I do it on my own because I feel like it. I am lucky because in the work I
do, I do a lot on my own. I don't like bosses. I can work 24 hours a day and still not
be finished dealing with people.

Participant 7 — First in being a mature student (after the war)

(going back to university as a mature student) ... getting used to all the kids. When I
am in the hall they would ask me 'Where is our class?' I would say 'Look, I am a stu­
dent like you.' I was one of a very few older people who signed up. The only one who
graduated and went to university because it was the early stages. They were just
beginning. They were observing me. They were lucky in that sense because I fit in.

Participant 8 Second interview — Accomplishing (after the war)

I have done so many things in my life that I thought I could never do. When I do
things I still think of myself as that little poor refugee looked down upon from the past. I have to be grateful for everything. I am out of my shell. I still hear a little voice saying to the little refugee 'What are you doing here?'

Participant 9 — Making friends (after the war)

It was always hard. The hard part was fitting in. Making friends. The contrast of completely being on my own for a whole year and hiding and needing to be quiet in order to survive then the tremendous need to have friends. Everyone was in groups already and I always had to fit in. The groups were from different countries. After the war there were no kids from Lithuania so I had to fit in ... I sat around in the evenings memorizing all the composers and the others so in that way I had an angle. I had more than others ... so I used to get feedback (got a boyfriend because I read Dostoevsky) and I actually used to sit and study those kinds of things. So that was my way of getting in — being different or special to make something special of me in order to fit in. That was really important. I had to make things happen and make them want to be my friend. I had to keep going that because I was always the outside. To each place I came there was always the established groups, they didn't need me, I needed them. I try to keep up my friendships. I put a lot of effort into that. I know that if I don't put in effort, it won't come back. I have to work at it. I have to be constantly proactive and it's tiring. You can't let go of that. Things don't come to me. I have to get them. You need to put effort forth. I felt I have to work for things. After that I had to use my skills. I had to make it happen, to feel social, loved ... accepted.

Participant 9 — Creating groups (after the war)

I have started a lot of groups. I start a lot of groups and then I pull out. I belong to Hadassah, Council of Jewish Women, leader in Zionist Jude camps. I was sent to Israel to learn to be a leader. I helped organize the Crisis Center, Safer — U.B.C. Women's Resource Center. I belong to a Yiddish Group.
Participant 11 — Fighting racism (after the war)

I became a school trustee. I chair the child survivor group. There was the so-called 'value school' movement in Surrey. There, some fundamentalists had gained office in Surrey. By then I had children so I had a stake in the school system, although they were not in school yet. They wanted what they called a 'Judeo-Christian' value system in Surrey. I got involved with the group of people to protest. I was beginning to get into fighting racism. That is when I ran for the school board.

Category 16: Believing in Lucky Fate

Participants believed that although they may have had a role in their survival, good fortune or luck also had a part. Survival depended on initiative, planning, a good constitution or upbringing. But it also depended on luck. Believing in luck helped participants make sense of their survival.

Examples.

Participant 3 — Luck plays a part in planful problem solving in escape (during the war)

Well of course it was luck, a lot of it was luck. The fate of why I'm here is maybe more than my husband was thinking ahead. But the way we did it, the things on the way, I think it was luck. The direction you had to think about it, but what was happening in between was luck. We were very lucky.

Participant 4 — Luck stands alone in escaping from labor camp (during the war)

People were walking in it to make hiding places ... People did not know what to do ... when we were surrounded at night ... the army ... we started running. People would run from one building to the other. I was lucky (to survive).

Participant 4 — Luck partnering with supernatural (during the war)

Somebody wanted us to live longer. I'm not a believer. But there must be something or luck. But something's there. It is like when you say you are in the right place at the right time. Or sometimes you are not.
Participant 8 Second interview — Luck guiding life (during the war)

I don't know what pushed me, kept me going, when I was down, but luck. I always found someone to help me. I found people when I needed them.

Participant 9 — Within a hard fate, luck existing (during and after the war)

The other side (of sister's death) is that they always feel that I've always been so lucky. I am always at the right place at the right time ... including the cancer. It was there and they took it out. I didn't need any therapy, no radiation. They took it out. Out of the right spot somehow.

Participant 9 — Luck as being part of character and learned survival skills (during the war)

I was lucky because of the family I was born into. I learned survival skills to build on. I helped me to feel good about me. I survived. My parents survived. Luck.

Participant 10 — Luck siding with social connectedness in camp (during the war)

In a way, I was, no matter how I suffered and what was happening, I was always lucky. It was pure luck. I wouldn't have survived there at all. He (future husband) had a little shack where there was the magazine. When they ... in the back of that they had a bed so they slept there too. He had a little stove so he could cook a little something. So from work I went there and they brought us ... you see what luck is (the extra warmth and food enhanced survival).

Participant 10 — Luck tying itself to survival in labor camp (during the war)

It was pure luck; whatever will be will be. I never tried. Of course, I wanted to live.

Participant 11 — Luck and achieving (after the war)

It was luck. I was invited by the government to a position — luck and a good name.
Category 17: Belonging

Participants derived strength through a feeling of being connected with others: family, people who shared the same fate, and other Jews. Feeling connected to family members was one of the most important ways that strength was derived. Suffering enhanced connectedness. Participants felt connected to people who had suffered the same fate. Belonging to the Jewish people created a sense of feeling the same as others and feeling protected by this sameness, as opposed to a world that once excluded Jews. Belonging enhanced self-esteem and identity. There was also a need to share, either through discussion or by being in the presence of others. There was a desire to hear the stories of others. A feeling of being cared for and caring for others is a part of this coping strategy. A sense of belonging was also derived from emigrating to Canada and finding acceptance and freedom in Canada. The belonging was mixed with a deep sense of gratitude.

Examples.

Participant 1 — Feeling similar (after the war)

_I don't feel I'm different from other child survivors in a sense that we suffered similarly and had similarities in terms of hiding, having Christian papers, of knowing our identities, our Jewish Christian thing, being confused, and so in that respect, I'm no different._

Participant 3 — Understanding through similar experiences (after the war)

_This is where I belong (Jew married to non-Jew). This is part of me and that's okay. I'm very comfortable. I feel at home with my Jewish friends. They are like family. What is great is we can talk to each other so easily like we can't talk to others, so easily like we can't talk to anyone else. There is immediate understanding. We have been through that trauma together and we are on the same wavelength._

Participant 3 Second interview — Finding strength through persecution (after the war)

_Jewish people need to stick together. Others are united against them. For Hitler it_
didn't matter, all Jews were the same. Jews have not learned this lesson. We have to keep telling the children, so they learn.

Participant 3 Second interview — Commonality of experiencing (after the war)

I have much in common and like being in the company of Jews.

Participant 4 — Feeling connected to others who have suffered (after the war)

This is only the story of one; what we went through.

Participant 4 — Feeling a part of Canada (after the war)

We are happy here. To come from countries like Poland or Germany. It's like a paradise. To be accepted. To be free — you are like a human being.

Participant 6 — Needing to feel a part of a group (after the war)

I think the group got me back into Jewishness. What was really missing in my life. To belong to a unity. To belong, that is what is missing. ... the idea of going and seeing a whole bunch of Jewish people. Now I go (synagogue). I see a bunch of people I know. That's a good feeling. I think this group (hidden children) has helped me a lot. It helped me to feel like one of them, rather than not.

Participant 6 Second interview — Comfort through sharing similar experiences (after the war)

One of the most important ways that I helped myself was in the friendship with one man I met in my youth. We would talk endlessly until we were blue in the face. We got it all out, our feelings and thoughts about the Holocaust experience. I was his doctor and he was mine. We didn't go crazy because we talked about it. My sister had no one who shared her same experience and so never talked about it. She become more nervous than me. She bottled it up.
Participant 6 Second interview — Comfort from sharing similar experiences (after the war)

*I get the most help from the child survivors group — no doubt. In their presence I am able to be me completely — no hesitation — no barriers — I can open up to small or large group; no embarrassment. We shared. I like to hear what they have to say. I connect. No one laughs at me. They understand. They are Jewish and had the same experience without speaking we connect. The whole group is exactly what I had with my best friend. I can feel free and home and open to 27 people. I can say things and be genuine; not phony. I really want to know how they feel.*

Participant 7 — Finding strength in belonging and identity through persecution (during the war)

*When we get out of here (cattle cars). We are a community. We are in this together; at least we are. We Jews are singled out; done nothing except be a Jews. At least you are with others who suffer likewise. Everyone in the train felt the same. I'm quite sure. It didn't make one proud to be a Jew. All war, one is innocent and yet I felt a kin to them. I would not give up my Jewishness, having suffered for it. I certainly would not.*

Participant 7 — Experiencing horror in terms of ‘we’ in going to camp in cattle cars (during the war)

*They were trying to suffocate us. The treatment the first week was so horrendous. The mockery that they made to us and with us.*

Participant 7 Second interview — Experiencing horror in terms of ‘we’ (during the war)

*We are all in the same boat — have to share in the camp.*

Participant 8 Second interview — Finding identity through belonging as a mature adult different than earlier (after the war)

*I felt a sense of belonging to the Jewish community later in life. I belong in the child*
survivor group. I have a strong feeling of belonging to the Jewish people and it doesn’t have anything to do with religion.

Participant 9 — Belonging to Canada (after the war)

Then I started feeling this is my country. This is my home because the other was not my home anymore. More when I became an adult. I was always grateful to Canada because it gave me the opportunities.

Participant 9 — Belonging through a feeling of being understood (after the war)

I feel good in the child survivor group. I don’t need to justify myself; what I am, what I do.

Participant 10 — Sharing experiences (after the war)

In the evening we were all just sitting and talking, reminiscing about the ties in the camp. ... It made me feel better to be with people who shared the same experiences, even now.

Participant 10 Second interview — Talking about shared experiences (during the war

People came to Vancouver and tried to find one another — things in common. One by one it became a group of friends. We always talk about what happened to us in the Holocaust — the families. Even if you went to a wedding, a happy occasion — we ended up talking about this. We always talk about it, till this day.

Participant 10 — A feeling of belonging as a sense of identity (before, during, and after the war)

I belong to the Jewish people.
Category 18: Understanding Context

This coping strategy concerned a curiosity to know and understand events. Knowledge enhanced a feeling of control. A sense of control fostered self-esteem and identity. Participants reflected on their experience in order to make meaning of it. Participants reflected on Jewish persecution before and during the Holocaust trying to understand and make sense of their own personal history as well as the history of the Jewish people and persecution. Their answers revolved around the idea of injustice. This idea enabled participants to not be destroyed by the negative emotional aftermath of persecution. Overcoming the effects of persecution involved understanding the history of the Jews and of the persecution of the Jews. Strength and coping was derived from the idea that Jews have always experienced difficulties and have overcome them. In the process Jewish identity was strengthened. Some state that the suffering solidified belongingness. There was strength in the collective suffering. Anti-Semitism was not taken personally. Pride was derived from the strength of survival of self, Jewish people, and Jewish identity. Knowledge of the Diaspora and anti-Semitism strengthened belief in the ability to cope. Reflecting on persecution helped participants cope.

Examples.

Participant 1 — Creating an identity through persecution (after the war)

I didn't understand why I was being persecuted and I knew I was being persecuted so if I had the knowledge of it, if someone explained to me they are persecuting Jews, but Jews for me was a word. It wasn't ... it did not mean anything to me. I knew, however that my mother's mother was religious but then ... and I knew Catholicism because my nanny tried to convert me — took me to church every Sunday ... So I was kneeling on a church floor before I had seen a synagogue or religious Jews.

Participant 1 — Labeling and identity (during the war)

We went back to Warsaw. We found our apartment shattered; everything was in
smithereens including toys and books and my room. I had a beautiful room. And what happened of course was the Jewish thing, which I didn’t understand then.

Participant 1 — Negative identity forming in the ghetto (during the war)

Then under the burden of it all and wondering why this was happening to us and the Jewish thing was never clarified to me. So I found it hateful ... a curse. My first inkling of Jewishness was that there was a wall being constructed on the streets of Warsaw ... and I walked with my Dad and I remember seeing also the SS officers with black uniforms and they frightened me and my father would stick to the side streets to avoid them because we continued to live in the apartment. But my father said that they were building this ghetto and that was my first understanding of what it meant to be Jewish; that I had to leave our beautiful apartment which was smashed and we somehow restored order for a few months and then moved to this horrible poor dreary area, which was a Jewish area before the war ... into a filthy apartment with millions of people and we were only given a room for four. My former life disappeared. And I suddenly knew I was Jewish.

Participant 3 — Making sense of Jewish identity (before, during, and after the war)

... because we were Jewish. I feel the separatists have a lot of economic jealousy. It's the Catholic church, and Poland is a Catholic country and they claimed that the Jews killed Jesus Christ. And the churches were very much antagonistic in respect to the fact that they were telling their parishioners that the Jews killed Jesus Christ. So it was mostly on the religious grounds and economic grounds. But there were many poor Jewish people, which I read about in books after I realized it was there, but I never in my dreams thought it would take shape as it did. Like a passing thing, it would go away. I always knew about it. It was on the streets. I read about it in the newspapers (anti-Semitism).
Participant 3 — Hiding Jewish identity to survive (during the war)

*I was not afraid of anti-Semitism. But I never experienced any of the anti-Semitism personally when I was growing up. I saw it. I saw it in the universities. They were beating up Jewish students in universities; that was before Hitler was even there. On the streets there was a lot of anti-Semitism, but I never experienced it personally. The minute the war ended, I had to go outside to line up. I was looking less Jewish than some members of my family. So they would send me in the line up to get some food.*

Participant 4 — Finding identity through persecution (before, during, and after the war)

*I feel very good to be Jewish. I was born a Jew and I will die a Jew. The Holocaust made me a stronger Jew — in my belief. Thousands of years (the Jews have experienced persecution); not so much like this time. You never know what could happen tomorrow.*

Participant 5 — Finding strength in Jewish people having coped throughout history (after the war)

*The Holocaust was just another bad time to get over. But they killed over 6 million people, over 3 million Jews, and what was left was nothing. Now in Poland, most of them emigrated, but most of them were killed.*

Participant 5 — Accepting anti-Semitism (before, during, and after the war)

*Anti-Semitism was very big. The Romanians were worse than the Germans. Romania was actually the cradle to anti-Semitism. So we were used to being shouted at ‘dirty Jew’ or fighting in schools because you were Jewish. We were used to that. It was part of an everyday thing.*

Participant 5 — Strength through being used to persecution (after the war)

*I think I was stronger to cope with this than if I had been a Canadian family that did not have anything happen to you. It gave me strength to cope. In spite of all that, it*
didn't kill us. In spite of all they tried to do. I don't think anyone will kill us, we've been persecuted for years, for ages, never kills us.

Participant 7 — Finding pride in history (before, during, and after the war)

What we can be proud of is the long history. The longest; that is why I remain Jewish. They were the first ones to do away with human sacrifices, animal sacrifices, and one lord and no images. We could read and write before other people. Something to be proud of in history. We were not fanatic Jews — Jews above all.

Participant 7 — Searching for meaning in the suffering (during and after the war)

Where is the fairness of it all to be singled out for no other reason just because you are a Jew. So many killed just because you are a Jew. What's the point? You may be a fanatic and say I don't care. If you are an Orthodox Jew and you believe in it so strongly that nothing else matters, you have to take the consequences. In the short time we have, why? It was such that, why get married, why have children? I found suddenly some things were the same; just like the old testament. The reason you are persecuted is because there is an old testament and a new testament and we that said that the Messiah has come and other said that it has not come and that is why you get killed. What is the point because we were liberals. The only time I would have really felt that I am Jewish was when I was pointed out by anti-Semitic remarks. I'm different. It was difficult. We could not help it (being Jewish). We were always different from the others anyway. And if you did not think it the others told you on the way to school.

Participant 7 — Trying to understand the persecution (during and after the war)

I asked myself, 'They cannot do that to us?' But they did. I asked myself, 'What had I done? What is it? Did we deserve that?' I thought that maybe I had done certain things, but nothing that bad.
Participant 7 Second interview — Making sense (during and after the war)

I had strong family ties and a knowledge of history. This gave me the strength to know that the Nazis had no right to say I had no rights to be here. We belong here. In reflection, I realized that there was always anti-Semitism and Jews could survive again. It was not personal.

Participant 8 — Fearing being a Jew (after the war)

If you look at the history of the Jewish people; there have been long periods, even centuries when things were okay. I'm concerned for my children. Even if they were half Jewish — Hitler went for them.

Participant 8 — Feeling ostracized in being a Jew (during the war)

It was difficult. As I stepped outside people started pointing and whispering and looking at you differently. All of a sudden for me, it was like being branded with a hot iron. Being highly visible ... Jews as parasites. It was difficult in school. Before I was one of the gang, then all of a sudden there was a void. It was not the same.

Participant 8 — Making sense of the persecution (after the war)

I was ten with my class at school, we went to a museum which was dedicated to show the danger of Jews ... statues of a big hairy Jew with big nose and holding a bag of money that was a museum of how bad Jews were and how much of a menace they were. For a child who did not know he was any different to be forced to attend was really quite traumatic. I felt threatened by being Jewish. I felt scared. As a child, you don't rationalize this or think why. That's how it feels.

Participant 8 — Creating an identity around fighting persecution (after the war)

History shows us what happened and that you can do something about it or it will
happen again and again. We have to do something about it and do it personally — stand up to the deniers, confront, stand up and be counted.

Participant 8 — Making sense of persecution (after the war)

If I had known about anti-Semitism it would have helped but I had a sheltered life and I only feared terror. Now that I know history I know it repeats itself, it makes more sense. As a mature adult I see the pieces of the puzzle.

Participant 9 — Identity forming through persecution (after the war)

The Jews have the strength of survival through the Diaspora. Religion, family, education, and tradition and anti-Semitism — kept us together. We cannot forget who we are. I always seek out Jewish people.

Participant 10 — Being Jewish meant living with persecution (before the war)

In Poland the anti-Semitism was very bad. There was no violence and we lived with it. We did not know any different. It was not something that was life threatening. They called us names; joking but they meant it. We were so used to it that we did not even take it seriously. Nobody was fighting us physically, just words.

Participant 10 — Trying to understand persecution in understanding human nature (during and after the war)

Such a good-looking guy, blond, blue eyes. He didn't even look Jewish, but he was (her brother killed by the Nazis). I don't even know how to express myself, how I felt. Why? Why? But they had to get rid of Jews. The world does not make sense. It is crazy. That is what they were after, the final solution. They did not want the Jews. They would wipe them off the earth.
Participant 11 — Trying to make sense of persecution as it appeared in one’s life (after the war)

Later, after the war, when I told my mother how awful I felt in the beginning, and how the teacher would not accept me. Then my mother said ‘Oh ya, she was anti-Semitic (teacher).'</I used to play with her (friend) and at one point I went to play with her and her mother said she is busy. She can’t play with you. When I came after the war to come visit these people. ‘Hey, are you still alive?’ That is all they said. There was the kind of anti-Semitism, but it was the gentlemen’s agreement kind. You did not really know. It was not overheard. I was disappointed and surprised when I was told that I could not play with my friend. I did not know it was because I was Jewish.

Participant 11 Second interview — Strength in knowing history and identifying with being a Jew (after the war)

Jews have learned to survive through some 1000 years — always been tribulations against us.

Category 19: Being Responsible/Accountable for Self and Others

Participants felt they must count on themselves in order to alleviate whatever situation befalls them or others. They could not change what had happened. It was necessary to accept it and make the best of it. This was achieved through helping others to escape, acquiring an education to change a lifestyle, handling the emotions of self and others, and viewing situations in a way that empowered. Importance was placed on the idea that one was self-reliant. Importance was also placed on the idea that one was able and could change one’s own life as well as the lives and situations of others.

Examples.

Participant 3 — Maintaining pride and not accepting charity from others (after the war)

I was a very proud person. I would never take anything from anyone. When I was expecting G there were some ladies here. One day one of the ladies said ‘I want to
tell you something. You are going to have a baby. We are going to give you a shower.' I didn't know what a shower was. So I asked what it is and she said 'Everyone's going to come and bring something for your future baby.' I got so angry with her. I said, 'My baby is going to have only what I can afford to give him.' I will never forget that. Just to give you an example. I remember in Warsaw there was a part of the family that was not so well off, so people would give them money or things they needed. I was so proud. I would never think of anything like that. My husband was like that too. He would never take anything from anybody, ever.

Participant 4 — Leadership and being responsible to others in an escape attempt from camp (during the war)

I was 18 or 19. We were laying on the grass. They said 'let's go' and I said 'we promised to come back'... We promised to come back and take them out. We weren't going to leave them there and they were no older ... the younger people, they ran right away ... at the end only older ... the fierce left.

Participant 6 — Empathy in feeling responsible for others' feelings (after the war)

I hate hurting people because I felt what hurt is in many different ways. I just can't hurt.

Participant 9 — Saving others (during the war)

I didn't know if my parents were alive or dead. I was responsible for my sister's death. I had to be very quiet. ... I felt that if I wasn't good and quiet I felt that not only would I die, but they would all die. The people who were taking care of me ... so the kids would come during the day and I was in hiding during the day, so I felt all kids would die. I really felt that it was in my power to save all these people by being quiet.
Participant 10 — Relying on oneself (after the war)

_I never applied for a pension (from Germany) because I was never sick. I have never been to see a counsellor or psychiatrist. I am my own counsellor._

Participant 11 — Changing oneself (after the war)

_Electioneering is related to the theater too. I was very shy. I was petrified to speak in public or speak in front of groups. I lost all that because I told myself I did public speaking. It was a role. It wasn’t me. So I got used to doing it._

**Category 20: Confronting**

Participants took action when they wanted to change the situation through “assertive or aggressive interaction with another person” (Suedfeld et al., 1997, p.163). They did not heed how others would judge it. Participants felt more in control of their life and the situation when they assumed a proactive stance. Confrontation was used in order to be independent, to fight against injustice both against a person and in society in general, and to save a loved one. Examples are from the incidents that took place life before, during, and after the Holocaust. Some participants used this strategy since childhood; others learned it over their lifetime.

**Examples.**

Participant 5 — Confrontational strategies involving writing a letter to a judge to protest his verdict on a drunk driver that killed participant’s daughter, and creating an organization to fight drunk drivers (after the war)

_I cope today through anger, through fighting bad things that happened; by starting MADD, by volunteering at the Holocaust Centre. I would be shy to talk. I believe that anger has brought me to be more outspoken and extroverted. I used to think what else could hurt me anymore? Nothing ... that gave me the power to speak out against society, against the system. Anger at the acceptance of drinking and driving. I wrote a letter to the judge ... when I saw the mannerisms of the way he reacted to_
the whole thing. It made me sick to my stomach. I came here to write the letter. It was my masterpiece.

Participant 5 — Calling attention to oneself in order to protest (after the war)

When I was in MADD. I was monitoring a lot of cases of drunk drivers. It was intimidating. I was told the lawyers were intimidated (by the participant), especially the defense lawyers. What reminds me of that was when I put my star back on (Jews had to wear a star in some countries before W.W.II to indicate they were Jewish).

When I went to the courtroom on Main St. The sheriff said the judge does not want you to wear the MADD badge. I asked why and he just told me he does not give a reason just don't wear it. I agreed; then I came the next day. I went wearing the badge and the judge was on the bench already. I saw the sheriff coming over. So I took it off slowly and made a production of it. I attracted a lot of attention.

Participant 8 — Working within an organization for change (after the war)

I am upset at what is happening at the college today. I am taking an active part in getting change. I am angry and frustrated. I want to fight for justice, decency, and fairness. I don't like people exploiting the system and being dictators.

Participant 10 — Confronting snipers and the police to be with and protect husband (after the war)

I heard what they (snipers) were saying — the Jews, they killed a Christian baby and used the blood to bake ... they thought the Jews killed Christ. When I heard this I knew that he (husband) was in trouble there (trapped inside a building with the snipers outside). I went closer and the militia, the Russian Police, they wouldn't let me go. I said 'I live here. I have to go home.' 'No you can't.' 'Please let me go home.' 'There are snipers on the roof' they said. I ran against the wall. When I came there my husband was there. 'Why did you come?' I was the only woman.
Participant 11 — Fighting for autonomy as a child (before the war)

Maybe more than anything I had to always stand up to my sister. I was six years younger. I see her as someone who put a lot of pressure on me without my mother being aware or being able to cope with that. I had to show her I was tough and that it didn’t bother me.

Category 21: Believing in the Value of Education

Getting an education was an expected way of life according to most participants. It opened up the possibilities of understanding, enjoyment, and a better lifestyle. Education promoted self-confidence and also enabled leadership qualities to develop. It was encouraged by parents, either through modeling (acquiring it and using it to their benefit), or as a means of their children achieving what they could only dream about. Education meant having a better life. Jews also learned, through the experience of the Diaspora (dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles after the Babylonian captivity), that education travels. Education provides skills that may be helpful if one needs to flee. Skills cannot be taken away the same way as material possessions can.

Examples.

Participant 3 — Receiving a higher education (before the war)

There was never any thought that someone could not go to university, or that after high school there was nothing else. This was the only way.

Participant 6 — Achieving a better lifestyle (after the war)

Together with my friend I went back to school. I am glad. It would not have been much of a life without education.

Participant 7 Second interview — Achieving higher self-esteem through education and leadership (after the war)

Through education I got the confidence and this allowed me to be a leader which helped me cope. Otherwise I would be way behind. It is painful. I am a leader
because I know the facts and history and can tell others — knowledgeable about many facts. ... Happier — it is an enlargement of well-being. Through education I got the job I wanted — prosperous. It helped me overcome my depressed feelings because the Nazis wanted to degrade you, and education and leadership helped me to overcome this. Gradually I found my own self-worth. The pay is superior. I did not believe in myself before. Now, through education, my self-esteem rose and I could participate with others and not feel degraded.

Participant 8 Second interview — Being a part of Jewish worldview (after the war)

Jewish people have a curiosity; a need to learn to know and understand and talk about it and argue a lot. This makes for a successful student. They have the right rhythm to think and operate in a university and feel comfortable, fit in, work. They make good students.

Participant 9 Second interview — Enabling one to survive anywhere (after the war)

I believe in education. If you have a skill, it helps you survive. It gives you skills to get a profession that could travel. My mother was a lawyer, then nurse, teacher, and many other things.

Participant 11 — Promoting education in the family (after the war)

I was the only one in the family who went to university. Mother was ambitious for me.

Category 22: Hope in Israel

The state of Israel evoked love, pride, comfort, security and belonging for participants. It is through the existence of Israel that participants felt they had a nation they could turn to in need; a protector and a place to go. There was also a feeling of being like other immigrants — Jews also have a homeland. The state of Israel exemplified a monument to the suffering of the Holocaust. Its existence gave some purpose to the suffering and a
belief that the Holocaust would not have occurred if Israel had existed. It was a place where participants felt accepted and were fully a part of. Above all, it offered hope to the Jewish people that they will continue to exist. Strength was derived from this idea.

**Examples.**

Participant 2 — Loving one’s country (after the war)

*We finally arrived in Israel. There are no words to describe what it meant. I was ready. I wanted something dramatic, like they say, to kiss the soil.*

Participant 2 Second interview — Finding protection (after the war)

*Israel is like a protector. If something could happen here, I know there will be Israel to go to.*

Participant 3 Second interview — Finding protection and freedom (after the war)

*Proud of Israel. No one wanted us and we had no place to go before. With Israel we are like any other country. It doesn’t mean we have to live there, but we have a country behind us. It is like having your parents. They may live in Montreal, but just knowing they are there. It is very important to the ego and everything. Israel is the greatest thing that has happened to the Jewish people. My people come out — don’t have to hide.*

Participant 9 — Finding protection (after the war)

*Zionism was very important. It meant a safe haven for Jews. Zionism was the thing that was coming of the state of Israel because it was clear that if we had a state of Israel we would not have been burned in ovens. It seemed like we somehow knew that or maybe I was taught that. So Israel become a thing to really ... really important thing — its existence.*
Participant 9 — Finding hope and acceptance (after the war)

Hope. The Jewish people needed a place of their own because they were not accepted and were hated everywhere else.

Participant 9 — Finding protection and identity through persecution (after the war)

We were long in a different country, had our own stuff and it was taken away just because we were Jewish. Not for any reason; not because we were bad people or because we chose that. There was so much death, so much destruction. So now my worry is the state of Israel. I worry that it will disappear. If that disappears it will be the thing that is keeping us together disappearing, like a parent protecting the children, like a place to go when things get bad, so that is always something that is there. There is a very strong Jewish identity, though not religious.

Participant 10 — Finding protection and purpose to volunteering (after the war)

Israel means a lot. I visited it four times. I work very hard. I am very dedicated for a great love for Israel. It is a Jewish state. If we had Israel then it would not have happened, what had happened. If Israel was a state, but it wasn't, not till '48. We love this state ... I have an album of what I have achieved working for H. to raise money for Israel.

Participant 11 Second interview — Finding identity through persecution (after the war)

... only in Israel I did not feel an outsider.

Category 23: Believing in the Supernatural

Participants ranged greatly in religious belief from the Orthodox Jewish faith to agnostic. But within this range most felt the presence of something greater which affected their life in some way. This ranged from actual protection in having survived the war to being given a strong constitution to go on. There is a questioning among many about religion, but a strong sense of the spiritual which many felt, but did not fully understand. Suedfeld
et al. (1997) referred to this strategy as “Attribution of survival to religious or superstitious practices; efforts to gain such protection (e.g., prayer) (p. 163).”

**Examples.**

Participant 1 — Finding spiritual transformation (after the war)

... there exists another power which is greater than we are which we don’t understand. I call upon that power through my writing — poetry and through meditation. I like being alone and I like thinking about things. I think there is something around us which we don’t understand. So I do believe that there is something gives me strength. I do believe in a higher power and that human beings have also a higher power and ability to think beyond things — to transcend. I think there is a great possibility there which is unused.

Participant 2 — Guiding one (during the war)

I could swear that I had a guardian angel. I could swear it. On the death march — (sister) and I. I thought I could not go on. 'You and mother can’t either.' If we do something we have to do it together (commit suicide). I could not set one foot in front of the other. My mother said we have to wait one more day and then it’s birthday and maybe a miracle would happen next day. We arrived in Theresienstadt. It is a true miracle. We were so close to do it. That’s why I believe in miracles.

Participant 2 — Finding God as a certainty (during the war)

I never stopped believing in God. I wasn’t at times sure where God was, but I knew he was hanging around.

Participant 2 — Finding God as a helper (during and after the war)

God helped me. I became a master in coping. Thank God. By the grace of God, I learned how to cope.
Participant 3 — Directing in life (during and after the war)

A major source (of coping) maybe God — to direct life. But, I don’t dwell on it.

Participant 4 — As a reason for surviving (during the war)

Somebody wanted us to live longer. I'm not a believer, but there must be something ...

Participant 7 — Helping in survival (during and after the war)

I alway say “the good Lord” has always looked after me — helped me in the right moment.

Participant 7 — Finding God as a provider (after the war)

The good Lord gave me so much after all that happened to me.

Participant 9 Second interview — Answering the unanswerable (during the war)

Can miracles happen without believing in God? Things happened that saved me.

Participant 11 — Guiding in life (after the war)

I tend to lean to mysticism and spiritualism.

Summary

The eleven participants portrayed a total of 1,416 coping incidents during a total of each interview being approximately five to ten hour interviews. All eleven participants stated that they perceived their life today as satisfying. They were all fully functioning members of society. They were self-selected as well functioning by their participation in volunteer work such as the Outreach program.

Participants revealed the use of a variety of coping strategies and flexibility over their lifetime. There were three most frequent coping strategies used: seeking social support (12% frequency — total number of incidents, 100% participation — number of participants providing incidents under these categories), reflecting (10.5% frequency, 100% par-
ticipation), and positive reappraising (9% frequency, 100% participation). These strategies were interwoven throughout the life narratives.

Participants considered their early family life as basically stable, secure, and satisfying. An example of this is the frequent use of the coping strategy emulating (6.8% frequency, 90% participation) in which participants learned successful coping strategies from their parents. Participants stated that they were very happy in their original family and had basic needs met; many felt they had much more than the necessities of life, having a privileged lifestyle. The majority came from well-to-do homes where parents had status in the community. A minority of others came from large extended families. This provided a secure base and sense of belonging (2.5% frequency, 100% participation) for all.

There was a rapid acceptance of the reality of the Holocaust (3.8% frequency with 100% participation rate). With acceptance came many different coping strategies focussed on survival. In situations where events were uncontrollable, there was more emotion-focused coping such as psychological distancing (3% frequency, 72% participation), affective self-controlling (3.6% frequency, 100% participation), believing in lucky fate (2.5% frequency, 82% participation) and believing in the supernatural (1% frequency, 72% participation). Where possible participants tried to use the following tactics: initiating action (2.5% frequency, 90% participation), planful physical escape (3% frequency, 90% participation), and following the escape plans of significant others (emulation 6.8% frequency, 90% participation). Participants incorporated varying ways of enduring the daily grind of trying to not be noticed in hiding or enduring the horror of ghetto and camp life (enduring hardship 5.6% frequency, 100% participation). Concentration was on daily survival. Survival was sought in whatever way possible.

After the Holocaust, life became centered around rebuilding and recreating life as it was before the Holocaust. Distancing (3% frequency, 72% participation) and planful problem solving (3.7% frequency, 82% participation) were most evident at this time. Participants found partners, got married, and had children. They sought to regain a lifestyle they had
lost through work. Distancing in varying forms was used to put aside the many feelings, thoughts, and questions to do with the Holocaust. The focus was on rebuilding.

At the time of the interviews, participants ranged in ages from the late fifties to the early eighties. For many this was a time when they were either working toward retirement or were in active retirement. Some of them were very involved in Holocaust related activities, as well as having many hobbies. The hard work of accomplishment was done, children were grown and time allowed for reflection. Participants reflected and positive reappraised to make sense of, and find purpose in, their personal life, the Holocaust experience, and what it means to be Jewish. The answers to the questions were found in the coping strategies of social support (12% frequency, 100% participation), helping others (6% frequency, 100% participation), participating in enjoyable activities (4.9% frequency, 100% participation), bearing witness (3.7% frequency, 100% participation), belonging (2.5% frequency, 100% participation), understanding the context (2.4% frequency, 82% participation), and hope in Israel (1.3% frequency, 82% participation).

As older adults, participants reflected on their lives. Perhaps being from a marginalized group and having experienced severe trauma created the greater need for reflection. Other than having had a stable secure early home life, chaos and change was a part of their lives. A Jewish identity, in its many forms, was a secure force throughout disjointed lives. Stability was enhanced by reflecting on Jewish identity (6.8% for 100% participation rate).

Participants had different ways of experiencing and understanding what it means to be a Jew, from having no idea to identifying with traditional orthodox religion and rituals. With the onset of the Holocaust, there were different degrees of disbelief at what was occurring. It was the first time for some that they realized that they were Jewish or had any idea of what it meant to be a Jew. Others had experienced varying forms of persecution and readily identified with being Jewish. Participant’s reflected on what kind of Jew they were and what the conditions of Jews were in their country at that time. Reflection on the meaning of Judiasm during the Holocaust centered around the question ‘Why is this happening to Jews?’
After the war, finding a welcoming place in the world was not easy and was effected by Jewish identity. Many found mates who were not Jewish and belonged to Jewish communities of people from many different countries in the world. These conditions of difference forced them to question and define what their understanding of being a Jew is and how they are Jewish. The questioning took place within themselves and with each other in community. Many questions were asked such as: Why am I a Jew? Do I believe in God? Do I openly proclaim my Jewish identity? Should I marry a Jew? Should I belong to the Jewish community? Should I raise my children Jewish? What kind of Jew should I be? What should I do to help Jews? In the whirlwind of questions and debates one could be contained and sheltered by the idea that Jewish identity was the lighthouse around which the storm took place. It brought one back to solid ground, even if the answers were in the negative.

As older adults looking back, they made sense of their lives through the common experience of being a Jew in some form throughout their lives and with each other in community today.

The pain of prejudice and the Holocaust was lessened through an identity that was interdependent and collective, although the Jewish culture is not a collective one. Seeking social support was the most significant coping strategy used by most participants throughout their lives. Suffering was lessened by being viewed as shared with others — family members, life partner, Holocaust survivors, other Jews and people in general. Hope was envisioned through the creation and continued existence of a national homeland for Jews — Israel. Israel was the ultimate place of belonging.

Meaning was sought in the suffering and death of the Holocaust. Answers were found through bearing witness. Through the telling of personal stories, individuals sought to understand what had happened to them, have their families know and understand, have the world know what happened, teach in order to prevent its reoccurrence, and in order that it not be forgotten or denied. This ‘obligation’ was helpful in finding a purpose in survival while others perished.
Helping others was a way of making life purposeful. Bearing witness allowed one to feel one is helping society, the Jewish people, and in particular those who perished as they would be remembered. Helping others involved extensive volunteer work in and also outside the Jewish community. It also involved helping people individually. There was an emphasis on being with and helping the family. Individuals continued to find peace and fulfillment through family as social support.

Participants led full, inquisitive and active lives. They participated in many enjoyable activities from skiing, dancing, traveling, lectures to the arts. They continued to show initiative and be accountable to themselves through creating full lives that involved enjoyable activities.

Taking the time and doing the sometimes hard work of reflection was a way that participants could positively reappraise their lives and their actions. They continued to attend lectures, read books, attend groups, and talk with family and friends about their life, the Holocaust, and being Jewish. They remained open and flexible to perspective taking and new information. They continue to seek understanding and knowledge. They were open to possibilities.

Throughout their lives, participants were and are planful problem solvers who are autonomous, responsible and proactive. They did what was necessary to survive and to achieve. They are also, at least in the mature years, in touch with their sorrow. From the vantage point and perceptions of an older adult, the coping strategies most used were seeking social support and reflection.

In order to make sense of the various coping strategies used, I will present the life narrative of one participant. Through the narrative account of her life, the varying coping strategies will be exemplified.

C — A case study

Born in Poland in the first quarter of the century, C and her family moved to Vienna when she was four months old. Vienna offered Jews more freedom than many other places in Europe at that time. Her family was fairly well off and her childhood and adolescence
was one of relative privilege and lots of love and care. Like every well brought-up Jewish child, she states “I took piano and French lessons” (Emulating).

C has happy memories of her youth in Vienna that centered around family life (Seeking social support). The result was evident. She states “I was a confident child — even in pictures I looked very confident. I was always told you can do it.” C, like her family, believed in the power of education. “What you learn — this is something no one will take away from you” for “you don’t give fish — teach him how to fish” (Believing in the value of education).

She enjoyed life and when her school ended she decided, as was popular for women at the time, to become a secretary. She felt very happy and proud of her achievement in being able, through her father’s connections, to land a very nice secretarial job in a beautifully furnished lawyer’s office (Seeking social support). She enjoyed the responsibility that the job required of her and the knowledge of legal skills. Here she worked until the Holocaust changed her life forever.

After Germany annexed Austria in 1938, C together with her family, ended up in a ghetto in Poland. The family of four (father, mother, sister, and C) lived there for four years. They did hard work in workshops to help the civilian populations. She felt fortunate in that she was able to be with her family and to share the same camp with them (Positive reappraising). In the ghetto, C was able to use her secretarial and language skills to her advantage. She was able to have better working conditions because of the jobs she could do (Planful problem solving). She related a story in which she had to do typing for a Nazi. It was bitterly cold and she was weak with starvation. The Nazi dictated to her while eating a full meal. He was rude and vulgar to her (Affective self controlling). Although pointing this out, she did not dwell on her anger at or hatred of him (Distancing).

In 1944 the family was deported in cattle cars to Auschwitz. At that time the family went through ‘selection’ and the father was separated to live with the men. C felt that the separation was the reason why he died in the camp. She felt her survival depended on having her mother and sister close by; although they pretended not to know each other and
made little contact with each other (Seeking social support).

During the last year in the ghetto she married a fellow inmate. They shared ten months together before he was killed in a concentration camp (Seeking social support).

Near the end of the war, C, her mother, and sister B were forced to go on the Death March. At this time it was a frosty April and they were starved and emaciated. What was left of boots soon became bare feet. C, today, can’t imagine how she marched, but remembers “just putting one foot in front of the other and not feeling anything” (Enduring hardship).

On what was to be the last day of the Death March, despair came over the family. C states “On the Death March B whispered we can’t go on. You and mother can’t either. If we do something, we have to do it together. I could not set one foot in front of the other. My mother said we have to wait one more day and then it’s B’s birthday and maybe a miracle will happen. Next day we arrived in Theresienstadt (model ghetto) where the Russians were now in charge. It is a true miracle. We were so close to do it. That’s why I believe in miracles. God helped me. I could swear that I had a guardian angel. I could swear it” (Believing in supernatural protection).

Three years after the war, C met a man who also worked under the restrictive law of the Russians (1948). This man had very early joined the Exodus ship for Palestine. He had been a member of the British army. After the war he returned to Prague and found work where C also worked at a American Jewish organization called the Joint Distribution Committee. They married (Seeking social support). “We fell very much in love. Dec. 28, 1948 we got married. So neither of us were young enough to have a long-drawn courtship. We both wanted to settle. (Planful problem solving). “It happened and thank God it happened. Where would I be today?” (Positive reappraising).

Soon new kinds of politics made life too difficult to stay in Prague. They decided to leave and made a plan to do it (Planful problem solving). They were able to move to Israel and happy to have some relatives there (Seeking social support). “I was pregnant. We left Prague for Israel. I don’t wish anyone that trip. But before we left, we still had a beautiful
honeymoon” (Positive reappraising). “We were together (Seeking social support) and we were in Israel (Israel) and no enemies, no Russia, no Nazis” (Positive reappraising).

“We finally arrived in Israel. There are no words to describe what it meant. I was ready. I wanted something dramatic like they say, to kiss the soil. Israel is like a protector. If something could happen here, I know there will be Israel to go to” (Israel).

Her husband had connections in Canada and wanted to move there. Life was difficult in Israel. She made the difficult decision to move to Canada. Through connections (Seeking social support) on her husband’s side he landed a job in Canada and they began building a life (Planful problem solving). Quickly her second child, a daughter, was born.

When her daughter was 14 months old, she was left home with Grandma while C, her husband, son and a family friend went for a drive. They were in a car accident. She remembers very little. Her husband was killed. “We had a head-on collision. All of us were thrown out of the car. No, the driver and I don’t remember much. I sort of woke up and I remember somebody slapping my face constantly. ‘What’s your name?’ For a second I was able to say my name. I just said ‘my little boy’ you know he was in the car too (Helping). The baby was at home with my Mother because she screamed in the car. She was better off with my mother” (Seeking social support). “I don’t think I can handle it. But I had two babies. I had to handle it” (Accepting reality). “It was Sept. 3, Labor Day, a Monday. I don’t remember very much ... I remember my Mother, the procedure, I don’t remember what they did. I had a concussion, fractured skull, and broken ribs” (Distancing). “I had my mother at my side, just like in the camp” (Seeking social support). “As I told you, had we waited, saved up, but, he was killed after two years; so I would have never had children. No, then there would have been no family. There would have been no life, absolutely none, absolutely none, absolutely. So I say if all my family is dead, my children live on, family” (Seeking social support and Reflecting).

She concentrated on the feelings of her children. “You don’t quite know what a child at that age feels. I don’t know what was more difficult to be told he was gone or to tell the child. For the longest time I said Daddy’s very sick and Daddy has to be in the hospital.
But how long could I tell this. I mean I had to come out with the truth” (Being responsible/accountable for self and others).

C quickly realized that she had to accept this tragedy and be strong for her children and find work for income. “I am alone ... you have to rely on yourself; face the music, be self-reliant. If God gives you a brain you go about it. You can’t throw up your hands and say that’s it. (Accepting reality).

Her husband had an insurance policy which gave her some financial support at this time. “We had a tremendous rent we couldn’t pay. So I took one half the insurance money and bought a small home — two bedroom and downstairs basement and B and husband moved there” (Planful problem solving). B was the best person in the whole wide world, my sister and her husband who was so good to the children. He jumped in and gave them a father image. We lived together” (Seeking social support).

She went to the relative who gave her husband his job and asked for work. He said she could have her husband’s job if she refrains from tears. “I will never forget the words of a rich cousin ... remember if you want to go to work you can’t put down your head on the desk and cry — one month after I lost my husband, I said ‘Don’t worry B. I’ll do my crying at home” (Affective self controlling).

Her cousin did not want it known that he was Jewish. “I was the only Jewish person (at work). He had converted. He avoided me actually. It was a constant fear (of being found out). I was a constant reminder. I made myself distant.” (Planful physical escaping from life-threatening situations). “Half the relatives converted. So we were always secluded. Horrible. But I did not let it bother me. I did not let anything — proceed with the next thing. I couldn’t do anything about it” (Distancing). “I knew I had to make myself better than anyone in that office. I knew it. I’ve never put so much into a job.” (Initiating action)

For the next 25 years C continued to work in the same place but moved up the ladder to being in charge of a small department. “We built up a life. I worked 8 to 5, Monday to Friday” (Enduring hardship). “Nobody gave me anything. I worked.” (Being responsible/accountable for self and others).
At home with her children, mother, and sister and her husband, they were “one big family” until her sister and husband moved across the street in 1962 (Seeking social support). The family enjoyed many activities together such as Sunday outings. “We were actually happy. My sister and brother-in-law had this old stationwagon car. We all climbed into this wagon and went every summer to Cultus Lake. Fishing — normal things” (Participating in enjoyable activities).

C felt she was able to give her children everything and she denied herself many extravagances to do this. “I've done my job. I swore my children would have everything. I mean everything that rich kids have, like piano lessons” (Helping and Planful problem solving).

She had many happy years as a close family. C taught her children to ‘count their blessings.’ “I didn’t need anything else. I truly did not need anything else. I was absolutely happy” (Positive reappraising).

Stability came through a strong Jewish identity. “I never wavered from my Jewish values. I can’t be more Jewish than I am. I truly can’t. We sit around the room, the tradition, kept the holidays, always fasting on Yom Kippur, always never eating bread on Passover. We all did the Jewish traditions. Like everything. Hanukah was celebrated. We celebrated tradition but did not keep a kosher home” (Jewish identity).

Her sister came to live with her in 1987. “My sister came to live with me several years after her husband died when she was terminally ill with cancer. She was like a second mother — kind. I was always close to her — so close. We stuck together. Her husband always regarded my children as his. And they loved her. She said ‘you are never alone’ and that’s how it became. She grew even closer and closer. Nobody would invite me without her (Seeking social support).

Terrible tragedies revolved around the death of her sister and her mother and her own bout with cancer. When her sister died she was devastated. “She had cancer of the ovaries.”

“A few months after my sister’s death I was diagnosed with cancer. I was operated on ... complications ... one month in hospital ... ten years ago. When I came out my family
picked me up. I saw the children’s faces in the recovery room. That was the main factor in my entire life. My children. That’s what made me cope. And that is how I cope today. I was not alone. I was not alone. I never had to cope all by myself. I can’t say I did it all alone because I had all this family; always. From early childhood on, as far as I remember, I had my family help” (Seeking social support).

She found her way out of this through making herself useful at the Jewish Community Centre. “I pushed myself back again. I can’t tell you how it was” (Self controlling). “I became a master in coping. Thank God, by the Grace of God. I learned how to cope” (Believing in supernatural protection).

She continued the volunteer work her sister began (Helping). Her sister volunteered extensively and eventually acquired many awards for this. “My sister got an award named after her. They established it after she passed away for excellence in volunteering. She was the heart and soul” (Emulating).

When it was the age of retirement her daughter told her it was time to quit. “My daughter said “Mom, you have worked hard. Let’s call it quits. You don’t need to support the family. I’m married. E is on his own feet. You have had enough for yourself. Stop it.’ And I said I’ll do it” (Seeking social support).

C quickly replaced paid work with volunteer work. “After my sister’s death I nearly collapsed, then I went to the Jewish Congress. You want me? I’m yours. Then I went to the Holocaust Centre. I then felt useful again” (Helping). She also helped out a journalist and enjoyed many happy working hours learning about many things and assisting him in writing (Participating in enjoyable activities). She soon found her niche in the Outreach Program and symposium work.

Through speaking about her story for educational and preventive purposes, she found great satisfaction and a purpose in her life. At first she did not think she could speak in public. “I felt like I was going to die — to do a tape and speak at a symposium. I can’t do it. It’s impossible. You can do it (others say). They always say you can do it. My best friend, my son, helped me out at the first speaking engagement at a symposium” (Seeking
social support). “I could not believe that I opened my mouth and words came out. I swear to you. My knees were cottonwool. And I had a small group talking at the lecture hall, about 20. Afterward, I was sitting. I couldn’t stand. ... Could not stand” (Affective self controlling).

C worked hard at perfecting her speech and enjoyed the thanks and appreciation from her audiences (Initiating action). In her eighties, she easily speaks before hundreds today. She has collected many thank-you letters.” “I get letters of thanks and appreciation from teachers and students. I keep saying I must have done something right. After a Holocaust speech I got a letter that said ‘I don’t think of you as a victim, rather a survivor and a heroine who overcame the obstacles put before you’. I like this because I am not a victim, I am a survivor” (Being responsible/accountable for self and others). “I got a letter, “Thank you for making our town a better place. I thought, my God, me, a Holocaust survivor and a Jew. I am making this American town a better place — my parents should read this. They would be proud. How far we have come since 1938. America would not accept us into the country. For all of us that we lived to see this day We, Jews, make a difference” (Bearing witness).

Volunteering has become the mainstay of her life (Helping and Bearing witness). In great part this has amounted to telling her story as a form of bearing witness. “I have done many interviews for CBC, Spielberg, you. I don’t do it to tell my story but to teach others about the Holocaust. Giving speeches is all about it never happening again — for education and remembrance. If you don’t give the speeches who will?” (Bearing witness).

Part of bearing witness was telling her own children their family legacy. “I told my children we were all survivors, mother, sister, my brother-in-law — from Auschwitz, and yet my children all grew up totally normally.” She made a conscious decision when to tell her children, “I never discussed the Holocaust with the children when they were small. When they were in their teens, I told them. Not the nitty gritty, but I told them where we were” (Being responsible/accountable for self and others).

She continues to be involved in the Jewish community and Holocaust work. “I don’t
want to be entertained. I can't play cards. I need to work. I read papers every day. I worked but I was never cut out to be a socialite. I volunteered at schools, Red Cross ...." (Helping).

She is very involved with her children and grandchildren (Seeking social support). "I embrace life." She swims and reads and attends lectures (Participating in enjoyable activities). "I have a lust for life which I recaptured on my visit to Spain with my sister. We went camel-back riding and laughed and had a lot of fun."

Other than her bout with cancer, she enjoys good health and has an enormous amount of energy. She dresses impeccably and holds herself very erect. She has friends and social activities that revolve around serious concerns. She finds herself at a loss with frivolity, but enjoys life.

She feels she has had a satisfying life and is at peace with herself. Victor Frankl in his (1946) book "Man and his Search for Meaning" had a profound impact on her. "I read Victor Frankl's book three times. He recalled 'if you have the why to live, you can bear with almost any how.' That opened the door to me because I did have a why. You have to believe, you have to have a reason. If you don't have a reason, it does not make sense. It means nothing, nothing. And I was really blessed to have a reason through my family background" (Reflecting).

She found a purpose for her life through her family; "You can't imagine how proud I was of the children. I'm so close to my children. My granddaughter keeps saying 'You are my role model'. My oldest granddaughter is the apple of my eye. She asked me 'are you happy Grandma?' I said, sweetheart, I'm very content. She said 'I know.' She's really smart. I said you know sweetheart, there are degrees of happiness. I talk to you, if I see you I feel deliriously happy" (Seeking social support).

C also finds support through being part of the Jewish community. "I was among Jewish people" (Belonging) and through her public speaking as a witness to the Holocaust (Bearing witness).

How has C coped with such a traumatic life? She concludes, "If you rely on yourself
you will cope. There is nothing else you can do” (Being responsible/accountable for self and others). “One cannot ask why it happened, it just did. You have to accept” (Accepting reality). “I learned throughout my life. I have not got ESP, but in my mind I’m thinking I was never weak. Ya, I was weak from hunger, but that’s a different story. But I always knew who I am, and nobody could tell me otherwise” (Reflecting).

Part 2: Validation Procedures

The validity and reliability of the categories were ensured through five procedures: (a) independent rater, (b) expert rater, (c) participants’ cross-checking, (d) exhaustiveness of participation rate, and (e) theoretical agreement of related findings in the research literature. These procedures will be examined in this section.

Independent Rater

Two independent raters were chosen to sort the critical incidents into the assigned categories to verify categorization. Both raters were male and in their early forties. One rater was a PH.D. student in Counselling Psychology and the other rater had two undergraduate degrees.

There needed to be an agreement rate of between 75% – 85% in order for the incident to be considered valid. An 80% agreement rate is considered valid according to research by Anderson and Milsson (1964).

Each critical incident was written on a card. A total of 46 cards were given individually to the two independent raters. A separate sheet was provided with the categories listed by number and title followed by nine other pages containing detailed descriptions of the categories. Raters were to peruse the titles to judge which was the most appropriate to the critical incidents. They were then to refer to the descriptions to verify the choice. Only one category could be chosen.

The training session involved compiling two critical incidents for each of the 23 categories. I related these incidents to one independent rater and told of the category I chose.
The rater then showed agreement or disagreement with the choice, followed by discussion on the cases of disagreement.

There were three incidents that the rater found could fit in one of two categories. One incident involved helping, which the rater felt could also fit for planful problem solving, a reflecting incident could also apply to positive reappraising and Israel could fit into belonging. I decided that the greater context of the critical incidents would decide which category they would fall into.

I also had to make clearer distinctions between categories such as hope in Israel and belonging. These distinctions formed the description of the category. One incident that did not fit into my categorization system was a statement to do with Zionism. The rater labeled the incident as Jewish identity while I chose hope in Israel. Perhaps not being fully knowledgeable of the meaning of Zionism, Jewish history, or related issues could influence categorization; as this incident proved. The process helped to refine and define the category descriptions.

The first rater had agreed with my categorization on the 46 cards of critical incidents; although 12 incidents needed further clarification as more than one category fit. After clarification on the 12 incidents, 100% agreement was reached. An example of the clarification process involved the use of Hebrew in a discussion of dancing. The incident was placed in the category of Jewish identity until a discussion of love of dance was reassessed to participating in enjoyable activities. Placing the incidents in context led to agreement of categories. Each rater had one hour of time working independently. There was a 100% agreement on all the categories chosen after clarification.

**Cross-checking**

Participants were given two opportunities to relate their experience in an interview situation. The second interview included verification of the categories I had created and the addition of new incidents. I went over each of the categories with the participants and related their respective incidents to the category system. Participants were asked if they agreed with the categories and the incidents under the category, and if they had anything
more to add to the category to further define or refine it. At the end of the session, partici-
pants were asked if they had anything else to add. The second interview was between two
to five hours. A total of 334 new incidents were added in the second interview. No new
categories were added. Participants agreed with all the categories adding new category
incidents. This was especially true of the category Israel and Jewish identity where many
new incidents were added. Two incidents were removed from the categories because they
did not fit the description completely. Two incidents were excluded, at the researcher’s
discretion, from use in the dissertation examples due to the private nature of the incident.

Participants found the second interview useful for debriefing the first interview and to
clarify what the research study was about and how they contributed to it.

**Exhaustiveness**

Categorization began after the third participant interview when rough categories were
created. The thirteen categories formed by Suedfeld et. al. (1997) were a framework to
begin with. Later, some of the original 13 categories were combined under one (i.e.
denial, compartmentalization and distancing) and new categories were formed. Categories
were continually refined until ten interview transcripts were analyzed.

The eleventh participant’s transcript was held back from categorization to ensure that no
new categories emerged from it. If no new categories emerged the categorization would be
considered comprehensive. Saturation was reached and therefore the category system was
regarded as comprehensive.

There were some critical incidents which I had categorized as vigor, flexibility, and
intelligence, but there were not enough incidents to make a category valid. I thought that
these categories, which were very evident to me in the interview sessions, were important
to mention.

**Participation Rate**

It is important that participants had critical incidents of coping in all the categories to
an 50% rate in order that the category would be considered valid. The percentage of par-
ticipation or incidents related by all the interviewees in each category is the participation
rate. Table 5 reveals, in percentages and totals, the participation rate and frequency of incidents in each category.

**Expert Validation**

Another means of ensuring validation was to verify results with experts in the field. For expert validation of the category system developed, I presented the findings to two expert groups, the Western Canada Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association and Family Services of Greater Vancouver. A draft of the dissertation was also sent to a prominent researcher and psychiatrist working with Jewish Holocaust survivors, Dr. Robert Krell.

There was a total of 15 members (psychiatrists and psychologists) of the WCPPA in attendance at the first presentation. Feedback was elicited from the group on the relevance and usefulness of the categories in working with Jewish Holocaust survivors. Both verbal and written responses for validation were positive.

The question asked of the group at the end of the presentation was: Are the categories of coping strategies of well-functioning Jewish Holocaust survivors relevant and useful in your work with survivors? If so, how?

Examples of written responses of eleven of the members of the association follow:

a. Yes, in that these are known strategies — not different or new

b. I find the categories interesting and integrate them into my own background thinking party because I’m set in my ways and partly because I really try to stick with free association. I would only verbalize them as seemed useful to help a client describe their own experience (as in an interpretation).

c. Helpful. They reflect a lot of what I see in the general population of clients I see who manage well.

d. Yes. Gives a good framework to assess and help clients.

e. Yes, I think you have summarized a wonderfully thorough group of categories which span a very solid cross-section of human coping skills.

f. Yes, The categories that dealt with meaning, reflecting and staying positive confirm my ideas about coping. The categories of seeking social support I find really inter-
### Table 5
**List of Categories, Respective Frequencies, and Participation Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Seeking social support</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reflecting</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Positive reappraising</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emulating</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jewish identity</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Helping others</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Enduring hardship</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Participating in enjoyable activity</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Accepting reality</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Planful problem solving</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Bearing witness</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Affective self-controlling</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Planful physical escaping</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Distancing</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Initiating action</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Believing in lucky fate</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Belonging</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Understanding context</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Being responsible/accountable</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Confronting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Believing in value of education</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Hope in Israel</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Believing in the supernatural</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Participants: 11
Total: 1,416 Critical Incidents

Average # of CI per Participant: 129
esting. It makes me wonder about focussing more on establishing supports for them — rather than address individual issues predominantely.

g. Yes. I think it is helpful perhaps more in terms of other kinds of trauma (i.e. sexual abuse).

h. I feel these categories are very relevant — some more so than others. The role of the therapist as “container,” someone who can hold the trauma and not retaliate is essential. These categories will help me help others re-define themselves as “self” versus a member of a group and what do they seek — what will help them heal?

i. Clear categories. Recognizable in terms of what I hear from survivors. Validating of other literature.

j. Yes, very much so. Most have great validity and relevance for a Jewish client population.

k. Excellent presentation bringing up ideas of the value of key concepts re: identity, bonds, hope and spirituality, accepting losses, “we, self” rather than “I, self.”

The category system was also presented to a group of 12 therapists and the director of Family Services of Greater Vancouver. The verbal response after the presentation was again positive. Some members felt that the categories would be helpful in relating to First Nations people.

Dr. Robert Krell also found the categories to be compatible with his research and clinical work with Jewish Holocaust survivors.

**Theoretical Agreement**

Research literature was analyzed to further test for validation. Each category was reviewed for agreement in the literature verifying that other researchers had similar results. If agreement was found the category was considered valid.

Lifelong coping strategies of the 11 Holocaust survivors produced a total of 1,416 critical incidents and 23 categories. I decided that it would be helpful to analyze categories
clustered around themes evident in the research literature. The clusters were examined related to similar findings in the literature.

**Positive social orientation.**

The coping strategy, emulation, is evident in various forms in research literature. Participants in this study felt they came from secure satisfying original families. Like the participants who felt that they had adapted well, Beardslee (1987) found healthy adaptation to be "the presence of a close, confiding relationship ... commonly ... found in the early life of resilient individuals; such relationships appear to be protective against the effects of future stressful occurrences" (Eisenberg, 1979, Lieberman, 1982, Rutter, 1986, cited in Beardslee, 1987, p. 266). Beardslee (1987) further states "The factor of past experience was also important in some aspects of the individual resilience particularly in relationships ... those who coped best emphasized the importance of relationships. The capacity to experience relationships in depth, to have intimate and confiding relationships, evolved over time and to some extent at least in these lives was heavily dependent on having had good relationships in the past" (p. 272). Resilient individuals had "sound current relationships and sound past relationships" (p. 272). With the highest score given to the category of social support, participants certainly did feel that they had strong past and present relationships.

Hagberg (1995) also found evidence in his study of the importance of early childhood and the importance of reflecting positively on the early period of life. He found the present results point to some period of special importance in this regard namely childhood and adolescence. Focussing on a particular aspect of the life history such as the attachment to important person, the evaluation of such a relationship in a retrospective review assumed to be important first of all for the preservation of personality characteristics, but also for the experience of life satisfaction (Bowlby, 1986). The present findings support such an assumption and specify the period of importance to be childhood and adolescence, which relate to present life satisfaction both directly as reminiscences and indirectly by way of reminiscing effects on mental status and personality (p.70).

Rutter (1993) found that protective processes are in part "those that promote self esteem and self efficacy through the availability of secure and supported personal relationships"
Rutter (1993) found that children who have at least one parent as “protective” are more likely to be resilient (p. 627).

Masten and Garmezy (1995) summarized that there were “three broad sets of factors:
(a) personality characteristics such as autonomy, self esteem and a positive social orientation; (b) family cohesion, warmth, and an absence of discord; and (c) the availability of external support systems that encourage and reinforce a child’s coping efforts” (cited in Rutter, 1993, p. 630). Rutter found evidence that supports these conclusions. Children exposed to stress have potential for positive outcomes when these factors are in place. The categories in this study which parallel Rutter’s factors are: emulating, seeking social support, helping, belonging, and Israel.

Werner (1990) found three types of protective factors evident in diverse studies

1. dispositional attributes of the child that elicit predominantly positive responses from the environment, such as physical robustness and vigor, an easy temperament, and intelligence; 2. affectional ties and socialization practices within the family that encourage trust, autonomy, and initiative; and 3. external support system that reinforce competence and provide children with a positive set of values (p. 111).

This has a generalized effect on children more than specific risk factors or stressful life events.

Statement 1 reflects the resilience I saw in the participants during the interviews.
During the interview sessions, it was very evident that participants had ‘physical robustness and vigor.’ Participants ages ranged from late fifties to early eighties and most had experienced major illnesses. Participants still had energy and were involved in many activities where physical robustness would be a prerequisite (i.e. giving speeches before large audiences, volunteering extensively, sports). Their life achievements, language and other skills also revealed that they were very able to learn. The participants needed to have a certain degree of intelligence either through career choice or through their abilities to pick up languages and make their way successfully in a new country. They also displayed, through the coping strategies used and through their interview style, that they had an ‘easy
temperment.' Participants had nurturing early experiences, relied on social support and were predominantly proactive.

Statement 2 compares to the categories: seeking social support, initiating, being responsible/accountable, positive reappraising. Statement 3 compares to the categories: emulating, seeking social support, belonging, hope in Israel, Jewish identity.

The categories of seeking social support and emulating were found in Werner's (1990) research. He found “affectional ties within the family provide emotional support during times of stress, whether from a parent, sibling, spouse, or mate; and external support systems, whether in school, at work, or church, that reward the individual competencies and determination and provide a belief system by which to live” (p. 80).

McCormick's (1994) study on healing for First Nations people also found evidence that establishing social connection, obtaining help/support from others, and learning from a role model facilitated healing.

**Believing in the value of education.**

Partial evidence for the category believing in education is found through the research of Luthar and Zigler (1991). They state, as did Comer, (1988) “The significance of parental values and beliefs in resilience is indicated by the fact that among underprivileged families, parents’ beliefs in opportunities through education can help children to attain considerable success and competence in their adult live” (Luthar & Zigler, 1991, p.15).

**Helping others, belonging, and Jewish identity.**

The creation of an identity is based to a great degree on relationship to and recognition from others as Erikson (1968) maintains. Marshall’s study found “validation of the construct of a mattering attitude” (1997). Marshall (1997) and Rosenberg (1985) described the perception of mattering to others, or interpersonal mattering as an aspect of the self-concept which is associated with psychosocial well-being. Marshall (1997) and Ferguson (1991) state one may feel marginal to a social context dependent upon “the individual’s perception that the social context is important or holds power over his/her life.”

A part of identity is formed through mattering to others. Marshall states the through
mattering one finds life meaningful. Marshall (1997) concludes “In essence, an attitude of mattering to others contributes to defining the self and giving meaning to life”. One is “connected to the social context rather than peripheral and meaningless”. When one perceives the “social context as having salience to the self” (Marshall, 1997) one does not feel marginal. The salience may also be negative.

For Jews during the Holocaust a sense of identity would be destroyed through negatively mattering to the social context. Participants did not feel this way. This may be because they found meaning in belonging to their own social context of the Jewish community rather than the larger one where they were being excluded and destroyed. When Jewish identity was attacked and a familiar world was taken away, the only stabilizing identity they had was being a Jew. After the war and immigration, the only stabilizing component was Jewish identity. Through a sense of belonging to the idea of being a Jew or a sense of belonging to the Jewish community and seeking support there, being connected to Israel, helping and bearing witness in the community, they again found meaning in their lives and reinforced their sense of identity.

Ishiyama (1995) created a model of self-validation (Ishiyama, 1987, 1989, 1995) which “provides a conceptual framework for understanding and helping individuals who are going through personal transitions. It has been used as a model for working with clients with cross-cultural issues” (Beck, 1993; Ishiyama & Westwood, 1992; Westwood & Ishiyama, 1990; Witzel, 1989, p. 135). The model is based on the idea of a multidimensional self and the idea that “people are motivated to seek self-validation, that is, the affirmation of one’s sense of self and positive valuing of one’s unique and meaningful personal existence” (p. 135). He further states

Self-validation is a complex psychoecological process which represents both one’s internal phenomenological world and one’s transaction with the external world. Identities are formed and validation experienced in a relational context for human interaction and self-awareness (Giddens, 1991; McCall, 1987, 1995, p. 135). While acknowledging the personal uniqueness of one’s sources of validation, we may find that the content, process, and structure of self-validation are strongly influenced by the sociocultural environment which shapes one’s values, worldviews, and self-identities (p. 135).
Ishiyama (1995) states that “Significant changes in self-other relationships can precipitate a major identity crisis and shifts in values and attitudes” (p. 137). In other words “identity and belonging are inseparable because reference groups and relational contexts (including relationships with nature and God) often serve as sources of selfhood (‘who-I-am-ness’) and validating the significance of personal existence” (1992, p. 52). Problems ensue when the context changes as Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, (1989) state:

One’s identity and sense of belonging are often threatened in a new culture (Arredondo, 1984). Moving to a new environment sometimes involves a loss of reference groups (e.g., family, friends, coworkers, relatives), around whom one develops self-concept, feelings of belonging and pride, and a shared sense of reality. In a new setting, however, rules may be different, and one may be punished or undervalidated (not appreciated or valued) because of culturally different values and behaviors. Additionally, the identity of minority individuals becomes a highly emotional issue when they frequently encounter racial remarks and have conflicts with others over differences in communication and values (Ruiz, 1990, p. 55).

Ishiyama examines the impact of cultural relocation. Conflicts revolve around “cultural differences and identity dissonance within self” (1995a, p. 266). Ishiyama uses the ‘validationgram’ to assist culturally dislocated individuals to try to “find new ways of validating themselves, in order to restore a familiar sense of who they are” (p. 273).

The participants in this study have retained a strong sense of who they are through connecting with the Jewish identity and Jewish community as well as in their host culture. Ishiyama (1995a) describes four cultural conflicted states. In this study, participants would fall into the category of “Low cultural conflict state” where “individuals are relatively conflict-free with either (native and new) culture” (p. 267). This was accomplished in part through a strong sense of belonging and identity to the Jewish people. Seeking social support, participating in enjoyable activities, volunteering/helping, and bearing witness in the Jewish community were all coping strategies used for this purpose.

**Bearing witness.**

Participants not only felt a sense of belonging and hence identity through mattering to their family and the Jewish community but also through their connection to those who died in the Holocaust. Through bearing witness to the events of that time and the ones who
died, they found a purpose in the destruction. There was a purpose in survival through
telling others what happened; the other may be family, or the Jewish community or the
world at large. Through bearing witness they found purpose and an identity of belonging.

Evidence of the importance of bearing witness as a coping strategy has been found
through research literature on autobiography and life review. For instance, de Vries,
Birren, and Deutschman (1995) wrote

In reviewing the literature on human development and autobiography (and life review),
J.E. Birren and Deutchman (1991) cited the following advantages: obtaining personal
fulfillment and integrating or making sense of a life ...; maintaining a sense of the con­tinuity of the self, acceptance of one’s heritage, and the need to ‘connect’ with ances­
tors; renewing confidence in one’s capacity to adapt; and increase in understanding of
one’s personal agenda, forming the basis for successful future choices. Areas of cogni­tive functioning; personality; spirituality; and social family and intergenerational inter­
actions are touched by autobiography, helping participants build new skills to meet new
demands (p. 172).

Krell (1993) notes that “The adaptive value of collating memories is demonstrated by a
proliferation of autobiographical books from various authors who are child survivors. The
recapturing of memory as a means of alleviating grief is a powerful adaptive tool. For the
child survivor remembering is the constructive counter to chronic bereavement” (p. 387).
Hagberg (1995) summarizes “The significance of the subject life history report for well
being in old age is supported by the results from a number of studies (J.E. Birren &
Deutschman, 1991; Butler, 1964; Field, 1989; Ryff, 1986; Ryff & Essex, 1992, p.70).”

McCormick’s study (1994) explores the healing processes for First Nations people in
B.C. using the Critical Incident Technique, in order to create a comprehensive category
system of what facilitates healing. Of the 437 incidents from 50 participants, fourteen cat­
egories emerged. McCormick (1994) created the category “anchoring oneself in tradition”,
“belonging” and “participation in ceremony to reinforce identity and mental health.” He
pointed to Anderson’s (1993) study that “personal and cultural identification is an important
theme in the foundation of a culturally sensitive counselling framework for First Nations
people. ... Those who have found the strength and discipline to become reconnected and
anchored in tradition and culture have found it to be an effective path to healing” (p. 66).
Alfonso’s (1997) study “Overcoming depressed moods after an HIV + diagnosis: A critical incident analysis” created the category “helping others.” She states “This category involves reaching out and doing something meaningful for others which often results in mitigating depressed mood, a sense of self worth, altruism, belonging and fulfillment” (p. 110). Bearing witness can be seen in Alfonso’s category “sharing the news.” She found that when participants shared the news with significant others “The outcomes of sharing the knowledge of their HIV+ status with other people is a lifting of depressed moods, and expression of meaningful intimacy, valuing honesty and transparency, a sense of being in charge of their life and the knowledge that they are not alone facing the challenge of the illness” (p. 87).

Pennebaker’s (1989) study of 31 Holocaust survivors who talked for 1-2 hours about their personal experiences during the Holocaust found that survivors relating the most trauma were in better physical health fourteen months later. Survivors were videotaped and judged in revealing traumatic events while skin conductance level (SCL) and heart rate (HR) were monitored. Earlier research maintained that “negative trauma -SCL correlations are indicative of high personal disclosure, whereas positive trauma -SCL correlations suggest low disclosure” (Pennebaker, 1994). Pennebaker found that by monitoring participants 14 months later, through self-reports of health, “degree of disclosure during the interview was found to be positively correlated with long-term health after the interview.” Bearing witness would therefore also have physical health benefits.

**Emotion-focussed and problem-focussed coping.**

As there were 23 categories of coping presented over the lifetime, participants revealed a considerable variety of strategies. Research reveals that using a variety of strategies enhances successful coping. Lazarus (1996) states “In much of our empirical research on coping (reviewed in Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, 1987, and Lazarus, 1991), people reported using a wide variety of coping thoughts and actions in all major stressful situations” (p. 290). Participants displayed flexibility.
Suedfeld et al. (1997) in their study of Holocaust survivors also found that successful coping consisted of a variety of coping strategies. They found

The pattern of changes in coping strategies is responsive to the changing demands and challenges in the life environment of these Holocaust survivors. Consistency in coping style varies across individuals (see e.g. Amirkham, 1994). Consistency could as well be termed rigidity or repertoire restriction: it refers to a person's tendency to use the same coping strategy repeatedly within or across situations. In our sample all of the respondents reported using several strategies in every time period. We observed no obvious tendency for individuals to focus on one particular strategy across time periods (p. 169).

Lazarus (1996) separated coping into two basic categories, emotion-focused and problem-focused. Lazarus (1996) points out that "The two functions (emotion and problem-focused coping) are interdependent. They work together as part of a total pattern in which a person struggles to manage a troubled person-environment relationship as well as the emotion itself. It is their relative balance and integration that contributes to overall coping efficacy" (p. 293).

Lazarus (1996) lists examples of emotion-focused coping as distancing, escape/avoidance, and positive reappraisal (p. 292). He states

Most evidence points to an important role for emotion focused coping in all stressful life situations. There is also insufficient recognition that people need to draw on both functions, emotion focused as well as problem focused. A number of research studies can be cited on this point, but I mention one here namely that of Collins, Baum, and Singer (1983). Its findings support the idea that in situations that cannot be changed, persistent problem solving efforts may be counterproductive and lead to chronic distress and dysfunction...Without the conviction or hope that can come from emotion focused coping, problem solving efforts to ameliorate the negative conditions will not be undertaken or sustained, and despair and depression are apt to be their emotional legacy (p. 294).

Suedfeld et al. (1997) found changes in coping strategies in time;

the time period with which the memories were concerned was the single most powerful determinant of coping strategies: seven of the thirteen strategies showed significant, and another one marginal, differences across time. By contrast, there were only two significant differences by age group and two significant age group x time interactions. To the extent that we can accept survivor narratives as reflecting actual behaviors, this pattern of findings supports the contextual view of coping: that is, the position that differences in coping behavior are primarily influenced by situational factors rather than

A variety of coping strategies was used.

**Believing in lucky fate and the supernatural for protection.**

The Suedfeld et al. (1997) study on Holocaust survivors reveals the use of luck as an unusual form of coping strategy. They state

references to luck increased markedly during the two Holocaust periods. They represent an attribution, or even an abnegation of coping, rather than a coping strategy. Narrators recognize the fact that in the chaotic world of the Holocaust, a lack of information often made survival a matter of chance. In the apparent absence of logic, predictability, or regularity, optimal survival strategies were both difficult to identify and in any case unreliable. Death could come to anyone who happened to stand in the wrong line, appear at the wrong time, volunteer or fail to volunteer for a work assignment, catch a random infection, or somehow arouse the anger of a guard, soldier, policeman, neighbor, or informer (p. 170).

The Suedfeld et al. (1997) found that

references to supernatural protection (religious faith or superstition) varied in content. Previous research on survivors of the Holocaust as well as of other extreme stressors have emphasized the role of faith and religious practices as a way to affirm both one's self and one's control over the environment (Hunter, 1956; Marcus & Rosenberg, 1995). However, only anecdotal evidence has been cited, and the actual utilization of such beliefs and practices in coping has to be studied systematically (p. 171).

The results of this study reveal that both luck and the supernatural were coping strategies, but their use was minimal (luck was number 16 and supernatural the least used coping strategy).

**Distancing.**

Rutter (1993) found evidence that distancing facilitated adaptation in children from stressful home environments. He maintains that one of the factors that helps in coping is “First, it means that given some family wide risk factors, protection may reside in children being able to distance themselves to some extent from what is going on” (p. 627).

Krell (1993) also found evidence for distancing as a successful coping strategy. He examined child survivors for strategies of adaptation (25 non-patient survivors).

Distancing, which included denial and compartmentalization, was a means of helping one
cope in uncontrollable situations or it allowed one to get on with life and move toward the goals of rebuilding life in a new country.

**Planful problem solving and positive reappraising.**

The Suedfeld’s et al. (1997) study found:

These survivors, who have successfully transcended not only the Holocaust but the vicissitudes of post-war recovery, emigration, and the re-creation of their lives, see themselves primarily as problem-solvers. Although they accept that luck and (in some cases) supernatural protection had a role in their survival, they downplay purely emotional strategies of dealing with challenge and instead structure their stories around self-control, persistence and, above all, planful problem-solving (p. 175-6).

This study found that the categories of enduring hardship, planful problem solving, affective self-controlling, planful physical escaping from life threatening situations, initiating action, and being responsible/accountable for self and others all fell under an action or goal orientation. Participants did what they could to either survive (enduring hardship, affective self-controlling) or reach a goal (planful physical escaping from life-threatening situations, planful problem-solving, initiating action). They felt autonomous and responsible.

Suedfeld et al. (1997) also found that:

In narratives of the Early and Late Holocaust periods, there were more references than in other times segments to planful problem-solving, self-control, and various aspects of dogged persistence (Endurance/Obedience/Effort). All of these represent practical task-oriented approaches to solving the problem of survival in the Holocaust environment, reflecting what should be considered good adaptive behaviors. Another form of direct coping, physical escape and avoidance, showed no significant increase, perhaps because of the low probability of success and the high cost of failed attempts (p. 169).

Participants positively reappraised in most situations. This coping strategy fosters problem-solving and action taking ability. Rutter (1993) concludes that “What seems important is to approach life’s challenges with a positive frame of mind, a confidence that one can deal with the situation, and a repertoire of approaches that are well adapted to one’s own personal style of doing things” (p. 630). Positive reappraising is part of self-esteem and self-efficacy control beliefs which
are personal resources that play an important role in the coping process because they support people's belief that they can control or deal effectively with ongoing stressors. When individuals believe they are capable of managing negative events in their environment, they are less likely to appraise these events as threatening and more likely to appraise them as challenges that can be coped with effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These challenge-oriented appraisals lead individuals to take active problem-focused approaches to alter situations (Rybarczyk, 1995, p. 224).

Rutter (1993) maintains that resilience is the implication that people can do a good deal to influence what happens to them. It is relevant that our own research and that of Clausen have shown the protective effect that stem from young people actively planning how they deal with what happens to them in important domains of life such as marriage or work careers. In our follow up study of institution reared children, many of their later problems stemmed from the fact that they felt at the mercy of fate and did not take active steps to deal with the life challenges as they presented. It appears that resilience may be fostered by steps that make it more likely that people will feel in control of their lives and become effective in shaping what happens to them (p.628).

Rutter (1985) states that “Resilience seems to involve several related elements. Firstly, a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence; secondly a belief in one’s own self efficacy and ability to deal with change and adaptations; and thirdly, a repertoire of social problem solving approaches.”

Rybarczyk (1995) continues along the same line “Personal resources such as self esteem, self efficacy, a sense of personal meaning, adaptive beliefs about personal control, and rewarding commitments and values can diminish the probability of depression developing by reducing the perceived frequency or intensity of stressful situations or by facilitating the use of functional coping strategies (Bandura, 1977; Fry, 1989, 1993; Lazarus and Delongis, 1983; Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghen, Mullen, 1981, cited in Rybarczyk, 1995, p. 223).”

**Reflecting.**

The second most frequently used coping strategy for mature Jewish Holocaust survivors was reflecting. This involved reflecting on oneself in terms of self-understanding and reflecting on the context of one's life for understanding and meaning making. Beardslee (1987) maintains that self-understanding “may be important in intense stressors and not ordinarily” (p. 276). The life review literature and research on autobiography are
relevant to the coping strategy of reflecting. Research in these areas confirms the positive results of reflecting in this study.

**a) Reflecting and identity.**

Lieberman and Tobin (1983) identified three functions of reminiscence:

a. To maintain the self concept in the midst of change and decline, through myth making; b. to serve as a resource of consolation and gratification and c. to resolve past conflict and achieve meaning for the remaining years.” Wong states (1995) “in essence, the main function of active life review is to achieve and protect ego integrity. Active life review includes processes that serve one’s need for coherence, meaning, identity, and self esteem and facilitate the struggle to be free from psychic pain and conflict (p. 31).

Wong (1995) concludes that “People take pride in a feeling of having done their best, of having met challenge and difficulty and sometimes from simply having survived against terrible odds” (p. 417). The life review, according to Butler (1975), is the primary mechanism whereby ego integrity is achieved (p. 417).

Hagberg (1995) found that through reflection there is continuity in development (p.70). Wong (1995) explains this further by stating “Ego integrity may be conceptualized as the development of positive but realistic self schemas. In the struggle for survival, we need a self concept that has stood the test of time and enables us to cope with the demands of the present and the uncertainties of the future.” (p. 31).

Kovach (1995) points out that through reflection memory can be a resource that “not only expands our coping capabilities but also helps us maintain a positive self-concept” (p. 35).

Kovach (1995) continues:

Memories can cut both ways they can depress us or elevate our spirit; they can bind us or set us free. When the power to recall is properly channeled, reminiscence can help maintain a sense of integrity and mastery. The most difficult and painful processes involve confronting and reconstructing the past and revising one’s schemas. Only through these processes can one develop a realistic, yet positive, self concept in spite of past negative events, present difficulties, future uncertainties. The other adaptive processes of reminiscence concern the use of memory as an inner resource. Our memory storage provides us with a constant supply of wisdom, inspiration, and personal meaning (p. 35).

Beardslee (1987) sees one of the dimensions of self-understanding as being realistic appraisal of the capacity for consequences of actions. This has two main components.
“1. the individual’s assessment of personal capacity for action and 2. the individual’s assessment of the effects of personal action.” Beardslee (1987) maintains that “A sense of identity and of continuity is necessary for an individual to be able to exercise this capacity.” One also needs a “sense of control over one’s surroundings [and] the knowledge that the locus of control resides within oneself.” Beardslee (1987) points to research in stating that these factors have “been shown to be important in a variety of other stressful situations (Lefcourt, 1981, Rutter, 1966)”. The components are “a broad sense of control coupled with the capacity to recognize one’s limits” (p. 271).

Hagberg (1995) stated that the life review stabilizes identity and increases well being by reducing anxiety (p. 71). Hence, the use of the coping strategy “reflecting” enhances a stable identity and a proactive orientation.

**b) Reflecting and understanding the context.**

Maintaining a sense of control is fostered through gaining an understanding of events. Some participants felt that they did not know what being a Jew was. This question was pondered on continuously. It led to other questions such as what happened to their family and the Jewish people during the Holocaust and finally to an interest in the history of the Jews. Through an interest in and an understanding of these issues, a sense of control and hence coping is fostered.

McCormick’s (1994) category “Gaining an understanding of the problem” can be seen as a parallel category. He states “Understanding relieves anxiety and provides a person with hope that he or she can deal with the problems” (p. 70).

Alfonso also had a similar category in “Gaining understanding of the problem.” She states “The outcome of understanding the problem is a sense of being in charge of their life, hope, competency, and a lifting of their depressed moods” (p. 102).

**Participating in enjoyable activities.**

Maintaining an active and enjoyable lifestyle is a coping strategy. Beardslee (1987) states that to be “engaged in action in the world” (p. 172) contributes to well-being. Alfonso’s category “participation in activities” is a similar category. Her activities ranged
from "pets, nature, visualization, reading, writing, house chores, art" (p. 72).

Alfonso (1997) confirms this category through previous research. She states "In general, researchers seem to agree that proactive coping is negatively correlated to mood disturbance (i.e. anxiety, fear, and depressed moods). In a four year longitudinal study of quality of life, depressive reactions, and coping, Brieger, Leibrich, Schumacher, and Low (1996) found that goal-oriented active style was positively correlated with improved quality of life, and lower psychological distress (i.e. depressed moods). Namir et al. (1987) found that active behavioral coping was related to lower mood disturbance" (p. 127).
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

During two indepth interviews, 1,416 critical incidents were elicited which created a framework of 23 categories of successful lifetime coping strategies of Jewish Holocaust survivors. The categories included: (a) seeking social support, (b) reflecting, (c) positive reappraising, (d) emulating, (e) Jewish identity, (f) helping others, (g) enduring hardship, (h) participating in enjoyable activity, (i) accepting reality, (j) planful problem solving, (k) bearing witness, (l) affective self-controlling, (m) planful physical escaping, (n) distancing, (o) initiating action, (p) believing in lucky fate, (q) belonging, (r) understanding context, (s) being responsible/accountable, (t) confronting, (u) believing in the value of education, (v) hope in Israel, and (w) believing in the supernatural.

Six validation procedures: (a) independent rater, (b) cross checking, (c) exhaustiveness, (d) participation rate, (e) expert validation, and (f) theoretical agreement ensured reasonable reliability. The categories were related to the literature under the following groupings: (a) positive social orientation, (b) believing in the value of education, (c) helping others, belonging, and Jewish identity, (d) bearing witness, (e) emotion-focussed and problem-focussed coping, (f) believing in lucky fate and the supernatural for protection, (g) distancing, (h) planful problem solving and positive reappraising, (i) reflecting, (j) reflecting and identity, (k) reflecting and understanding the context.

The results of the study are a confirmation of many findings in the related research literature. There are areas where the literature is extended. Suedfeld’s et al. (1997) study created 13 categories of coping strategies. Three of these categories were combined into one synthesized category — (a) compartmentalization, (b) denial, (c) distancing, were recreated under the heading “distancing.” The remaining categories were consistent with the findings of this study, although title names may have changed to a degree or new categories created from another category. For instance, the category “escaping” became two
categories — (a) planful physical escaping from life threatening situations and (b) initiating action.

The present study elicited categories which corresponded to different research areas. Believing in the value of education and emulating reveal the importance of role modeling to coping. Role models, especially within the family, have a profound effect on an individual's ability to believe in self, and be proactive which facilitates successful coping. A belief in education promoted a striving for accomplishment and creative thinking. These findings have important implications for practice. Helping clients explore their history and the present to find role models for emulating is an example of this.

The focus of this study was on how older marginalized adults have coped with stress over a lifetime after experiencing trauma. The coping strategies that were used and predominant may have been perceived differently at other times in their lives. They may in fact not have been the one stated, but for these adults in their fifties to eighties, these were the strategies that are and have seemed most significant to them today. Important conditions of their lives have been marginalization, trauma, and change. These factors may have coloured the choice of coping strategies, in particular the strategies of reflection and Jewish identity.

Being Jewish created the conditions of the participant's trauma. Being Jewish framed their subsequent existence. When they lost their families, homes, communities, countries of origin, language, and lifestyle, during and after the Holocaust, the one thing that remained was their Jewish identity and their relationship to it. Some participants (27%) married non-Jews. In their new country, Jews from many different countries came together with only one thing in common, being Jewish. Although this meant various things to the participants, it still remained the one stabilizing force in their lives.

Being Jewish and discriminated against forced participants to think about what it means to be Jewish. This fostered the use of reflection as a coping strategy. Being different than the main culture, created the conditions for reflecting on Jewish identity (i.e., what is a Jew, what is the history and future of Judaism, why did the Holocaust take place).
Reflection on identity solidified identity. Hence, what had set the participants apart as Jews helped create the conditions for the dominant positive coping strategy, that is, reflection.

Reflecting on Jewish identity was stabilizing and fostered many other positive coping strategies such as: hope in Israel, bearing witness, helping, belonging, seeking social support, and positive reappraising. Identity effected coping and in particular in old age where participants were making sense of their lives (Erikson, 1985). Being marginalized and having experienced trauma coloured the choice of coping strategy for these older adults.

The use of reflection as a strategy has been evident through research on life review. Reflection incorporated both fostering identity through self-understanding and understanding the context which included meaning making (Beardslee, 1987). Reflecting on identity created a stability of self-concept and a proactive orientation (Lieberman and Tobin, 1983). To have a proactive orientation one needs a sense of control. Reflection fostered control as it involved the need to understand the context, make sense of it and what one can and cannot do because of it (Rutter, 1993). Reflection was particularly important for Jewish Holocaust survivors. This coping strategy allowed survivors to accept and make sense of the Holocaust.

Reflection may take on an executive position nurturing other coping strategies and directing them. Reflection maybe a vital coping strategy for mature individuals and for individuals who have experienced trauma. Reflection on identity may be especially important for a marginalized group. Further research could examine this.

An expanded Critical Incident Technique allowed for a breadth and depth of inquiry. It enabled participants to create a life narrative that was not restricted by the structure of too many questions or relying only on facts and behaviors. It allowed participants to state a wide-range of coping processes that involved more than the critical incident and covered a lifetime. Before the individuals agreed to become participants in the study, it was necessary to make a personal connection. I felt the personal connection allowed participants to become more open and allowed for a depth in their narrative. Other researchers may
not find that the expanded Critical Incident Technique would work for them. It may therefore prove useful to use the Critical Incident Technique with a larger participant number as a comparative study.

The rigour of the method was emphasized through the use of six validation procedures. The process I undertook for expert validation proved very successful. It included presenting the dissertation in its entirety to two expert groups. The first hour included the purpose of the study, the methodology, data collection and analysis, and findings. This was followed by a response from the chair. The last hour included an open discussion of the results with the group. Finally, a validation questionnaire was distributed and time allotted for a written response. The discussion allowed for a refinement and clarification of several areas of the study as well as being a helpful validation procedure.

Cross-checking was also a useful validation procedure. The second interview, although not as long as the first, was extensive with the inclusion of 334 new critical incidents. It was important to provide an open time frame to allow for new material to be added. The second interview also enabled participants to better understand the nature of the study and the results as well as providing a debriefing of the first interview. This proved especially beneficial due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

The categorical system provides a map of helpful coping strategies. It can aid in the development of training programs for counsellors. Counsellors can develop interventions from the category system. Participants and their respective coping strategies can be used as role models for recent trauma survivors. Categories may be used in a preventative capacity for survivors of trauma.

The categorical system points to the importance of using the community as a basis for counselling practice. The categories: seeking social support, reflecting, positive reappraising, emulating, Jewish identity, helping others, participating in enjoyable activities, accepting reality, planful problem solving, bearing witness, initiating action, belonging, understanding the context, being responsible/accountable, and hope in Israel can be implemented in a community setting. For instance, Holocaust survivor support groups, cultural groups,
and educational groups could involve the uses of these strategies. Fostering the use of reflection in both a group setting and in counselling is useful. Bearing witness could be achieved through enabling clients to narrate their life story or to write about it in the form of a memoir.

**Theoretical Implications**

This study is part of a growing trend of research on Holocaust survivors which examines successful coping strategies as opposed to examining pathology. It has focussed on conscious coping strategies rather than unconscious motivations. It examined participants who were well-functioning members of society.

The focus was on strategies used by participants who had experienced traumatic stress. The differences between trauma and stress and how one copes over a lifetime need to be further examined. It maybe that different strategies are used or that different components arise in trauma as opposed to stress. Stress and coping theory may not fully apply to survivors of trauma as coping strategies may differ in terms of effectiveness.

Resiliency and personality were factors that may appear to be part of successful coping. Research needs to examine the place of personality and resiliency in successful coping with trauma, especially over a lifetime.

Little research has looked at coping over a lifetime rather than focussing on coping immediately preceding, during and immediately following the Holocaust or other traumas. This study has revealed an emphasis on reflection as a coping strategy among mature survivors as does research on life review. Research needs to continue examining reflection and lifelong coping. Is reflection used more in the mature years or do successful copers always use reflection as a coping strategy?

This study focussed on coping and identity especially pertaining to a marginalized, traumatized people. The results helped elicit the belief systems, especially concerning identity, and how identity affects the coping process. These issues may reveal themselves more vividly in the study of lifelong coping rather than the short-term. More studies on lifelong coping and trauma need to be undertaken to reveal the relevance of identity and
culture. Seeking social support, helping, belonging, hope in Israel, and emulating were coping strategies that used a positive social orientation that is evident in collective cultures even though the Jewish culture is not collective. Further research could evaluate if the Holocaust experience created a collectivist identity among the survivors.

Counselling Implications

A comprehensive category system was derived from the study. This may be useful in counselling practice, training, program development, and community resource development.

The study reveals the coping process over a lifetime. Practitioners knowledgeable of lifelong coping processes and identity issues may incorporate this knowledge in their contact with survivors. Concerning practice, the study reveals that survivors of severe trauma have unique needs. For instance, the idea that the trauma (the Holocaust) was the pivotal event of a life, and issues must necessarily revolve around it is not necessarily true. Survivors found other events such as the death of a child or the untimely death of a mate to have affected them more.

There is a need for survivors to create a narrative of their life to tell their life story; this could be encouraged as well as helping survivors make sense and purpose of their narrative. An educational component could be used in therapy in which successful coping strategies of Jewish Holocaust survivors are discussed and initiated.

Krell (1988) stated “One major factor contributing to the possible failures of therapy with survivors relates to the most fundamental of all therapeutic techniques — the science, the art of listening. One must be able to listen differently. One must devise different ways of listening” (p. 23). Listening differently involves the survivor’s “personhood and often successful reclaiming of humanness” (p. 23). Krell (1988) maintains that this form of listening can be accomplished through hearing the survivor’s narrative “as commemorative” (p. 23). Meaning is given to the suffering. Coping strategies of positive reappraisal, bearing witness, and reflection include meaning making.

Krell (1993) examined child survivors of the Holocaust searching for strategies of adap-
tation. He found three themes: bereavement, memory, and intellect. Bereavement is “chronic, dealt with over the years as more facts of the Holocaust come to light” (p. 386). Krell maintains, that “partial healing is sought through memory” (p. 386) as “remembering is the constructive counter to chronic bereavement” (p. 387). The coping strategies of believing in the value of education, understanding the context, positive reappraising, bearing witness and reflecting in this study parallel Krell’s findings.

Reflection was a major coping strategy for survivors. The process of recalling past events and placing them in historical and personal perspective was healing and needs to be included in practice. As identity, personal and cultural, was destroyed, reflection offered survivors a means of recreating who they were and are. Krell (1993) concluded that, “To achieve relief for symptomatic child survivors, the knowledgeable therapist elicits memories, assists in their integration, makes sense of the sequence and encourages the child survivor to write their story, publish it, tape it or teach it” (p. 388). Groups could also be formed using the life review process where survivors could be assisted in reflecting on their life. These are some examples that could form part of a therapeutic training program for therapists dealing with Jewish Holocaust survivors. Successful survivors of a mature age were in touch with their emotions and thoughts and talked about their life story while actively participating in life. Some successful survivors were not able to do so until later life.

Survivor educational and support groups may be created. A component of the group may include discussion of Jewish identity. As reflection was a frequent coping strategy for mature survivors, programs could be created that enable survivors to reflect on their experiences with others of the same experience as well as to younger people in some way affected by the Holocaust (second generation) or who had recently experienced trauma. In this manner the coping strategy of social support, helping, understanding the context, and especially emulating, could be fostered. Survivors could be role models in this capacity.

At the community level, opportunities could be made available for volunteerism, participating in enjoyable activities, and bearing witness. An example of volunteerism may be
fund-raising for Israel or other community-related causes. Participating in enjoyable activities could involve learning Hebrew dances to lectures on Jewish identity or religious issues.

Program development could include asking survivors for their assistance in “public education and commemoration” (Moskovitz and Krell, 1990, p. 91). This helps survivors reach “a life-affirming dimension where the process of fulfilling work moves them from the mire of victim into the arena of creator” (p. 91). Support groups could be established to facilitate sharing of Holocaust experiences and Jewish traditions. Examples in this community of places where these practices take place are the Jewish Community Centre (to foster a sense of belonging by being with other Jews), the Outreach Education Program, Symposia (finding meaning in the events of the Holocaust through telling their personal story to educate the young against racism) Kristallnacht Commemorations, Yom Ha Shoah (public ceremony acknowledging the Holocaust). Reflecting, positive reappraising, believing in the value of education, being responsible/accountable for self and others, planful problem solving, initiating action, seeking social support, helping others, belonging, understanding the context, Jewish identity, and bearing witness are categories used in these programs.

Program and community development in this form was also found useful in McCormick’s dissertation (1994) of facilitation of healing for the First Nations people of B.C. where he suggests “healing that might be facilitated by members within a community setting. Community leaders might, for example, organize members to recognize, make available, and encourage various paths of healing. This might mean setting aside undeveloped areas of land so that community members would have the opportunity to utilize nature in healing. Ceremonies could be made available to members of the community. Elders and families could be recognized and supported in their role as care-givers to community members. Initiatives such as these would strengthen community purpose and provide access to healing resources” (p. 128).

McCormick’s study (1994) reveals the unique place of identity and how identity can
facilitate coping of trauma victims. For instance, participants in this study held a collective cultural value, although the Jewish culture is not collective. Markus and Kitiyama (1991) refer to this process as an interdependent construal of the self (p. 224). Part of coping consisted of either being helped by others or helping others. Coping also consisted in perceiving identity in terms of we, and therefore salvation could be achieved through more than the fate of oneself. Counsellors may make use of the collective value by stressing the importance of relationships in the helping process as well as having clients take a proactive stance in helping others, either individually or the community. Maintaining ties with the Jewish community in some form also helped participants in recreating an identity of belonging. Reflecting on identity was therapeutic. This study reveals unique characteristics of Jewish Holocaust survivors which can be integrated into the therapeutic process.

**Research Implications**

Research should continue in terms of further developing a category system for survivors. Putting the system into practice and developing programs from this system would be the first step. The effectiveness of the practice and programs that make use of the category system would need to be researched.

Due to the limited number of participants in this study, it would be important to conduct future studies that include the same population but use larger participant numbers implementing the Critical Incident Technique or quantitative methodologies. Research could also include replicating this study in order to refine, revise, and/or extend the category framework.

Further research could look at surveying other populations who have experienced severe trauma and comparing those to Holocaust survivors. Examples could include First Nations, Kurds from Turkey, or Bosnian Muslims and Albanians from the former Yugoslavia.

Research could also include studying the varying ways, if any, that identity and culture affect coping. Identity issues could be examined in this manner to discover if the collective identity provides a buffer in the coping process and, if so, how it differs in the varying cultures.
Research, both quantitative and qualitative, could examine two cultures — collective and individualistic, to see whether coping to severe stress differs. The use of control groups and other groups who have experienced severe stress may aid in the study of coping after severe stress. Prior research has mainly been qualitative and so it may prove beneficial to include more studies that are quantitative and include Holocaust survivors from around the world. Studies that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methodology may be able to detect results that tap into the best of both methodologies.

Limitations

There are limitations to the study which decrease its generalizability at this time. This was a qualitative study that involved a small number of participants and generalizability is not the purpose so much as an in-depth view of the experience. This experience involved Jewish Holocaust survivors in the Greater Vancouver area only.

Participants included children and adults during the time of the Holocaust. Their experiences were not separated in the research and may be different. The participants also came from many countries and had different experiences of being a Jew and identifying with being Jewish. The experience during the Holocaust was also differing: escaping before the Holocaust began, remaining in Europe under false identity or in hiding, being in a camp either concentration or labor, being in the Resistance or a combination of these experiences. Each experience may have elicited a unique coping response in participants; again there was no differentiation made in this study.

The experience of trauma came to include immigration. Immigration in itself produces stress in the necessity to learn a new culture and language and fit in without a broad support system. Therefore survivors who did not emigrate may have other coping experiences. Survivors consisted of immigrants to the Greater Vancouver area; this may also limit generalizability.

Self-reporting may limit results as memory may contain only some events and the responses to them. There were two interviews approximately five months apart. At a later date other memories may have been awakened, but were not included. Self-reporting also
means that participants will reveal only what they want with the knowledge that it will, in some form, be made public. Schwarz’s (1999) review of self report found that “Self-reports of behaviours and attitudes are strongly influenced by features of the research instrument, including question wording, format, and context” (p. 93).

The purpose of the study was to find successful coping strategies of people who experienced the severe trauma of the Holocaust. Responses would be framed in a positive light. Many other factors such as negative coping or feelings were not focussed on or recorded.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This study explored how Jewish Holocaust survivors had coped with various stress situations in their lives by identifying and articulating what were facilitative coping tactics. The goal of the study was to understand their lifelong coping process and to contribute to the field of counselling psychology by providing information on what helps survivors of the Holocaust be successful copers over a lifetime.

The research method involved extensive interviews with eleven Jewish Holocaust survivors living in the westcoast Canadian city, Vancouver, British Columbia. Prior to the interview, the participants had stated that they perceived their life today as satisfying and believed they were fully functioning members of society. Participants were self-selected as well-functioning through their volunteer work in the Outreach Program (public speaking to educate and prevent racism) at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Flanagan’s (1954) Critical Incident Technique was chosen because it provided a structure to the information gathering and allows for a rigorous validation process.

The validity and reliability of the categories were ensured through: (a) use of independent rater, (b) use of expert rater, (c) participants’ cross-checking, (d) exhaustiveness, (e) participation rate, and (f) theoretical agreement in the research literature to related findings.

The Critical Incident was expanded to include detailed narrative accounts. Accounts were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The eleven participants portrayed a total of 1,416 coping incidents during two interviews with each participant. Each participant was interviewed between five to ten hours altogether.

A comprehensive category system was developed and a wide range of successful long-term coping strategies were identified. Twenty-three categories emerged in the critical incident data analysis as follows, presented in the order of frequency (from the highest to lowest): (1) seeking social support, (2) reflecting, (3) positive reappraisal, (4) emulating, (5) Jewish identity, (6) helping others, (7) enduring hardship, (8) participating in enjoyable
activities, (9) accepting reality, (10) planful problem solving, (11) bearing witness,
(12) affective self-controlling, (13) planful physical escape from life-threatening situations,
(14) distancing, (15) initiating action, (16) believing in lucky fate, (17) belonging,
(18) understanding context, (19) being responsible/accountable for self and others,
(20) confronting, (21) believing in the value of education, (22) hope in Israel, and
(23) believing in the supernatural.

This study focussed on positive life-long coping after traumatic stress. It revealed an
emphasis on seeking social support and reflecting as coping strategies among mature sur-
vivors. It also focussed on coping and identity especially pertaining to marginalized trau-
matized people. The findings of this study contribute to the field of counselling psychology
by providing a category system with descriptions of what constitute successful coping
strategies for Holocaust survivors.
References


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APPENDIX A

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Meichenbaum, 1994)

DSM-IV Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Criteria

A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:
   1. The person has experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others;
   2. the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror (in children, disorganized or agitated behavior).

B. The traumatic event is persistently reexperienced in at least one (or more) of the following ways:
   1. recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event including images, thoughts, or perceptions (in young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed);
   2. recurrent distressing dreams of the event (in children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content);
   3. acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur upon awakening or when intoxicated) (in young children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur);
   4. intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event;
   5. physiologic reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by at least three (or more)
of the following:
1. efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma;
2. efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma;
3. inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma;
4. markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities;
5. feeling of detachment or estrangement from others;
6. restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings);
7. sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span).

D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by at least two (or more) of the following:
1. difficulty falling or staying asleep;
2. irritability or outbursts of anger,
3. difficulty concentrating;
4. hypervigilance
5. exaggerated startle response.

E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in criteria B, C, and D) is more than one month.

F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or marked impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Specify if:
Acute: if duration of symptoms is less than three months
Chronic: if duration of symptoms is three months or longer

IV. Complex PTSD and Disorder of Extreme Stress

1. Herman (1992) has offered a clinical profile of individuals who have experienced prolonged and repetitive exposure to traumatic stressors. She characterized these as Disorders of Extreme Stress Not Otherwise Specified or DESNOS. This clinical profile is described in Herman (1992) and in Table 4. Herman describes the conse-
quences of an individual’s subjugation to totalitarian control over a prolonged period of time (months to years). Examples includes being a hostage, prisoner or war, concentration camp survivor, survivor of a religious cult, domestic battering, childhood physical and sexual abuse and organized sexual exploitation (p. 47).
APPENDIX B

Disorders of Extreme Stress (DES) Scales and Categories Used in the DSM-IV Field Trail
(van der Kolk et al., in press)

I. Alteration in Regulation of Affect and Impulses (Category A plus 1 other)
   A. Chronic Affect Dysregulation
   B. Difficulty Modulating Anger
   C. Self-destructive and Suicidal Behavior
   D. Difficulty Modulating Sexual Involvement
   E. Impulsive and Risk-taking Behaviors

II. Alternation in Attention or Consciousness (1)
   A. Amnesia
   B. Transient Dissociative Episodes and Depersonalization

III. Somatization (2)
   A. Digestive System
   B. Chronic Pain
   C. Cardiopulmonary Symptoms
   D. Conversion Symptoms
   E. Sexual Symptoms

IV. Alternations in Self-perception (2)
   A. Chronic Guilt, Shame and Self-blame
   B. Feelings of Being Permanently Damaged
   C. Feeling Ineffective
   D. Feeling Nobody Can Understand
   E. Minimizing the Importance of the Traumatic Event

V. Alternation in Perception of the Perpetrator (not needed for diagnosis)
   A. Adopting Distorted Beliefs
   B. Idealization of the Perpetrator
C. Preoccupation with Hurting the Perpetrator

VI. Alternation in Relations with Others (1)
A. Inability to Trust
B. Revictimization
C. Victimizing Others

VII. Alternations in Systems of Meaning (1)
A. Despair, Hopelessness
B. Loss of Previously Sustaining Beliefs (p. 51).
APPENDIX C

Type II Traumas — sustained and repeated ordeal stressors — series of traumatic events or exposure to a prolonged traumatic event:

i. variable, multiple chronic, long-standing, repeated, and anticipated traumas

ii. more likely to be of intentional human design

iii. e.g., ongoing physical and sexual abuse, combat

iv. initially experienced as Type I stressors, but as trauma reoccurs, victim expects and fears its reoccurrence

v. feels helpless to prevent it

vi. memories are typically “fuzzy” and “spotty” because of dissociation; over time dissociation can become a way of coping

vii. may lead to altered view of self and of the world and accompanying feelings of guilt, shame, and worthlessness

viii. more likely to lead to long-standing characterological and interpersonal problems, as evident in increased detachment from others, restricted range of affect, and emotional liability

ix. result in attempts to protect self that may involve the use of dissociative responses, denial and numbing, withdrawal, use of addictive substances

x. likely to lead to what Herman (1992) calls a Complex PTSD Reaction and what van der Kolk et al. (1993) characterize as Disorder of Extreme Stress (DES) Individuals with these reactions have poor recovery. A stressor is more likely to produce PTSD if it is severe, sudden, unexpected, prolonged, repetitive, and intentional (Tömb, 1994) (p. 21).

There is a strong suggestion in the literature that human-caused disasters and resultant victimization are worse than naturally caused disasters (Baum, et al., 1983; Ursani et al., 1994) (p. 20).
APPENDIX D

Physiological Alternations Associated with PTSD (Friedman, 1992, Hiley-Young et al., 1993)

1. Sympathetic nervous system arousal
   a. Elevated baselines sympathetic indices
   b. Excessive response to neutral stimuli
   c. Excessive response to traumamimetic stimuli

2. Excessive startle reflex
   a. Lowered threshold
   b. Increases amplitude

3. A reducer pattern of cortical evoked potentials in response to neutral stimuli

4. Abnormalities in sleep physiology
   a. Increased sleep latency; increased body movements; increased number of awakenings
   b. Decreased total sleep time; decreased sleep efficiency
   d. Possible disturbances in sleep
   d. Traumatic nightmares, which are unique, differing from other types of nightmares in intensity (p. 40).

Neurohumoral/Neuroendocrinological Abnormalities associated with PTSD (Hiley-Young et al., 1993, Vargas & Davidson, 1993)

1. Increased noradrenergic activity
   a. Increased urinary catecholamine levels
   b. Down-regulation of alph-2 and beta receptors
   c. Reduced platelet MAO activity
   d. Yohimbine-induced panic and PTSD adrenergic flashbacks

2. Hypofunction of hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) axis
a. Decreased urinary cortisol levels
b. Elevated urinary catecholamine/cortical ratio
c. Increases sensitivity to dexamethasone suppression (DST) — HPA suppression following DST test
d. Blunted ACTH response to CRH

3. Opioid system deregulation — abnormalities of the endogenous opioid system
   a. General lowering of pain threshold at rest
   b. Stress-induced analgesia by traumagenic stimuli
   c. Decreased endorphin levels (p. 40).
APPENDIX E

RESEARCHER'S BACKGROUND

Dear Participant:

My name is Susan Baum and I am investigating the lifetime coping process of Jewish Holocaust survivors. This research is part of my doctoral work in counselling psychology at the University of British Columbia (supervising professor: Dr. Ishu Ishiyama). It is intended to help long-term survivors in the coping process.

Sincerely,

Susan Baum
APPENDIX G

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant Number:

1. Are you a survivor of the Holocaust?

2. What was your experience: (1) in concentration camp, (3) ghetto, (2) in hiding, (3) false identity, (4) emigrated before, during, or after the Second World War, (5) resistance effort — partisans?

3. What was your age at the time of the above-specified experience/event?

4. Are you male or female?

5. Have you ever used psychiatric or psychological services?

6. What is or was your occupation?

7. How do you spend the majority of your time now?

8. How would you describe your present financial situation? Difficult, moderate, easy?

9. Do you do any volunteer work? especially related to the Holocaust?

10. What are the things you do for enjoyment?

11. How often do you see friends and/or family?

12. What country were you born in and did you spend most of your life in (pre-Holocaust)?

13. What was your education before the Holocaust and since?

14. What is your religious orientation?

15. How would you describe your family life before the Holocaust? today?

16. Have you ever given an interview or related your experience for the public before?

17. Do you consider yourself satisfied with life?

18. List all the organizations or groups you belong to?
Confidentiality

Any information resulting from this research will be kept strictly confidential. Upon signing the informed consent you will be given a code number to ensure the maintenance of confidentiality. Participants will not be identified by the use of names or initials.

If you have any questions or concerns at any time during the study, you may contact Dr. Ishiyama or Susan Baum at the numbers listed above. You may also telephone Dr. D. Spratley, Director, Office of Research Services, at 822-8598 if you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject. You will be informed of any significant information that may concern you. Free counselling services will be made available at the U.B.C. Counselling Clinic if the need arises before, during, and after the interviews. Professional services will be available through doctorate students in the Counselling Psychology Department.

I have read the information and I have had an opportunity to ask questions to help me understand what my participation would involve. I freely consent to participate in the study and acknowledge receipt of a copy of the consent form.

________________________________________
Signature of Participant

________________________________________
Date

________________________________________
Signature of Witness

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.
APPENDIX I
QUESTIONS

1. What were crisis times in your life?
2. What happened and what did you do?
3. What do you attribute your coping to?
4. What helped and what did not help?
5. How important was this incident at the time?
6. What made this incident so helpful/unhelpful?
7. How did you know that it was so helpful/unhelpful?
8. What was the outcome of what you did?
9. What was meaningful about this incident?
10. What did you learn about yourself from it?
11. Was this incident so helpful/unhelpful that it changed your attitude towards others things — Jewish identity, values, religion?
12. Has your coping style changed over your lifetime? How?
13. What would others say about your ability to cope?
APPENDIX K
EXPERT VALIDATION

As part of the validation procedures for my U.B.C. dissertation in counselling psychology (Holocaust survivors: Lifelong coping after trauma) I need your expertise in working therapeutically with survivors. I would appreciate you taking the time to answer the following questions concerning the results of my research.

Thanks for your assistance.

1. Are the categories of coping strategies of well-functioning Jewish Holocaust survivors relevant and useful in your work with survivors? If so, how?
APPENDIX L

Examples of thank-you letters re: bearing witness

Nov. 17, 1997

Dear Mrs. C

I am a grade eleven student at N.D. Senior Secondary and I heard you speak about your experiences with the Holocaust. I was greatly moved by your story and by the message accompanying it. I admire your courage in surviving the cruelty brought upon you and in continuing to spread the truths of what occurred. I’m happy to see that, although the Holocaust happened over fifty years ago, it has not been forgotten. It was and is a vital part of everyone’s history and, as you stated so clearly, by our knowledge and remembrance of such events we will have a greater chance of not letting it happen again. I sincerely believe it won’t. So many changes have occurred over the last fifty years. So many movements fighting for equality and human rights have planted the seeds for a more accepting society. I thank you for reminding us what being human is all about, giving from deep within our hearts and souls. We are not meant to be selfish, but selfless. As well, I thank you for helping me and my fellow students to remember that we are all part of one race and, no matter what God we believe created us, we are each an important part of what is called humanity. I am sorry you were a victim of such an inhumane group of people. However, I don’t think of you as a victim, rather a survivor and a heroine who overcame the obstacles put before you.

Sincerely,

S.W.
Nov. 18, 1997

Dear Mrs. C

This morning, I listened to your interview on CBC Radio. I'd like to thank you for doing such a tremendously valuable service to humankind when you talk to people about the Holocaust and your personal experiences. People like you help to shape our human future, because you remind us that we have a choice between keeping silent and blind, or speaking out and acting for respect and freedom for everyone.

Margret Mead said: ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has’. You help create these groups of committed people. I wish you health in body and soul, and the strength to go on.

With great respect and admiration

B.S.

April 1, 1997

Dear B

Thank you so much for coming to speak with ... . You spoke straight from your heart to my heart. My mind listened but there is much that it is unable to comprehend. My heart heard; it hurts but it will not forget.

Your strength, courage, and humanity shine through as you talk. It is clear, however, that retelling your story is very painful for you. We will not let others forget your message.

I am happy to have had the pleasure of meeting you. I hope you will come to visit us again.

With love,

N.R.