ANSWERING THE CALL:
AN EXPLORATION INTO FACTORS AFFECTING THE MOTIVATION OF VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN A TELEPHONE COUNSELLING ORGANISATION

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"ANSWER THE CALL - BECOME A HOTLINE TELEPHONE COUNSELLOR"
(message on a recruitment poster).

ABSTRACT

This study investigates factors which affect the motivation of volunteer telephone counsellors, including demographic variables as well as volunteers' subjective perceptions of the factors which have influenced their involvement.

The study was conducted in two stages. The first consisted of a demographic analysis of two groups of counsellors from an organisation in the Western Cape, while the second stage involved a qualitative analysis of semi-structured in-depth interviews with respondents who were drawn from these groups.

446 volunteers were selected for demographic analysis, of whom 247 were the full complement of current counsellors in the organisation as of April, 1993, and 199 were ex-volunteers who had terminated their involvement during the preceding three years. Eight demographic variables were recorded for each volunteer: current age, gender, age on joining the organisation, educational level, religious orientation, marital and parental status and length of service. Volunteers were predominantly female (75%), and were on average middle-aged, well-educated, and Christian (64%). Approximately half of the group were married. Parents comprised 50% of the group. The average length of service was approximately five years.

Length of service was analysed in relation to each of the other demographic variables in turn in order to discover which factors, if any, were implicated in volunteer turnover. Parental status was the only variable found to be significant in terms of length of service across both current and ex-volunteer groups. A regression analysis performed on the data set as a whole identified parental status as a significant predictor of length of service.

The second stage of the study consisted of 23 in-depth interviews. Respondents (12 current volunteers, 11 ex-volunteers) were selected according to a purposive technique which took the form of a systematic, structured sampling strategy in order to maximize the diversity of obtained responses. A descriptive phenomenological perspective was adopted in order to tap the rich, subjective experiences of respondents. Interview data was analysed according to an inductive, constantly comparative approach.

Findings based on respondents' self-report suggest that motivational factors underlying volunteer participation are multifaceted and complex, changing in nature

and salience during the course of involvement (from initial contact with the organisation until termination of participation). Although self-serving motives seemed to play a major role in influencing participation, especially during the early stages of involvement, altruistic motives appeared to be important in sustaining on-going involvement.

On the basis of findings which have emerged from the study, recommendations have been made as to possible strategies that could be adopted by the organisation to improve volunteer management. The most important of these concerns the implementation of a supervision and support structure for all active volunteers.

INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Who are the people who "answer the call" by giving of their time to listen to the problems of anonymous callers? Why do such people become involved in this form of voluntary activity, why do they continue to serve and why do they eventually terminate their involvement?

The aim of this study is to investigate these questions by first analysing the demographic profile of volunteers who are, or have been, members of a voluntary telephone counselling organisation. Secondly, through an exploration of the subjectively perceived experiences of volunteers, a rich and detailed picture of their experiences will be sought, as a means of understanding how they perceive their motivation to be involved in a voluntary telephone counselling organisation.

The study is presented in seven chapters. Chapter one consists of a review of the pertinent literature which spans a number of fields including individual, social and industrial psychology. Theory and research relating to relevant areas such as volunteerism, intrinsic motivation and occupational membership will be reviewed.

In the second chapter the methodology for the study is presented. Aspects which are covered include the evolution of the study and the rationale underlying the choice of methodology. Details concerning the research design are outlined, including sampling strategies and methods of data analysis.

The third chapter provides an overview of the context of volunteer involvement. The first part of the chapter provides certain background information concerning the nature and functions of the organisation from which the subjects for the study have been recruited. In the second part of the chapter, the process of volunteer participation is outlined, from the initial contact with the organisation until termination of membership.

In chapter four, findings relating to a statistical analysis of demographic variables within two groups of volunteers are reported. Demographic profiles are presented and discussed. Findings pertaining to the relationship between the various demographic factors and length of service are investigated, in an attempt to identify factors which are associated with long service, and conversely, with accelerated volunteer turnover.

Chapters five and six explore respondents' interpretations of their experience of voluntary involvement. Direct quotations from interview transcripts are provided to illustrate the themes which emerge. In chapter five, factors perceived by respondents as affecting their motivation are explored, while in chapter six, themes relating to respondents' experience as telephone counsellors are examined.

In chapter seven, findings relating to the demographic analysis and the in-depth interviews are integrated and reviewed. On the basis of this, recommendations are made for improving counsellor management during the different stages of volunteer participation. Limitations of the study are discussed as well as recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1 Introduction

Due to the nature of the topic, this study spans a number of different branches of psychology - individual, social, community, health and industrial. Therefore, in terms of a literature search, the net had to be cast wide in order to consider theories and related research which could be relevant.

Three major themes emerge as fundamental to the study: volunteerism, intrinsic motivation and organisational involvement. In the first part of the chapter, theory and research relating to motivation within the specific area of volunteerism will be reviewed, followed by a discussion of theory and research relating to organisational involvement and management, such as job satisfaction, commitment and turnover. Finally, the literature relating to stress and burnout will be investigated, with particular reference to the helping professions.

1.2 Volunteerism and Voluntary Organisations

Smith (1981, p. 22) defines a volunteer as "an individual engaged in behaviour that is not bio-socially determined (e.g. eating or sleeping), nor economically necessitated, nor socio- politically compelled (e.g. paying ones' taxes), but rather that is essentially (primarily) motivated by the expectation of psychic benefits of some kind".

Henderson (1981) and Smith (1975) stress the recreational nature of volunteering. Thus, according to these researchers, the essential components of any type of volunteer activity are that it is a freely chosen leisure behaviour motivated primarily by intrinsic rewards.

Parkum (1985) differentiates between self-help and regular volunteers. Self-help volunteers are those who have experienced the same probem or illness as those who they assist (such as members of Alcoholics Anonymous). The volunteers in the current study would be classified as regular volunteers as they deal with the entire spectrum of human concerns and problems from requests for information to threats of suicide.

Smith (1981) describes voluntary organisations as formal groups which are non-governmental in nature and which operate for non-profit purposes. He makes a further distinction between non-profit organisations which employ paid staff and volunteer organisations. The former achieves its goals mainly through the input of paid staff while the latter functions largely due to the efforts of volunteers. The organisation from which the current sample of volunteers for the writer's study has been drawn, can be regarded as a volunteer organisation. because although there is a small staff of paid employees, all counselling, training and fund-raising duties are carried out by unpaid volunteers.

1.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Volunteers

Smith (1975) provides a comprehensive overview of studies dealing with voluntary activity participation (VAP). He notes that more educated people with higher occupational and income status have higher VAP rates in most countries, with the VAP population in the USA being "middle aged, male, married, Protestant and living in an urban area" (Smith, 1975, p. 254).

The research of Engs and Kirk (1974) lends partial support to this view. They conducted a demographic analysis of volunteers in crisis intervention centres in Tennessee, USA, and reported that 55 percent were females, and that the majority of volunteers fell into the age groups 20 to 24 years and 40 and over. They state that community agency volunteers tend to be white and upper class. Smith (1975) however, cautions against racial-ethnic role stereotyping in studies related to VAP as components of socio-economic status such as income, occupational status and education could confound results.

The age distribution of volunteers reported by Engs and Kirk (1974) is consistent with Kanchier and Unruh's (1988) findings concerning the link between the career and the life cycle, where entry into and disengagement from an occupation was found to coincide with major transitionary periods in the life cycle. Transition periods may be precipitated by critical life events such as travel, illness, divorce or the death of a loved one, and cause a re-evaluation of values and goals, according to Neugarten (in Gerdes, 1988), and Kanchier and Unruh (1988). Kanchier and Unruh identify five transitionary periods: ages 29-33, 40-44, 50-54 and 60-64.

Graham (in Kanchier and Unruh, 1988, p. 128) using a sample of air traffic controllers, found a "healthy occupational identity" to be reflected in a stay of five to

eight years. However, Engs and Kirk (1974) found that their sample of volunteers in crisis intervention centres served for an average of only nineteen and a half months.

1.3 Theories of Intrinsic Motivation and Adult Development

As volunteerism is regarded primarily as a response to intrinsic motivational forces which are non-drive based and not largely dependent on external rewards, this presupposes a proactive, growth-orientated view of humankind. According to this perspective, all individuals actively pursue new experiences and challenges in order to achieve higher levels of personality integration and development. The motivational theories of Allport, Erikson, Maslow and Rogers are based on this approach (Gerdes 1988; Diensbier, 1991).

Murray (1938) was the first to postulate inherent non-drive based needs as an alternative to the two predominant behaviourist theories of the 1930's - Skinner's operant theory of conditioning and Hull's drive theory. Murray viewed motivation not in terms of reinforcement or tissue deficits but as an innate energizing force where challenging and stimulating activities are undertaken for their own sake - the reward lying in the spontaneous feelings and thoughts that accompanied the activity itself.

Deci and Ryan (1991) suggest three primary psychological needs which underly a theory of intrinsic motivation. First, a desire for competence - people inherently strive to be in control of outcomes and to experience effectiveness. Murray (1938) stressed a need for achievement and Maslow self-actualisation (Gerdes, 1988). The second aspect relates to the need to be autonomous and have a sense of agency - to "feel like the origin" (de Charms in Diensbier, 1991, p. 243). Thirdly, the need for a healthy relatedness to others - "to feel a satisfying and coherent involvement with the social world" (Diensbier, 1991, p. 243).

However, Deci and Ryan point out that intrinsic motivation does not operate in a vacuum but that the social environment can either facilitate or retard its expression. They discuss the key dimensions for evaluating the social context. An optimal interpersonal milieu will provide support volunteer autonomy, where initiative and choice are encouraged. Structure is important as it influences an individual's sense of self-efficacy and perceived control, thus clarity must exist in regard to expectations and feedback is important. Finally, involvement by significant others is

vital as this provides a source of support, allowing the individual to develop inner resources, hence promoting self-development and a sense of effectiveness.

Environments that are deficient in any of these three areas will lead to "blocks to competence" (Deci and Ryan, 1991, p. 269), resulting in a sense of amotivation, characterised by passivity or disorganised behaviour. In the case of volunteer participation, this could conceivably translate into feelings of reduced commitment to the organisation and possibly also lead to counsellor turnover.

1.3.1 Motivation within the Context of Volunteerism

As the theory of intrinsic motivation has general and universal applicability it is necessary to consider it in terms of the specific area of volunteerism with reference to relevant literature.

In 1957 Coleman broached the subject of volunteer motivation by identifying the lack of knowledge that existed concerning this complex phenomenon, "When we ask ourselves why people volunteer for any particular community activity we tend to experience a feeling of helplessness, not only in recognition of the complexity of the question but also of its personal nature" (Coleman, 1957, p. 221). He identified three general needs of people, for relatedness to others, security and a sense of self-esteem. Voluntary participation provides the opportunity for "dependency and dominance, for status and prestige, for approval and independence ... to feel part of the larger purposes and meanings of group life" (p. 218).

1.3.1.1 The Fundamental Motive for Volunteering - Self-serving or Altruistic?

The predominant theme in the literature on volunteer motivation concerns the identification of needs that lead certain people to seek out voluntary activity, implying that even in the case of intrinsic motivation, inherent psychological growth-orientated forces are nonetheless fundamentally self-serving.

Researchers seem generally sceptical about the role that altruism plays in voluntary motivation. Smith (1981) defines altruism as a facet of human motivation where individuals give of themselves in an interpersonal situation without expecting reciprocity in kind. The reward for the "giver" takes the form of psychic satisfaction.

Smith believes that although respondents are inclined to provide altruistic reasons for their voluntary participation, as these are deemed to be socially desirable, volunteers are fundamentally motivated by "psychic benefits" (1981, p. 23). These he sees as selfish motives which lead individuals to evaluate themselves in a positive light, thereby enhancing their self-image.

Kennett (in Francies, 1983, p. 17) speaks of "quasi-altruistic" behaviour which seems to be completely selfless but has hidden motives such as recognition and status. Blau (in Francies, 1983, p. 17) states that "There are, to be sure, some individuals who selflessly work for others without any thought of reward and without expecting gratitude, but these are virtually saints, and saints are rare". Francies, (1983, p. 17) thus concludes that other "motivational paychecks" for volunteerism must be sought, while Smith (1981) merely cautions researchers to use sensitive instruments when eliciting motivational factors in order to tap genuine information.

Altruism has been found, according to empirical studies (Gluck, in Smith, 1981), to play a minor role in organized volunteerism, where more powerful motivations were found to include a strong self-serving component, such as meeting the needs for power, achievement and affiliation (Francies, 1983; Henderson, 1981) and goals involving self-actualisation and the improvement of skills (Flynn & Webb in Smith, 1981). However, Engs and Kirk (1974) found that volunteers who cited altruistic motives for their participation were more committed to the organisation and remained as members for almost twice as long as people who reported being involved in order to gain experience or for self-growth.

Henderson (1981) points out, however, that needs are not always consciously defined and volunteers may not be aware that they are motivated by psychic needs. She suggests that volunteers seldom act according to either purely selfish or purely altruistic motives but that "A volunteer will be motivated when primary interest, obligations and needs can be met comfortably while giving service to others"(1981, p. 210).

1.3.1.2 The Benefits and Costs associated with Volunteerism

While certain research into volunteer motivation is largely concerned with the identification and categorization of volunteers' needs (Francies, 1983, Henderson, 1981), other studies in this field have adopted a perspective that considers both the inducements as well as the costs associated with voluntary involvement. Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt (1971) initially identified two main sets of motivational forces

from the model proposed by Kurt Lewin. One group consisted of factors that would encourage participation, (such as the opportunity for self- actualization or to repay a debt to society), while the other group comprised negative elements that might militate against involvement (such as issues relating to time pressure or economic constraints). Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt (1971) point out that motivational forces are not of equal strength and that they vary with each individual due to unique personal, interpersonal and situational factors.

Current trends in the area of voluntary motivation adopt an incentive perspective to volunteerism (Knoke & Wood, 1981; Smith 1981; Prestby, Wanderman, Florin, Rich and Chavis, 1990). Incentive theory traces its origins to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) which posits that any social exchange hinges on the balance of benefits and costs incurred. Individuals will participate if they believe that benefits will exceed or outweigh costs. According to Clarke and Wilson (in Knoke and Wood, 1981), participatory benefits in voluntary organisations can be conceptualized as falling into three categories: material incentives, such as wages and information, solidary benefits, including opportunities for social interaction and prestige, and purposive incentives in terms of doing one's duty, fulfilling a sense of responsibility and bettering the community. Costs can be similarly classified. Material costs include sacrificing time and effort while solidary costs include interpersonal conflict and a lack of social support. Purposive costs relate to disagreements with organisational goals and problems relating to communication and scheduling.

However, other research findings point to a bimotivational categorization of benefits and costs as either personal aspects which are readily quantifiable (such as skills learned and time spent due to participation) or social/communal/organisational benefits and costs (relating to interpersonal or communal goals which are fundamentally based on emotions or values) (Prestby et al, 1990).

A further distinction can be made between gains achieved from volunteer involvement and ongoing incentives to continued participation. For example, people who join an organisation in order to learn skills or gain experience could decide to leave after achieving their aim, while volunteers who participate out of a sense of belonging to the organisation would have to remain a member in order to fulfill this need. Pierce and Geyer (1991,p. 118) speak of investments in the form of "nonportable materials or psychological resources of the individual, extrinsically or intrinsically connected to a particular association or job". Extrinsic investments relate to resources that were not originally linked to the organisation but which have

become so over time while intrinsic investments refer to resources such as time and money which have been expended on involvement and which would be lost on leaving.

Although exchange theory maintains that a high level of participation is related to high costs as well as benefits (Blau, 1964), current research does not appear to confirm this contention. Prestby et al (1990) found that higher levels of participation were associated with higher benefits but lower costs for members of a grassroots community organisation, with active members reporting significantly higher levels of both personal and social/communal/organisational benefits than less active members. Pierce and Geyer (1991) found that commitment to an association or job increases when reward and investment are high, costs are low and there are few viable alternatives.

Certain studies found that incentive and cost management efforts on the part of leaders and/or organisations were successful in promoting individual participation. These included personal incentives, such as skills and training, discounts on food, social/communal incentives (including praise and recognition at meetings) and group activities such as outings and parties. Cost management efforts were aimed at alleviating personal costs such as the provision of safe transportation and child care provision while social/organisational cost management addressed issues such as group discussions regarding organisational decisions and reporting of goal accomplishments via a newsletter.

However, Prestby et al,(1990) stress the importance of tailoring organisational incentive and cost management efforts to the individual requirements of participants and therefore recommend a needs assessment to accurately gauge specific benefits required and costs experienced by members. In the same vein Smith (1981) stresses the importance of material and solidary incentives in attracting and retaining volunteers as he maintains that "as a volunteer organisation demands more of volunteers, creating greater contribution costs for them, it must provide correspondingly greater incentives of various kinds in order to retain (or attract) the kinds of volunteers it needs"(p 32).

1.3.1.3 An Incentive to Participation - Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment has become a central concept in recent community psychology literature. Seidman and Rappoport (1986) regard empowerment as a goal to be attained by both communities and individuals as comprising "a mechanism by which

people, organisations and communities gain mastery over their affairs" (Rappoport in Florin and Wandersman, 1990, p. 44). At an individual level empowerment leads to greater feelings of control and self-efficacy through the attainment of new skills, resources and knowledge. Prestby et al see volunteer participation as a means of promoting individual empowerment, and believe that voluntary organisations should take the form of "empowering settings" by providing the context and conditions that promote individual empowerment (Zimmerman in Presby et al, 1990, p. 144). This has been borne out by research which has found that participation in voluntary organisations is positively related to empowerment. (Zimmerman in Prestby et al, 1990; Rappoport in Florin & Wandersman, 1990).

Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt (1971) regard volunteer participation in the same light by maintaining that volunteerism within a democratic form of government provides the opportunity for continuous education and re-education in a changing society.

Zimmerman makes the distinction between empowering and empowered organisations. Empowering organisations promote the empowerment of members while empowered organisations are successful in providing services and in the attainment of goals (Zimmerman, 1990).

1.4 Aspects of Organisational Membership - Satisfaction, Commitment and Turnover

Glisson and Durick (1988) maintain that job satisfaction and organisational commitment are key factors in both burnout and turnover in the human services and it is thus of crucial importance to understand the etiology of these two aspects, not only out of concern for the well-being of the worker but through consideration for the quality of services offered and the well-being of clients. This point is of particular significance in the case of hotline telephone counselling where the counsellor is provided with only a single opportunity to reach the caller (Warnath & Shelton, 1976).

However, can it be assumed that the motivational dynamics which underly career choice are similar to those which determine volunteer participation? Smith (1975) points out that volunteer participation is by nature a leisure activity and therefore involves behaviour which is not related to physical needs and thus involves a high

degree of discretion. However, Henderson (1981) maintains that volunteering has been classified as being more like work than recreation as it is outer-directed and not inner-directed as in the case of play. Briggs (in Francies, 1983) found that growth and self-esteem needs were rated as the most important for both paid employment and volunteer activity and for both groups the social aspects of the work environment were regarded as the greatest source of satisfaction.

The compensatory hypothesis avers that people volunteer for activities which fulfil needs which are not met by the work or home situation. Miller's (1985) research supports this theory. It was found that people who perceived their jobs as unfulfilling were more likely to participate in voluntary activities to meet growth needs. These people were apt to seek voluntary work that was varied, interesting and enjoyable and which allowed for personal contact. This research highlights the necessity, therefore, continually to reassess and update the training and supervision of volunteers in order to tailor activities to maximize the satisfaction that individuals derive from their involvement.

Within the context of incentive theory, volunteer satisfaction is regarded in terms of members' perceptions of the benefit/cost ratio associated with their participation (Prestby et al, 1990). Cutler (1981) found that the greater the involvement in a voluntary organisation, the greater were the levels of satisfaction associated with participation.

Metz (1987) identified 17 facets of job satisfaction in clinical psychologists that clustered into positive factors such as feelings of being useful and personal accomplishment and negative aspects including time pressure and doubts regarding the perceived effectiveness of intervention efforts.

When considering the relationship between satisfaction with one's job and general life satisfaction Schmitt and Pulakos (1985) found that life satisfaction is a good predictor of job satisfaction. However, according to Cutler (1981), a relationship between volunteer participation and life satisfaction could not be unequivocably established because individuals who participated in voluntary organisations were predominantly of a higher socio-cultural level and were healthier, and thus more satisfied with life, irrespective of their voluntary involvement.

Glisson and Durick's article (1988) highlights the differences between the concepts of satisfaction and commitment. Job satisfaction is defined by Locke (in Glisson &

Durick, 1988, p. 64) as "the positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience" while organisational commitment is seen as " a strong belief in the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on the part of the organisation, and a strong desire to remain a member of the organisation".

Knoke and Wood (1981) identified three distinct dimensions of volunteer commitment. These are loyalty to the organisation, perception of member commitment, and personal salience. Glisson and Durick (1988) found that job satisfaction and commitment are each affected by a different hierarchy of predictors and that job characteristics, skill variety and role ambiguity are the major determinants of satisfaction, while aspects of the organisation such as age, dependability and leadership best predict commitment.

Miller, Powell and Selzer (1990) found that although volunteer turnover is influenced by similar factors as employee turnover, such as attitudes and personal situations, volunteerism differs from paid employment in that a volunteer does not have to find alternative employment before leaving. Thus different factors were found to be more powerful in determining turnover in voluntary work, such as convenience and flexibility of the schedule, the extent to which participation offers opportunities to acquire experience necessary for paid employment, and age (which has been consistently found to correlate negatively with turnover) (Cotton and Tuttle in Miller et al, 1990).

1.4.1 The Relationship between Motivation, Satisfaction, Commitment and Turnover

Francies (1983) maintains that satisfaction in an occupation depends on compatability between the individual's needs (for experience, social approval, achievement), his/her abilities and the various facets of the particular position. It is therefore important to match personal and job profiles in order to increase satisfaction and reduce turnover.

There appears to be little consensus as to the nature or the direction of the relationship between satisfaction and commitment (Glisson and Durick, 1988). However, as previously stated, these authors, citing research by Porter and Jayaratne and Chess, maintain that these two variables influence turnover. Thus an

indirect relationship can be traced between the precursors of satisfaction and commitment - job and organisational characteristics, and employee attrition rates.

1.5 Stress and Burnout

The concept of stress was first introduced by Selye in 1926, who defined it in terms of a non-specific bodily response to any demand placed upon it (Selye in Everly, 1989).

According to Selye's stress response model, the general adaption syndrome, three phases of the stress reaction are distinguishable. First, the alarm phase, then the stage of resistance, and finally the exhaustion phase. If a stressor persists, the body's adaptive energy will be depleted with the resultant overtaxation of the body's defences. According to the 'adaptive-cost hypothesis' (Glass and Singer, in Cohen 1980), the costs of stress are cumulative, and the effects may be felt long after exposure to the stress-provoking stimulus.

The concept of burnout is consistent with this theory. It was first formalised by Freudenberger in his research into alternative help-providing facilities (Metz, 1987). Burnout is defined by Maslach (1982) as a syndrome characterised by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment and job productivity. In health care settings, according to this author, burnout results in a cynical attitude and an unfeeling and impersonal response towards others. It is evident, therefore that burnout is of particular relevance to the area of telephone crisis intervention.

Cherniss (in Seidman & Rappoport, 1986) takes issue with the stress approach to burnout, as he feels that it has been developed from a scientific-technical paradigm, which is seen as mechanistic. This author suggests an alternative to the term burnout - "low morale syndrome" (Seidman and Rappoport, 1986, p. 217), which is defined in terms of loss of commitment due to an erosion of moral purpose. Cherniss believes that an antidote to burnout in the human services involves a rekindling of commitment through the active promotion of a formal ideology and a sense of communal belonging. This view is consistent with the concept of burnout as an existential issue.

Baron and Cohen (1982) believe that hotline crisis intervention is an activity that has a high risk of inducing burnout in counsellors due to the intense emotional involvement with callers, while Warnath and Shelton (1976) maintain that the scheduling requirements such as the stipulation of a certain number of all-night or 'graveyard shifts' (p. 508), and the "once-off" nature of counselling which does not allow for any feedback as to the efficacy of the intervention.

1.5.1 Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Burnout

Maslach (1982) found a significant negative correlation between burnout and age. Metz's (1987) findings were not consistent with this trend, however. She found that clinical psychologists in the age group 35 - 45 reported the highest levels of occupational burnout. She attributed the low levels of burnout in young adult newly qualified psychologists to the enthusiasm of starting a career.

Other variables found to be related to burnout include marital status, with married people experiencing significantly lower levels of emotional exhaustion than single and divorced individuals (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Leiter's (1990) research confirms the importance of the family as a resource and an emotional buffer against occupational burnout. As all aspects of an individual's life are interdependent, however, resources or stress from one area will have a spillover effect on other aspects. Thus, while a nurturant home environment will provide a buffer against occupational burnout, an unsatisfactory work environment could cause the employee to seek emotional support at home, leading to burnout on the domestic front (Farber, 1983). In regard to the current research it would be important to ascertain whether members see their involvement as a positive or negative stress factor.

1.6 Summary and Critique

There is a considerable body of research dealing with volunteerism, and a number of journals which specialise exclusively in this area, such as the Journal of Voluntary Action Research. Whilst the subject of volunteer counselling has attracted a certain amount of attention, most articles have focused on issues such as the efficacy of crisis intervention in addressing specific problems experienced by callers, such as depression and child abuse. Little attention has been devoted to lay counsellors, apart from an isolated study which has looked at personality factors associated with

volunteering for this type of activity (Francies, 1983; Engs and Kirk, 1974). Only one article explored the problem of burnout in hotline crisis counsellors (Baron and Cohen, 1982).

1.7 Relationship between the Literature Review and the Study

The aim of the literature review has been to achieve an overview of the "domain" covered by the reseach question in order to enhance the "theoretical sensitivity" of the researcher, which according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 42) involves the "the attribute of having insight and the ability to give meaning to the data".

However, while the review has served to identify potentially useful questions that might be explored during the course of the in-depth interviews, due to the exploratory nature of the study an inductive approach to data analysis has been adopted (which will be discussed in the following chapter). Thus no specific research questions or hypothesis have been formulated on the basis of the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The research design employed in this study is the product of an evolutionary process which began with the initial tentative idea for a possible thesis topic. Due to the author's increasing familiarity with the field the study was continually changed and refined prior to the adoption of the research design which was eventually employed.

In the first part of this chapter the development of the study will be outlined in order to create a backdrop for the final choice of research design, which will be discussed thereafter. Following this, the in-depth interview as a research method will be critically discussed in terms of its advantages for this particular study as well as its problematic aspects, such as issues relating to the reliability and validity of findings.

Finally the research methodology underpinning this study will be discussed. Aspects which will be covered include sampling strategies and subject selection as well as the procedure used for collecting, analysing and integrating findings.

2.2 Background to the Study

2.2.1 Thesis Development

Origins of the Thesis - Topic Selection

As a volunteer counsellor the writer had become aware of the problem that the volunteer organisation, of which she was a part, was experiencing with regard to high counsellor turnover. Whilst staff members would admit that there was a problem in this respect, no-one was sure of the extent of counsellor attrition as no accurate information had been systematically recorded in regard to this. In addition, although staff members and counsellors seemed to hold a number of divergent theories as to why counsellors were resigning in significant numbers, the issue of turnover did not appear to have ever been researched by the organisation. The question of volunteer turnover therefore seemed a worthwhile subject to pursue as it seemed not only to provide an interesting thesis topic but also to be of practical utility to the volunteer

organisation in question, by providing insight into the phenomenon of counsellor turnover and thus enabling this issue to be constructively addressed.

However, on examination of the pertinent literature, it became clear that the issue of turnover comprises merely one aspect of the wider phenomenon of volunteerism, and it seemed thus equally important to discover why certain people remain in the organisation - both positive and negative factors being relevant to the study. Therefore in order to achieve a comprehensive and holistic perspective of volunteer participation the decision was made to extend the scope of the investigation to consider the experience of the volunteer crisis counsellor in a wider frame.

2.3 Choice of Methodology

In the initial thesis proposal three phases of the study were envisaged. They were to comprise:

a) A demographic analysis of current and drop-out counsellors.

b) A qualitative component consisting of ten exploratory interviews.

c) A questionnaire designed on the basis of information obtained from interviews to be administered to a representative sample taken from the two groups in a).

Through discussion with staff members and fellow counsellors the complexity of the phenomenon of volunteerism became increasingly evident. Furthermore, an analysis of the literature revealed that very little research had been done in the area of volunteer motivation (see literature review). The few papers that had been written on the subject had employed a quantitative approach and a fixed question, limited response format which provided little insight into the phenomenological world of the volunteer.(Francies, 1983; Henderson, 1981).

It was therefore decided that the focus of the study should be changed by expanding the second phase of the original proposal. By increasing the number of in-depth interviews to be undertaken, a greater diversity of responses would potentially be obtainable. The qualitative component would then comprise the major part of the

thesis. As the emphasis would be on richness, depth and complexity of response, the third quantitive phase would fall away.

The use of the in-depth semi-structured interview approach as a research tool will now be discussed.

2.3.1 In-depth Interviews

As previously mentioned, in-depth interviews were selected as an effective means of achieving an insight into the "experiential world" (Hornstein, 1986, p. 552) of the volunteer telephone counsellor with the aim of "obtaining rich and detailed descriptions of the respondents' own concerns, rather than eliciting bits of behaviour responses to precategorized stimuli" (as in the case of a forced-choice questionnaire approach) (Ashworth, Giorgi, & de Koning, 1986, p. 338).

This method of data collection was regarded as the most suitable due to the apparent complexity of the topic and the exploratory nature of the research.

Furthermore, according to Walker (1985) in-depth interviews require that subjects be articulate. As respondents in this study were involved in telephone counselling which depends on their ability to communicate effectively, it was envisaged that in-depth interviews would be a most appropriate and apt medium for eliciting information relating to volunteer motivation.

However, while the in-depth interview approach offers a number of advantages it nonetheless has certain drawbacks and problematical aspects. For example, by choosing a "depth" approach which utilizes a small, non-random sample of subjects, the "breadth" or generalizability of the research is limited. Due to the qualitative nature of data which is obtained through the medium of in-depth interviews, the question of the reliability and validity of findings is not as clear-cut as in the case of quantitive methods. This aspect will now be addressed as it has implications for this research.

2.3.1.1. The Objective of Qualitative Research - Issues of Reliability and Validity

Qualitative researchers deny the existence of an objective external reality which can be "discovered" by the researcher and therefore believe that "the notion of some kind of impersonal, machine-like investigator is recognised as a chimera" (Walker,

1985, p. 48). This standpoint thus calls into question traditional positivistic views of reliability and validity. Qualitative researchers criticize the criterion of reliability as viewed from a positivistic perspective as dependent on consensus. Certain adherents of a qualitative approach go as far as to suggest that a concern with inter-rater reliability is an instance of "collective delusion" (Packer and Addison, 1989, p. 285) which cannot, in any event be achieved in an interview context as "an interview is a complicated, shifting social process occurring between two individual human beings, which can never be exactly replicated" (Walker, 1985, p. 48).

According to qualitative researchers, validity should be seen in terms of "fidelity to the data" (Ashworth et al, 1986, p. 357), where the researcher is concerned with accurately reflecting the meaning conveyed by the respondent. Ely, Angul & Friedman, (1993) described this aspect as the degree to which the vision of the researcher matches those of the people who are being studied.

2.3.1.2 The Problem of Experimenter Bias

How can researchers ensure that they have correctly interpreted the meaning conveyed by respondents? Qualitative researchers agree that subjective interpretation on the part of the researcher is inevitable, yet there are differences of opinion as to the degree to which they see subjective bias as a potentially contaminating factor.

Walker, (1985) believes that familiarity with the topic under study could be an advantage if used creatively and self-consciously, and Packer and Addison (1989, p. 277) regard pre-understanding as a "type of caring", where meanings are co-constructed between the researcher and the respondent within the context of the interview. However, McCracken (1988) points out the potential pitfalls associated with familiarity with the field, where findings could be misinterpreted due to preconceptions on the part of the researcher. He speaks of the importance of "manufacturing distance" (p 22) whereby a critical awareness is created of well-known phenomena. This is of importance in the context of the present study where the researcher is also a voluntary telephone counsellor. While this special status provided access to information which would not have been available to an "outsider", in the form of membership records and respondent self-disclosure (interviewees invariably asked me whether I was a fellow-member before providing intimate personal details relating to their involvement), it was nonetheless important to constantly keep in mind that the aim of the interview was to allow all respondents

free rein to discuss their experience of their voluntary involvement from their own unique perspective with the minimum of prompting from the researcher.

The interview procedure was pilot tested on three colleagues who were themselves volunteer counsellors, in order to gain feedback regarding interview technique and the suitability and scope of the questions which were posed.

As each interview was transcribed verbatim from a tape recording by the interviewer, the threat of inaccurate interpretation was minimized. However, in cases where meanings were unclear, respondents were requested to clarify their statements, either at the time or at a later stage.

Another validity issue concerns the coding of interviews and the degree to which the concepts that are used fit the data. As discussed later in this chapter, in this study categories and themes were empirically determined "from the bottom up" (Ely et al, 1993, p. 151), from common meanings that emerged from interview texts. Peer review and member checking procedures were used continually to monitor the appropriateness of categorisation. This was deemed especially important in this study, where one person conducted the entire research process.

2.3.1.3 Research Criteria and Goals

The criteria by which to measure validity according to a qualitative perspective involve such aspects as comprehensiveness, comprehensibility, intelligibility, credibility, meaningfulness and significance (Packer and Addison, 1989). These authors regard worthwhile research as "fruitful" in terms of providing new ways of seeing phenomena, where findings take the form of "emancipatory knowledge" which "reorients, focuses and energizes participants towards knowing reality in order to transform it" (p 287).

This pragmatic orientation is in line with the aim of popularising research by making it available as a resource to participants in the study and to other parties who may be able to utilize insights which emerge. In regard to the present study, it is planned that findings which have emerged will be presented to the organisation concerned at a members' evening, where implications and recommendations can be debated.

2.4 Research Design

2.4.1 Sampling Strategies

The initial phase of the research took the form of a within- group study, consisting of two groups of subjects. The first group comprised all current volunteers , while the other group was composed of all volunteers who had left the organisation during the three previous years (as of April, 1993).

Subjects for the second phase of the research were selected from the initial sample according to a purposive technique involving a systematic, structured sampling procedure (Babbie, 1989) in order to maximize the diversity of experience of respondents. Thus the aim of using this sampling strategy was "to increase the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities would be uncovered" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 40). This will be elaborated upon in the "procedure" section of this chapter.

2.4.2 Subjects

According to the records kept by the organisation, at the time when data was collected (April, 1993) there were 247 volunteers who were current members of the organisation of whom 40 were inactive (see Chapter 3). After sifting through all the records of members who had left the organisation, a sample of 199 drop-outs from the previous three years was identified.

These subjects did not participate directly in the research process as their demographic details were obtained from their files.

From this initial sample twelve current and eleven ex-volunteers were chosen as respondents for the interview phase of the research. (see Appendix A for the demographic characteristics of respondents).

2.4.3 Procedure

2.4.3.1 Phase 1 - Demographic Analysis

2.4.3.1.1 Gathering Demographic Data

Permission was first requested from the volunteer organisation in order to proceed with the research and to gain access to the files containing counsellor information. This was granted on condition that all personal details were to remain confidential.

2.4.3.1.2 Analysis of Demographic Data

For each subject in both the current and ex-volunteer group the following variables were personally recorded and computerized: date of joining the organisation, date of departure (in the case of withdrawers), date of birth, highest educational level achieved, religious orientation, sex, marital and parental status.

A statistical analysis was performed on the data in order to determine the demographic profile of subjects in terms of each variable and to explore relationships between the different variables and length of service for both the current and ex-volunteer groups. Upon initial analysis of the data, gender appeared to play a role in affecting findings. Thus in order to achieve more homogeneous sub-samples, variables were analysed separately in terms of this variable in both current and ex-volunteer groups.

Statistical methods which were employed, where applicable, include one-way analysis of variance, t-tests, and correlations. A regression analysis was performed on data with "length of service" as the dependent variable in order to try to discover whether or not any of the other variables were significant predictors of this factor.
The results of the demographic analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

2.4.3.2 Phase 2 - In-depth Interviews

2.4.3.2.1 Participant Selection

In order to select respondents for the next phase of the research each subject from the initial sample was assigned a number and the data was then sorted according to the age of the subject and his or her length of service, as the literature appeared to

indicate that these are salient factors which influence volunteer motivation (Gerdes 1988; Kanchier & Unruh, 1988).

Thus two lists were generated, one of current and the other of drop-out counsellors. These were ordered in such a way that those who had served the longest were at the top of the list, whilst in the case where more than one counsellor had served, for example ten years, then the oldest counsellor appeared first. This method was adopted so that a systematic, structured sample of counsellors might be selected for the in-depth interviews, with a view to tapping diverse experiences and viewpoints. This was deemed especially important as the choice of a qualitative approach sets limits to the number of interviews that can be processed, due to time and financial constraints.

In this way a list of 12 current and 11 drop-out counsellors was generated. The next step consisted of contacting these individuals telephonically in order to request an interview.

2.4.3.2.2 The Recruitment of Respondents

As current counsellors must live within travelling distance of Cape Town in order to come in to the centre to fulfill their counselling duties, it was not envisaged that major problems would be encountered in arranging interviews with these people, assuming that they would be willing to co- operate. However, it was surmised that the counsellors who had left the organisation during the previous three years would be more elusive as they might have relocated, changed their names due to marriage, or changed their places of employment. However, once the names of those no longer living in the Cape Town area had been discarded (as they had relocated, their reasons for leaving the organisation were clear-cut) and had been replaced by the next person appearing on the ordered list, it became a relatively easy task, due to the willing assistance of a member of staff of the organisation, to locate all the individuals on the list. In fact it was more difficult to make contact with the current members, who seemed on the whole to be living such full lives that reaching them became quite a challenge.

When telephonic contact with each subject was eventually achieved, a standard explanation was given regarding the interviewer's personal background and credentials, as well as the aims of the research. Their co-operation was requested in allowing a taped interview to be conducted, preferably in their home environment.

The assurance was given that all information would be treated in confidence. All those contacted agreed to co-operate, and the majority demonstrated great interest in the endeavour and were enthusiastic about the interview. A time and date was set for each interview.

2.4.3.2.3 Interview Format

As mentioned previously, most interviews were conducted in respondents' homes as it was felt that this would provide a relaxed environment while at the same time give the researcher an impression of the respondents' context within the limited period of the interview.

Before commencing with each interview, the researcher attempted to establish rapport with subjects in order to build up sufficient trust to facilitate self-disclosure. The interviewer reiterated that confidentiality would be maintained.

The interview took the form of a "steered conversation" (Walker, 1985, p. 78), consisting of a number of general, open-ended questions intended to tap respondents' feelings and opinions on all aspects of their volunteer involvement (see appendix B). Interviewees were free to place their own interpretation on the questions and to expand on issues that they were most interested in or about which they felt most strongly.

Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes. A biographical questionnaire was also completed by respondents at the conclusion of the interview (see appendix C).

Directly after each interview a "contact summary sheet" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 69) was compiled by the researcher, detailing impressions of the interviewee and the information that had been presented, as well as tentative hypotheses concerning any discernable patterns that seemed to be emerging in the data. This activity would often initiate a new train of thought, leading to a constant refining of the questions to be asked in subsequent interviews. This approach is in line with Strauss and Corbin's (1990) constant comparative method of data collection and analysis.

2.4.3.2.4 Analysis of the Interview Data

After each interview the taped recording was transcribed verbatim onto the computer. This task was undertaken personally by the author for two reasons. First, it was found that listening to the tape during transcription provided the opportunity to achieve a greater "feel" for the meaning that was being conveyed as such factors as voice intonation, hesitation and laughter could be taken into account. Secondly, confidentiality was an important consideration. Although the tapes were anonymous, in certain instances "sensitive" information was imparted by certain respondents, which the author felt should not be divulged to a third party on ethical grounds. Similarly, when quoting from interviews, codes have been used to preclude identification of respondents. Current volunteers with short to medium term service (up to five years) have been coded CS and those with longer term service (over five years) have been coded CL. Ex-volunteers have been coded ES and EL.

The procedure that was adopted in the data analysis roughly follows the process advocated by McCracken (1988). The first stage involved becoming steeped in the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990,) by reading and rereading the text of the interview before deciding on descriptive labels that would encapsulate the meaning of the data. As tentative relationships between different categories began to emerge, these would be written up alongside the text in the form of "memos" (Miles & Huberman 1984, p. 69). Category labels were entered into the margins of the interview text, general themes on the left, and detailed categories on the right. Certain words and phrases which appeared significant or evocative were highlighted. At a later stage the "mark and copy" function of the computer was used to locate all instances of key words and phrases.

When all the interviews had been coded in this way, the "cut and stick" method was employed, whereby the text of the interviews was divided into general themes and placed into different columns on large pieces of cardboard. Individual interviews were ordered in rows, according to length of service and sex of respondent, with active counsellors on the right, drop-out counsellors on the left. In this way a "conceptually clustered matrix" was formed (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 110).

This method facilitated the analysis of the data and writing up process by providing a visual overview of the material, which enabled the discovery of relationships and patterns in the data, while still preserving the context in which it appeared. A further advantage was that of enabling the researcher to see at a glance where the

respondents had focused their attention as certain themes and categories were "fuller" than others. This was enhanced through the colour coding of categories.

At this stage a comprehensive list of themes and categories was compiled (see appendix D). These were colour coded to facilitate analysis.

As a network of themes emerged, each was explored individually with reference to interviewees' quotations which served to illustrate the emerging network of hierarchically organised sub-themes and categories. Through a process of "harvesting and winnowing" (Mc Cracken, 1988, p. 47) the formation of each general theme was developed (see Appendix D).

The following stage involved determining the relationship between themes, and the identification of major or core themes under which the other relevant ones could be subsumed.

2.4.4 Achieving Synthesis - Discussion of Findings

Finally, phases one and two of the research were combined. All the themes emanating from the in-depth interviews were brought together into a synthesis with findings from the demographic analysis in order to review "the general properties of thought and action within the community or group under study" (McCracken, 1988, p. 46). General findings were then presented and on the basis of these, recommendations were made with the object of enabling the volunteer organisation from which subjects were drawn to improve the management of volunteers.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the evolution of the research from the initial idea for the study, the choice of methodology, the procedure employed for gathering and analysing the data, through to the final stage involving the presentation of the research findings.

However, before embarking on a presentation of the research results of the study it is deemed important to acquaint the reader with a background to the nature of the organisational involvement of volunteer telephone counsellors in this study in order to place findings in context. This will be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: THE CONTEXT OF PARTICIPATION AND THE PROCESS OF COUNSELLOR DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

In order to gain an understanding of factors underlying volunteer motivation in the specific area of "hotline" telephone counselling, it is important to have an idea of the context in which volunteers participate as well as the criteria for involvement.

First a brief background to the origins, structure and objectives of the organisation will be given, followed by a discussion concerning the various duties and responsibilities of the volunteers.

In the final section of this chapter the stages of counsellor development and the accompanying personal decision-making process of volunteers will be outlined and discussed.

3.2 The Volunteer Organisation

The organisation from which the subjects for this study were recruited forms part of an international movement which originated in 1963 from a Christian base. At present it consists of over two hundred centres in fourteen countries. The regional branch is affiliated to the Southern African organisation, which was brought into existence in 1968. The national body lays down broad criteria for the accreditation of counsellors and insists on minimum training standards for prospective members:

> "Counsellors should be willing to engage in counselling in accordance with Christian insights. They should show personal emotional maturity and must successfully complete the prescribed courses of training" (Constitution of the National Organisation, March, 1980).

However, the regional branch exercises full control over its own training and selection procedures. The regional branch is controlled by an Executive Committee consisting of 12 current volunteers who are elected by the membership. There are six full-time paid staff members, including a counselling director, who answer to the executive.

The movement is housed in the centre of a metropolitan area, where training courses are held and all counselling duties are performed.

The organisation offers a 24-hours a day general problem counselling service as well as face-to-face counselling during office hours. The service is available to anyone in need:

> "When you have a problem, sometimes it's hard to know which way to turn...no problem is too large or too small. All you have to do is pick up the 'phone and ring. Anytime, from anywhere, for any problem" (Information pamphlet).

The nature of calls vary from crisis-related problems to requests for information. (see Appendix E for categories and statistics relating to calls received).

At the time when the data for this study was gathered, there were 247 current members. Not all of these were currently active, however. There were approximately forty who were temporarily inactive, thus there were some 200 members who were available for duty at any one time. These counsellors were responsible for handling approximately 2,000 calls a month.

Although fully detailed records were not maintained for all counsellors who had left the organisation, it was apparent from the data that during the three years preceding the study a minimum of 199 people had resigned. This accounted for about 66 per year, an average of approximately 26% of current membership. This roughly accords with the finding that the average length of active membership was approximately five years (see chapter 4).

3.3 Objectives of the Organisation

According to the Mission Statement decided upon by the Regional Executive on 5th November 1990, the organisation "cares for the community" by offering a 24 hour crisis counselling service as well as counselling and life skills training. As regards the membership, the Mission Statement declares that the organisation provides members with a sense of fellowship and an opportunity for growth (it does not state, however, how these aims are to be realized).

3.4 Duties and Responsibilities of Volunteers

Before individuals are accepted as counsellors and become members of the organisation they are required to commit themselves to certain responsibilities. Their counselling obligation entails performing a minimum of two duties a month, and three all-night duties a year. The length of counselling sessions ranges from three to five hours during the day and overnight sessions last for ten hours.

In addition to their counselling duties, volunteers are expected to participate in various fund-raising activities (including an annual street collection and selling tickets for an annual charity Gala Premiere) and to attend a minimum of three members' evenings per year. In addition, they are asked to assist as facilitators and trainers in the organisation's training programmes. An annual membership fee of R 50 is also imposed.

3.5 The Process of Becoming a Counsellor

Becoming a telephone counsellor involves more than merely deciding on the spur of the moment to do something to benefit the community, offering one's services, and beginning immediately.

The actual process of becoming a counsellor is much more complex and involves a progression through a number of distinct stages. In order to progress from one stage to the next, the volunteer (or the organisation) must make the appropriate decisions which will allow him/her to continue. On the basis of interview data it is evident that at each stage different factors influence participants' motivation to continue with the process (see Chapter 5).

However, especially in the preliminary training and supervision phases the decision to continue does not rest solely with the volunteer. Fellow volunteers, group facilitators and the staff are all involved in the assessment and decision-making process.

3.5.1 Stages in Counsellor Development and Decision-making of Volunteers

As the voluntary organisation in this study has clearly defined criteria and requirements for the selection of trainees and counsellors, the stages in becoming a counsellor are the same for all volunteers.

Figure 1 provides an outline of the process involved in counsellor development in terms of a series of stages, as well as the timing and nature of the decisions which must be taken by each volunteer in order to progress from one stage to the next.

3.5.2 Stage 1 - The Training Phase

Decision 1 - to do the Training Courses

The training phase leading to becoming a counsellor consists of two parts, a personal growth course and a course concentrating on counselling skills and communication. At the time this study commenced the first course consisted of a three-hour session once a week for approximately eight weeks while the second course, also consisting of one three hour session a week, extended over seven weeks.

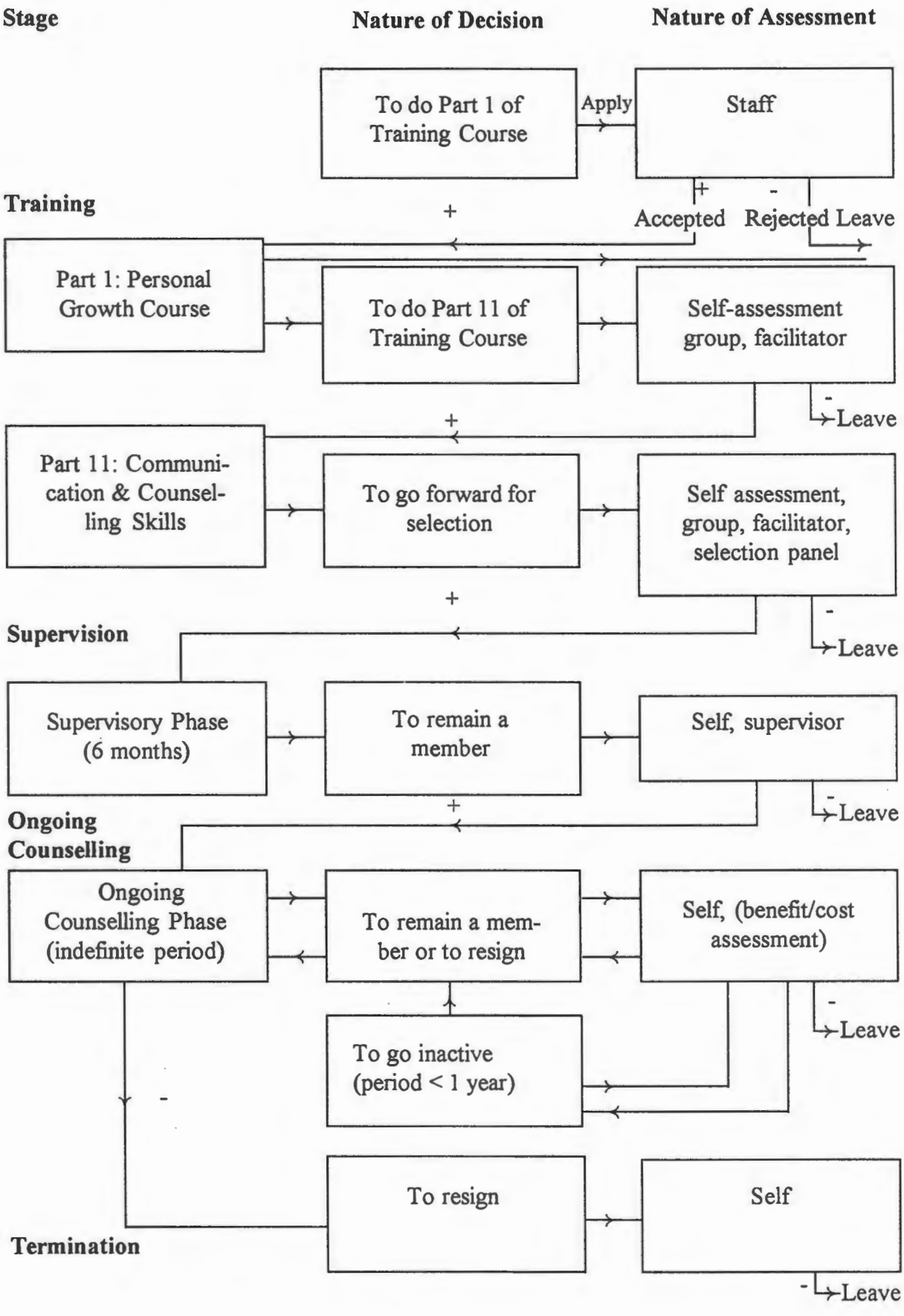
In order to be accepted for the personal growth course applicants have to complete a written questionnaire providing personal details, giving reasons for wanting to do the course and information as to whether or not they are undergoing any form of psychotherapy.

Training sessions are conducted on an experiental basis with trainees being split up into groups of four or five with a group facilitator who is an experienced counsellor.

Not all individuals who do the personal growth course have the inclination to go on to become counsellors. As an example, in 1993, 109 persons enrolled for the personal growth course. Of those 23 went on to the second part of the training and only twelve of those went on to become counsellors.

However, those who wish to continue to the next stage of the course are required to conduct a self-assessment as well as undergo evaluations by the members of the group and the group facilitator. This is also a requirement at the end of the second part of the course for those participants who decide to apply to become counsellors.

Figure 1: Flow Chart. The Process of Counsellor Development – Stages and Decisions



3.5.3 Stage 2 - Becoming A Telephone Counsellor Under Supervision

Decision Two - to go forward for selection

Once the prospective counsellors have been favourably evaluated by the group and have decided to put themselves forward for selection, the next step involves undergoing an interview with a selection panel consisting of a group of experienced counsellors. A number of panels meets concurrently in the same room. The organisation suggests a number of general criteria for selection, stating that:

> "It is difficult to be too specific here. Basically, we look for mature people with skills that enable them to listen and respond warmly to others. We also look for a commitment in people to their own personal growth, an awareness of their motivation for applying, realistic expectations, and an acceptance of others' beliefs and values even if these are contrary to their own. We are looking for people with a deep commitment to serving others. A counsellor must be able to relate to others at the very core of their beings and we thus believe it is important for there to be a discernable spiritual awareness, however this may find expression in the life of each counsellor." (Organisational pamphlet entitled "About being a * Counsellor")[1].

Thus whilst there appear to be a number of qualities that are generally considered important in a potential counsellor, panel members decide individually on the nature and content of the questions which are put to interviewees. There is therefore a substantial subjective element in counsellor selection which was criticised by a number of respondents in the study. Certain interviewees expressed the feeling that there should be only one selection panel and consensus on selection criteria, while others contended that the selection process was not sufficiently rigorous, allowing people to become counsellors who weren't sufficiently committed to the organisation or who did not possess the necessary depth of spiritual awareness. Certain long term counsellors saw this as contributing to an erosion of counsellor commitment and morale leading to an acceleration of the drop-out rate:

> "We have to ask what is the difference in the calibre of counsellors coming through now..and I think there is something wrong..there are too many slipping through the net..who are doing it as an ego-thing..and they stay for a short time and their attitude is -'I'm doing you a favour, OK.'I think a good number of years ago it was more difficult and they were more fussy about who got in ..."(EL).

After the selection interview candidates are informed telephonically as to the panel's decision and those who have been successful are invited to join the movement.

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[1] For the purposes of confidentiality, the name of the organisation is not revealed.

3.5.4 Stage 3 - Becoming A Telephone Counsellor

Although each new counsellor is assigned a supervisor who acts as a consultant during the first six months of service, to all intents and purposes the counsellor is on his or her own within the counselling context as it is considered unethical by the organisation for a third party to listen in to calls.

At the end of the six month probationary period each counsellor is required to complete successfully two test calls, in which the supervisor takes the role of a caller presenting with a certain problem. The novice counsellor is then eligible to become a full member of the organisation after taking a Dedication Pledge at a special ceremony.

Decision Three - to Remain a Telephone Counsellor

From this stage onwards the decision to remain with the organisation becomes almost exclusively a personal one on the part of the individual volunteer as continued membership depends on the fulfillment of clearly defined tasks and obligations (as outlined in Section 3.4 of this chapter).

In the event that volunteers are unable or unwilling to counsel for a time they are permitted to go inactive for periods of up to a year. However, if they do not resume their counselling duties after this period, counsellors are asked to resign.

According to the incentive theory of motivation (see chapter 2), volunteers' decisions to continue to participate in a certain activity depend on the subjectively perceived positive ratio of the benefits over the costs of involvement. A number of interviewees seemed to use this model when considering their continued involvement:

> "I always thought I would stay on until I'm not learning anything [new]...that hasn't happened yet...it's not just learning skills but to make a contribution..but as long as I'm stretched it's worthwhile"(CS).
>
> "The organisation meant a lot to me and I also feel I received as much as I gave" (EL).

3.5.5 Stage Four - Termination of Participation

Decision Four - To Leave the Organisation

When volunteers decide to leave the organisation they are asked to give their notice in writing. It is the organisation's policy to conduct exit interviews with all those who decide to leave, though some interviewees reported that this did not happen in practice. One long-term counsellor expressed considerable hurt and bitterness at not having her note of resignation or her contribution acknowledged by the organisation.

At the time when this study was conducted, volunteers who have left the organisation but who wish to reinstate their membership are usually required to go through the entire training programme and selection process again from the beginning.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter the context of volunteer involvement was explored. Aspects which were discussed include the nature of both the organisation from which subjects were drawn as well as the counselling service which is provided by members. In addition, the process involved in becoming a counsellor was outlined.

The organisation forms part of an international Christian-based movement and is controlled on a regional level by an Executive Committee consisting of active counsellors elected by the membership and assisted by a small, paid staff. The aims of the organisation include the provision of a 24-hours a-day telephone counselling service and face-to-face counselling for members of the public requiring assistance with any problem (from requests for information to help in a crisis). In addition, the organisation conducts a series of training courses for various groups within the community.

At the time when the study was conducted, current membership totalled 247 volunteers, 207 of whom were active. These counsellors handled, on average, 2 000 calls per month.

In terms of the various duties and additional activities expected of volunteers, apart from being responsible for two counselling sessions per month and three all-night

duties per year, members are required to attend three meetings a year, assist with fund-raising and to be involved in training and facilitating.

When outlining the process of counsellor development the various stages were discussed including training, supervision, ongoing counselling and termination of participation. Progression to each subsequent stage was shown to require an appropriate decision on the part of the volunteer as well as a positive assessment from the the various agents which were responsible for selection.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

4.1 Introduction

Data for demographic analysis was obtained from a total of 446 subjects in April 1993. Of these, 247 were current counsellors while 199 were ex-counsellors, who had left the organisation during the preceding three years. As can be seen from Table 1, males comprised approximately a quarter of the volunteers in both groups.

Table 1. Current and Ex-volunteers by Gender

	Current Volunteers(n=247)		Ex-volunteers(n=199)		
	N	%	N	%	Total
Females	181	74	144	75	325
Males	64	26	49	25	113
Missing	2	N/A	6	N/A	8
Total	247	100	199	100	446

Variables that have been used for analysis are the following: age on joining the organisation, current age (as of April 1993), level of education, religious affiliation, marital and parental status and length of service (see Appendix F for categories and levels of variables).

In the first part of the chapter demographic profiles will be presented and discussed for each variable in turn for current and ex-volunteers. Where applicable, female and male volunteers have been considered separately within the current and ex-volunteer groups.

Thereafter the variable "length of service" will be analysed in relation to the other demographic variables, as this factor is of crucial importance in providing an indication of the factors associated with long-term membership of the organisation and volunteer turnover.

Finally, results pertaining to the regression analysis will be presented. This was performed in order to identify the independent variables which significantly predict length of service in the sample of volunteers as a whole.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Demographic Profiles

4.2.1.1 Age on Joining the Organisation

The entire data set including both current and ex-counsellors was first grouped together (n=417, 49 missing scores) in order to analyse the data pertaining to age on joining the organisation. The frequency distribution of the group has a range from 20 to 68 and is positively skewed with a mode of 35-39 years (see Graph 1).

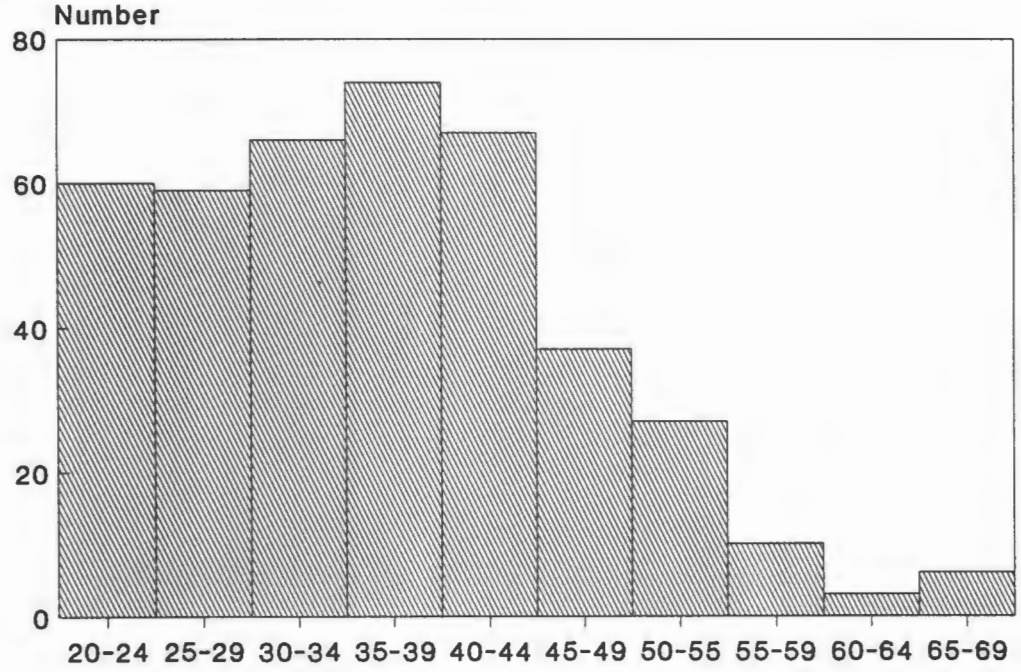
However, when male and female volunteers are considered separately a different pattern emerges (see Graphs 2 and 3). Whilst the highest proportion of women volunteers join the organisation between the ages of 35-39 (20%), initial membership for males peaks between the ages of 30-34 (23%). A higher proportion of males than females join the organisation before the age of 35 (50% of males as opposed to 44% of females). However, above the age of 50 the two sexes are more or less equally represented.

In Table 2, the age on joining is analysed separately for current and ex-volunteers, the mean being somewhat higher for current volunteers than ex-volunteers (see Table 3).

Table 2. Mean Age on Joining the Organisation for Current and Ex-volunteers

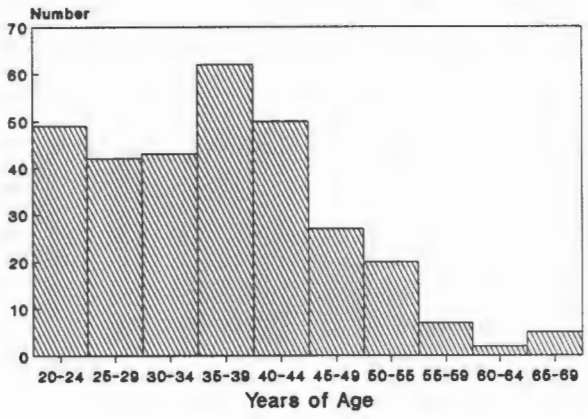
	Current Volunteers (n=247)				Ex-volunteers (n=199)			
	N	Mean	SD	Med	N	Mean	SD	Med
Females	173	38,6	10,5	38	134	35,8	9,8	36
Males	62	38,0	10,3	38	40	36,4	11,1	33
Sub-total	235	38,5	10,2	38	174	36,1	10,1	35
Missing	12				25			

Graph 1: Age Distribution on Joining the Organisation(n=446)



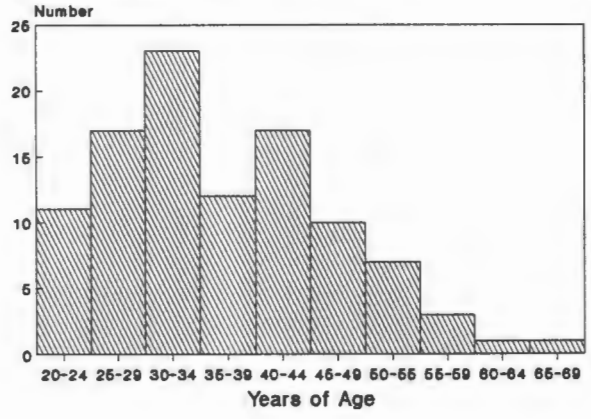
Missing Scores ▪ 8

Graph 2 & 3: Age Distribution on Joining the Organisation for Females and Males



Females (n=325)

Missing Scores ▪ 18



Males (n=113)

Missing Scores ▪ 11

4.2.1.2 Current Age

Table 3 presents the mean ages of female and male volunteers as of April 1993. Males tend to be older than females in both current and ex-volunteer groups.

Table 3. Mean Age as of April, 1993, for Current and Ex-volunteers

	Current Volunteers			Ex-volunteers		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Females	175	43,9	12,5	138	41,9	10,8
Males	62	45,2	11,6	41	43,7	13,3
Sub-total	237			179		
Missing	10			20		
Total	247			199		

4.2.1.3 Educational Qualifications

As can be seen in Table 4, volunteers' overall level of education tends to be high. 151 (65%) of current volunteers and 105 (59%) of ex-volunteers have obtained a tertiary qualification while only 10 (less than 3% of all volunteers) have not matriculated. Current volunteers on average have a higher level of education than ex-volunteers, while females in both groups had a higher proportion of diplomas than degrees while the opposite is the case for males.

Table 4. Frequency of Levels of Educational Qualifications in Current and Ex-volunteers by Gender

	Current Volunteers					Ex-volunteers				
	Females		Males			Females		Males		
	N	%	N	%	T	N	%	N	%	T
< Matric	5	2,9	1	1,6	6	3	2,1	1	2,5	4
Matric	58	33,5	19	31,2	69	55	39,6	15	37,5	70
Diploma	49	28,3	8	13,1	57	29	20,9	5	12,5	34
Degree	61	35,3	33	54,1	94	52	37,4	19	47,5	71
Sub-total	I73	100,0	61	100,0	234	139	100,0	40	100,0	179
Missing					13					20
Total					247					199

4.2.1.4 Religious Affiliation

Christianity constitutes the predominant religious orientation, with 64% of subjects belonging to a Christian denomination. Anglicans constitute the largest denomination, comprising 23% of the total sample.

When religious affiliation is considered separately for current and ex-counsellors (see Table 5), proportional representation is roughly similar in most categories. However, the Jewish faith is better represented in the current group than the ex-volunteer group (18,8% as opposed to 17,5%).

Table 5. Religious Affiliation - Current vs Ex-volunteers

	Current Volunteers		Ex-volunteers	
	N	%	N	%
Jewish	45	18,8	32	17,5
Other Religions	13	5,4	9	5,0
None/Not known	30	12,7	24	13,0
Anglican	52	21,7	44	24,0
Other Protestant	55	23,0	43	23,5
Roman Catholic	23	9,6	21	11,5
Other Christian	21	8,8	10	5,5
Total Christian	151	63,1	118	64,5
Missing	8		16	
Total	247	100,0	199	100,0

4.2.1.5 Marital Status

Table 6 (a) presents the frequency distribution of marital status of current and ex-volunteers. The largest category comprises married people who make up approximately 50% of the total sample, with a higher percentage of current counsellors being married as compared to ex-counsellors (57% as opposed to 42%). The reverse is the case for those who are single, with there being a higher percentage of single members in the ex-volunteer group (38%) as opposed to current volunteers (27%).

Divorced people comprise about 15% of both groups while those who have been widowed account for under 3% of the total sample.

When females and males are considered separately within each group (see Tables 7(b) and 7(c)), it can be seen that there is a higher percentage of female volunteers who are divorced than male volunteers (17% compared to 7%). While approximately 50% of both female and male volunteers are married, a higher percentage of males than females are single (36% compared to 31%).

Table 6(a). Distribution - Marital Status of Current and Ex-volunteers

	Current Volunteers		Ex-volunteers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	65	27,0	71	38,2	136	31,8
Married	137	56,8	79	42,5	216	50,6
Divorced	35	14,5	27	14,5	62	14,5
Widowed	4	1,7	7	3,7	11	2,6
Deceased	-	-	2	1,1	2	0,5
Sub-total	241	100,0	186	100,0	427	100,0
Missing	6		13		19	
Total	247		199		446	

Table 6(b). Distribution - Marital Status of Current and Ex-volunteers by Gender

	Current Volunteers					Ex-volunteers				
	Females		Males			Females		Males		
	N	%	N	%	T	N	%	N	%	T
Single	46	26,0	19	30,0	65	52	37,0	19	43,0	71
Married	102	57,3	35	55,5	137	58	40,9	21	47,8	79
Divorced	27	15,2	8	12,7	35	27	19,0	-	-	27
Widowed	3	1,7	1	1,6	4	5	3,5	2	4,5	7
Deceased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4,5	2
Total	178	100,0	63	100,0	241	142	100,0	44	100,0	186
Missing					6					13
Total					247					199

Table 6(c). Distribution of Marital Status Current and Ex-volunteers by Gender

	Females		Males		
	N	%	N	%	T
Single	98	30,6	38	35,5	136
Married	160	50,0	56	52,3	216
Divorced	54	16,9	8	7,5	62
Widowed	8	2,5	3	2,8	11
Deceased	-	-	2	1,9	2
Total	320	100,0	107	100,0	427
Missing					19
Total					446

4.2.1.6 Parental Status

For the purposes of analysis, parental status has been coded as a dichotomous variable in terms of subjects either having, or not having children (see Appendix F). When considering both current and ex-volunteer groups as a whole (see Table 7), it is evident that a higher percentage of the volunteers are parents than those who are not (54% compared to 46%).

When considering the sexes separately as regards parental status (see Table 7) it is evident that while a higher percentage of female volunteers have children compared to those who don't (57% compared to 43%), male volunteers are more or less evenly divided between those who are parents and those who are not (49% as opposed to 51%). However, there is a higher proportion of childless males in the ex-volunteer group in comparison to males without children in the current volunteer group (57% compared to 48%).

Table 7. Distribution of Parental Status for Current and Ex-volunteers by Gender

	Current Volunteers					Ex-volunteers				
	Females		Males			Females		Males		
	N	%	N	%	T	N	%	N	%	T
None	74	41,6	30	47,6	104	65	45,8	24	57,1	89
Some	104	58,4	33	52,4	137	77	54,2	18	42,9	95
Sub-total	178	100,0	63	100,0	241	142	100,0	42	100,0	184
Missing					6					15
Total				247						199

4.2.1.7 Length of Service

As can be seen from Table 8, the distributions of both current and ex-volunteers are positively skewed with a range of from less than one year to 25 years. Approximately half of all volunteers serve for less than three years (47% current, 49% ex-volunteers), while over 80% remain with the organisation for less than eight years (80% of current volunteers, 86% of ex-volunteers).

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of Years of Service for Current and Ex-volunteers

	Current Volunteers			Ex-volunteers		
Length of Service	N	%	Cum %	N	%	Cum %
< 1 year	45	18,7	18,7	13	9,7	9,7
1-2 yrs	39	16,3	35,0	28	20,9	30,6
2-3	28	11,7	46,7	24	17,9	48,5
3-4	25	1,4	57,1	14	10,4	58,9
4-5	15	6,3	63,4	11	8,2	67,1
5-6	17	7,1	70,5	12	9,0	76,1
6-7	10	4,2	74,7	8	6,0	82,1
7-8	12	5,0	79,7	5	3,7	85,8
8-9	5	2,1	81,8	5	3,7	89,5
9-10	6	2,5	84,3	0	0,0	89,5
10-15	21	8,8	93,0	10	7,5	97,0
15-20	11	4,5	97,5	3	2,1	99,2
>20	6	2,5	100,0	1	0,7	100,0
Sub-total	240			134		
Missing	7			65		
Total	247			199		

4.2.2 Relationships between Demographic Variables and Length of Service

Table 9 presents the mean length of service for current and ex-volunteers. On average current volunteers have served for a longer period than ex-volunteers. When considering length of service in relation to gender, male volunteers remain with the organisation for longer periods than female volunteers. There is a higher variation in the period of service of males as compared with that of female volunteers.

There is a significant difference between the sexes in length of service in the case of current volunteers, with males remaining with the organisation for longer periods of time than females (t= -2,64, df=238, p<0,05). However, the difference is not significant as regards ex-volunteers (t = -1,3, df=132, p<0,2).

When length of service is correlated with gender of subjects, results are significant for current but not ex-volunteers (current volunteers: r_{PB} = 0,17, p < 0,009; ex-volunteers r_{PB} = 0,12, p < 0,16).

Table 9. Mean Length of Service in Years for Current and Ex-volunteers

	Current Volunteers		Ex-volunteers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Females	5,14	4,64	4,63	3,73
Males	7,17	6,63	5,74	4,71
Sub-total	5,67	5,29	4,91	3,96

Table 10. Mean Length of Service in Years for Current and Ex-volunteers by Educational Level

	Current Volunteers		Ex-volunteers	
	M	SD	M	SD
< Matric	9,0	7,1	9,5	7,9
Matric	5,7	5,2	6,5	4,3
Diploma	5,6	5,5	6,5	3,3
Degree	5,6	5,2	6,0	3,3

When length of service is analysed in terms of level of education, Table 10 shows that in both current and ex-volunteer groups, members who have not matriculated serve for longer on average than volunteers who have matriculated and who have some form of tertiary qualification. However, the group of members who have not matriculated is small compared to the total sample (N = 10, 2%), and the variation in length of service between subjects is relatively large (approximately 7,5 years). Thus this finding must be interpreted with caution.

Overall, differences in length of service within current and ex-volunteer groups are not statistically significant in terms of level of education. A one-way ANOVA yielded the following F values: (current volunteers: $F = 0,77$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,5$; ex-volunteers: $F = 0,97$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,4$).

Table 11. Mean Length of Service in Years for Current and Ex-volunteers by Religious Affiliation

	Current Volunteers		Ex-volunteers	
	M	SD	M	SD
None/Not Known	2,8	2,1	5,6	3,7
Other Religions	5,0	5,6	5,4	2,1
Jewish	6,0	4,9	7,1	4,1
Anglican	7,2	6,6	6,1	2,8
Other Protestant	6,4	5,2	6,0	4,7
Roman Catholic	4,6	4,1	6,3	3,6
Other Christian	5,2	5,5	7,6	4,0

When length of service is analysed according to religious orientation it can be seen from Table 11 that Anglicans tend to be the longest serving group of current volunteers, while within the ex-volunteer group, Jewish members served longer on average than members belonging to other religious groups. A one-way ANOVA yielded significant differences in length of service within current volunteer groups but not within ex-volunteer groups (current volunteers $F = 2,75$,$df = 6$, $p < ,01$; ex-volunteers $F = 0,74$, $df = 6$, $p < 0,6$).

Table 12. Mean Length of Service in Years of Current and Ex-volunteers by Marital Status

	Current Volunteers		Ex-volunteers	
	M	SD	M	SD
Single	4,2	4,6	5,3	2,7
Married	6,4	5,7	6,8	4,1
Divorced	5,5	4,0	5,7	2,7
Widowed	5,7	3,1	9,1	3,6

Table 12 shows that when mean length of service is considered in respect of the marital status of subjects, married volunteers serve for longer periods than single or divorced volunteers. A one-way ANOVA yielded statistically significant results only within ex-volunteer groups: (current volunteers: $F = 2,45$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,07$; ex-volunteers: $F = 4,53$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,01$).

When length of service is analysed in terms of parental status, it can be seen from Table 13 that volunteers with children serve on average for longer periods than childless volunteers. This difference is highly significant in respect of both current and ex-volunteers (current volunteers: $t = -3,8$, $df = 236$, $p < 0,003$; ex-volunteers: $t = -3,7$, $df = 181$, $p < 0,0003$).

Table 13 . Mean Length of Service in Years for Current and Ex-volunteers by Parental Status

	Current Volunteers		Ex-volunteers	
	M	SD	M	SD
Parents	6,7	5,6	7,3	4,5
No children	4,2	4,2	5,2	2,7

4.2.1 Predicting Length of Service

As is evident from the discussion of findings presented in the preceding section of the chapter, results regarding factors found to be associated with length of service are somewhat equivocal as in certain instances significant results have been found in only one group of subjects (either current or ex-volunteers).

Thus in order to identify which variables significantly predict length of service across the entire group of subjects, a multiple regression analysis was performed on the sample as a whole. Length of service was regressed against the other demographic variables used in the first part of the statistical analysis.

After regressing each variable in turn against the dependent variable, length of service, the "best" model was constructed, consisting of the independent variables which were found to be significant predictors of length of service (see Table 14). (The regression equation has been modelled on the logarithm of the dependent variable as its distribution is positively skewed). The percentage variance accounted for by the model is 21,5.

The independent variables included in the regression analysis were: age on joining the organisation, current status as a volunteer and parental status. However, due to the interaction of current status of volunteers and age on joining (see Table 14), the relationship between age on joining and length of service is not straightforward. Current volunteers with long service tend to have joined the organisation when fairly young, while in the case of ex-volunteers, the opposite is the case.

Thus parental status can be regarded as the only variable to unequivocably predict length of service across the entire sample (members with children are more likely to serve for longer periods than members without children). As can be seen from the antilog of the regression equation (Table 14), volunteers with children are predicted to serve approximately 1,3 years longer than volunteers without children.

Table 14. Significant Predictors of Length of Service

	Estimate	s.e.	t
Age joined	0,013	0,005	2,58*
Current Volunteer	0,93	0,249	3,73*
Age joined.Current	-0,015	0,006	-2,4 *
Parent	0,271	0,07	3,7 *

* Significant at $p < 0,02$.

* Note: Co-efficients are reported as logs.

Regression equation reported in antilogs: Period of service

= 2,8+1,0 (age joined) + 2,7(current volunteer) -1,0 (age

joined*current volunteer) + 1,3 (parent).

4.3 Summary

On analysing the demographic data pertaining to 446 volunteers (247 current and 199 ex-volunteers) the following profile emerges.

Three quarters of both the current volunteer and ex-volunteer group are female. As a group, subjects tend on average to join the organisation between the ages of 35-39. The age on joining tends to peak for male volunteers between the ages of 30-34, and for female volunteers between 35-44. On average volunteers are middle aged, with the majority falling within the age group 30-49. Male members are significantly older than female members (as of April, 1993).

As a group, volunteers are highly educated, with over 60% having obtained a tertiary qualification. Christianity comprises the dominant religion, with 62% of volunteers belonging to various Christian denominations. The Jewish faith has a significant following, with approximately 17% of volunteers adhering to this religion.

As regards marital status, approximately half of the total sample are married, with a significantly higher proportion of current volunteers being married than those in the ex-volunteer group. 15% of volunteers are divorced while 3% have been widowed. Just over 50% of volunteers have children.

When considering the length of service of volunteers, the average period that volunteers stay with the organisation is about five years. 50% of volunteers remain members for less than three years, with current members remaining for a longer period (on average) than ex-volunteers.

Results of the regression analysis indicate that volunteers who have children are more likely to sustain their membership for longer periods than volunteers who do not have children.

CHAPTER 5: DECISIONS AND TRANSITIONS - Factors Perceived by Volunteers as Affecting their Motivation

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter factors which were reported by respondents as influencing their participation will be explored with reference to direct quotations from interview transcripts. The nature of the influence of these factors will be discussed in relation to the different stages of the volunteering process.

First the relative importance of personal growth needs versus altruistic motives is assessed, followed by a consideration of the influence of the life context of the volunteer, including both social and physical environmental aspects.

The next section concerns the impact of organisational membership on respondents' motivation and commitment and finally the effect of stress and burnout on involvement will be discussed.

5.2 Primary Motivation - Altruism or Personal Growth?

5.2.1 The Initial Drawcard - Answering the Need for Personal Growth

Most subjects reported that when they had initially volunteered to do the first training course their motivation was predominantly self-serving. Of the 23 individuals in the sample, all stated that the desire for self growth was implicated in their decision to do the course, while 18 reported that this was their sole or main reason.

According to interview data, the desire for self growth encompassed a number of facets and held divergent meanings for different respondents (see Appendix C for a list of these categories).

Certain individuals said that they had participated initially out of a need to develop intrapersonal insight while others stressed the desire to achieve greater understanding of others:

"I wanted to find out why people reacted the way they did" (CL).

There were other respondents, however, who recalled that what had motivated them originally was related to a wish to be involved in an activity which would offer a personal challenge as well as the opportunity to acquire counselling skills and experience.

However, irrespective of these differences in emphasis there was consensus on the part of those interviewed as to the effectiveness of the courses in meeting participants' personal growth needs:

> "[The course] brought me out as a person, I was terribly shy..I never dreamt I could ask questions...I discovered insights into myself" (CL).

> "The course initiated a complete revolution for me...in forcing me to look at areas of my life..and I wanted more" (CS).

In the same vein, particular volunteers stressed the permanent nature of the changes that had been brought about through undergoing the training:

> "Your awareness is changed forever" (ES).

In contrast to the salience of personal growth motives in influencing people to participate initially in the organisation, a sense of altruism seemed to play a minor role at this stage. While nine respondents did mention a desire to be of benefit to other people or the community at large, only five reported this to be their overriding motivation. The counsellors who alluded to altruistic motives for joining the organisation tended to have experienced personal crises in their past and volunteered because they felt that they could utilize their experience to be of benefit to others.

For the remainder of the subjects, however, altruistic inclinations tended not to be clearly defined at this stage:

> "I'm always looking for something to do..I had some time in my life when I started and I felt I would like to put something back into the community" (ES).

5.2.2 Personal Growth vs Altruism during Stage 2 - Flip-sides of the Same Motivational Coin

As volunteers progressed from the stage of training to considering becoming a counsellor many reported that their motivation changed from being purely centred on the self to considering using their emerging skills to be of benefit to others:

> "[Initially] I wasn't interested in giving anything, when I finished Part 1 something changed in me..." (ES).

When interviewees considered their experience during the stage of being active counsellors, it seemed that in cases where they felt positive about their participation, both personal growth and altruism incentives were seen as necessary to sustain ongoing motivation to participate.

Words that were used most often by interviewees to describe feelings concerning their participation mirror the interactional nature of personal and altruistic motives. These included: "fulfilling", "worthwhile", "challenging" and "rewarding" (see Appendix G for a full list of descriptive words).

Nonetheless, the self-serving element seemed to remain a crucial factor in ongoing participation:

> "I always thought I would stay on till I'm not learning anything anymore" (CS).

There were differences, however, in the way in which respondents saw the nature of this learning. Some individuals regarded it in terms of attaining mastery of clearly defined skills and hence saw their involvement as a means to an end. These respondents tended to use the word "gains" when discussing the positive aspects of their participation.

Other people viewed personal growth as a life-long quest, and believed that their ongoing involvement with the organisation served to facilitate this process.

Respondents reported that they felt they had benefitted personally through helping others:

> "It enriched me enormously, it helped me remain open-minded and flexible" (EL).

This 'enrichment' was conceptualised by individuals in different ways, from seeing it in terms of facilitating empowerment, self-understanding, or in certain cases as a means of boosting their sense of self-worth. When this was seen in a negative light it was referred to as involving a power or ego-trip:

> "It [being involved in training] was very good for me, it was something I had never done before, even though it was an ego-trip to some extent" (EL).

The altruistic motive was nonetheless implicated to a greater or lesser degree. This was illustrated by the view expressed by certain subjects that they felt it to be important that their free time be spent in a meaningful way:

> "I'm not going to make the world right, but you must do something, not just play bridge" (CL).

However, those whose sense of altruism had been frustrated in some way, for example if they questioned their effectiveness in influencing the lives of others or were unsure as to the relevance of the service to the wider community, often felt a decreased sense of satisfaction and commitment:

> "I started to think that maybe I could be having a more positive effect spending time with people that I actually know and that I actually know I could help" (CS).

5.2.3 At the End of the Day - the Importance of Altruistic Motives in Sustaining Involvement

When interviewing long-term counsellors it appeared that altruistic motives became more salient the longer the participants served as volunteers. Three long-term counsellors maintained that they stayed on as volunteers only because they felt that they were still able to make a unique contribution in terms of being able to reach certain callers:

> "At one stage I felt I stayed there for the movement or even myself..I don't feel as if I'm getting as much out of it as I used to, but I still feel I have something to give to the callers" (CL).

5.3 The Life Context of the Volunteer

On analysing interview data it became evident that the environment of the individual played a significant role in the decision to participate initially and thereafter in

influencing ongoing involvement. This includes both the social and the physical component.

5.3.1 The Social Context

Interviewees highlighted different aspects of their social environment which influenced their involvement. These included the family, friends and the work situation as well as the immediate context of their involvement.

5.3.1.1 Current Transitions and Past Traumas: the Role of Volunteers' Social Environment in Relation to their Initial Motivation

There was an awareness on the part of a number of interviewees of situations in their personal lives which had led them to become interested in approaching the organisation in order to do the personal growth course. Two themes emerged - attributions concerning the present life context and those concerning past events.

Certain respondents indicated that at the time when they were thinking of doing the course they had felt dissatisfied with aspects of their lives and experienced the need for change:

> "I think I'd reached a stage in my life when I felt I had to move forward..I was stuck, I was at a crossroads" (CS).

However, the influence of the social environment wasn't always consciously perceived at the time of joining but was sometimes acknowledged in retrospect:

> "I can remember feeling trapped many times..and saying that there's something there that can't get out..it was others [in the organisation] who saw what was inside of me that encouraged me to become..[a confident person]..it was a long, slow process" (CL, joined at age 37).

As in the case of the respondent quoted previously, a number of female subjects who had been home-makers prior to their involvement in voluntary work had reached the stage when children were becoming independent and in some cases marriage relationships had become problematic.

Individuals who had reached this stage of life comprised a substantial proportion of those who were interviewed. Of the seventeen women in the sample, nine (53%) were aged between 35 and 41 years of age when they joined the organisation.

Certain counsellors who "found themselves" in this stage of life noted that their volunteer involvement had boosted their confidence and self-esteem:

> "that's where it started... [at the personal growth course]... and in retrospect I must say that it literally changed my life" (CL).

As opposed to those counsellors who attributed motivational factors to their current life context at the time of joining the organisation, other interviewees saw their involvement as a response to significant traumatic life events which had occurred in some time previously. Three respondents reported that in the past they had overcome abusive relationships and divorce, while two had experienced bereavement due to the loss of a partner or family member.

Volunteers who stressed the importance of their past in this way tended to report a stronger altruistic motive to their initial involvement. They believed that by having successfully resolved their personal crises they could utilize their life experience to the benefit of others through a heightened empathic understanding of other people's problems. Interviewees who fell into this category tended to be older when they initially joined the organisation (mean=45,8yrs).

In contrast, interviewees who reported that they were primarily motivated by the desire to obtain counselling skills and experience usually did not report that their social context had influenced their decision to initially become involved with the voluntary organisation. For this group occupational characteristics and the work situation were perceived as salient motivational factors. The three respondents who fell into this category were younger than average when they joined the organisation (mean=24 yrs).

5.3.1.2 A Hindrance or a Help? The Relationship Between the Social Context and Ongoing Participation

One of the questions put to respondents concerned how their personal lives impacted on their voluntary involvement and vice versa.

Those respondents who were married and who had children still living at home tended to report that their families often experienced ambivalent feelings concerning their involvement. Two female interviewees stated that while their children were proud of their mother's role as a telephone counsellor as this gave them a certain status amongst their friends, they resented the time that their mother spent away from home. One particular counsellor reported that although her husband

acknowledged the growth that had taken place in his wife due to her voluntary involvement he nonetheless felt threatened by her affiliation to the organisation:

> "He thought perhaps that the organisation was giving me something he wasn't" (CS).

Seven respondents particularly noted that their voluntary involvement had had a positive effect on their relationships. They felt that they had acquired interpersonal skills due to their participation, such as the ability to listen attentively and to deal with conflict through constructive confrontation. This had been useful not only with family and friends but also in the work situation.

An interesting ripple effect was noted by three interviewees who reported that spouses and teenage children had acquired these skills indirectly through observation and had then applied them successfully in their own work or school context.

5.3.1.3 The Influence of the Immediate Social Context on the Decision to Become a Counsellor

As opposed to the effect of the wider social environment which came into play in participants' initial decision to do the training courses, interviewees stressed that the immediate social situation created within the context of the training courses provided a powerful incentive to go forward for selection to become a counsellor. Participation in small groups where the emphasis was placed on honest and open communication and self-disclosure provided the opportunity for members to bond closely with one another. Thus as the courses progressed members tended to receive a great deal of positive affirmation and support from their group which in many cases served to reinforce or confirm the growing feeling in the trainee that they possessed the necessary qualities and skills to become an effective counsellor:

> "It was nurturing stuff..the group made me feel that I could do it" (ES).

> "There was a tremendous buzz about the whole thing" (CL).

Certain respondents indicated that whilst they found their group involvement exciting and challenging, they had to admit that the evaluative component of the group process caused them to become competitive and to see the selection as an end in itself, as representing an opportunity to succeed where others might fail:

> "It was first prize, I'm very goal-orientated and I wanted to compete for selection...it was a matter of winning, passing..I've got to make it, I aimed at capturing the prize" (CL).

5.3.1.4 Social Context and Degree of Volunteer Involvement

Interviewees who stated that they were heavily involved in the organisation at one time or another often tended to rely on their membership as a source of social support. In many cases there was a sense of belonging to a family of like-minded caring people:

> "It was a special place..there was an incredible feeling of group support, I always felt loved and warmed and welcomed, it was like another home to go to" (ES).

Particularly those respondents who were single, recently divorced or widowed when they joined the movement, reported that they soon became deeply involved in their voluntary activities to the extent that this aspect monopolized their free time and often dominated their lives. On the other hand, interviewees who were married with young children stated that they limited their involvement to daytime counselling duties as additional activities such as training and the attendance of workshops usually occurred in the evenings when they had competing responsibilities.

Individuals who were minimally involved, coming in to the organisation solely to fulfill their counselling duties often reported feelings of isolation and in certain cases began to question their counselling effectiveness. Some interviewees attributed this to the loss of the close interpersonal contact and supportive feedback which they had enjoyed during their training:

> "but once you've made it, so to speak, you sometimes feel you're in a little vacuum..you can get the feeling that nobody cares" (CS).

> "As you get further away from the course...I wonder if I'm good enough a lot of the time..I don't know" (CS).

5.3.1.5 The Social Context in Relation to the Decision to Leave the Organisation

A number of respondents who had left the organisation reported that a major factor in their decision related to a change in their social circumstances. Two female subjects had remarried and one had become pregnant.

Three respondents left because they had changed their jobs. In two cases new jobs involved a great deal of counselling and apart from the time pressure these people felt that the they needed variety in their lives. The third individual stated that his new employer was not sympathetic to the all-night duty requirement.

However, almost half of the interviewees who had left the organisation (n = 5), did so primarily because of dissatisfaction relating to aspects of the volunteer organisation's policy and/or approach to its counsellors (see Section 5.4).

5.3.2 The Role Played by the Physical Environment.

As in the case of the social context, both personal environmental factors as well as the immediate context of the volunteer involvement were mentioned by respondents as influencing their motivation.

For example, particular interviewees reported that a change of environment such as an overseas trip or a move to Cape Town had caused them to reappraise their lives. This had triggered a desire for personal growth which had led to the decision to enrol for the training course.

On the other hand, two long-term counsellors reported that an overseas trip had had the opposite effect and had precipitated their resignation from the organisation:

> "It was strange, it was so sudden [the decision to leave], I had been away for two months overseas and coming back..there was a sinking feeling in my stomach" (EL).

While certain respondents mentioned that their personal situation had influenced their involvement, other individuals felt demotivated by certain aspects of the physical setting and the location of the premises where they performed their volunteer duties:

> "[On the way to a duty] I look at the sunshine and the sky and enjoy the fresh air, and I'm very aware of going into that narrow little alley [laughs] and sitting in that counselling room with just a patch of skyline against the mountain" (CS).

The security aspect was highlighted as a cause for concern by certain counsellors, especially in the case of all-night duties. Two long-term counsellors who had recently remarried reported that part of their reason for leaving the organisation related to their partner's concern for their safety:

> "I know it's going to worry him [my husband] if I go into town alone at night" (EL).

5.4 The Individual Counsellor in Relation to the Volunteer Organisation - Commitment or Disenchantment?

One of the major themes which came to light during the interviews related to volunteers' feelings and opinions concerning the organisation itself.

5.4.1 The Image of the Organisation - Good or Bad?

Certain respondents said that prior to their involvement they had been aware that the organisation had good standing in the community:

> "I'd always respected * as an organisation that does good" (ES).

One volunteer admitted that this positive image had had an impact on his decision to be a counsellor:

> "It's a nice cause to be associated with, I enjoy being involved in a prestigious form of social activity...it has a good name" (CL).

A number of counsellors reported that once they, themselves, had become involved, they were able to confirm at first-hand the good qualities of the organisation:

> "It's such a wonderful place" (ES).

An aspect of their membership which interviewees particularly appreciated related to the sense of belonging to a group of like-minded, caring people:

> "It's the sort of feeling of being part of a large family, to be surrounded by people you feel safe with" (CS).

Fellow counsellors were seen to be different in some way to people at large:

> "The type of person who is drawn to the organisation is wanting to learn and to grow and is not stuck somewhere and closed and I find that very uplifting" (CS).

> "When you speak to another member one-on-one a veil will lift..there's a mask down - you experience their realness in terms of their being able to access their feelings and own their vulnerabilities" (CL).

However, certain counsellors who had been highly involved in the organisation could also see the dark side of group participation such as infighting, rumourmongering and the formation of cliques:

> "It's kind of become a hotbed of ego-needs" (CL).

According to two veteran counsellors fellow-members could not always be counted on. These respondents complained that often they would be obliged to do a double shift when the person who was to have relieved them didn't put in an appearance:

> "I admit I resented it when counsellors didn't keep their commitment...I was stuck there ... and naturally I felt angry ... it wasn't fair" (EL).

This perceived lack of support caused these respondents to question their own commitment:

> "I'm demotivated by the fact that so many people aren't taking their involvement seriously and nothing seems to be done about this" (CL).

Contrary to the view of members as 'special' people, this respondent pointed out that participants are nonetheless human:

> "When I was so starry-eyed I was told [by another veteran member]..*ers are people, never forget they have all the negative qualities that other people do".

5.4.2 The Issue of Authenticity - Does the Organisation Practise what it Preaches?

Interviewees highlighted a number of anomalies that they had become aware of when considering the question of whether or not the organisation was true to its proclaimed policy and values.

5.4.2.1 The Importance of a Non-judgemental Stance

Some respondents felt that the values that were held up by the organisation as sacrosanct and which had been inculcated in counsellors during the training course were not adhered to in practice by the organisation:

> "There is a discrepancy which has developed between what the organisation says and what it does..there is no longer a strong spiritual dimension" (CL).

For example, prospective counsellors were asked the following when applying for membership:

> "Do you feel that the qualities of empathy, genuineness and acceptance are sufficiently developed within you at this time for you to be able to effectively counsel

> someone in need? Do you have an unbiased, non-judgemental approach to others?" (Questions on application form).

In addition the organisation stressed that these values were adopted in selecting members:

> "Although * has a Christian foundation and adheres to Christian principles, membership is open to all people who have a discernable spirituality. We have members who are Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Sufi and Universalist". (Pamphlet entitled 'About being a counsellor').

However, when it came to the selection of a director, exclusive religious criteria were adopted by the organisation (this is no longer the case as the clause relating to this issue has been removed from the Constitution). This caused a number of counsellors to question their involvement:

> "They were being very closed, very Christian, very anti- anything that was outside, even Jung, and I thought this was the time to leave'" (EL).

5.4.2.2 The Virtue of Commitment - But is it a One-way Street?

Commitment is regarded by the organisation as an essential value in its counsellors:

> "We are looking for a commitment in people to their own personal growth...for people with a deep commitment to serving others". (Organisational pamphlet entitled 'About being a * counsellor').

Respondents mirrored these feelings and in a number of cases expressed the view that it was essential that a high level of commitment of members be maintained in order to sustain solidarity amongst counsellors.

However, a number of interviewees questioned whether the organisation and the staff saw themselves as equally committed to the volunteers in terms of counsellor care.

5.4.2.2.1 Commitment to the Carers

Most respondents (n = 16), mentioned that an important incentive for ongoing participation in the organisation was feeling that they were cared for and valued by the organisation. This was deemed especially important in the early stages when they were new to counselling. One person explained that this perceived sense of support served to affirm the worth of his involvement:

> "The people who were running the movement inspired me...gave me a sense of hope and meaning to what I was doing, a sense of belonging" (ES).

However of the nine volunteers (both current and ex-volunteers) who had served for more than eight years, five discussed at length how they had become progressively more disenchanted with the organisation and reported how this had had a negative effect on their commitment.

While volunteers were required to commit themselves to the welfare of both the caller and the organisation, respondents questioned whether the organisation felt a reciprocal obligation to its members.

Respondents highlighted a number of facets to counsellor care that they felt needed to be addressed by the organisation if they wished to improve commitment and prevent high turnover of volunteers.

These included acknowledgement of the volunteer as an individual. A number of respondents felt very strongly that once they had become members their worth was seen in terms of the duties they could perform and they were not valued as individuals:

> "You can easily get the feeling that nobody cares, all they care about is that you're there and that's that" (CS).

One long-term counsellor said that she had become seriously disillusioned with the organisation when they sent her a series of computer-generated letters informing her that her membership would be terminated if she didn't pay her membership fee. She felt that she had sacrificed a great deal of her time with little acknowledgement:

> "I do it [the counselling] because I don't want to let the side down..but I don't know whether it matters to * ..just as long as I pay the R50 [annual membership fee]" (CL).

One person pointed out that the organisation should acknowledge the contribution that the volunteers make to the organisation:

> "Volunteers are a tremendous resource" (CL).

However, he felt that this required that the members be treated and assessed individually:

> "Counsellors have different needs, for example workshops shouldn't be done on a blanket basis".

One strong theme which emerged from interview data was the concern regarding the lack of ongoing supervision of counselling. Respondents felt that due to the nature of telephone counselling, feedback was especially necessary as it was often difficult to ascertain whether or not the counselling intervention had been appropriate or successful.

> "You sit with a lot of stuff afterwards and there's no one to actually talk to" (ES).

The organisation maintains that it provides support for its counsellors:

> "* recognises the importance of nurturing each other as counsellors and has evolved an intricate support system. As a counsellor you will always have a Referral Officer (an experienced senior counsellor), to whom to turn in a crisis. The counselling manager, a full-time staff member, is also available for guidance and support. There are also specialized crisis teams to deal with life-threatening situations". (Organisational pamphlet entitled 'About being a counsellor').

However, although this may seem to provide the counsellor with extensive support, it is seen by most volunteers merely as a backup in cases of emergency. Respondents mentioned that they often utilized their own support network to compensate for the lack of continuing supervision.

> "I draw on supportive friends otherwise I'd probably burn-out" (CS).

The long-term volunteers in the study tended to attribute the lack of counsellor care to a misplaced order of priorities on the part of the organisation:

> "You sit in these committee meetings for four hours and the accent is on all these external things such as fund-raising..but you know what its all about is caring" (EL).

The opinion was expressed that the movement has become too large and bureaucratic and has lost sight of its mission:

> "I've had the feeling that it [the organisation] hasn't quite centred on the right things, its like the story of the life-boat, the people in the clubhouse have been asked to get together to build a bigger lifeboat while people are drowning outside" (CL).

5.4.2.2.2 The Commitment of Staff Members

As the interviews proceeded it became evident that the impression that volunteers had of the leadership and the staff had a major impact on their sense of commitment:

> "When I joined two very special people ran the organisation, they were able to attend to your needs and there was that experience of going home...and when they left the place lost the sparkle it once had..it wasn't the same anymore, there was nothing holding it together, and something died" (ES).

In the three years preceding April 1993 there had been a number of resignations of staff members. According to certain interviewees, this served to undermine volunteers' confidence in the organisation:

> "It was very disruptive...people start thinking what's wrong with the organisation? (CS).

Respondents reported that the continual changes of staff members caused them to question their allegiance:

> "I started getting disillusioned about the change of staff..it lost its cohesiveness..it had an effect on my commitment" (EL).

5.5 Stress and Burnout - Issues in Counsellor Turnover?

On the whole stress did not seem to be a major concern of interviewees. As participation was voluntary and there was the option of going inactive for periods of up to a year, it was possible to take a break from counselling whenever this was deemed necessary.

On the contrary, two respondents indicated that they actively pursued a stressful lifestyle:

> "I have a great capacity, the more the better" (CL).

> "I think time stretches as much as you allow it to" (ES).

Interviewees that were involved to a high degree with alternative duties such as training and facilitating seemed to see their involvement as causing adverse stress only when they were unwilling to be assertive as regards the degree and nature of their participation. This was often only acknowledged in retrospect:

> "* took a big part out of my life, and at times I said I wouldn't do other things because of *. I allowed it to take over too much" (EL).

However, in regard to the counselling aspect, one interviewee remarked that telephone counselling is less stressful for the counsellor than traditional therapy as the volunteer only had duties twice a month as opposed to seeing clients every day. In addition, the volunteer isn't committed to a long-term relationship with the caller:

> "it's not like psychotherapy where you have to take a break at some point because at that level you burnout very quickly, but with telephone counselling you can actually put your everything into it" (ES).

Few respondents seemed to experience significant symptoms of burnout such as feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment except in cases where their duties at work were similar to their voluntary activities.

5.6 Summary

The interview data highlighted certain motivational factors. The four main themes were - personal growth versus altruistic incentives, life context, relationship with the organisation and the role of stress and burnout. The effect of these factors varied with the degree and duration of involvement with the organisation.

Both personal and altruistic incentives seeemed necessary to sustain involvement, with the latter becoming more important over time. Personal factors prompting initial participation fell into three groups - a current personal situation, past traumas and the attainment of skills.

Both positive and negative social consequences of involvement were perceived. Gaining valuable interpersonal skills and the admiration of their families were valued but strains on personal relationships were also reported. Involvement was often restricted by social commitments but particular solitary individuals reported getting over- involved.

The bonding in the small group training sessions was credited with significance in influencing initial participation.

Changes in personal physical environments affected participation, both positively and negatively, whilst the actual physical location of the organisation had mainly negative connotations.

The organisation was generally perceived as well-respected but certain important inconsistencies were noted and high turnover tended to undermine volunteer morale.

Burnout was not a significant factor except where career activities and counselling duties were similar.

Another major factor found to affect motivation relates to volunteers' perceptions and feelings concerning their experience as telephone counsellors. This will be the subject of the following chapter.

The implications of the findings presented in this chapter will be discussed in chapter seven.

CHAPTER 6: TELEPHONE COUNSELLING - THE ROMANCE AND THE REALITY

6.1 Introduction

Although the volunteers in this study were required to assist in other tasks such as fund raising and in addition are requested to get involved in various aspects of training, counselling nonetheless comprised the core activity for all volunteers as their continued membership is dependent upon the fulfillment of a certain number of counselling duties per month, as well as three all-night sessions per year.

While the organization offers face-to-face as well as telephone counselling, telephone intervention comprises the major portion of the counselling load. Thus the way volunteers feel about their involvement in telephone counselling would seem to be a crucial factor in influencing their motivation to remain members of the organization.

This chapter aims to provide an insight into respondents' subjective experiences as telephone counsellors. Their viewpoints, attitudes and feelings are provided in the form of direct quotations from the text of their interviews in order to highlight major themes which emerged from interviewees' responses.

The first theme concerns the goals of counselling - first as laid down by the organization and secondly as perceived by the respondents. Two distinct dimensions of the counsellor's role are identified on the basis of interview data and the question of whether or not there is consensus on the issue of the role of the counsellor is explored.

The second theme relates to the unique nature of the telephone counselling encounter and the implications that this form of intervention presents in terms of the quality of the counsellor-caller relationship, as perceived by the counsellor. In particuilar, the issues of regular and sexual callers are explored in relation to the feelings that these types of calls engender in respondents.

Following this the issue of "problem calls" is highlighted. These are calls which are dreaded by respondents such as threatened suicides and cases relating to child abuse.

In the next section respondents' thoughts on the way to and from a duty are revealed as these have been found to encapsulate interviewees' attitudes and feelings concerning their telephone counselling involvement.

6.2 The Goal of Counselling - Organizational and Counsellor Perspectives. Do they Coincide?

6.2.1 Psychological Support or Empowerment?

The respondents in this study belong to an organization that endorses a non-directive, non-judgemental, support-based view of its counselling role, where the nature and purpose of the counselling is regarded as:

> "essentially one person caring for another by telephone. ..It is not advice giving. We listen without telling callers what they should or should not do, but just allow their hurts and fears to be expressed, heard and understood" (Organizational pamphlet entitled "Being a Counsellor").

The author was interested to discover whether or not respondents viewed their role in the same terms. Of the 23 respondents who were interviewed, five mirrored the purely support-based view of their counselling role, in line with the policy of the organization. (One active counsellor, 23yrs experience, four ex-counsellors, mean length of service 9,75 yrs). These respondents tended to see their role in terms of:

> "just being there I suppose, almost like a hand to help someone stand up straighter for a little while, not to carry them but to give them a shoulder to lean on" (CL).

Certain volunteers in this group stressed that the counsellor's role was not necessarily that of a therapist with "special" knowledge or skills but rather involved:

> "meeting them [the callers] from where you are as a person who knows about distress and what it's like, and who knows these things can happen to people" (EL);

> "one realizes one cannot act like God, one can only be alongside people, you have to give of yourself,..you've got to feel their pain" ((CL).

Support-orientated counsellors tended to espouse a purely non-directive, empathic approach to their callers, where a successful intervention depended on enabling the caller to feel cared for and understood, even if the situation or problem that was being presented seemed intractable:

> "when the person goes off you know that they feel so much better, the situation is still the same but through what has happened between the two of you they're much more able to deal with it" (EL),

> "I never met so many people who were absolutely desperate and sometimes I didn't know what to say,...if I felt that I could help, that I could make a difference, even just for that specific period... she was crying now she's laughing, and for me that makes my day" (ES).

However, almost half of the respondents (n =11) saw their main goal as the empowerment of the caller in terms of facilitating the recognition and development of the necessary personal resources which would enable them to deal constructively with their problems:

> "It's a challenge to help people discover their own powers and their own answers" (CS);

> "counselling is a channel for empowerment, to persuade people to take responsibility and change their own lives" (ES).

Counsellors who held this predominantly growth-orientated view of counselling tended to display frustration and dislike for calls where the client failed to demonstrate an openness to change. Certain counsellors referred to these callers as "loopers":

> "those frustrating calls that just sort of go no-where" (ES);

> "it was actually quite mindless because you couldn't do anything..it's almost like you're lending a sympathetic ear and its quite demoralizing" (CS).

In a number of cases volunteers tended to view their effectiveness as counsellors in terms of these growth objectives:

> "sometimes you just feel the call moving, you can feel the process taking place, you can feel the person reaching, making goals, making decisions, coming to conclusions, then it's beneficial, but when I kinda put the phone down and I feel the person is still in the same place, then it's not so beneficial" (EL).

Certain counsellors perceived that this approach to counselling could be potentially demotivating:

> "the ones [fellow counsellors] who were getting frustrated were saying it's supposed to be crisis counselling and they [the callers] are supposed to budge..and it becomes almost an ego-thing ...sure you'd like that but its a kind of added extra ... if you want them (the callers) to change you can become incredibly stressed, but if you see it more as an encounter and allow each call to be what it is, to be a unique unfolding..." (CS).

6.2.2 Spiritual Transformation in the Caller - the Cherry on the Top

The majority of counsellors, even those who professed to hold a totally support-based view of their role described a "good" call as one in which the caller and the counsellor had achieved a high level of rapport, enabling the counsellor to access in depth the caller's feelings:

> "you reach their innermost being..and it's just perfect ...and there's something between the two of you which is something wonderful and difficult to describe" (EL).

In a number of cases counsellors attributed this to a spiritual transformation which had occurred through the intervention of the counsellor:

> "it's incredible, ..it's not happened often, there's so much mystery, and in that way you're used ..it's something bigger than yourself (EL).

Counsellors who saw their role in these terms believed in some cases that they were given spiritual guidance for certain difficult or challenging calls and that certain calls were somehow "chosen" for them:

> "when you're on the telephone there's an energy..and the minute I would say 'help' it would be amazing..my mouth would say the right thing.. and I began to realize that the calls I was getting were really meant for me" (EL).

6.2.3 Nature of the Intervention - Going Deep or Remaining in the Shallows?

During their training aspirant counsellors are schooled in techniques to facilitate access into the caller's innermost thoughts and feelings and trainees are led to believe that a successful call depends on the counsellor's ability to achieve a high level of rapport in order to attain this end.

Although this "depth" counselling approach was supported by most counsellors, a minority were critical of the technique. Two male counsellors in particular regarded their role as alleviating the immediate discomfort and pain of the caller by means of:

> "a normal chatting about life.. if she [a regular caller] wants to get serious I let her but I always steer it back to the laughing side..if I have hassles I laugh and joke about it, it's the only way to get through it (CL);

> "you think you made a difference, she was crying now she's laughing, and for me that makes my day" (ES).

These same two volunteers also stressed the recreational, enjoyable aspect of their telephone counselling, while maintaining the belief that their type of intervention strategy was nonetheless worthwhile as it involved:

> "getting the person out of the loop of despair" (ES).

6.3 The Nature of Counselling

6.3.1 Beginning Counselling - the Fear vs the Reality

Many volunteers admitted feeling nervous or even terrified when they initially started counselling due to the fear that they would not be able to handle difficult calls:

> "in the beginning it was quite nerve-wracking...I used to hate picking up the phone ..because I was new" (EL).

On the whole new counsellors' most predominant concern was being presented with a potential suicide, and while two interviewees did, in fact, have a suicide call during their first counselling session, most admitted that their initial fears were unfounded and that calls that are most common involve more mundane issues:

> "I find that the trainees are petrified of the suicides and the terrible situations they won't be able to handle and in a month's time they will have spoken to all the insomniacs and the regulars and the masturbators [laughs], and they'll realize ...and then you lose them [the counsellors]" (CL).

Thus certain interviewees seemed to believe that an initial idealized view of counselling could potentially lead to the disillusionment and demotivation of volunteers due to unfulfilled expectations. While few respondents actually stated that their experience of counselling did not match up to their expectations, one interviewee felt very strongly that actual telephone counselling was far from what had been imagined:

> "had I glamourized it [the counselling] in some way? I suppose there was a part of me that had..it was part of the hype that had come with it [the training course]..settling down and getting into the nitty gritty of the real problems that people face..there was a sense of disappointment ... "(ES).

6.3.2 Traditional Counselling vs Telephone Counselling - Committed Relationship or One-Night Stand?

Respondents often alluded to the various aspects relating to the unique nature of hotline telephone counselling, such as the "once-off" nature of the contact, where the counsellor is provided with no follow-up information regarding the success of the intervention.

Some volunteers enjoyed the challenge presented by this form of counselling, while others complained that a lack of feedback from the caller left the counsellor with a feeling of uncertainty regarding their counselling ability:

> "it was amazing to be close to people and yet not be committed to an ongoing relationship...you can put the phone down and you don't have to carry on an ongoing thing, you're there for that particular moment" (ES);

> "I always enjoyed the challenge of a tough call, and I always felt afterwards that I'm so upset that it doesn't carry on, and I resented the fact that I had to say goodbye to that person, and they went off into the dark" (ES, 5yrs, who later went on to study clinical psychology).

This aspect of telephone counselling coupled with its anonymous nature caused certain counsellors to question the issues of responsibility and accountability:

> "there's a sense of irresponsibility ...they [the callers] may go out and shoot themselves..it's a dangerous thing..you know you're never going to see them again" (ES).

This potential lack of a sense of responsibility was linked by one volunteer to the "long-distance" nature of the counselling:

> "you can't see the person, you can't touch the person or watch the person's body language..I think the telephone can provide quite a safe...[context], keep you at arm's length..you don't need to touch them" (EL).

However, other counsellors regarded this aspect of telephone counselling as a challenge:

> "it was amazing because I had to be able to communicate with people straight through the medium of language without seeing them... the challenge, the encounter, the romance of it, being on the phone...I enjoy it" (CS).

Two salient differences between crisis counselling and traditional therapeutic interventions were highlighted by interviewees. In the case of hotline counselling there is no time limit set as to the length of the calls in comparison with the 50

minute counselling session. The lack of time stipulation has the advantage that the volunteer has more flexibility in regard to the length of the contact, however marathon calls which can last for hours can be immensely draining for the counsellor, especially in the case of circular calls:

> "you have all the time in the world..there's no barrier (CL);
>
> "I had a real bummer [call] once, I spent two hours on the phone with this woman..she was a 'yes...but' person ...at the end she did a turn about and switched off, and the feeling at the end of the call was such utter despondency on my part..what did I do wrong?" (CS).

The second feature concerns the unpredictable nature of each counselling duty. At the commencement of the session the volunteers must prepare themselves for any type of call:

> "you never know what's going to get thrown at you" (EL).

At most times there are two to three counsellors on duty simultaneously. Some sessions can be hectically busy, while at other times the volunteer may drive in to town especially for a duty only to find that no calls are received for the entire session. These "empty sessions" tended to be tolerated philosophically by the interviewees who had been members of the organization for a long time:

> "it's just important that you're there, it's the whole picture, it's being prepared to be involved" (EL).

However, a number of newer members, especially those who stated that their voluntary involvement was primarily motivated by the need to learn skills or gain experience, found empty sessions to be demotivating:

> "sometimes I used to be incredibly frustrated when there were four of us (counsellors) and no calls" (ES).

6.3.3 Regular Callers - a Love-Hate Relationship?

There are a certain number of callers who telephone the service regularly and thus become quite well-known to the counsellors. These "regular" callers have different patterns and frequencies of contacting the organization from once every three months to a number of times a day, yet they share the characteristic of needing the ongoing contact with counsellors while being unresponsive to any form of

counselling intervention by remaining locked into a particular maladaptive mindset or behavioural repertoire.

The subject of regular callers has generated a great deal of heated debate at members' meetings and a number of interviewees felt strongly about this issue. Respondents who believed that their goal was to foster change in the caller tended to regard habitual callers in a negative light and see the counsellor's role in terms of:

> "just a holding operation" (CL).

This group of counsellors regarded regular callers as:

> "people who cannot move or find a way of empowering themselves" (CL);
>
> "uncounsellable, frustrating, playing games...some drive everyone up the wall" (CS).

Those respondents who were against the encouragement of regular callers believed that:

> "we [the counsellors] create addicts...a dependency instead of kicking their butt every now and then" (CL);
>
> "there are cases where you enable the person to stay there..a bit like co-dependency in alcoholism, and you protect them and you say it's OK and it's not OK" (EL).

One veteran counsellor was of the opinion that certain regular callers abuse the service:

> "when I hear of people lying in bed and drinking coffee and phoning the counsellors I get angry" (CL).

The majority of interviewees, irrespective of how they generally felt about regular callers reported enjoying speaking to one particular woman who has called the service every day for many years. She is described as interesting and fun to talk to, and she has always shown great appreciation for the service. Thus the elements that seem to lead certain volunteers to dislike regular callers concerned manipulation and an inability to be authentic by dropping "their masks":

> "she [another regular caller] mustn't play games, she must try to be real" (CS);
>
> "it's when I feel that I've been caught" (CS);

> "it would help to make the counsellors aware of what the hooks are with regular callers" (CS).

These "hooks" refer to the strategies employed by certain callers that snare unsuspecting counsellors into extended unproductive conversations:

> "I felt very excited, thought a call had moved..but felt let down when after two hours I found out it was a regular..." (CL);

> "it can be a waste of time having callers that you can't really get anywhere with so it leaves you with a sense of frustration and emptiness rather than fulfillment" (CS).

Counsellors who disliked regular callers reported that this aspect of counselling has caused them to question their involvement:

> " I knew that I would speak to her six times that night you know, and actually hate picking up the phone" (ES);

> "some days it's fine [when there are not so many regular callers], but sometimes I think..[softly]...I wonder what I'm doing there.."[barely audible] (CS).

However, not all respondents held negative views regarding regular callers. A number of interviewees were of the opinion that regular callers should be afforded the same consideration as any other caller as they were also people in need:

> "I believe a caller is a caller is a caller..I have no right to suddenly decide I don't like this call..that they [the regular callers] are a nuisance. That is wrong, you're supposed to be a caring person who's there for the caller" (EL);

> "it's the counsellor's not the caller's problem. They [the callers] pay for the call and you say you're going to be there..you can't put conditions...[on who you're prepared to counsel] (ES);

> "I try very hard to be empathic not irritated" (EL).

This counsellor referred to the danger of labelling callers:

> "you cannot judge a person's pain ... you must listen with a freshness (to each call)."

One male respondent of 13 years' experience made the distinction between two types of regular callers. Callers who were grappling with difficult life situations where there seemed little that could actually be done behaviourally to alleviate the distress, such as in cases where the person may be trying to come to terms with the death of a spouse, were contrasted to the caller who potentially was in a position to bring about positive change in their lifestyle yet chose to remain "stuck". He suggested

that in the latter case it could be beneficial for certain individuals if the counsellor were to terminate a call after a limited length of time as this might be beneficial to the caller through the precipitation of a crisis.

However, a couple of other long-term counsellors believed that there is a potential for change even in the most "hardened" regular caller, and they provided instances where people who had been regular callers for a number of years had eventually broken the cycle of dependence to go on to live happy and fulfilling lives.

6.3.4 Sexual Callers - Male Callers and Female Counsellors

When asked what (if any) were the negative aspects associated with telephone counselling, the predominant response of most female interviewees was a denouncement of callers who contact the organization solely to obtain sexual gratification.

Sexual callers, being predominantly male, invariably chose to speak exclusively to female counsellors. Thus male respondents barely mentioned experiencing any problem with sexual callers. However, one male interviewee did mention that he had felt uncomfortable on a couple of occasions when he felt that his personal boundaries had been violated by abusive female callers.

Although two long-term counsellors stated that they attempted to be empathic towards sexual callers and engage them to constructive counselling, other female counsellors' feelings towards sexual callers ranged from impatience, dislike, to undisguised loathing. While certain counsellors merely expressed irritation at sexual callers:

> "Oh, the masturbators you mean..they're a bit of a nuisance" (CL).

Others expressed anger at being treated as impersonal objects:

> "some of them were really violent and horrible, they don't care who's on the phone" (ES).

Highly emotive language was often used by interviewees to express their feelings towards these callers. The words used most often by respondents included: [feeling] abused or used (n = 6), manipulated (n = 4) and uncomfortable (n = 3). (See appendix G for a full list of descriptive words).

The main reason given by most volunteers for their dislike of sexual callers was the highly devious and manipulative nature of these calls:

> "I was taking it all in before I realized it, I was seeing the padding not the core, I didn't see the danger signs of the call..I realized I was vulnerable" (ES);

> "I feel cross when they [sexual callers] try to suck you into a conversation and meanwhile they're getting it off ... I feel very uncomfortable" (CL).

On analyzing counsellors' responses to this issue, it became clear that particular volunteers had developed strategies to deal with sexual callers. Some believed in terminating a call when it was ascertained that the caller was seeking a sexual outlet:

> "I don't see that I'm here to be abused by anybody ... I'm quite firm..they can call back when they're finished" (CS).

A minority of counsellors, on the other hand, reported that they attempted to get the abusive caller to address personal issues:

> "I knew what he was about and I tried to bring him around to talk about other things in his life" (EL).

6.3.5 Exacting Calls

When asked if there were any aspects of telephone counselling that were particularly difficult to deal with, the types of calls that were mentioned most often by interviewees were those involving threats of suicide (n = 9; four of these were current and five ex-counsellors) and child abuse (n = 3; all ex-counsellors).

Suicide calls were dreaded by counsellors, especially in the early stages of counselling:

> "in the beginning you get the caller who says: 'I've got pills, or I've got a gun', and they say when you put down the phone that they're going to kill themselves" (EL).

An aspect of suicide calls which most concerned volunteers was a feeling of helplessness that they experienced due to the nature of crisis telephone counselling, in particular the realization that the call could not be followed-up. Hence there was no way to ascertain whether or not the caller had gone through with the intention of ending his or her life.

Certain counsellors mentioned the issue of responsibility in connection with suicide calls, and it was stressed that counsellors could only contain the caller psychologically for the duration of the call and could not be responsible for any action that the caller might take on termination of the call. However, although interviewees appeared to accept this on a rational level it nonetheless seemed to create a sense of dissonance.

One counsellor related her experience of a particularly harrowing call that almost led her to cease telephone counselling:

> "somebody had taken tablets and wanted me to speak to them while they died and they wouldn't give me any information about themselves" (EL).

Child abuse calls were regarded as particularly unpleasant:

> "you can't give them the kind of help they want... you can't help them" (ES).

One respondent highlighted the unique problems presented by the third party calls where abuse was being reported by a concerned outsider:

> "when people are actually in some kind of danger and you're sitting on the phone trying to figure it out..the problem was there but you were talking to somebody else" (EL).

Male counsellors in particular mentioned that calls concerning old age and bereavement were difficult to counsel, one example given related to:

> "a guy whose wife had died was lying in bed missing her" (ES).

Retrenchment was also mentioned as a problematic issue to counsel. A factor which is common to all these types of calls is that there was a perceived lack of hope of any positive outcome which seemed to be experienced by both the caller and the counsellor.

6.4 Thoughts on the Way to a Duty

Respondents were asked to describe their thoughts on the way to a telephone counselling duty. This question proved to be extremely effective in gaining access to the emotional component of interviewees' counselling experience. It was almost as though this question acted as an emotional barometer offering a global reading of

respondents' attitudes and feelings concerning their telephone counselling. For example, respondents who enjoyed their counselling would note that they approached their sessions with a feeling of anticipation, while respondents who were no longer achieving satisfaction from their involvement reported negative feelings such as impatience and resentment and a preoccupation with personal matters:

> "Usually I'd go to a duty in the morning and I'd be thinking I'd like to be in bed and not going to a duty..[laughs]...my thoughts aren't usually very positive" (CS).

> "Well, near the end [of my involvement] it was that I just didn't feel like it...generally I thought about other things" (ES).

The predominant thought that respondents had on the way to a duty was feeling the need to put their personal concerns and problems aside and become focused on the duty ahead:

> "It's important to become centred before a duty, in touch with who you are as a person"(CL).

For volunteers who stressed the spiritual foundation of their counselling, centring their thoughts involved an essential spiritual component:

> "It was always very much the same...I'd be driving along de Waal Drive and I'd think..right, I'm now going on a duty..I don't know what's in front of me, let me quiet my mind..I'd turn the radio off and would tune into myself, and I would always, always say a little prayer and ask for help and guidance for what may happen during that duty..so by the time I got there my being was in the right state to be there and to accept whatever was to happen" (EL).

Some respondents, on the other hand, demonstrated a much more practical focus to their thoughts, such as concern as to whether or not they would arrive on time, parking arrangements and identity of co-counsellors:

> "In general I'm in a hurry to get there...[my concern is] that I've got enough time to make coffee, some food and to sit down. I come straight from the office..so I think about how to beat the traffic lights" (CL).

> "Being a shy person one of my thoughts was who would I be on duty with" (EL).

While three male interviewees reported that they concentrated on the positive elements of the forthcoming duty such as being afforded the opportunity to have time to themselves and to relax, certain respondents mentioned that they would often dwell on potential problems or difficult calls:

"I often think I might get that one call..the one suicide that I'll have problems with" (CL).

"I think to myself..I hope there aren't going to be any real heavies" (CS).

6.5 Thoughts on the Way Home

The overwhelming thought expressed by a number of counsellors was that of gratitude for their own secure lives and supportive relationships:

"I come back to my wife and I'm grateful for the fact that I have my problems" (CL).

"I'm enormously grateful for the normality of my life..it's very levelling" (CL).

The other predominant theme concerns a reflection on the calls which have been received during the session, which often triggered a potpourri of emotional response:

"I would think about the calls, sometimes there would be really beautiful calls and I would come away feeling really thankful for that...other times [I would think] how I would have approached a call in a different way...you might feel disappointed because there wasn't a neat, tight ending and you hadn't helped the person as you had hoped" (CS).

"I felt very different to when I arrived...quite tired..drained..[I would think] did I get it right, was it long enough...and often just being touched by what had happened..just the reality and the levelling" (ES).

6.6 Summary

In this chapter the experience of telephone counselling was explored in terms of respondents' perceptions of and feelings towards this aspect of their voluntary participation.

There were dissimilarities in the way in which respondents viewed their counselling goal. Some counsellors saw their role as being solely that of a provider of psychological support while others felt their purpose involved facilitating positive change in their callers. In addition, while certain interviewees believed that their effectiveness as counsellors hinged on the ability to gain access to the callers' innermost feelings, others endorsed a more problem-focused, ameliorative approach.

The nature of the telephone counselling situation presented unique demands on counsellors. While certain volunteers found the anonymity and once-off nature of the counselling to be a limiting factor, others regarded this form of intervention as a challenge.

The issue of regular and sexual callers constituted a major source of dissatisfaction for many respondents. These types of calls were disliked due to their manipulative and exploitative nature. However, not all respondents were negatively affected by these calls. Certain counsellors were of the opinion that a non-judgemental attitude should be extended to all callers, irrespective of the nature of the call. It appeared that those respondents who had displayed a lack of negative sentiment towards regular and sexual callers had developed counselling strategies to confront these callers, thereby remaining in control of the counselling situation.

The type of calls which were dreaded most by respondents related to suicide, while other problems which were regarded as especially difficult to counsel included child abuse and bereavement issues.

The thoughts that went through respondents' minds on the way to their counselling duties provided a good yardstick of how they felt about their counselling and their level of motivation. On the way home after a counselling session there was tendency to review the calls that had been received.

Thus a number of different facets of the telephone counselling experience were shown to influence volunteers' feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction concerning their participation.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In this final chapter findings presented in the previous chapters will be discussed. Patterns and relationships found to occur between the various salient factors will be traced and their effect on volunteer motivation debated. Comparisons will be drawn between findings which emerged during this study and the research literature. Thereafter, implications and recommendations for the management of volunteers throughout the various stages of involvement will be outlined. Finally, limitations of the study will be discussed and recommendations made for future research in this particular area.

7.2 General Findings

The phenomenon of volunteer motivation was found to be complex and multi-faceted, with motivational factors changing or assuming a different degree of importance during various stages of the process of volunteer involvement.

Although the qualitative part of the research did not take the form of a longitudinal study, the nature of the information gleaned from interviews with subjects usually took the form of a retrospective account of their experience from the time of their initial contact with the organisation. Respondents saw their involvement in developmental terms, and regarded their motivation for participation as changing during the course of their involvement.

7.2.1 Demographic Profile of Subjects

The demographic profile of subjects in the study is similar in most respects to that of the general population of volunteers in the USA , except in the case of gender, as volunteers in the USA were found to be predominantly male (Smith, 1975).

Subjects were predominantly middle-aged when they initially joined the organisation. A possible explanation for this may be found in Gould's (1975) research, where the mid thirties to mid forties represented a distinct transitionary phase during which time

individuals were prone to question their values and search for new meaning in their lives.

Certain differences were evident in the demographic profiles for female and male volunteers, possibly due in part to the relationship between the career and the life cycle (as proposed by Kanchier and Unruh, 1988) and to the differences between female and male roles. Hornstein (in Gerdes, 1988) found that females are inclined to experience a transitionary period during the late thirties (the predominant period in which female subjects joined the organisation), while, according to Kets de Vries (1978) and Levinson (1977) males are prone to experience a mid-life crisis during the ages of 40-44 (one-sixth of joining males fell into this group).

Of the female subjects interviewed, those who were aged between 34-39 and who were homemakers when they joined the organisation tended to report that they initially applied for the training course out of a need for self-growth. This group tended to mention that their involvement had boosted their sense of self-esteem and afforded them the necessary skills to enter the workplace (as was found by Coleman and Antonucci, 1983). For these people volunteer participation was seen predominantly as an avenue to personal empowerment (as suggested by Prestby et al, 1990).

The average length of service of subjects corresponds to the length of time associated with a "healthy occupational identity" reported by Graham (in Kanchier and Unruh, 1988), but is considerably longer than the mean length of service of approximately 20 months in a sample of American volunteers in crisis intervention centres (Engs and Kirk, 1974).

In view of the fact that subjects who had had children tended to stay as members for significantly longer periods than volunteers without children, it is possible that volunteers without children might be more inclined towards greater geographical mobility, whereas volunteers with families might be more likely to remain in one location for an extended period. Interviewees who were parents tended to report that they felt they had acquired sufficient life experience to deal with "difficult" calls which might have led to a higher level of satisfaction with their involvement and inclined them towards longer service.

Amongst current counsellors, male volunteers were found to serve for significantly longer periods than females. The demographic analysis failed to find any significant

gender differences on any other of the variables which could account for this difference. However, male counsellors tended to be less harassed by sexual calls, which tended to be a major source of discontent for many female counsellors.

7.2.2 The Role of Self-serving Needs vs Altruistic Intentions

The literature on volunteer motivation suggests that individuals participate in voluntary activities not primarily out of a sense of altruism but in order to achieve personal benefits (Smith, 1981). However, findings from this study (based on subjects' self-report), indicate that the relationship between self-serving and altruistic motives in volunteer motivation seems to be more complex than that reported in the literature and tended to change during the course of participation. Both types of motive appeared to be necessary to sustain ongoing involvement but altruistic motives appeared to gain in importance the longer respondents remained with the organisation (as reported by Engs and Kirk, 1974).

However, respondents seldom remained with the organisation unless they felt that they were gaining personally from their involvement in terms of improving skills or achieving greater self-knowledge. Thus when respondents initially joined the organisation they did not generally appear to "answer the call" in the sense of seeking a selfless vocation. These findings are in line with other research in this regard (Smith, 1981) and lends support to the tenets of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and incentive theory (Knoke & Wood, 1981; Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich and Chavis, 1990) discussed in Chapter 1.

Interview data highlighted individual differences between volunteers in their perception of the benefits and costs associated with participation. Some respondents viewed their self-growth in terms of a life-long process while career-minded people who had joined the organisation to acquire skills tended to report that they would leave once they had "gained" all that they could out of their involvement.

7.2.3 Volunteer Satisfaction and Commitment Relating to Motivation and Turnover

Satisfaction with participation tended to decline when respondents felt that they were no longer learning anything new or when they believed that they were not effective in

the counselling situation (the latter supports Metz's,1987, finding, in respect to her study involving clinical psychologists).

As pointed out by respondents, counsellor effectiveness is particularly difficult to assess in an anonymous, one-off telephone counselling situation where there is no feedback from the caller.

The degree to which volunteers perceived themselves as effective in the counselling situation seemed to be related to how they saw their counselling role. Volunteers who rated their effectiveness in terms of successfully bringing about positive psychological change in the caller were more prone to feeling frustrated with the support-based nature of counselling and thus tended to feel demotivated by callers who seemed to be "closed" to constructive intervention, such as regular callers, "loopers" and "empty sessions" (as discussed in Chapter 6).

Respondents tended to experience a reduced sense of commitment when they felt that they were not seen as individuals but merely as a means of filling the counselling roster. The feeling of anonymity which was experienced as a result is contrary to one of the purposes of voluntary involvement, as found by Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt (1971), which is to serve to reduce participants' feelings of alienation which are a common aspect of today's modern, dehumanizing society.

7.2.3.1 Role of the Organisation in Volunteer Satisfaction and Commitment

Respondents generally felt that the values of caring and commitment should not be seen as the sole preserve of the volunteer but that the organisation, including the staff, should demonstrate solidarity and an equal commitment to the welfare of their volunteers.

Respondents' assessment of the quality and worth of their participation was found to be affected by the degree to which they experienced a feeling of belonging and involvement in the organisation. From information which emerged during interviews, respondents minimally involved in the organisation tended to feel out of touch with the organisation as their only contact involved the occasional chat with fellow counsellors during a counselling duty.

On the other hand, volunteers also involved in assisting on the training programmes reported that they particularly enjoyed being involved in this as it was intensely

challenging and worthwhile. However, respondents who had taken on even more additional responsibilities tended to report that while they had viewed their involvement as intensely rewarding at the time it had nonetheless, in many cases, tended to dominate their lives. This had made them overly reliant on the organisation for social support, to the detriment of other areas of their lives, such as their personal relationships. However, this was often not perceived at the time, but appreciated only in retrospect.

One veteran ex-volunteer attributed her overinvolvement partly to not being sufficiently assertive to decline a request for assistance with training or facilitating if this were inconvenient. In addition, volunteers who were highly involved in the organisation tended to become aware of the negative aspects of organisational membership such as the existence of a certain degree of in-fighting and rumourmongering, causing certain respondents to feel a sense of disillusionment and to perceive the organisation in a more cynical light.

In cases where respondents felt a reduced sense of satisfaction, a factor such as an overseas trip or a life event such as a remarriage tended to precipitate a decision to leave the organisation. Respondents reported that they tended to go inactive for a period of time before taking the final decision to terminate.

7.2.4 The Role of Stress and Burnout in Influencing Motivation

Although a number of researchers maintain that stress, and more specifically burnout, constititute a major problem for individuals who are involved in "crisis" counselling (Baron and Cohen, 1982; Uys, 1992), this was not supported by the interviews. Respondents did not report strong feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982). This is very probably due to the fact that volunteers are only requested to do two counselling duties a month, in comparison with individuals who are involved in the helping professions on a full-time basis. In addition, volunteers may go inactive for periods of up to a year when they feel they are under too much stress.

7.3 Implications and Recommendations for Optimal Management of Volunteers

It is clear from the above discussion that there is a need for the organisation to review the process of volunteer development.

7.3.1 Implications and Suggestions for the Training of Volunteers

To make trainees more aware of the nature and reality of what is involved in participating as a telephone counsellor, the following could be considered:

(a). Giving the trainees an accurate picture of the nature of telephone counselling and what will be expected of them in the counselling situation. The expectations that aspirant counsellors entertain in connection with telephone counselling should be examined and any myths that might exist in the minds of trainees should be dispelled by providing realistic input into what the role of the counsellor entails - that the majority of calls are not crisis-related but require the volunteer to provide empathic understanding and a listening ear, and that telephone counselling does not offer the opportunity to "save the world".

(b). The issue of volunteer commitment needs to be discussed on a concrete level, with the trainee being made aware of the practical implications of their involvement, in terms of the personal sacrifices which will be required and the possible impact which their involvement will have on the other aspects of their lives, such as their relationships.

(c). Trainees would benefit by being schooled in techniques and strategies which have been acquired by veteran counsellors. These would enable the novice counsellor to deal effectively with callers who appear "closed" to constructive intervention, such as regular and sexual callers and to recognise and counteract manipulative tactics used by certain callers. This will allow the new counsellors to feel more in control of the counselling situation and serve to innoculate against possible feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction. Although it is important for trainees to be prepared for these types of calls it is however important to stress to trainees the danger of prematurely "labelling" callers. Each call must be approached with an open mind and all callers afforded an equal opportunity to explore their particular problem.

It might also be worthwhile to discuss negative feelings which volunteers may experience in the counselling situation, such as a sense of helplessness or futility as a result of countertransference reactions to certain callers. Trainers could explore with trainees ways to cope with and utilize these feelings in a counselling context in order to sensitize prospective counsellors to possible reactions that they might experience during the course of their telephone counselling.

(d). As mentioned in Chapter 3, interviewees tended to mention that the context of the training course had an influence on their decision to put themselves forward for selection to become counsellors. Accordingly, the trainees could be made aware of, and asked to reflect upon, the supportive and yet competitive atmosphere that is generated within the training context and which may sway their decision to become a member of the organisation. The "hype" of the training course, according to respondents, may provide a false impression of what being a telephone counsellor entails and not prepare them for the fact that once volunteers finish their training they will no longer enjoy the same sense of a close, nurturant camaraderie.

7.3.2 Accurately assessing Volunteer Motivation - Implications for the Selection of Volunteers

The general aim of selection may be seen in terms of identifying people who will be reliable, committed and involved members of the organisation, who will maintain its counselling and training standards and remain as members for a reasonable length of time.

As discussed previously, results of the demographic analysis indicate that the parental status of volunteers is associated with length of service. Thus, volunteers who have children are "good bets" in terms of lengthy commitment to the organisation.

As the underlying motives of aspirant members will influence their sense of commitment to the organisation as well as the length of time they will remain as members, this aspect needs to be carefully assessed to ascertain why individuals wish to volunteer and how they see their future within the organisation. It is thus important to identify those people who merely wish to gain counselling skills and experience and use their membership as a stepping stone in their career path. Such identification would enable the organisation to give preference in acceptance to

those more likely to serve longer, while still continuing, to the extent it wishes, to provide career experience to selected individuals.

However, as pointed out in the literature (Smith, 1981; Henderson, 1981) and confirmed by this study, it is not always possible to elicit directly in an interview situation the underlying motivation of a prospective candidate volunteer as often self-serving motives are disguised or in some cases may not even be consciously recognised by the interviewee. Thus when assessing the suitability of candidates it is suggested that a holistic assessment be conducted of the life context of aspirant counsellors. This would provide a picture of individuals' outside pressures and responsibilities that may militate against their being able to give adequate allegiance to the organisation as well as indirectly providing an indication of the genuine motivation underlying the desire to volunteer. For example, findings on the basis of respondents' reports suggest that those individuals who were experiencing a life transition at the time of applying to become a counsellor tended to be preoccupied with their own growth needs while respondents who had successfully weathered personal crises in the past appeared to be more centred on altruistic goals.

In addition, findings indicate that the stage of life that the individual has reached is important when considering their potential for involvement in the organisation. Candidates who have the responsibility of caring for young children might not be in a position to become involved in the organisation apart from the obligatory counselling duties while young single people who are in the process of building a career may similarly experience conflicting responsibilities.

An issue raised by respondents related to the uniformity and consistency of the selection process and it was felt by certain respondents that the multiple selection panels intensified the subjective and idiosyncratic nature of the selection process and that unsuitable counsellors were slipping through who were not suitably committed to the organisation which in turn served to undermine the motivation and commitment of other members. On the basis of this, it could therefore be suggested that a single selection panel be implemented, which while having the disadvantage of lengthening the selection process, would have the advantage that there would be greater consensus on selection criteria. This would serve to tighten up the selection procedure by making it increasingly rigorous, which might contribute towards the reduction of turnover in novice counsellors and could, in addition, increase the confidence and sense of cohesiveness in the body of established counsellors.

Alternatively, bearing in mind that the existence of multiple panels does have the advantage that at least the same mistakes are not made in respect to every candidate, perhaps the problem could be adequately addressed by taking great care to ensure that there is a high degree of liaison and discussion between the selection panels.

7.3.3 Recommendations for Improving Commitment and Reducing Turnover in Volunteers

In order to enhance commitment of volunteers and curb turnover it is important to address the issues found negatively to affect volunteer motivation. The following recommendations are accordingly made:

(a). That ongoing monitoring and supervision of all volunteers engaged in telephone counselling be implemented. This would serve the joint purpose of providing psychological support for volunteers whilst at the same time maintaining the standard of the counselling service through in-service skills training and assessment of counsellors. Regular supervision would address the growth needs of volunteers by upgrading their counselling skills while at the same time demonstrating support for counsellors by enabling supervisors to remain in touch with their particular problems and concerns and thereby ensure that they "stay in psychological shape" (Uys, 1992, p. 114). For example, counsellors who feel frustrated with support-based interventions could be identified and given help and additional input on how to cope with their tensions and develop strategies to deal more effectively with difficult callers. Supervision would thus have the additional advantage of improving counsellor morale, thereby strengthening volunteer commitment.

Dr Gordon Isaacs, associate professor and former head of the Department of Social Work at the University of Cape Town, who directed a crisis counselling service in Johannesburg for seven years, believes strongly that regular supervision of volunteers must be as an integral part of their involvement as any organisation that offers a counselling service to the public has an ethical responsibility to ensure a quality service and must therefore address the issues of responsibility and accountability (personal communication, May, 1994).

Although the implementation of ongoing supervision would present certain practical and financial challenges, this would not necessarily involve a large financial outlay as a supervisory network could be developed, where more experienced volunteers

could conduct supervisory and support groups for less experienced volunteers, who, in turn would report to, and be supervised by, the counselling coordinator.

(b). As findings indicate that prior to deciding to leave the organisation volunteers tend to go inactive for a time it is suggested that all members who have been inactive for a lengthy period be afforded the opportunity of an interview with a staff member in order to ascertain their "psychological status" and to explore their feelings regarding their participation. This would provide the volunteer with a sense of support and would address the issue of the feelings expressed by certain respondents (as discussed in section 5.4.2.2.1) that they are seen by the organisation as merely another person to help fill the counselling roster.

(c). The organisation's commitment to caring for the personal growth of volunteers (see 3.3) needs to be examined and, if reaffirmed, then steps should be taken to ensure that it is being adequately operationalized.

(d). It is clear that for one reason or another some experienced counsellors find themselves, at some stage, unable to continue telephone counselling. In accordance with Miller's (1985) finding that activities should be tailored to maximize the satisfaction of individuals in order to reduce turnover, it is suggested that there might be benefit to both these volunteers and the organisation in exploring the possibility of channelling the energies of these volunteers into other activities within the organisation. Such activities could include providing support for counsellors as well as handling administrative tasks. Thus the organisation might be enabled to function more effectively without incurring additional costs.

(e). The issue raised by several respondents (e.g. 5.4.2.2.1) regarding paying an annual membership fee, could be positively addressed by replacing the subscription with a "recommended annual contribution". This would leave wealthier members free to give more without burdening those in the lower income groups.

(f). A cost-management programme could be implemented along the lines of that outlined by Prestby et al (1990), aimed at improving incentives to participation while at the same time alleviating any personal costs experienced by volunteers. However, to do this effectively, a comprehensive needs assessment would be called for in order to gauge accurately the opinions and requirements of volunteers. In order to elicit the volunteers' own points of view an open-ended questionnaire could be administered, followed by a workshop which could take the form of a a small group

discussion, where members could "brain-storm" possible cost-management strategies for adoption.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

7.4.1 Issues Relating to External Validity

Subjects for this study were all recruited from one regional branch of a voluntary telephone counselling organisation,results are not generalizable to the wider population of voluntary telephone counsellors.

Furthermore, the subjects who were selected for in-depth interviews were not chosen at random but according to a systematic, stratified sampling procedure in order to achieve a variety and dissimilarity of responses within a limited sample size (n=23). Therefore it must be borne in mind that findings that emerged from interview data are not necessarily fully representative of the group from which the interview sample was drawn.

7.4.2 Issues Relating to Internal Validity of the Study

While the organisation from which the sample of subjects was recruited had kept the details of current volunteers up to date, this was not the case in respect to ex-volunteers. For the latter group there tended to be a certain proportion of missing scores on certain variables, particularly length of service, while in the case of other factors such as marital and parental status, data may not in all cases have reflected the current situation of the volunteer on leaving the organisation, resulting in a certain degree of error.

While the in-depth one-off interview was found to be an ideal means of capturing the subjective experience of volunteers, it nonetheless had the drawback of having to rely on the retrospective accounts that subjects provided of their participation. These recollections may not have been accurate as they may have become distorted over time or were perhaps coloured in certain cases by current perceptions and feelings. This issue is particularly important to note, especially in regard to the group of respondents who were no longer counsellors but who had left the organisation over the three years preceding the study, because they were no longer in touch with the realities of participation.

7.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The following points could be considered as regards refinements and extensions to this study:

(a). As this study found that volunteer motivation takes the form of a process which changes over time, and as retrospective accounts tend to be inaccurate, a longitudinal study is suggested, which would trace the course of volunteers' experience from the time they enter the organisation in order to train as counsellors until they terminate their involvement.

(b). Chronological age represented a potential source of confounding in the first part of the demographic analysis of length of service, as younger volunteers had had less opportunity to become parents or to accrue long service than had older volunteers (the regression analysis, however, served to nullify the effect of age). A refinement to the study could involve the stratification of the sample according to different age groups prior to performing further analysis. Another possible approach could be to analyse length of service as a fraction of age.

(c). As results of the demographic analysis identify parental status as a significant predictor of length of service it would be interesting to conduct a further study to explore possible explanations for this finding.

7.6 Conclusion

This research confirms that much of the literature on volunteer motivation is applicable in the context of voluntary telephone counselling. However, this study also reinforces Coleman's (1957) view of volunteerism (which he espoused 37 years ago) as a complex phenomenon requiring an innovative research approach. It thus confirms this author's belief that a purely quantitive approach consisting of a one-off, fixed-answer questionnaire approach is unable to capture fully the multifaceted and developmental aspects of volunteer motivation.

By eliciting the subjective experience of telephone counsellors in conjunction with a demographic data analysis, a rich insight into factors affecting motivation in a group of volunteer telephone counsellors was achieved, which has implications for the training, selection and ongoing support of volunteers engaged in this form of activity.

However, as the study was largely descriptive in nature no conclusive explanations as to the factors underlying volunteer motivation are possible. Nevertheless it is believed that this study serves to pave the way for further research into this fascinating area.

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APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF INTERVIEWEES

CURRENT COUNSELLORS

AGE	SEX	LENGTH SERVICE	OCCUPATION	QUAL	RELIGION	M S	P
69	F	23yrs	Housewife	Matric	Christian	M	1
49	F	13yrs	Administrator	N/N	Christian	M	1
45	M	13yrs	Business Consultant	Degree	Christ/Univ	M	1
65	F	12yrs	Retired	Degree	Universalist	D	1
46	F	8yrs	Admin.Officer	Degree	Universalist	D	1
41	M	6yrs	Manager	Degree	Jewish	M	1
45	M	4yrs	Manufacturer	Matric	Jewish	D	0
44	F	3yrs	Teacher	Degree	Christian	M	1
24	F	3yrs	Intern Psychologist	Degree	Jewish	S	0
48	F	18mnths	Housewife	Matric	Unorthodox	M	1
30	F	18months	Manager	Matric	Christian	S	0
28	F	6mnths	Teacher	Diploma	Not stated S	0	

INCOME GROUP

	Current Volunteers	Ex-volunteers	Total
Up to R3000 per month	3	2	5
R3000 - R5000 " "	1	1	2
R5000 - R10000 " "	3	6	3
Over R10000 " "	3	5	8
Not known	1	1	2
Total	11	12	23

EX-COUNSELLORS

AGE	SEX	LENGTH SERVICE	OCCUPATION	QUAL	INC	RELIGION	M S	P
60	F	22yrs	Publicity Officer	Matric	N/N	Christian	M	1
59	F	11yrs	Personal Assistant	Matric	1	Universalist	W	1
53	F	9yrs	Housewife	Diploma	3	Christian	M	1
38	M	8yrs	Computer Analyst	Degree	4	Jewish	S	0
47	F	7yrs	Aromatherapist	Matric	3	Unorthodox	M	1
29	M	5yrs	Intern Clinical Psychologist	Degree	4	Jewish	S	0
45	F	4yrs	Buddhist Teacher	Degree	4	Buddhistt	M	1
23	F	3yrs	Social Worker	Degree	4	Jewish	S	0
31	M	2,5yrs	Manager	Diploma	3	Jewish	M	0
33	F	2yrs	Nurse	Diploma	2	Christian	S	0
40	F	1yr	Housewife	Degree	4	Jewish	M	1

KEY

Marital Status (M S)		Parental Status (P)	
Single	S	Parent	1
Married	M	No children	0
Divorced	D		
Widowed	W		

N/N: Not Known

APPENDIX B

Questions for In-depth Interview

Introduction to Interviewee

Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview.

The purpose of the interview is to gain an understanding of your feelings about being a volunteer counsellor. Therefore it is important for you to respond "from the heart" and as fully as possible.

1) **Motivation**

Why are you a volunteer counsellor?

What motivated you to become involved originally and what motivates you now?

If there has been a change in your motivation, what brought this about?

2) **General Involvement**

What activities have you been involved in since you joined the organisation and specifically over the last year?

What caused you to scale up or reduce your involvement?

3) Pros and Cons of Involvement

a) Of being a Volunteer Member

What, for you, are the positive aspects of being a volunteer counsellor? What are the negative aspects?

What would cause you to stay/leave?

Can you think of any changes that would make being a volunteer counsellor more enjoyable or worthwhile?

What could the volunteer organisation do to help its counsellors?

b) Telephone Counselling (if not covered in the previous section)

What aspects of telephone counselling do you enjoy and/or dislike?

Are there any aspects/issues that are difficult to deal with? Why?

4) **Volunteer Involvement in Relation to Life Situation**

a) Home Life

Does being a volunteer counsellor impact significantly on other aspects of your life? In what way?

How do your family feel about your involvement? What is the impact (if any) on personal relationships?

In-depth Interview (contd)

b) Work

How does your voluntary involvement affect your job and vice versa?

5) **Goals**

How do you see your future within the organisation? How long do you see yourself staying?

5) **Influence of Past Experiences**

Can you think of an event or situation in your past which may have initiated your interest in joining the volunteer organisation?

6) **Other Issues**

What do you think about on your way to and from a counselling duty?

Would you approach this organisation for counselling?

Did our conversation stimulate any other issues for you which we haven't covered?

What other questions would you have asked if you had been conducting this interview?

APPENDIX C

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION **CONFIDENTIAL**

TODAY'S DATE :.....

FIRST NAME :..... SURNAME :.....

SEX :.....

AGE:.....

OCCUPATION :..... TELEPHONE NO :.....

Combined Family Income Group (optional)
(please tick)

Up to R3 000 per month .....
R3 000 - R5 000 .....
R5 000 - R10 000 .....
Over R10 000 .....

EDUCATION

Highest level reached:.....
Emphasis/Speciality (if any):.....

SPIRITUAL/RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION (if any):.....

MARITAL STATUS:.....

CHILDREN (ages and gender):.....

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Please list the activities you have
been involved with in this organisation.

During 1992/1993.....
Before 1992.....

Years of Membership:.....

Have you ever gone inactive?.....
If yes, please give details:.....

Length of Time	Date from	to	Reason
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW THEMES AND CATEGORIES

INITIAL MOTIVATION - for doing the course

1) Precipitating life situation:
    a) relationship
    b) previous trauma, loss
    c) "empty nest"
    d) change of environment: move, overseas trip

2) Desire for personal growth:
    a) Personal insight
    b) Personal challenge
    c) Learning skills, gaining experience
    d) Search for meaningful: activity
    interpersonal contact

3) To achieve understanding of other people
4) Sense of altruism
5) To telephone counsel

ACQUIRED MOTIVATION - to become a counsellor

1) Competitive aspect
2) Personal affirmation from the training group
3) Sense of achievement
4) Acquiring skills, experience in counselling, facilitation or training
5) Personal insight
6) Acquiring self-confidence
7) Deepening spirituality
8) Sense of belonging, care, support
9) Interpersonal contact with: a) callers
    b) co-counsellors
    c) staff
10) Sense of pride, status

11) Feeling of fulfilment, being useful (sense of purpose, meaning)
12) Enjoyment
13) External factors - effect on life:
    a) family and friends
    b) work
    c) wider social environment

TELEPHONE COUNSELLING

1 a) Goal of counselling:
  b) The 'good' counsellor
  c) Idealised view of counselling

2) Nature of counselling:
  a) Single contact - 'one off', no feedback
    Distance
    Lack of visual contact, cues
    Anonymity: issues of responsibility and accountability
    Unlimited time
    'Empty' sessions
    Wide spectrum of problems - unpredictability

  b) Regular callers

  c) Sexual callers

  d) Exacting calls: suicide
    child abuse
    death and bereavement
    age-group related
    'loopers' (circular calls)

THE VOLUNTEER WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

THE ORGANISATION

1) Ethos - spiritual orientation
value congruence

2) Size
3) Bureaucracy
4) Leadership
5) Staff: turnover
infighting

6) Staff-volunteer relationship

a) counsellor care/support
b) valuing counsellors as individuals
c) supervision, monitoring, feedback:
after initial training
after counselling sessions
d) maintaining standards
e) volunteer selection

7) Relationship between counsellors: co-counsellor support

DEMOTIVATING FACTORS (COSTS) ASSOCIATED WITH VOLUNTEER COUNSELLING

Reasons given for leaving:

1) Problem with the organisation:
a) Spiritual/political issues
b) Turnover: staff and leadership
c) (Lack of) counsellor care, acknowledgement, supervision, feedback

2) External Factors

a) Time Pressure: competing recreational opportunities
family/friends
career

b)Job/volunteer activity similarity

c) Life changes: marriage
retirement
birth of child
new job
holiday

THOUGHTS ON THE WAY TO A DUTY

1) Clear mind of personal concerns, become centred
2) Anticipation (both positive and negative)
3) Nervousness
4) Practicalities (length of duty, co-counsellors, parking)
5) External day-to-day concerns (children, shopping, time pressure)

THOUGHTS ON THE WAY HOME

1) Thankfulness (scope of own problems, to be alive, to have 'survived' the duty)
2) Reflection on calls (both 'good' and 'bad')
3) Positive feelings: fulfilment, relief
4) Negative feelings: (annoyance, frustration) due to:
'empty' sessions
regular, sexual callers
'loopers'
5) Practical concerns: hunger, tiredness, time pressure

APPENDIX E

CHARACTERISTICS AND STATISTICS RELATED TO CALLERS AND THE TYPES OF CALLS RECEIVED BY THE VOLUNTARY TELEPHONE COUNSELLING ORGANISATION DURING APRIL, 1993 (n=2013)

1. GENDER OF CALLERS

	Number of Calls	%
Female	1445	71,8
Male	568	28,2
Total	2013	100,0

2. POPULATION GROUPS OF CALLERS

	Number of Calls	%
Asiatic	36	1,8
Black	12	0,6
Coloured	499	24,8
White - Afrikaans	1166	57,9
White - English	123	6,1
Unknown	177	8,8
Total	2013	100,0

3. SUBSEQUENT CALLS (ie. calls other than initiating calls)

	Number of Calls	% of Total (2013 calls)
Regular Callers	250	12,4
Subsequent Calls	70	3,5
Third Party Calls	109	5,4
Total	429	21,3

4. CATEGORIES OF CALLS

	Number of Calls	%
General	254	12,6
Grief/Loss	24	1,2
Material Loss	85	4,2
Mental/Emotional	473	23,5
Personal Growth	22	1,1
Physical Health	32	1,6
Relationships	690	34,3
Sex	201	10,0
Substance Abuse	125	6,2
Violence	107	5,3
Total	2013	100,0

APPENDIX F

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES - CATEGORIES AND LEVELS

1. AGE ON JOINING THE ORGANISATION

11. CURRENT AGE - AS OF APRIL 1993

111. LEVEL OF EDUCATION

1 < Matric
2 Matric
3 Diploma
4 Degree
5 Unknown

1V RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Christian

1 Anglican
2 Other Protestant (Methodist, Baptist, Dutch Reformed)
3 Roman Catholic
4 Other Christian (eg. Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Adventist)

Other Religious Groupings

5 Jewish
6 0ther (eg. Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu)
7 Not known/none

V. GENDER

1 Female
2 Male

V1. MARITAL STATUS

1 Single
2 Married
3 Separated
4 Divorced
5 Widowed
6 Deceased

V11. PARENTAL STATUS

1 Parent
2 No Children

V111 LENGTH OF SERVICE (IN YEARS)

APPENDIX G

WORDS USED BY RESPONDENTS TO DESCRIBE ASPECTS OF THEIR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

THEME	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Telephone counselling		
Goal	empowerment giving hope being there unique unfolding	
Nature of Calls	fulfilling fun relaxing feel good/great funny stimulating worthwhile challenging rewarding amazing adrenaline fix	lack of fulfilment emptiness draining, worn out disappointed heart-breaking despair apprehensive feel horrified disenchanted terrified

THEME	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Regular Callers		foster dependence
		holding operation
		require a crutch
		feel stuck
		loopers
		enable helplessness
		frustrating
		addiction
		pain in the neck
		impatience
		nuisance
		playing games
		uncounsellable
Sexual Callers		(feeling) manipulated
		used
		abused
		angry
		annoyed
		uncomfortable
		vulnerable
		nervous
		nasty
		violent
		horrible
		dangerous
		hateful
		clever
		testing

THEME	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Volunteer Involvement	challenging	power
	rewarding	ego-trip
	exciting	ego-stroking
	wonderful	in-fighting
	balancing	
	levelling	
	contributing	
	growing experience	
	learning experience	
	tremendous	
	buzz	
	sense of belonging	
	sense of family	
	nurturing	
	reassuring	
	uplifting	
	give meaning	
	interesting	
	enjoyable,fun	
	eye-opener	
	thrill	
	joy	
	romance	
	pride	
	winning	
	passing	