EXPLORING THE CONFLICT NARRATIVES OF YOUTH AT RISK:
THE UMZI WETHU PROGRAMME, PORT ELIZABETH

by

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ABSTRACT

Years of political unrest, forced removals, migrant labour and overly rapid urbanisation have had a negative effect on the lives of many South Africans and poverty, unemployment and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have increased the challenges facing young people in South Africa. With 54 per cent of South Africa’s population younger than 24 years and two-thirds of South Africans between the ages of 18 and 35 years unemployed, youth development is an urgent and critical social investment. Current research stresses the importance of an integrated and developmental approach that recognises young people’s optimism and resilience and builds on their strengths.

Of the various youth developmental interventions being implemented in African countries, including South Africa, an initiative that is being used increasingly, is the international broad-base programme known as the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). Using an experiential approach honed by over 35 years’ of working mostly in prisons in more than 35 countries, AVP teaches the attitudes and strategies (such as self-awareness, empathy and community-building) needed to transform conflict nonviolently and addresses the important psychological need for intimate connection with others.

This study investigates how the experience of an AVP workshop can influence so-called ‘at-risk’ young South African adults’ perceptions of personally-experienced conflict situations. The study was conducted in partnership with a local youth development project and used a narrative analysis approach to explore the pre- and post-AVP workshop conflict narratives of a group of Xhosa-speakers from the Eastern Cape. To support the analysis of the conflict narratives, focus groups were conducted three months later and again after six months with a selected sample of volunteers. Participation in the study was wholly voluntary and by informed consent.

Key words: nonviolence, youth, conflict, narratives

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1 This vulnerability status could include one or two missing parent(s), no formal income in the family or an abusive home environment.
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DECLARATION

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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: [Signature]

DATE: 18/1/2012
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1

**BACKGROUND**

1.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT ................................................................. 1

1.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH AIM ............................................................. 8

1.2.1 Objective 1 ............................................................................. 8

1.2.2 Objective 2 ............................................................................. 8

1.2.3 Objective 3 ............................................................................. 8

1.2.4 The central research question ................................................... 8

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ............................................................ 9

1.4 RESEARCHER’S ROLE ....................................................................... 9

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR STUDY ................................................................. 11

1.5.1 Increasing the conflict management capacity of at-risk youth ....... 12

1.5.2 Diffusion of the AVP philosophy and model into local communities ................................................................................. 12

1.5.3 Incorporation of AVP into Umzi Wethu’s programme ................. 13

1.5.4 Contribution to development of AVP in South Africa ............... 13

1.5.5 Contribution to AVP global research and development ............. 14

1.6 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLE ................................................................. 14
1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ................................................................. 15
  1.7.1 Autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons ....................... 16
  1.7.2 Nonmaleficence ......................................................................... 16
  1.7.3 Beneficence .............................................................................. 17
  1.7.4 Justice ...................................................................................... 17
1.8 DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS ......................................................... 18
1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE .......................................................................... 18

CHAPTER 2
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................. 20
2.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PREVENTION ................................. 20
2.3 INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ................................... 38
  2.3.1 The social change process and AVP ........................................... 45
  2.3.2 NonViolent Communication (NVC) and empathy ..................... 54
2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY ........................................................................ 65

CHAPTER 3
YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

3.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................. 66
3.2 YOUTH TODAY – A GLOBAL AND LOCAL DEFINITION ................... 66
3.3 GROWING UP IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY ...................................... 73
  3.3.1 South African youth: violence and crime, vulnerability and
          resilience ....................................................................................... 78
  3.3.2 South African youth: health and well-being ............................... 89
3.3.3 South African youth: education and skills development .............. 92
3.3.4 South African youth: economic participation and poverty .......... 95
3.3.5 South African youth: social integration and civic engagement ...... 99
3.3.6 South African youth development ........................................ 103
3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY .......................................................... 107

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
4.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................ 109
4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN .................................................................. 111
4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .................................................. 115
  4.3.1 Participants ........................................................................ 118
  4.3.2 Data collection procedures ................................................ 119
    4.3.2.1 Phase 1 - questionnaires .............................................. 120
    4.3.2.2 Phase 2: AVP workshop – researcher’s observations ... 120
    4.3.2.3 Phase 3: narrative analysis of the conflict narratives .... 126
    4.3.2.4 Phase 4: individual interviews ................................... 135
    4.3.2.5 Phase 5: focus groups ............................................... 136
4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY .......................................................... 138

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
5.1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................................... 140
5.2 PRE-WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRES .................................... 141
5.3 RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS OF AVP WORKSHOP ........... 145
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.2 HOW PARTICIPANTS PERCEIVE AND MANAGE THEIR CONFLICT SITUATIONS

6.3 HOW PARTICIPANTS PERCEIVED AND MANAGE THEIR CONFLICT SITUATIONS AFTER THE AVP WORKSHOP

6.3.1 Raised awareness of participants’ perceptions of conflict and violence (including social and gender-based violence)

6.3.2 Positive impact on participants’ perceptions of the ‘other’

6.3.3 Positive impact on participants’ attitudes to relationships

6.3.4 Self-empowerment of participants

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................................................................................ 193

6.5.1 Investment in youth development ............................................................................. 193

6.5.2 Creating platforms for youth support and building peace for social change .......... 193

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................... 196

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : LETTER OF CONFIRMATION OF RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP .............................................................. 218

APPENDIX B : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS ............................................ 219

APPENDIX C : RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRES .................................................................. 227

APPENDIX D : AVP UMZI WETHU REPORT ........................................................................ 234

APPENDIX E : CONFLICT NARRATIVES .............................................................................. 242

APPENDIX F : AVP WORKSHOP AGENDA UMZI WETHU SEPT 2011 ......................................................... 273

APPENDIX G : FIRST FOCUS GROUP 09/12/2010 (THREE MONTHS AFTER WORKSHOP) . 276

APPENDIX H : SECOND FOCUS GROUP 30/03/2011 (SIX MONTHS AFTER WORKSHOP) .......................................................................................................................... 292
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 The Conflict Triangle (Galtung 1969) .................................................................22
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 : Terminology and definitions (Snodgrass 2005:51) .........................29
Table 2.2 : The Three Pillars of Conflict ..........................................................33
Table 2.3 : Features of main interpersonal conflict management styles .............42
Table 2.4: Thought words often used as feelings ............................................57
Table 4.1 : Types of conflict experienced by participants ...............................227
Table 4.2 : Types of conflict personally witnessed by participants ..................228
Table 4.3 : Participants’ view of treatment by friends .......................................229
Table 4.4 : Participants’ support system ............................................................229
Table 4.5 : Participants’ view of personal problems .........................................230
Table 4.6 : Participants’ attitudes to conflict .....................................................231
Table 4.7.1 : Participants’ views on boy-girl insults (Insult: Q9.1-Q9.8) ............232
Table 4.7.2 : Participants’ views on hitting (Hit: Q9.9 – Q9.12) .........................232
Table 4.7.3 : Participants’ views on general conflict behaviour (Opinion: Q9.13- Q9.21) .................................................................233
CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

1.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Using violence to resolve conflicts has become commonplace in South African society, especially amongst youth. Farr, Dawes and Parker (2003:31) warn that “unless alternatives are presented to the young person, aggressive behaviour can become a normative strategy for the resolution of conflict”. The term, ‘violence’, refers not only to physical violence but also to bullying and verbal abuse as well as structural and institutional violence that prevents equal access to resources (Snodgrass 2005:3). Snodgrass explains that although the terms ‘violence’ and ‘conflict’ are often used interchangeably, “much conflict occurs without violence and much violence, such as structural and criminal violence, occurs without conflict” (ibid:3).

In addition to the importance of presenting youth with alternatives to aggression, youth development is a critical area for social investment if South Africa is to benefit from its current ‘youth bulge’ (Panday & Richter 2007). Also called a ‘demographic dividend’, a youth bulge is a result of improving conditions combined with falling fertility rates and child dependency ratios. As a bulge in the working-age population, it gives a country a significant opportunity to benefit from the talents of a large number of young people (Human Sciences Research Council, 2010). The World Development Report of 2007 indicates that South Africa will experience a youth bulge for the next three to four decades. Taljaard (2008:2) recommends that South Africa implement policies to take advantage of this “demographic window of opportunity”.

Studies on South African youth, therefore, especially with regard to conflict, are vital at this moment in South Africa’s history. To explore how South African youth perceive and manage conflict situations, this research study was conducted in partnership with the Port Elizabeth-based initiative, Umzi Wethu (a project of the
Wilderness Foundation, a non-governmental organisation)\textsuperscript{2} which each year selects and qualifies 40 young adults (of whom 18-20 are trained in Port Elizabeth) in a focussed development and job placement programme through training scholarships and partnerships with game reserves and parks.

The young adults (18-25 years of age) selected by the Umzi Wethu project are classified as ‘at-risk’ or ‘displaced’ youth because of a vulnerability status which could include:

- both parents deceased (HIV/AIDS or other cause);
- one parent deceased;
- both parents alive but without suitable income;
- abusive home environment; or
- father unknown (or has never been a part of the family).

(Personal communication, Paul Longe, Umzi Wethu 22 April 2010)

Thus the Umzi Wethu students come from a variety of backgrounds and life circumstances which, according to the literature, might have had a negative effect on their emotional development. For instance, Cluver, Gardner and Operario (2007) highlight the difficulty that youth with vulnerability status have relating to their peers, a difficulty which they claim could manifest in emotional (and, to a lesser extent, behavioural) problems and, consistently, studies on youth (Allsopp & Thumbadoo 2002; Dawes 2005; Morrow, Panday & Richter 2005; Sommers

\textsuperscript{2} Following a feasibility study that assessed the job qualification needs of Eastern Cape parks and game reserves, the Umzi Wethu model was initiated by The Wilderness Foundation in April 2006. Design of the model involved partners from the conservation, social development, government and academic sectors. Since its inception, Umzi Wethu has carried through eight student intakes (four in Hospitality and four in Field Guiding (Wilderness Foundation/Umzi Wethu. 2010. [Online]. Accessed 14\textsuperscript{th} August, 2011).
2003; Soudien 2007a, 2007b, 2010) call for interventions to address the unmet developmental needs of vulnerable youth.

Central to any developmental intervention aimed at improving the emotional resilience of young people, is teaching conflict management strategies. Although “verbal disputing constitutes a critical means by which … adolescents learn to construct their identities and to position themselves vis-à-vis their peers” (Briggs 1996:4) and different views and perspectives are important for creative decision-making and growth in relationships, guided interventions are usually needed to prevent simple misunderstandings from developing into dysfunctional conflict. Such interventions usually involve shifting conventional perceptions of conflict as negative as well as providing proactive ways of dismantling these common perceptions: Bodtker and Jameson (2001:259), for example, argue that “to be in conflict is to be emotionally activated” and stress the importance of understanding the emotions in conflict to achieve “generative conflict management” which seeks long-term gain; and Winslade and Monk (2001:41) talk of the ‘narrative metaphor’ and that how we talk about our conflicts can shape how we perceive and react to these conflicts, claiming that language plays a central role in constructing how we behave with others. Presenting young people with strategies such as these could, therefore, significantly alter how they manage their emotions and their relationships, especially with regard to conflict situations.

Because of the importance of teaching young people conflict management strategies, the central focus of this study was to determine whether exposing the Umzi Wethu group of at-risk youth to a specific conflict prevention and management two-day programme, known as the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), could contribute to their resourcefulness, especially in how they perceive and respond to conflict situations. The study was done when the youth were training with Umzi Wethu and used narrative analysis to explore the students’ pre- and post-workshop oral and written conflict narratives in order to gain insight into any changes in how they perceive and respond to conflict. (The term ‘conflict narrative’, as used in this document, refers to an oral or written description of a
personally-experienced conflict situation). To support the analysis of the conflict narratives, participants also completed an initial self-administered questionnaire and, after three months and again after six months, focus groups were conducted with a selected sample of volunteers. All participation was voluntary and by informed consent. In addition, as an extra precautionary measure, the full-time Counselling Psychologist (registered with the Health Practitioners Council of South Africa) of the Umzi Wethu project was on hand to provide counselling and post-workshop debriefing.

Although Umzi Wethu’s programme adequately addresses the needs of its students, the aim of including an AVP workshop in Umzi Wethu’s programme was to facilitate the ‘bonding’ of the group of students (all strangers to each other); to increase the students’ emotional resilience and, in particular, to enhance their ability to manage conflict nonviolently. To explain how AVP could contribute in this way, a description of AVP’s origins and philosophy follows.

AVP was initially designed in the United States of America (USA) in 1975 by a small group of Quaker men and women in response to a request from the inmates of Green Haven Prison, New York State who wanted to reduce the physical violence in their prison as well as the recidivism of the young prisoners. Accordingly, the Quakers3 devised a three-day experiential, non-religious workshop aimed at showing prison inmates how to deal with conflict without

3 The Quakers (originally known as ‘The Religious Society of Friends’ – today Quakers still refer to each other as ‘Friends’) – came into being in 1652 in the USA largely through the efforts of George Fox (1624-1691) who believed that a relationship with God does not need intermediaries. Early Quakers were persecuted by the established church but their commitment to recognising that there is a power for peace and good in all people, regardless of religion, culture or creed, spread and today Quakers are found in many African countries as well as Europe, North, Central and South America, Asia and the Middle East. The earliest reference to Quakers in South Africa is in a letter dating from 1728. One South African Quaker, Richard Gush, an 1820 settler who settled in Salem in the Eastern Cape, gained his place in history during the frontiers wars of 1834 when, unarmed, he faced an “angry band of 500 Xhosas who were threatening his farm” and negotiated a peaceful settlement. Quakers have always promoted humane working conditions, the abolition of slavery and child labour, prison reform, religious freedom as well as gender and racial equality. “…[W]orshipping in silence without rituals, symbols or outward sacraments … Quakers usually keep a low profile and do not always take credit for their work” (Pulford 1995:10-16).
resorting to violence. The workshops were well-received, and prisoners began facilitating their own workshops, some continuing after they were released.⁴

Initially, AVP workshops were conducted mostly in prisons but soon began to be given also in schools, universities, non-governmental organisations, government corporations and community centres (Halfman & Couzij 2008:10). Run mostly by volunteers, AVP spread fairly rapidly throughout the USA and to the rest of the world.⁵ In South Africa, AVP nonviolence training is primarily offered by Phaphama Initiatives, a Section 21 company established in 1990.⁶

There are three levels of AVP training: Basic, Advanced and Training for facilitators. All workshops last for three days and emphasise the nonviolent transformation of conflict. The Basic training provides an initial introduction to the building of community whereas in the Advanced workshop participants explore a chosen theme (such as fear, anger, forgiveness) more fully. In the Training for Facilitators, participants learn how to lead workshops themselves.

Because AVP teaches fundamental human values and draws primarily from the experience and insights of its workshop participants, it has been well received in different cultural settings by people of widely divergent class, ethnic, educational

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⁴ Ex-prisoners from the USA facilitated a workshop at the 2006 AVP International Gathering held in Johannesburg (researcher participation).

⁵ The International AVP website currently lists the following countries as having AVP activity: Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Bolivia, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Belarus, Burundi, Canada, Caucasus Region, Columbia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Japan, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Namibia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palestine (West Bank), Peru, Russia, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Tonga, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States (in more than 40 states, including Virgin Islands) (AVP International 2010:3).

⁶ Phaphama Initiatives (PI) work with all sectors of South Africa society and support initiatives in Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. In 16 years of operation, PI have trained close to 10,000 participants, written a Learner Guide and Workbook and created a network of about 20 experienced team leaders and 150 facilitators many of whom work for independent organisations offering AVP in all the provinces (Phaphama Initiatives 2011).
and social backgrounds. AVP facilitators in the different countries adapt a semi-standard workshop format to meet local needs, sometimes translating the workshop manuals into local languages; thus, the global AVP community shares a rich diversity of hands-on experience as well as an extensive resource of oral, written and audio-visual material. This constant intercultural interaction and, especially, the continual sharing of experience of adapting to local traditions, contribute to AVP’s self-regulating dynamism. Even where its egalitarian philosophy challenges local hierarchal structures, AVP’s overall value is recognised. For example, an evaluation study on seventy AVP workshops conducted in Rwanda between 2004 and 2005 as part of the Gacaca reconciliation process, concludes that “the results of this evaluation are unambiguous: though AVP was imported from the United States, it is clear that it is flexible enough to have a lasting and meaningful impact in a very different society” (Chico & Paule 2005:23). Part of this flexibility is AVP’s commitment to recognising the value of all human beings. The same Rwandan report acknowledges:

Rather than assume cultural neutrality or fret over cultural imperialism, it is better to acknowledge Rwandans’ ability to use what is familiar, experiment with what seems different but perhaps useful and dispense with what is not wanted.

(Chico & Paule 2005:16)

Thus, even though its structure and teaching strategies originated in the USA and contain certain North American normative assumptions, because its teachings emphasise universal human values, AVP’s philosophy can be accessed by

7 Chico and Paule (2005:18) note that participants reported that their ways of making decisions had changed from a top-down, hierarchical approach to a more participatory and consensus-based process, both in the home and the workplace. Their report also observes that one of the most striking consequences of AVP is that people who had openly admitted to beating their wives or children said that after AVP they had changed (ibid:20).
different cultures and some participants even see AVP’s teachings as reinforcing their local customs (Chico & Paule 2005:16).

Importantly, AVP does not affiliate itself with any religion. Miller and Shuford (2005:1) explain that “AVP promotes no religious doctrine” … [but] operates on the fundamental belief that there is a power for peace and good in everyone and [that] this power has the ability to transform violence”. This premise that there is a “transforming power in everyone which can transform hostility and destructiveness into cooperation and community” (AVP Basic Manual 2002:A3) is central to AVP. AVP proposes that this power is everywhere – in our opponents and in the world around us - and that it is possible to access this power by means of “certain individual and group dynamics which can be learned and used by anyone wanting to build more constructive lives and healthier societies” (ibid:A3). Although, as mentioned, AVP was initially designed for use in prisons, at the urging of many incarcerated people, AVP also developed an extensive youth component, adapting workshops for a variety of age levels and for different community organisations supporting at-risk youth, and an AVP Youth Manual was published in 2000. A more detailed discussion of AVP’s strategies and the structure of an AVP workshop is given in chapters 2 and 4.

Various studies of AVP have been conducted within a prison context. The results of the evaluations show that AVP has consistently contributed to a decrease in violent incidents in the prisons where it has been implemented8 and that AVP strategies are effective in preventing escalation of destructive conflict not easily

8 A list of the main prison studies includes: a study on the effectiveness of inmate-run AVP at a correctional facility in Maryland USA (Walruth 2001); a study on behavioural change in inmates of the Delaware Correction Center in the USA (Sloane 2002); an evaluation of AVP workshops in New Zealand (Phillips 2002); evaluation research in three prisons in the United Kingdom in 2003; the assessment of inmates’ experiences in a prison in Maryland USA in 2004; a summary of studies on the effectiveness of AVP in 2004; a three-year cumulative study in recidivism at the Delaware Correction Center (Miller & Shuford 2005).

In South Africa AVP has featured in an external review of the Integrated Youth Offender Approach in the Boksburg Juvenile Correction Centre (Roper 2005); in a study on conflict resolution workshops in Western Cape prisons (de Villiers Graaf 2005) and in an external evaluation of a nine-month AVP implementation at the Medium C Section of Leeuwynkopp Correctional Centre in Gauteng (Hackland 2007).
managed by negotiation. Studies conducted outside the prison environment have also yielded encouraging results: both Niyongabo and Yeomans (2003) and Chico and Paule (2005) evaluated AVP programmes in Rwanda as part of that country’s post-genocide reconciliation process; the reported impact of AVP workshops in Uganda were evaluated for a masters dissertation (May 2006) and in 2008, Halfman and Couzij proposed an evaluation model for use in AVP workshops using narrative analysis of participants’ conflict stories. By using narrative analysis to explore Umzi Wethu students’ pre- and post-workshop oral and written conflict narratives, this study implements Halfman and Couzij’s model and thus contributes to the growing body of research on the impact of AVP as well as to the ongoing development of the AVP evaluation process.

1.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH AIM

The purpose of this research study is to explore, within the context of an AVP workshop, the perceptions of conflict and conflict management strategies held by a selected group of at-risk youth.

1.2.1 Objective 1: to explore and describe how participants perceive and manage their conflict situations prior to an AVP workshop as seen by their initial narratives.

1.2.2 Objective 2: to co-facilitate a two-day AVP workshop.

1.2.3 Objective 3: To explore and describe to what extent an AVP workshop can change how participants perceive and manage their conflict situations as seen by their second narratives.

1.2.4 The central research question: How does the experience of an AVP workshop affect how at-risk young adults perceive and manage conflict situations?

To address this question, the following sub-questions will be posed:

- How do these young adults perceive and manage their conflict situations?
What, if any, are the differences in how these conflict situations are perceived and managed after the experience of an AVP workshop?

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Because the aim of this study is to explore the personal perceptions of conflict within a mixed gender group of 18 so-called at-risk young adults before and after exposure to specific conflict management strategies, its paradigmatic assumptions are those of interpretive research which seeks to understand “phenomena and events … through the mental processes of interpretation which are influenced by and interact with social contexts” (Henning 2004:20). The study takes a social constructionist view of conflict (Lederach 1995; Schellenberg 1998) which sees conflict as a socially constructed cultural event and people as participants in creating the situations that they define as conflict. This view allows for conflict transformation through changes in such perceptions (Lederach 1995:8) and thus aligns with AVP’s key goal of transforming conflict nonviolently through increased self-awareness and empathy. An overview of the research design and its methodological implications is given in chapter 4.

1.4 RESEARCHER’S ROLE

Because interpretative research involves the “biographically situated” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:18) researcher in a sustained and intensive experience with participants (Creswell 2009:177), various strategic, ethical and personal issues are implicated and researchers are urged to make explicit their “biases, values and personal background such as gender, history, culture, and socio-economic status, that may shape their interpretations” (ibid:177) as well as the steps taken to gain entry into the research site. Accordingly, this section gives a brief overview of my background and interest in conflict management and, in particular, in the AVP conflict management process. In addition, the section explains my connection to the research site, the Umzi Wethu programme.
Although, like most people, I have been influenced by a great many people and events during the course of my life, three key life experiences of mine are pertinent to this research. The first is the seven years I worked at the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations in Rome (as an editor in a team which produced audio-visual training material for small farmers in developing countries) where I first understood the importance of rural development and the challenges faced by people of a different socio-economic background from my own; the second is a book on South Africa’s migrant labour system, which I co-authored with a Belgian sociologist and my Iranian husband while living in the Transkei, and which exposed me to the isolation of rural communities in South Africa; and the third is a rural community project that I coordinated in Spain for ten years which gave me a hands-on experience of working closely with people of different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. While the first two experiences heightened my sense of responsibility towards disadvantaged communities, it was the Spanish project and the realisation of the value of diversity that led to my current interest in conflict management. In 1986, after working and training with Marshall Rosenberg, who developed the globally-used conflict management strategy known as ‘NonViolent Communication’ (NVC), I was made aware of a similar broad-based programme already operating in South Africa: the Alternatives to Violence Programme (AVP). Over a period of two years, I underwent the three-tiered training to become an AVP facilitator and began co-facilitating workshops in the Eastern Province.

My respect for the effectiveness of both NVC and AVP is due to my personal experience of these processes and to the appeal that both these organisations have for a wide range of culturally diverse people because of their non-

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9 Like AVP, NVC also operate with a global network of people – training centres have been established in England, Switzerland and the USA and there are currently more than 300 certified NVC trainers worldwide. See References for books written by Marshall Rosenberg.
denominational nature. The assumptions of AVP and the AVP philosophy in general represent a summary of my own biases and values.

I was initially attracted to the Umzi Wethu project of the Wilderness Foundation because of its unique goal of annually giving 40 so-called vulnerable youth the opportunity to gain employment in the game park and hospitality industry by training them not only as game rangers and chefs but also exposing them to a range of lifeskills. In this latter regard, I especially liked Umzi Wethu’s policy of taking the youth on regular nature trails to create environmental awareness. In 2009 I joined Umzi Wethu’s mentorship programme which aims to provide a committed mentoring relationship to each student for the duration of their time at Umzi Wethu (one year). The Umzi Wethu mentorship applicant form explains that “the single most important characteristic of an Umzi Wethu mentor is unwavering commitment to the mentoring relationship” and I thus committed to weekly contact sessions with my mentee, initial training sessions and monthly mentor training and support meetings. My regular contact with the Umzi Wethu staff and students led to the realisation of the research opportunity that exploring students’ perceptions of conflict before and after an AVP workshop could give. This realisation was especially relevant in the light of recent research done by two Dutch scholars in the AVP community who recommended the use of narrative analysis to evaluate the AVP process, and I became interested in implementing their suggested procedures. Talks with the Umzi Wethu senior staff resulted in the agreed research collaboration, providing the study was done strictly by informed consent and that a copy of the research report was made available to Umzi Wethu.

Application was made to the Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth and approval for the study was granted.

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR STUDY

The motivations for this study are thus the following:
1.5.1 Increasing the conflict management capacity of at-risk youth

Young adults, especially South African at-risk youth, need support in developing their inner resources and building capacity for social interaction, particularly conflict management. Olivier (2008:2), in discussing the manifestation of violence in South African society, describes how the experience of trauma, whether personal or collective, “forces one to search, via language and imagination, for meaning and sense in something experienced as senseless … and [that] the only way one can address it is at the level of the language (Freud’s ‘talking cure’)”. Although not all the childhoods of the Umzi Wethu students can be labelled ‘traumatic’, some may have experienced emotional deprivation due to their restricted family circumstances and an AVP workshop is an established, well-structured and safe group space for the reflective process needed to address this. The experience of an AVP workshop offers these young adults a unique opportunity to examine their inner world, especially with regard to how they perceive and respond to conflict.

1.5.2 Diffusion of the AVP philosophy and model into local communities

Young adults such as the Umzi Wethu students who have been chosen from numerous applicants to participate in Umzi Wethu’s training programme are well-placed to become role models amongst their peers. An effective experience of a programme like AVP could contribute to the development of their leadership skills and, subsequently, the social cohesion of their communities. Margaret Wheatley, social change theorist, insists that it is the community which is “the unit of change” (Wheatley 2006:5). For Wheatley, it is the small community group (not the large group) that is “the most potent focus” because:

Change does not happen from the top down … life organizes from the inside out – it organizes from [different groups of] … local action which, when they connect with one another, make great change possible … as networks of relationships form among people who discover they share a common cause and vision of what’s possible.

(ibid:5)
Giving the Umzi Wethu youth the opportunity to experience the ‘sense of connectedness’ that AVP generates and then exploring whether this experience changes the way they perceive and manage conflict situations could have a ripple effect in their family and communities. In an AVP study of the effectiveness of the AVP process on Rwandan judges involved in the Gacaca traditional arbitration and reconciliation process for the victims and perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, results showed that “AVP had been helpful, not only to the judges involved … but in helping the participants resolve conflicts within their families and their everyday lives” (Delahanty 2003:3). Similarly, a New Zealand study done with state prisoners in 2002 shows that, over time, “support, administrative and custodial staff began their own AVP training in community-based AVP courses” (Phillips 2002:10).

1.5.3 Incorporation of AVP into Umzi Wethu’s programme

Incorporating an AVP workshop into Umzi Wethu’s orientation programme in order to give new students a ‘sense of connectedness’ and the experience of the diversity of their peer group in a positive way, could help prepare these young adults for their year’s training with Umzi Wethu, for the relationships with their new group of peers and for future job opportunities. AVP could become a permanent component of Umzi Wethu’s orientation programme. In addition, other organisations working with at-risk youth might be encouraged to collaborate with a programme like AVP. Collaboration between community organisations such as Umzi Wethu and AVP is critical to social development. Morrow, Panday and Richter (2005:v) stress the importance of cooperation between youth development programmes and how this cooperation can strengthen communities.

1.5.4 Contribution to development of AVP in South Africa

AVP provides an important process for South African youth and the work done by Phaphama Initiatives, an AVP training provider in South Africa, has created an extensive network of facilitators of different cultural backgrounds. Working in all sectors of South African society as they do, Phaphama Initiatives have valuable
experience to share and academic validation of their work can help them further their objectives (Phaphama Initiatives 2011).

1.5.5 Contribution to AVP global research and development

Analysing the ‘twin stories’ of participants’ conflict narratives, as recommended by Halfman and Crouzij (2008), could animate further research in the field of conflict narratives and be replicated by AVP in other countries. Contributing to the global development of AVP in this way is an important motivation for this study as broad-based programmes such as AVP need academic validation of their processes. Halfman and Couzij (2008:1) point out that not knowing exactly what AVP produces inevitably limits its opportunities for improvement; they stress the need for an appropriate evaluation model to simplify decision-making for sponsors and government policy-makers so that a widespread implementation of AVP can be more easily facilitated.

1.6 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLE

The study focuses on a specific, pre-selected group of 18 young Xhosa adults (18 to 25 years old), all from the Eastern Cape, nine of whom are female and nine male. These young adults were chosen to participate in their Umzi Wethu Academy programme (conducted in Port Elizabeth from July 2010 to July 2011) aimed at increasing youth employability and were selected on the grounds of their vulnerability status by means of a referral-based selection process. Working in partnership with local social development organisations (mostly community-based and non-governmental organisations) in the townships of Port Elizabeth and the nearby rural areas (for example, Alexandria, Paterson, Addo as well as Graaff-Reinet and Somerset East), Umzi Wethu receives 60-100 applicants annually. In addition to conforming to an at-risk status, applicants must be between 18-25 years

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10 As already mentioned, this vulnerability status could include one or two missing parent(s), no formal income in the family or an abusive home environment.
of age with good spoken and written English. Umzi Wethu interviews 40-60 of the initial applicants, selects 30-40 applicants for a 3-day wilderness trail and chooses 25 applicants for a final academic and health screening, after which a short-list of 18-20 successful students is drawn.

The Umzi Wethu students were chosen for this research study for the following reasons:

- the size, age and mixed gender of the group was suitable for an AVP workshop (AVP recommends no more than 20 participants and preferably a male/female mix);
- the students lived and worked together for a year; thus, they were interacting with each other on a daily basis for the duration of the research period. In terms of the aims of the study, this provided a valuable opportunity to explore the extent to which a group of young people (who had been exposed to the same AVP workshop) were able to implement any shift in perspective gained during the workshop to their everyday relationships.

Although these young adults are privileged by the opportunity being granted them by their inclusion in the Umzi Wethu project, there is no reason to suppose that their prior experiences of conflict and conflict-related attitudes and behaviour were any different from any other youth-at-risk coming from similarly deprived backgrounds.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Beauchamp and Childress (2001 in Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006:67-69) refer to four widely accepted philosophical principles that determine whether research is ethical. These principles are:
1.7.1 Autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons

This principle requires the voluntary informed consent of participants as well as the protection of individual, institutional and community confidentiality. To address this principle and to ensure conceptual equivalency of the explanations of the study which were given to the participants, all explanations were given in the participants’ home language, namely, Xhosa. For the same reason, the letter of agreement, the letter of consent and the questionnaire (appendices C, E and B respectively) were available in Xhosa and two of the workshop facilitators were Xhosa-speaking (one male and one female). The explanations clarified the aim of the research, details of the questionnaire and the ‘twin stories’ exercise, as well as the nature of the workshop and the post-workshop focus groups. Emphasis was placed on the voluntary nature of participation and the freedom to withdraw at any time as well as participants’ right of access to the results of the study.

Once the questionnaire, the letter of agreement and the letter of consent were explained (in both English and Xhosa), participants could choose to sign their agreement. Umzi Wethu granted permission to conduct this study (see Appendix A) on condition that the students’ participation was strictly by informed consent. All students chose to participate.

The participants were also assured of full confidentiality. This was achieved by using pseudonyms for all the research documentation and ensuring that only the research team has access to the documents. In addition, as suggested by Terre Blanche et al (2006:76), focus group participants were also “…encouraged to maintain confidentiality and [were] … briefed about the confidentiality risks in advance”.

1.7.2 Nonmaleficence

This principle obliges the researcher to make certain that the research participants are not harmed as a result of the research and that, in addition, they are not wronged or deceived in any way (Macklin 2002 in Terre Blanche et al 2006:67). In the case
of the present study, every effort was made to communicate openly and honestly and participants were invited to contact the researcher, any of the co-facilitators or Umzi Wethu’s staff psychologist (who was available throughout the research period) at any time if they felt uncomfortable with any aspect of the research process. Although the students communicated freely with the AVP facilitators during the workshop, no student contacted Umzi Wethu’s psychologist in this regard.

1.7.3 Beneficence

According to this principle, the researcher needs to ensure that the research participants will receive the maximum benefits of the study. In the present study, the primary reason for including post-workshop focus groups after three months and again after six months, was to give participants the opportunity to address any confusion that could arise after the initial increased sense of well-being frequently mentioned by participants of AVP workshops (Halfman & Couzij 2008:43) has been subjected to the challenges of everyday life. In this way, the researcher aimed to minimise any post-workshop difficulties and extend the workshop benefits.

1.7.4 Justice

As Terre Blanche et al (2006:68) explain, justice in research “requires that those who stand to benefit from the research should bear the burdens of the research and vice versa”. In this research study, every effort was made to treat all participants with fairness and equity. Because of the close affinity of the values of an AVP workshop with ethical considerations, the principle of justice is inherent in the design of an AVP workshop, for example, in allowing all participants equal opportunities at all times and to take their viewpoints into account. This research study was integrated into the participants’ training programme and took place at their residential premises where Umzi Wethu’s staff psychologist was available, thus minimising physical inconvenience to the participants and ensuring that participants had easy access to support should they need it.
Permission to conduct this research was also obtained from the Faculty of Research Technology and Innovations Committee (FRTI) and the NMMU Ethics Committee (Human).

1.8 DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The results of this research will be disseminated in the following ways:

- as a Master’s thesis for completion of an MA in Conflict, Management and Transformation at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University of Port Elizabeth;
- to all interested participants of the study;
- as a report for research partner, Umzi Wethu;
- as a report for the local and international AVP community (to be made available on the websites of Phaphama Initiatives and AVP International);
- possible articles in appropriate academic journals.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The research document is divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1 provides details on the rationale for the study, the objectives to be achieved and the overall research design. This chapter also includes the history and philosophy of AVP.

Chapter 2 presents the first section of the literature review, giving the theoretical framework and showing how the study is aligned with contemporary approaches to conflict management.

Chapter 3 provides the second section of the literature review and discusses what it means to be a young person in South Africa by exploring the challenges that young people face and the type of developmental support they need.
Chapter 4 gives the research methodology – the pre-workshop questionnaires, the structure of the AVP workshop and the post-workshop focus groups. This chapter also looks at how narrative analysis is used to explore the participants’ written experiences of conflict situations.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the study drawing on the data obtained from the pre-intervention questionnaires, the AVP workshop, the narratives offered by the participants and the two post-workshop focus groups.

Chapter 6 concludes with a synopsis of the study, giving the conclusions and offering recommendations.

The following chapter provides an overview of the field of conflict resolution and some of the frameworks for analysing the causes and conditions of conflict as the first section of the conceptual framework for this study.
CHAPTER 2

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores conflict management approaches to interpersonal conflict with the aim of providing a conceptual framework for the study. It begins by defining conflict and giving a brief overview of the field of conflict resolution, looking at some of the frameworks for analysing the causes and conditions of conflict as well as the cultural, structural and institutional influences. The chapter then focuses on approaches in interpersonal conflict, discussing forgiveness and reconciliation before considering the process of social change and the role that AVP can play in this process, bearing in mind that the aim of this study is to explore how the experience of an AVP workshop affects how young adults perceive and manage conflict situations.

2.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PREVENTION

Because conflict resolution emerged as a discipline only after World War II, it is still a relatively young area of scholarship and professional practice (Deutsch & Coleman 2000:xii). The last fifty years, however, have seen an increase in conflict management and peacekeeping studies worldwide mainly due to the controversial effects of globalisation, rapid social change and the increased movement of people across the world. While this increased mobility and diversity growth has opened many people to a positive experience of other cultures, it has also resulted in more conflicts as people with different value systems clash. Conflict is an inevitable component of such interactions and whether any conflict results in growth and progress or increased destruction depends largely on how such conflict is handled. Taking a social-constructionist view of conflict, Lederach (1995:8) maintains that, because conflict is constructed socially and people are active participants in creating the situations they interpret as conflict, there are always opportunities for transforming conflict in positive directions which can lead to mutually beneficial
outcomes. This view aligns directly with this study which looks at how AVP affects young people’s management of conflict as AVP’s primary goal is to transform conflict nonviolently.

The term 'conflict', however, is defined in various ways, depending on theoretical orientation. Although early definitions mostly portrayed conflict as dysfunctional, it was also seen as “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals” (Coser 1967 in Wilmot & Hocker 2007:8). Wilmot and Hocker (2007:15) define conflict as “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources and interferences from others in achieving them” whereas Bartos and Wehr (2002:174) regard conflict as “a situation in which actors use conflict action against each other to attain incompatible goals and/or express their hostility” and put conflict behaviour on a continuum ranging from noncoercive action (pure cooperation, promising reward and persuasion) to coercive (threat of coercion, nonviolent coercion and violent coercion) action. Zartman (2008:1) comments that conflict is “simply an incompatibility of positions, a static situation when mutually exclusive views are present”.

Thus intrinsic to defining conflict is defining the type of conflict. Addressing both the causes and expression of conflict, Anstey (2008:6) talks of ‘latent’ and ‘manifest’ conflict which:

… exist[s] in a relationship when parties believe that their aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously, or perceive a divergence in their values, needs or interests (latent conflict) and purposefully employ their power in an effort to eliminate, defeat, neutralise or change each other to protect or further their interests in the interaction (manifest conflict).

Although conflict behaviour is usually situation-specific and similar processes are likely to occur in similar conflict situations (Druckman 2005:4), the common factor in transforming all conflicts is a perceptual or conceptual change in one or more of the parties; thus, perception is central to all conflict analysis (Wilmot &Hocker
2007:9) which is why this research study explores the perceptions of young people with regard to their conflict situations.

This emphasis on the perceptions of conflict parties is also highlighted in Galtung’s (1969) well-known model of conflict which addresses both symmetric conflicts (conflicts between similar parties) and asymmetric conflicts (conflicts between different parties):

![Figure 2.1 The Conflict Triangle (Galtung 1969)](image)

According to Galtung’s model, conflict can be seen as a triangle with contradiction (C), attitude (A), and behaviour (B) as its vertices which Galtung explains as follows:

- The contradiction refers to the conflict situation, which is the actual or perceived incompatibility of goals between the parties. In symmetric conflicts, the contradiction is defined by the parties and their clash of interests whereas in asymmetric conflicts, the contradiction is inherent in the structure of the conflict parties and the relationship between them.
- Attitudes include emotive (feeling), cognitive (belief) and conative (will) components and are the parties' positive or negative perceptions and misperceptions of each other and themselves. In violent conflicts, parties usually maintain ‘enemy images’ fuelled by anger, hatred and fear.
• Behaviour includes cooperation or coercion as well as actions of friendship or hostility. Violent conflict is characterised by aggression and attacks.

Because conflict is a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviour constantly change and influence each other, all three components need to be present for a full conflict. Galtung’s triangle thus helps to pinpoint the root causes of conflicts, for example, a latent conflict might not exhibit conflictual behaviour or attitudes.

However, as mentioned in chapter 1, it is important to distinguish between the terms ‘conflict’ and ‘violence’ although, sometimes, these terms are used interchangeably in the literature: conflict can be constructive, triggering both personal development and progressive social change while violence is invariably destructive. Snodgrass (2005: 71) warns of the danger of confusing conflict and violence, underlining that violence prevention does not aim to prevent or eliminate conflict but that much of the literature, especially on South African school conflict, uses the terms ‘violence’ and ‘conflict’ interchangeably. In drawing attention to the difference between these two terms, Snodgrass cites Wehr (1979:13) who points out that “…much conflict occurs without violence and much violence, such as structural and criminal violence, exists without overt conflict”.

The concept paper, *The violent nature of crime in South Africa* (2007:33-36), defines violence as actual or threatened use of physical force against a person which can give rise to criminal or civil liability, whether severe or not and whether with or without a weapon, and that severe violence may be associated with intimate violations of the person or the potential to cause serious physical pain, injury or death. Aggression (violence) can thus be defined as deliberately intended harmful physical or verbal action or inaction and includes physical or emotional assault, sexual abuse and passive withholding of resources (Opotow 2000:404).

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11Published by Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2007) preceding the publication of six comprehensive reports on violence and crime in South Africa.
Snodgrass (2005:29-30) emphasises that violence also includes verbal and psychological abuse (name-calling, labelling, bullying and ridicule) and refers to Pruitt and Kim’s (2004:104) use of a continuum to define conflict with ingratiation and persuasion at one end and coercion and physical assault (violence) at the other end.

In addition, aggression and violence can be both direct or indirect (structural). Direct violence is visible and has traumatic effects, for instance, assault, torture and war while the violence resulting from oppressive social structures is often hidden, chronic and institutionalised (Opotow 2000:404; Jeong 2008:181). Such structural violence occurs locally, regionally, nationally and internationally and refers to inegalitarian social structures or harmful state and corporate policies and practices which force people into situations where their choices are predetermined for them by a power structure set up to benefit certain groups and disadvantage others (Parsons 2007:175). Because structural violence can be imperceptible, its victims are often seen as causing their own debilitation (Opotow 2000:405). Structural violence is, therefore, more complex to address as its results are usually profound and long-term. In South Africa under apartheid, for example, the state-motivated limited access to education and job opportunities for the majority of its citizens stigmatised these groups socially, politically and economically and many authors attribute South Africa’s current pervasive societal violence to the deep and ongoing effects of apartheid (Soudien 2007a, 2007b, 2010; Kyoch 2008; Graham, Bruce & Perold; Altbeker 2008). This view is relevant for this study which explores so-called at-risk Xhosa youth’s perceptions of conflict as their worldviews reflect the shared knowledge of their cultural group which was disadvantaged in this way.

However, cultural violence does not only occur in ethnic conflicts but in any situation where one group justifies physical or emotional aggression on another because of perceived cultural or ideological differences. The tendency to assume that perceived negative behaviour of an unfamiliar person or group is a result of personal factors is a well-known psychological process called ‘attribution error’ which increases the chances of misunderstanding amongst different groups of all
kinds (Kimmel 2000:457-458). In this regard, Slocum-Bradley (2008:1) maintains that the way in which people form perceptions of themselves and others is, arguably, the most important root cause of conflict, and that violence between social groups, whether ethnic, religious, linguistic, gender or racial, entails the construction of a certain perception of one’s own group and that of the ‘other’. The less intercultural experience we have, the more likely we are to make attributions that conform to our own cultural experience which can then present as stereotypical thinking which, in turn, creates cultural conflict. Thus, as Ting Toomey and Oetzel (2001:96) caution, “we need to be mindful of … [the] conflict scripts, thinking patterns, affective states, language usage … that we bring to an intercultural situation”, and Avruch (2008) stresses that the key issue in intercultural conflict is the extent to which our own conceptions are determined by our culturally constituted assumptions and presuppositions about the world.

However, the word ‘culture’ presents its own difficulties especially since we are often unaware of other cultural perspectives. Le Baron and Pillay (2006:27) explain that the term ‘culture’ (usually conflated with ethnicity, race or religion), eludes definition because cultures are more than differences in language, dress, food and customs and regard culture as a “flow of meanings and identities that consciously and unconsciously guide us” which constantly adapts to changing environments. They, therefore, loosely define culture as “the shared, often unspoken, understandings in a group that shape identities and the process of making meaning” (ibid:26) and maintain that, although cultural groups may share ethnicity, race or nationality, cultural conflict can also include differences in socio-economics, class, generation, sexual orientation, ability and disability, political and religious affiliation, gender or regional origins. Thus, as Avruch and Black (1991:170) point out, members of the same social group do not necessarily internalise cultural representations equally and while culture is not the cause of conflict, it is “always the lens through which differences are refracted”.

Le Baron and Pillay (2006:5) also maintain that because people have multiple cultural identities, culture and conflict constantly shape and reshape each other in
an evolving, interactive process (ibid: 7) and that, since culture is a part of every relationship and conflict only arises in relationships, relationship-building becomes the central focus of intercultural conflict resolution, especially since worldview differences – diverse ways of seeing our purpose, values and relationships – can result in conflict. This importance of relationship-building is central to this study as the key to transforming conflicts nonviolently is in improving the quality of relationships.

In talking of the relationship between culture and conflict, LeBaron and Pillay (2006:7) identify three dimensions of conflict: material (the ‘what’ of conflict); symbolic (the meaning of the issues involved, especially those related to people’s identities, values and worldviews) and relational (the way the conflict unfolds), noting that culture connects to all three dimensions. They talk of the importance of ‘cultural fluency’ and provide guidelines for decoding cultural ways of making meaning, noting that the key components of cultural fluency are anticipation, embeddedness, expression and navigation, all of which require increased awareness, especially of our socially learned ways of seeing.

One such socially learned ‘cultural’ worldview is that of patriarchy which exemplifies an overarching ideological violence not always explicitly recognised. With its privileging of men (some more than others) and dominant hierarchical structures in state institutions, the patriarchal worldview is relevant to this study which deals with perceptions of Xhosa youth since both African and Western cultures are deeply patriarchal (Coetzee 2001:300-301). Wentworth (2005:2) refers to patriarchy’s quintessential activity as war waging and how, in an unbroken line through recorded history, patriarchs have tried to take by force what does not belong to them: territory, natural resources, slave labour and economic, social or political control, and how the patriarchal code exists in the language, religion, laws and government of virtually all cultures. She also underlines how, under capitalism, war profits from the manufacture of ever more sophisticated weaponry and the constant rebuilding of infrastructure devastated by war. In her seminal work on patriarchy, Gerda Lerner (1986:78-79) observes how the concept of the permanent
powerlessness of the dominated and the total power of the dominant have become acceptable conditions of social interaction in the modern world. In discussing the difficulty of opposing such embedded traditions and values by, for instance, challenging the notion of power as dominance, these authors acknowledge that a commitment to peace must necessarily entail social change at all levels.

Thus violence has many names and most are negative. Conflict, on the other hand, is neither positive nor negative but inevitable in all relationships and, as mentioned, what determines whether any conflict will be constructive or destructive, is how it is handled (Anstey 2006:6-10). When conflict is not managed positively, it can escalate to violence which is why the two terms are often confused.

The important point about conflict, therefore, is that it is not negative in itself. LeBaron and Pillay (2006:12) use the term ‘conflict fluency’ to underline that conflict offers choices and growth. Referring to the terms ‘conflict’ and ‘cooperation’ as processes inherent in all communities, Cheldelin et al (2008) also stress that both conflict and cooperation can be creative or destructive: “cooperation, when harnessed to malign ends, can result in totalitarian and repressive outcomes [and] conflict, when harnessed to benign ends … is capable of generating high levels of conflict creativity and positive change” (Cheldelin et al 2008:11). Homer-Dixon (1999:5) maintains that even violent conflict is not always negative, giving an example of how mass mobilisation and civil strife can produce useful change in the distribution of land and wealth and in institutions and governance processes.

However, for many people, the term ‘conflict’ has only negative connotations. Mack and Snyder (2006:4) remark on “the persistent tendency to regard all conflict as bad [and] as susceptible to complete elimination” (original emphases), regarding the inexplicit nature of conflict terminology as an ongoing challenge in the field. Littlejohn and Domenici (2001:10) list some of the common negative associations of conflict as ‘emotionally draining’, ‘avoidable’ and ‘damaged
relationship’, making the point that whether conflict is regarded as negative or whether it is accepted as an inevitable part of life, will determine whether the conflict is a constructive or destructive process. In addition, since all societies struggle with tensions between conflict and cooperation, the legitimacy of conflict, as Anstey (2006:7) notes, is “complicated by shifting norms, cultural variation, means-ends debates and questions of justice and morality”. Thus diplomatic international relations for a country’s security highlight conflict management and peacekeeping studies because, as Zartman (2008:1) maintains, it is “not the expensive military hardware that assumes the security of a state and its inhabitants but the diplomacy associated with its use or non-use. Insecurity arises from problems unsolved and conflicts unmanaged”.

To address the need to differentiate explicitly between conflict and closely related concepts, Sandole (2004:516) defines some of the conflict terminology as follows: conflict prevention (preventive diplomacy), conflict management (peace keeping), conflict settlement (coercive peace-making), conflict resolution (noncoercive peacemaking and conflict transformation (peace building). Lederach (2000b) believes that the term ‘conflict resolution’ promotes the idea that conflict is bad and needs regulating or managing and prefers the term, ‘conflict transformation’, since the outcome of a conflict depends on transforming perceptions of the issues and the actions of the other party and because conflict transformation strategies can also transform the expression of conflict, namely, whether it is overt or covert. Lederach (2000b:87) also sees implicit in the term, ‘conflict resolution’, the need to understand how conflict ends and talks of the need for strategies for dealing with possible destructive outcomes.

Snodgrass (2005:51) observes that the different definitions of conflict highlight how conflicts are characterised by the interplay between the different causes of conflict: the external, objective factors such as scarce resources and the cognitive, subjective factors. She usefully summarises the main conflict terms and definitions (see Table 2.1 below) under the umbrella terms of ’conflict resolution’
and ‘peace studies’, pointing out that there is an overlap in all the subfields of these terms.

Table 2.1: Terminology and definitions (Snodgrass 2005:51)

<table>
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<th>Peace</th>
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<td>Peace is not only concerned with the overt control or reduction of violence but also with the vertical social developments that are responsible for hierarchical relationships between people. It thus connotes more than the cessation of war - it implies human beings working together to resolve conflicts, respect standards of justice, satisfy basic needs, and honour human rights.</td>
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<td>Negative peace focuses on the absence of war or direct violence.</td>
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<td>Positive peace is structural justice and equality. The goals of positive peace touch upon many issues that influence the quality of life, including personal growth, freedom, social equality, economic equity, solidarity, autonomy and participation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The way peace is defined affects how ‘peace studies’ and ‘conflict resolution’ are conceptualised. These terms are used interchangeably in the literature and have significant areas of overlap.</td>
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<th>Conflict Resolution</th>
<th>Peace Studies</th>
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<td>This term implies that the sources of conflict are addressed and resolved. It implies that behaviour is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile and the structure of the conflict has been changed. The term refers to the process (or the intention) to bring about these changes, and to the completion of the process. Conflict resolution skills refer to the various techniques such as facilitation, negotiation and mediation used to bring about the resolution of a conflict. Conflict management, or ‘conflict regulation’, covers the whole gamut of positive conflict handling. It implies the understanding that conflict is never resolved but needs to be managed as a process, on an ongoing basis. Conflict management skills refer to the various techniques such as facilitation, negotiation and mediation used to manage a conflict. Conflict transformation implies a deep transformation of the parties and their relationships and in the situation that created the conflict. Some see this as the deepest level of change in the conflict resolution process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the macro level peace studies are concerned with the broader issues of social justice, social change, and social participation. At the micro level there are programmes devoted to conflict resolution with the emphasis on the techniques of mediation and arbitration. Peace education is the social process through which peace is achieved. It includes the practising of equality of rights and equal power-sharing for every member of a given community. It includes the learning of skills of nonviolent conflict resolution. Peacemaking means moving towards a settlement in a conflict. In terms of school conflict it means teaching a whole range of conflict resolution skills and implementing peer mediation programmes that use a third party (a mediator), to help solve the differences. Peacekeeping (traditionally with the consent of the conflict parties) refers to the interposition of third parties to separate the conflicting parties and is often now associated with monitoring and policing. In terms of school conflict this means expulsion from school, metal detectors, adopting zero tolerance policies, weapons searches and policing the school environment. Peacebuilding underpins the work of peacemaking and peace keeping by addressing structural issues and the long-term relationships between conflictants. A peacebuilding approach to school violence would be to create the conditions of positive peace by addressing the structural problems in education and building trust among all the stakeholders.</td>
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Taking these arguments into account and using the framework of these definitions, this study, therefore, loosely confines itself to the aim of conflict transformation by discussing the effect of one particular conflict management strategy, the AVP workshop, on participants’ perceptions of their conflict situations. The use of the term, ‘conflict management’, does not imply that participants were manipulated or controlled in any way, but that the aim of the study was to explore their perceptions and to assist them to view and manage their conflict situations differently.

In discussing the diversity of the terms in the field, however, it is important to note how the scope of the academic discipline and professional practice of conflict resolution has changed since the 1990s: Kelman (2008: ix) comments that the concepts of peace-building, conflict transformation and reconciliation, which are now discussed extensively in the literature, were hardly used then. This underlines the interdisciplinary nature of the field, the variety of tasks that conflict resolution theory, research and practice must address as well as the diversity of approaches needed for these tasks.

In keeping with this diversity, conflict resolution theories are found in all social science disciplines. Defining the field, Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast (2008: 4) note how the cross-disciplinary nature of conflict resolution can be both a strength (its diversity) and a weakness (its unstable boundaries) and stress the importance of integrating conflict resolution theory, research and practice in order to develop generic theory. They regard conflict theory as radical political philosophy but with a mission “to devise processes that will generate positive orientations to change, and the institutional and processual mechanisms for doing this nonviolently” (ibid:12). While recognising their implicit idealism, Cheldelin et al underline that all conflict theory needs to “improve communication and understanding, promote tolerance and diversity, yield positive sum agreements, acknowledge core identity needs of all antagonists, overcome negative stereotyping, promote clear communication, and achieve justice, peace, and reconciliation between peoples and state systems” (ibid:17).
When attempting to address such wide-ranging aims, Jeong (2008:183) stresses that the conflict resolution practitioner needs to explore the root causes of conflict rather than focus on deviant behaviour and emphasises the necessity of looking at the structural constraints that inhibit social harmony, as power is maintained by specific social-economic systems, cultural norms and the institutionalisation of ethics and values. Jeong maintains that the goal of conflict resolution is to “uncover the historically contingent origin of the dominant discursive practice whose functions are to perpetuate social and political hierarchies” (ibid:189). This goal of conflict resolution is critical for a post-conflict society such as South Africa where, as mentioned, the conflict is still deep-rooted and the violence is still structural and cultural. Soudien (2007a:3) talks of the “insidious prejudices that haunt South Africans’ consciousnesses” and how “contemporary African adolescents carry the double burden of poverty and cultural alienation”; thus, underlining one of the main motivations for this study which explores how Xhosa youth can be supported.

Examining the structural issues of a conflict in this way raises questions regarding the role of the conflict resolution profession in social change and to what extent resolutions need to be sought within a given power framework or whether they should support social change. Rubenstein (1999), for example, believes that if conflict professionals ignore social causes, they risk becoming agents for the power elite as macro-structural causes can be rendered invisible or insignificant if social conflicts are dealt with privately. Similarly, Lederach (2005:87) not only sees the facilitation of social change as intrinsic to the role of conflict practitioners but discusses, in detail, the attitudes and behaviour needed for effective connection with the social spaces that can begin constructive change processes. This view of conflict resolution as social change is also significant for this study which aims to show how AVP can contribute to social change processes by influencing conflict perceptions and behaviour at an interpersonal level and empowering men, women and especially youth to manage conflict in nonviolent and creative ways.

Perhaps one way of clarifying some of the more divergent approaches amongst conflict practitioners is to look at the distinction that Lederach makes between
‘technicians’ and ‘artists’ which he defines primarily as “the difference … in how [conflict practitioners] are attentive to and interact with world around them” and which, irrespective of personal vocation or location, he maintains will show itself as the extent to which a practitioner can “recognise patterns and relational contexts and think beyond what already exists” (Lederach 2005:122). This ability, which Lederach calls a ‘moral imagination’, recognises the long-term commitment that social change demands, as well as the paradoxical attitude of hope and indifference to the impact of continued conflict and violence that is needed to work effectively in such settings. Lederach’s viewpoint on how the more intangible explanations of social realities influence each other again underlines the broad spectrum of frameworks that, from a variety of disciplines, constitute the field of conflict resolution.

In considering differences in scale and significance of different conflicts, theorists make the distinction between macro conflicts (wars and revolutions) and micro conflicts (conflicts within smaller groups and between individuals) and explain how the social sciences can be roughly divided into two groups accordingly: psychologists and biologists who look at individual conflict behaviour with a 'micro' approach, while sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists who examine conflict in groups, institutions, social classes, nation-states and cultural systems use a 'macro' approach (Snodgrass 2005:14).

Because of this wide scope, conflict analysis and conflict resolution need multiple perspectives and, for this reason, there is no single general theory of conflict. Instead, multidisciplinary and multilevel approaches such as Sandole’s (2004:516-517) Three Pillar Framework (see Table 2.2 below) are used to consider both micro and macro approaches.
Table 2.2: The Three Pillars of Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar 1: Conflict elements</th>
<th>Pillar 2: Underlying causes</th>
<th>Pillar 3: Conflict interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Individual level of explanation</td>
<td>Conflict prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- groups</td>
<td>Societal level of explanation</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term objectives</td>
<td>Maintain or change a situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means used</td>
<td>Violent or nonviolent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sandole 2004:516-518

The first pillar defines the elements of the conflict, both its level of analysis (interpersonal, intergroup, inter-organisation, international); its type (ethnic, religious, class, political, environmental or family); the issues involved; the long-term objectives; the means used (violent or nonviolent); the preferred approaches (conflict avoidance, accommodation, confrontation, compromise or collaboration) and the conflict context (institutional, cultural, religious, historical, physical or other environment).

The second pillar deals with the underlying causes of the conflict which can be deep-rooted and operate at different levels, for example, the individual level of explanation (of, for instance, biologists, philosophers, psychologists or theologians); the societal level (the domain of anthropologists, economists, historians, political scientists or sociologists); the international level (at which diplomats, diplomatic historians and international relations’ scholars function) and
the global or ecological level (where, amongst others, demographers, ecologists and petrologists operate).

The third pillar refers to the conflict intervention and the third-party goals, namely, violence prevention, conflict management, settlement, resolution or transformation as well as the means for achieving these goals: confrontational or collaborative means; ‘negative peace’ (absence of violence); ‘positive peace’ (elimination of underlying causes of violence or absence of structural violence) and ‘track one’ (governmental) or ‘multitrack’ (nongovernmental) actors and processes.

Sandole (ibid:517-518) explains that wherever the conflict occurs under pillar one (interpersonal, intergroup, inter-organisational or international), factors from all four levels (pillar two) will probably be involved and will need to be taken into account when designing an effective intervention (pillar three).

Thus, applying Sandole’s model to the context of this study: the investigation undertakes to influence the interpersonal conflict perceptions of a small group on a short or long-term basis using the collaborative, nonviolent means of an AVP workshop and with a conflict management/transformational goal, (pillar one), at the individual level of explanation (pillar two) to achieve improved conflict prevention and conflict management (pillar three).

Sandole (ibid:513-518) also distinguishes between ‘Realpolitik’, the dominant paradigm in educational and policy systems which tends to perpetuate conflict and usually obtains stability by military force, and ‘Idealpolitik’ which strengthens the development of peace building and sustainable cultures by transforming relationships at all levels and discourages conflict. However, he stresses that, ideally, one paradigm should not replace the other but that one should be located

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12 The terms ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ peace were first used in John Galtung’s (1969) seminal work. Positive peace also refers to the elimination of direct and structural violence and needs the development of just and equitable conditions and the transformation of inegalitarian structures. Peace studies are concerned with both negative and positive peace as well as the path from negative peace to positive peace through justice (Snodgrass 2005:28).
in the other and that “Realpolitik should be subordinated to a comprehensive, multilevel, multiactor framework dominated by Idealpolitik”. For example, he maintains that it is sometimes necessary to forcefully stop a conflict in order to address the underlying causes and create a situation conducive to “more reconciliative interventions”. Sandole emphasises that since conflict is about human relationships in general, the conflict practitioner “needs all disciplines that deal with human relationships … to capture the complexity of conflict”. This need for a comprehensive holistic perspective was recognised by early conflict resolution theorist, John Burton (1997:130), who warned that the lack of such a holistic perspective is:

probably a significant reason for humanity's persistent failure to control its destiny … [because people] … tend to perceive situations in a limited context, to seek limited remedies for problems and generally to reduce seemingly complex variables to simple proposition.

Burton’s Human Needs theory has been recognised as an alternative conceptual tool to the dominant Realpolitik paradigm addressing human needs on all levels and accounting for the deep-rooted nature of protracted, intractable conflicts (Sandole 2001:2).

Marker (2003:2) explains how Burton adapted Maslow’s well-known ‘needs pyramid’\(^\text{13}\) to conflict theory, and lists human needs as:

- Safety and security – the need for structure, predictability, stability, freedom from fear and anxiety.

\(\text{13}\) Abraham Maslow (1950) developed what he called a ‘hierarchy of needs’ in which he claimed that low-level needs, such as physiological necessities and safety, must be satisfied before higher-level needs of social recognition or self-fulfillment are pursued. Maslow maintained that when a need is satisfied, the motivating factor becomes the next level of need until ‘self-actualisation’ is reached. He identified a number of key characteristics of ‘self-actualising’ people such as self-acceptance, the ability to relate well with others, the capacity to act independently, to take social responsibility, the intent to solve rather than avoid problems, spontaneity, creativity and a tendency to behave realistically (Bar-On 2010:56).
- Belongingness/love - the need to be accepted by others and to have strong personal ties with one's family, friends, and identity groups.
- Self-esteem - the need to be recognised by oneself and others as strong, competent, and capable. It also includes the need to know that one has some effect on her/his environment.
- Personal fulfillment - the need to reach one's potential in all areas of life.
- Identity - this need goes beyond a psychological "sense of self". Burton and other human needs theorists define identity as a sense of self in relation to the outside world. Identity becomes a problem when one's identity is not recognised as legitimate, when it is considered inferior or is threatened by others with different identifications.
- Cultural security - the need for recognition of one's language, traditions, religion, cultural values, ideas, and concepts is related to identity.
- Freedom - the condition of having no physical, political, or civil restraints; having the capacity to exercise choice in all aspects of one's life.
- Distributive justice - the need for the fair allocation of resources among all members of a community.
- Participation is the need to be able to actively partake in and influence civil society.

The underlying premise of Burton's Human Needs theory is that people's need for identity, recognition and security can influence beliefs, the values of these beliefs as well as the emotional impact of any frustration of highly valued beliefs. Burton (1997:91) distinguishes between negotiable and nonnegotiable issues, recognising that human needs, unlike interests, cannot be traded or suppressed and believes that there are human limits to capacities to conform to elite-sponsored institutions and norms and that, for example, people are prepared to go to extreme lengths to defy systems in order to pursue deeply felt needs, for example, hunger.

14 Cobb (2008:99) warns of the possibility that people may not know their (real) needs or may have been oppressed for so long that they are not able to imagine their needs which, in a conflict diagnosis, could result in a paternalistic needs' analysis drawing on abstract rather than local needs.
strikes or death by suicide bombing. Thus, Burton (2001:3) stresses the fundamental importance of satisfying human needs so that the sources of conflicts are treated, pointing to how the human tendency to pursue social recognition or personal identity, at any cost, often makes punishments and other deterrent strategies useless and calling for conflict analysis and resolution problem-solving practices, rather than legal processes. Burton maintains that “anti-social behavior, violence and crime, sources of our insecurities, require society, not people, to be ‘punished’ by altering its institutions, and people to be rehabilitated in changed circumstances” (ibid).

Another holistic perspective is that of Cheldelin et al (2008:30) who see conflicts as occurring at four levels:

- **Intrapersonal** – the dynamics that develop within individuals including their “predispositions, thoughts, ideas, drives and emotions” which come into conflict with each other. Although these intrapsychic dynamics are not the domain of the conflict resolution practitioner, it is useful to understand the implications of these internal processes (for example, anger, fear or depression).

- **Interpersonal** – conflicts that occur between individuals such as domestic disputes, sibling hostility, employer-employee relationships and neighbour disputes, all of which commonly use negotiators, mediators and community conflict resolution practitioners.

- **Intragroup** – conflicts that occur within specific groups such as work teams, clubs, associations or political parties where practitioners need special expertise to mediate the conflict process.

- **Intergroup** – the largest group of conflict resolution practitioners work with conflicts occurring between groups, mediating, for example, conflicts between unions and management, neighbourhood groups, gangs and leaders of nations.
Similarly, Lederach (2000a:52) also refers to four interdependent levels of conflict transformation and identifies the aspects of conflict in each: personal (emotional, perceptual and spiritual); relational (expressive, communicative and interactive); structural (areas related to human needs, access to resources and institutional decision-making patterns); and cultural (the way culture affects the development and handling of conflict).

These different levels of conflict transformation provide the greater framework for this study which explores how a specific group of young people perceive and manage their conflict situations and how the experience of an AVP workshop affects these perceptions. The following section, therefore, overviews conventional approaches to interpersonal conflict management and investigates how increasing the effectiveness of interpersonal communication in conflict situations can lead to the perceptual changes necessary for successful interpersonal conflict management. The section ends by considering peace-building as social change and the role that AVP workshops can play in this regard as well as the contribution that Rosenberg's (1999; 2003; 2005) process of NonViolent Communication (NVC) can make in a forgiveness and reconciliation process.

2.3 INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Despite controversy over the implications of the words, the term, 'conflict management', is widely used in the literature to refer to the entire field of positive conflict handling by addressing the concerns of conflict parties (Snodgrass 2005:37). The term implies that conflict needs to be managed as a process, on an ongoing basis and includes negotiation (give and take communication process to reach agreement through joint decision making and bargaining or compromise) and mediation (voluntary process assisted by intervention of a third party) as well as conflict transformation.

Interpersonal conflict is complex and multi-layered and interpersonal aggression of young people is a critical issue requiring attention particularly amongst South
African youth who are, as will be discussed more fully in chapter 3, exposed to high levels of societal violence and often lack positive role models, especially with regard to managing conflict. Importantly for this study, it is often during the critical identity development phase of adolescence that young people experience the most conflict in their relationships. Examining the development of conflict management strategies of children and adolescents, Sandy and Cochran (2000:316-342) refer to Erik Erikson’s (1968) seminal work on the psychosocial stages of development, noting that, according to this model, the primary tasks for adolescents is the need to establish a sense of identity and to take the initiative in establishing life goals. It is the pursuing of these tasks that often brings the adolescent into conflict with family and friends. According to Sandy and Cochran (ibid:339), without specific skills development in conflict resolution, more than 50 per cent of adolescent conflicts with peers are resolved by standoff (parties divert their attention to a different activity) or withdrawal (one party refuses to continue in the exchange). Other strategies include submission (conceding to another’s demands), compromise (both parties making concession) or third-party intervention (parties accepting a resolution suggested by someone else).

Also important for this study because of its cross-cultural nature, is how the emotions generated in conflict can be affected by differing cultural perceptions of the same situation and dominant cultural mores regarding emotional expression. Some of these differences can be understood by acknowledging the differences between individualistic cultures (which tend to place the individual’s goals over group goals) and collectivistic cultures (which usually give precedence to group goals). Gudykunst (2004:47) explains that the resulting importance of ‘ingroups’ is a major differentiating factor between these two types of cultures because, while both types of cultures can have similar ingroups (for example, family, work groups,  

church group), the ingroup exerts limited and specific influence on the individual in an individualistic culture while on the individual in a collectivistic culture, the ingroup usually has a strong influence on behaviour across situations.

Nevertheless, people from all cultural backgrounds experience similar emotions in conflict, and how conflict is managed in personal relationships determines to what extent any relationship grows and deepens. When managed competently, conflict can provide the opportunity to clarify misunderstandings and strengthen common interests, often renewing the sense of connection, but ineffective conflict management can negatively affect physical and mental health and everyday performance. Thus conflict can provide a testing ground for relationship resilience (Ting Toomey & Oetzel 2001:3) and successful interpersonal conflict management is a valuable life skill, especially for young people whose identity and relationships are still being formed.

Learning this life skill, however, has more to do with ‘unlearning’. Wilmot and Hocker (2007:5) underline that most people’s approach to conflict is a ‘developed repertoire’ which can be changed and that successful conflict management entails “an examination of one’s most deeply held values and spiritual beliefs” (my emphases) because our intrapersonal perceptions are the foundation upon which conflicts are built. They regard effective interpersonal conflict management as complicated sequences of relational skills that are seldom taught and comment that often conflict is less about anger than about the “aching, lonely, sad, anxious, disappointed, uncertain, resentful and forlorn feelings” which are not encouraged in our society (ibid:26-35). These feelings are especially typical for young people in the process of constructing an adult identity and it is precisely these feelings that an AVP workshop addresses. A primary aspect of this ‘unlearning’ of relational habits is becoming aware of the impact of the language we use, especially in conflict situations where many people have fixed patterns of interaction. Such awareness can result in taking more responsibility for reactions and creating new patterns of communication.
Littlejohn and Domenici (2001:10), who describe life as a network of connected conversations, contend that “we make our social worlds by talk, [that] conversations are a way of structuring reality” and that seeing conflict as a conversation means being able to change the conversation to have more positive outcomes or even having a “transformative conversation”. Their goal of first establishing respect and understanding in a conflict situation is similar to Rosenberg’s (2003:12) recommendation that first the ‘quality of connection’ needs to be improved before the conflict issue can be addressed. Rosenberg’s relationship-based NonViolent Communication (NVC)\textsuperscript{16} suggests a twofold process in conflict situations: expressing feelings and needs honestly and receiving feelings and needs empathetically and, because it is similar to the AVP ‘five pillars’, was incorporated into the AVP workshop of this study and is discussed in section 2.3.2 below.

Discussing the importance of good communication in conflict situations, Anstey (2006:226) lists the main techniques for improving communications as:

- establishing a listening environment;
- improving the communication climate;
- improving listening skills;
- improving skills in message transmission;
- increasing levels of self-awareness; and
- understanding communication networks.

\textsuperscript{16} Dr Marshall Rosenberg’s NonViolent Communication (NVC), developed in 1999, is a model for conflict resolution and empathy development which supports individual self-empowerment. Influenced by Carl Roger’s tradition of Humanistic Psychology, it emphasises empathy as the basis for fulfilling relationships. Rogers also stresses the importance of emotional awareness, the experience of empathetic listening and the deep value of congruence of one’s inner awareness, one’s conscious awareness and one’s communication (Little 2002).
As mentioned in chapter 1, these interpersonal communication skills are the focus of AVP workshops which also address physical posture, facial expression, voice tone, silences as well as non-verbal exchanges which, as Anstey (2006:231-233) stresses, are also significant aspects of interpersonal communication. However, before reaching the stage of the possibility of a transformative conversation, conflict partners face various choices. First, there is the fundamental choice of avoiding or engaging in a conflict, both of which can be workable options depending on the circumstances. There is also the choice of conflict style.

Table 2.3 below, compiled from Wilmot and Hocker's (2007:130-176) comprehensive discussion on conflict styles and tactics, gives an overview of the main features of the five conflict management styles identified by most conflict management practitioners. A distinction is made between conflict styles (patterned responses) and tactics (individual conflict moves) which, although they might seem like planned manoeuvres, are usually unconscious reactions.

**Table 2.3 : Features of main interpersonal conflict management styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict style</th>
<th>Behaviour manifestation</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoidance</strong></td>
<td>Denial. Avoiding topics. Being noncommittal. Joking about the issue. Different from stone-wall which is overt hostility.</td>
<td>Gain time to think. Sometimes a wise choice (e.g. trivial issues or to protect from harm). Can be useful when cost of confrontation too high. Can promote health.</td>
<td>Can give the impression that one does not 'care enough to confront'. Can prolong or escalate conflict. Reinforces negative image of conflict. Can cause health problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition</strong></td>
<td>Overt disagreements. Goals accomplished at the expense of others. Includes criticism, rejection, hostile imperatives, threats, hostile jokes, presumptive remarks, denial of responsibility, bullying, violence.</td>
<td>Useful for emergency decisions. Can generate creative ideas. Useful if goal more important than relationship. Shows importance of issue. Useful when seen as strength e.g. in sport or court battles.</td>
<td>Can harm relationships due to focus on external goals. Can encourage other party to resort to covert strategies. Tends to reduce all conflicts: win or lose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict style</td>
<td>Behaviour manifestation</td>
<td>Advantages</td>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compromise</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often confused with collaboration. However, differs in that it requires trade-offs and exchanges.</td>
<td>Moderately assertive and cooperative. Some goals are given up in order to achieve others. Shared power. Includes appeals to fairness, trade-offs, maximizing wins, quick short-term solutions.</td>
<td>Can allow both conflict parties to accomplish main goals. Reinforces power balance to achieve short-term settlements. Can be used as a backup method when other methods fail. External moral force thus can appear reasonable to most parties.</td>
<td>Can be an easy way out or avoidance tactic, not based on demands of situation. Some people view it as ‘losing’. Can prevent creation of new options. Chance measures (e.g. drawing straws) more arbitration than compromise: true compromise means either side gives something to reach an agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting aside needs or preferences in favour of someone else’s. A common response to differences but least noticed as often a covert or patterned response.</td>
<td>Can be done gladly or grudgingly. Includes giving up, giving in, denial of needs, disengagement, desire for harmony.</td>
<td>Useful to show reasonableness especially if in the wrong or when an issue is more important to the other person. Can prevent harm or overt conflict.</td>
<td>Can foster covert competitiveness of being reasonable. If overused, commitment to relationship never tested. Can reflect ‘I have no choice’ thinking or increase powerlessness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands most constructive engagement. High level of concern for own goals and goals of other as well as relationship (unlike compromise which has moderate concern for goals). Only concludes when both satisfied.</td>
<td>Relationships are better than when conflict began. Effective, cooperative focused on team effort or partnership. Also called mutual problem solving. Uses best communication skills.</td>
<td>Helps find integrative solutions that satisfy both. Generates new ideas, shows respect for other party. Reality-based due to attention to feelings of both parties. Affirms both relationship and goals. Shows that conflict can be productive.</td>
<td>Not worth time if trivial issue or low investment in relationship. Can become manipulative or used as a one-up move. Sometimes pseudo-collaboration used to maintain power balance. But true collaboration needs at least two collaborators.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled from Wilmot & Hocker (2007:130-176)
As can be seen from Table 2.3, no single conflict style guarantees productive conflict but collaborative tactics enhance containment and management of conflicts. Also important is style flexibility to avoid being ‘frozen’ into a particular style and because the ability to see the behaviour of others objectively makes us less inclined to assume the worst in other people and helps us withstand pressure and ambiguity. The more choices of communication behaviour we have, the better able we are to resolve conflicts, and this is one of the primary goals of an AVP workshop: to give participants alternatives to habitual (or violent) reactions to conflict.

Individual conflict management styles are, thus, not static and are dependent on a variety of factors. As already mentioned, cultural habits also affect choice of conflict style, for example, most eastern cultures tend to avoid confrontation and choose ‘indirect working through’ while Western cultures tend to be more confrontational.

However, Wilmot and Hocker (2007:166-169) warn of the dangers of over-interpreting individual styles and remark that assessment instruments measuring conflict styles can give the impression that conflict styles are inherent personality traits which they are not. They also stress that conflict dynamics cannot be understood by looking at the individual in isolation and that the interaction of two or more people determines the outcome of conflict, sometimes triggering unexpected results, even in experienced practitioners. They identify two primary patterns of interlocking behaviour: complementary patterns (which are different but mutually reinforcing as in avoid-engage cycles) or symmetrical patterns (when parties’ conflict tactics mirror one another, for example, when both escalate or both avoid).

The following two sub-sections discuss peace-building as social change, the role that AVP workshops can play as peace-building initiatives and explore the contribution that Rosenberg’s (1999; 2003; 2005) NonViolent Communication (NVC) can make in a forgiveness and reconciliation process.
2.3.1 The social change process and AVP

This section discusses the implications of implementing local peace-building initiatives for conflict prevention and social change and explores how the AVP process is used in this regard, especially for youth. In Lederach’s (2000a:52) terms, the study examines the personal and relational aspects of conflict management within a specific small group, situating these within a cultural context.

Similar to reconciliation theory, local peace-building theory argues for a long-term, bottom-up peace-building approach which aims to strengthen a community’s ability to resolve disputes peacefully and change embedded patterns of violence. This is important for a country like South Africa where, as mentioned, violence is still structural and cultural, with longstanding patterns of conflict at all levels of society. Deep-rooted conflict of this type cannot be resolved easily; hence, the need for ongoing peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives. As mentioned, peace studies are concerned with both negative and positive peace as well as the path from negative peace to positive peace through justice (Snodgrass 2005:28). Thus, peace and justice are always linked and peace needs action.

A peace-building approach develops trust, safety and social cohesion between communities and promotes inter-ethnic and inter-group dialogue (Walter 2002:3). Cohesive communities have greater resilience to external threats as internal disputes are often exploited by insurgent groups. Walman and Ruttig (2005:8) remark that although peace-building does not always resolve a core conflict, it can assist in diminishing its intensity and scope but caution that the implementation of any peace accord is highly dependent on political will. In South Africa, as a post-conflict society, the promotion of positive peace and peace-building activities is urgent. As a long-term strategy, the primary focus of local peace-building and social change strategies are, therefore, interpersonal, intragroup and inter-group conflict (Walter 2002; Lederach 2005:87).

Two main characteristics define the peace-building movement: that it is an emerging movement and that it aims for the self-determination of local
communities through a wide range of local actions, primarily to help people develop the capacity to adapt to an increasingly unpredictable world. The nature of these local actions in a peace-building movement will, of course, be nonviolent. Ackerman and Duvall (2000:9) believe that the “greatest misconception about conflict is that violence is always the ultimate form of power … [but] … one side’s choices in a conflict are not foreclosed by the other’s use of violence … that other, nonviolent measures can be a force more powerful”. Discussing contemporary leadership of local communities, Wheatley and Frieze (2011:1) stress the importance of re-engaging people by bringing diverse people together in conversation, especially those who “have been buried in the hierarchy” or those “silenced into submission by autocratic leadership” and it is the creation of opportunities for participation of this kind that is the focus of peace-building. In a similar way, in looking at developing such local peace-building initiatives for conflict resolution, prevention and social change, Lederach (2005:125) stresses that, just as critical as the results obtained, is the process of exploration. Reflecting on how change happens or what unexpected insights it yields is crucial to developing what he regards as the art of change. In this regard, Lederach highlights the role that social ‘platforms’ (rather than formalised institutions) can play in helping to bring about social change, explaining that the nature of a platform is akin to that of a river in its ever-changing dynamism. In a similar vein, Wheatley (2006:173) defines platforms as “social constructions of what the ‘new sciences’ call process-structures [which are] found in the natural world”. Like Lederach, Wheatley believes that when local platforms connect, they can emerge as a global force more powerful than the sum of the local platforms because they become an inter-connected, self-organising web. Hawken (2007:193) also refers to the power generated when local, community-based initiatives join forces, stressing that there

17 Embodied in quantum physics, chaos theory and the theory of self-organising systems, the new sciences regard nature as designer, mentor and guide (Wheatley 2006:17).
is currently a gradual global change from a world created by privilege to a world created by community.

Central to these explanations of how local platforms operate and develop, is the platform’s focus on a specific purpose but with an adaptive response to the environment (Lederach 2005:125). As a peace-building platform with a specific framework, AVP operates both locally and internationally in this way because its over-arching purpose – to offer alternative strategies to habitual violent attitude or behaviour responses – is constantly adapted to the needs and demands of the many different cultural contexts in which it operates. As described in chapter 1, the prison-born AVP is now an international network that uses experience-based workshops to develop people’s natural abilities to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence (Novek 2011:335). For example, in working with South African youth, AVP complies with the recommendations of reports such as that compiled by Graham, Bruce and Perold (2010:14-18) which stress that youth development interventions need to focus on the vulnerability of young people, the normalisation of violence and the development of life skills, assertiveness and coping strategies. With its four central pillars of affirmation, communication, cooperation and community building, AVP comprehensively addresses these areas as well as those recommended by The Second South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (2010:84) which asks that interventions, especially those for at-risk youth, provide a “combination of … strategies which take into account not only the actual behaviours and their determinants but also the environmental and social contextual determinants”. As Novek (2011:335) explains, AVP workshops introduce methods for reaching consensus and compromise, resolving conflicts rather than simply reacting to them and learning communication skills that can de-escalate potentially violent and dangerous confrontations.

A key feature of AVP youth workshops is treating youth as young adults and giving importance to their views. For instance, to emphasise their equal status, AVP facilitators do not stand in front of the participants but sit with them in a circle, as equals - a small gesture which seldom goes unnoticed in a workshop. Ashwell
(2010:227) reports how sensitive youth are to being treated like children, doing what they perceive as ‘childish’ activities or being ‘preached at’ and mentions their preference for learning actively. She maintains that in order to overcome their social inhibitions and the sense of invisibility that characterises adolescent alienation (ibid:231), youth need acknowledgement from “personal words of encouragement and discussion times … to rituals and ceremonies celebrating their achievements”.

Space for encouragement, discussion and celebratory rituals from within a non-hierarchical, non-judgemental structure form the core of an AVP workshop. For instance, an independent developmental evaluation of the impact of AVP on offenders, staff and behavioural interactions within Leeuwkop Correctional Centre in the Western Cape, South Africa conducted from April 2006 to December 2007\(^\text{18}\) reports that:

> Participants are not taught from a moralistic perspective commenting on ‘right from wrong’. Rather the process facilitates reflection on personal histories and the impact of these on the self, and creates space for people to reconsider who they are and what they stand for. It provides a new direction that is familiar but also radically different from what participants have generally become accustomed to.

Hackland 2007:59

Concluding her evaluation, Hackland (ibid) comments on how prisoners repeatedly mentioned that AVP helped them to adopt a new perspective to what had become routine and unquestioned.

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\(^\text{18}\) The evaluation tasks included: a review of existing measures for AVP to develop baseline instrument/s to determine the individual and collective behavioural interactions of offenders and staff at the Leeuwkop Centre; implementation of the baseline instruments over a two-day period prior to AVP workshop; ongoing monitoring and evaluation to measure the impact of AVP; and an external analysis of data and a post-intervention survey compared with baseline data.
This focus of AVP on changing unconscious thought or behaviour patterns reflects Lederach’s notion of ‘re-storying’ history by paying attention to past patterns and potentialities of present, past and future (Lederach 2005:139-140) because, as Lederach (ibid:141) explains, “critical for settings of protracted conflict is the understanding that people’s stories … are experiences that have flesh and blood attached to them and more often than not, they are experiences that have just repeated themselves into the next generation”.

In South Africa, generations of experiences of institutionalised racism have profoundly affected the stories of both perpetrator and victim communities. These stories have solidified into what Lederach calls the ‘landscape of social memory’ (Lederach 2005:142) and it is this landscape of collective lived experiences – what is remembered and kept alive – that is often (sometimes unconsciously) offered as justification for violence and revenge. Especially significant are those moments “when the story of a people was disrupted or even destroyed” (ibid:146) and that, for this reason, Lederach maintains that a micro-oriented application to “re-negotiating history and identities” can sometimes be more effective than what he sees as the event-driven field of international mediation (ibid).

This process of re-negotiating history and identities is especially significant in a country with South Africa’s history where, as Soudien (2010:1) points out, the “discourse of the everyday is a deeply reductionist, racialised view of the world” which is concerned with the symptoms of the social problems of the country but seldom addresses the root causes of these problems which Soudien attributes to the “damage [that] the complex of apartheid and colonialism has wrought on our society” (ibid).

Re-negotiating history and identities includes visualising what could be and Lederach stresses the role of the artistic imagination in this process. He believes that when artistic creativity “is acknowledged as something far beyond entertainment [it] accomplishes what most of politics is unable to attain …[and] can build a sense that we are, after all, a human community” (Lederach 2005:153). As
a micro-oriented approach (AVP workshops are limited to groups of 20), the AVP process stimulates the artistic creativity of participants through carefully designed exercises and games aimed at increasing participants’ ability to change their inner world and, by so doing, affect their outer world. The experiential nature of this process directs participants inwardly, to reflect on their unconscious beliefs and attitudes. This is a first step in encouraging awareness of the artistic imagination. As Lederach (2005:161) notes, “[Art] requires that we pay attention to what already lies within us, within our capacity” and peace-building is primarily about finding a way “to touch the sense of art that lies within us all”. The importance of developing the resource of an artistic imagination is echoed by Franklin (in Vellacott 2008:134) who sees the expression of violence as ‘resourcelessness’.

Facilitating such a journey within is the central strength of the AVP process. In the safety of a well-structured group and clear, consensual working guidelines, participants are given the time and the space to increase self-understanding. AVP facilitators are trained to work with the emerging self-understanding of the individual as well as of the group in order to help make any self-understanding more conscious. This usually entails encouraging participants to access and express their feelings. As Hawken (2007:4) comments, “the most important step to take is to feel. Our courage, reverence and will are locked up in paralysis and released when we [allow ourselves] to feel”.

The AVP process, thus, aims to help participants connect with themselves and others in a way that allows them to enjoy deeper intimacy, to give to one another with more enjoyment and to not get caught up in duty, obligation, guilt, shame, and the other attitudes that destroy the intimate relationships that are an essential ingredient of working successfully with young people. As discussed in chapter 2, young people need intimacy as a social space to gain a sense of where they want to go as adults and the quality of intimacy that young adults can access in contemporary South Africa is very limited (Soudien 2007b:11). This need for intimacy, together with the importance of acceptance from their peer group and the critical role that self-esteem and respect play (McDonald 1999:208) in young
people’s socialisation processes, is addressed in an AVP workshop which, as Novek (2011:339) emphasises, offers participants the opportunity to recognise the similarity of their own struggles to those of others.

In encouraging participants to access and express their feelings, Rosenberg’s (2003:37-47) NonViolent Communication (see section 2.2.1.1 below) or ‘literacy of feelings and needs’ is an important component of an AVP workshop (where it is included as an extension of the better-known exercises on ‘I-messages’). Rosenberg highlights habitual language of criticism, moralistic judgments, analysis and diagnoses (which he refers to as ‘the problem with you is… language’) and can help participants understand the link between their feelings and needs.

Although this is essentially an emotional process since, as Lederach (2005:160) explains, hurt and brokenness are primarily found in the emotional memory, AVP is not therapy and not group therapy and the inner ‘re-storying’ process occurs spontaneously in the shared group experience. Especially important in this regard are AVP’s light-hearted games without losers which, aimed at stretching the body and lightening group energy during the workshop, affirm the group’s sense of community and bring the healing of shared laughter. Lederach underlines the importance of humour in any peace-building endeavour:

Reconciliation … the effort to repair the brokenness of relationships and life … appears as a very serious business. Ironically the pathway to healing may not lie with becoming more serious. This may explain [why] people of so many geographies of violence have developed such extraordinary sense of humour and playfulness.

(ibid:160)

In addition to the playfulness and humour inherent in the structure of an AVP workshop bring, healing laughter can also sometimes be generated with the ‘role-plays’. Role-plays are done by volunteer participants forming groups and enacting conflict situations of their choice for everyone in the workshop. The aim of role-plays is for workshop participants to consider the various options available in any
conflict. An important feature of these examples of real-life conflicts, is that the role-play, like life, does not have any planned outcome and the players do not practice any specific lines. In planning the role-play, a group “simply determines what the conflict is, where and when it takes place and who the characters are … [which] gives participants an opportunity to be ‘put on the spot’ in a safe place” (AVP manual 2000:F48). Whatever the outcome of the role-play, a lesson in conflict management can be drawn from it. The only provisos of role-plays are that they be relevant to life experience, that participants do not play themselves and that a facilitator will call ‘Cut!’ when the conflict reaches an impasse or becomes too intense in order to ask the characters, one at a time, how they are feeling. At this point of the role-play, anyone in the workshop may ask questions of the character (who needs to answer as the character). These questions and answers are often deeply reflective and revealing. At the end of the role play, the characters are ‘de-roled’ carefully and given a round of applause.

Role-plays are a more complex process than simply ‘play acting’ and often represent steep learning curves for all concerned, including the facilitators. With the aim of modelling alternative behaviour that can transform a conflict nonviolently, role plays are done once full trust within the group has been established. Experienced AVP facilitators report that the two words that most come to mind in connection with role-plays are ‘courageous’ and ‘impactful’ (Judy Connors, personal communication, April 2011). Connors explains how physically performing a conflict situation gives participants an experience of the actual emotions involved, affording them privileged, insider perceptions of the character they have chosen. In addition, both the role-players and the observers have the opportunity to reflect on how they would react in a similar situation (or how they did in the past) as well as how an awareness of the needs of others can change a conflict situation.

For example, a participant in an AVP focus group in the Leeuwkop Correctional Facility described a situation in which he had eventually shot a man who apparently
wanted to steal his car. Another inmate, who was incarcerated for car theft, stressed the narrator’s role in the escalation of the situation:

Once you had drawn your gun and pointed it [at] the suspected thief … you limited your own options [because] if someone points a gun at you, you had better shoot … otherwise you will get shot, probably with your own gun.

Hearing how the narrated conflict could have been dealt with differently can generate new insights into a conflict situation that is, perhaps, seldom discussed.

Another example of how an AVP workshop helps participants to reconsider their values can be found in the report of an external review of an Integrated Youth Offender Programme conducted in 2005 in the Boksburg Juvenile Correctional Centre in South Africa (Roper 2005). This programme included various AVP workshops of different levels (Basic, Advanced and the AVP Facilitator training) conducted over a period of six months and the external report noted that the key achievements of the participants included:

- exploring how fear leads to anger;
- building self-esteem, self-awareness and self-empowerment;
- shifting from macho bravado to humility, co-operation and cohesion;
- learning the importance of introspection; and
- forming new and better relationships between participants and between participants and facilitators (ibid:16).

Consistent with how peace-building and local platforms operate, steps such as these in re-negotiating history and identities (Lederach 2005:146) can significantly assist people to change their inner world in a way that will help them make positive choices in their outer world.

This section has outlined the key principles of the peace-building movement as social change and how strengthening the self-determination of communities and their capacity to resolve disputes peacefully is essential in a bottom-up, long-term approach to change embedded patterns of violence.
The following section outlines Marshal Rosenberg’s (1999; 2003; 2005) twofold process of NonViolent Communication (NVC) which was included in the Umzi Wethu AVP workshop. Rosenberg’s process is based on empathy development, the principles of which contribute to the conceptual framework of this study.

2.3.2 NonViolent Communication (NVC) and empathy

This section discusses the role of empathy in interpersonal conflict management approaches and examines Rosenberg’s honesty-empathy process as its central message was included in the AVP workshop of this study. As Little (2002:52) explains, Rosenberg’s process was designed to facilitate a socio-linguistic transformation of domination systems (based on rewards and punishment) into partnership systems (based on human dignity, mutual accountability and mutual respect). Little’s study of empathy development and violence prevention training for marginalised youth, based on Rosenberg’s process, concludes that self-empathy is integral to the development of healthy relationships and that the development of empathy, particularly self-empathy, can significantly decrease aggression and violence (Little 2002:18). She describes how Rosenberg’s honesty-empathy process articulates a practical means for engaging restorative justice principles in personal relationships with its focus on recognising the feelings and needs of others (empathy), reflecting on one’s own feelings and needs (self-empathy) and clearly expressing one’s feelings, needs and requests (honesty). Rosenberg (2003:6) divides the process of communication into four areas: observations, feelings, needs and requests. He regards true observations as what a video camera would record: an objective situation without any interpretation, diagnosis, criticism or judgement.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{19} For example, ‘Mary didn’t ask for my opinion in the meeting, even though I’d prepared a report on the subject’ is an observation, whereas the statement ‘Mary doesn’t respect anyone’s opinion but her own’ mixes in a personal interpretation.
Such criticism, whether implied or stated directly, can determine the outcome of a conflict. Wilmot and Hocker (2007:43) emphasise the importance of the tone of the “critical start-up” of any conflict, how any form of criticism is likely to result in an escalation of conflict and advise the use of an ‘I’-statement (instead of the more usual ‘you always’ or ‘you never’) to describe undesirable behaviour or when asking for a specific behavioural change. Rosenberg (2003:49-65) takes this recommendation one step further by linking the ‘I’-statements to personal needs which is perhaps the most significant contribution of his model. For example, he proposes that instead of saying (or thinking): ‘I’m angry because you/he/she/they ....(did or said something) .....’, that the negative feeling be linked to the unmet need underlying the anger and advises saying instead ‘I’m angry because I need ...’ (my emphasis). This critical change of focus directs attention away from blaming the other party which serves to defuse the conflict and increase the self-reflection of both parties.

To do this, most people need to move out of their ‘developed repertoire’ because, as Wilmot and Hocker (2007:16-17) point out, when intensity is high, we react rather than observe and think; thus, they talk of how the moves and counter-moves of a conflict influence each other and refer to Gottman’s ‘four horsemen of the apocalypse’ to identify the most common characteristics of destructive conflicts: criticizing, defensiveness, stonewalling and contempt. In this regard, Rosenberg (2003:15-22) gives specific examples of language constructions that contain hidden criticism or judgements (intentional or unintentional):

- Direct label, usually using the verb ‘to be’ (She’s such a show-off!)
- Evaluative verb, usually with ‘never’ or ‘always’ (He’s always complaining)
- Implying our ideas are the only ones possible (Everything always comes back to how you eat)
- Mixing prediction and certainty (He’ll never succeed in that job)
- Not being specific, usually with ‘never’ or ‘always’ (She’s never on time for meetings).
The second aspect of Rosenberg’s process concerns identifying and expressing feelings. In NVC, “the concept ‘feeling’ describes an emotional or physical sensory state that we can experience independently of others” (Little 2002:219).\footnote{According to Little (2002:218-219), records from the 14th century show that the word, ‘feeling’, originally referred only to physical bodily sensations, that it was in the 17th century that the word came to include an emotional component, whether of one’s own or another’s condition, and that from the mid-18th century, the word also referred to mental pleasure or pain.} One of the central premises of Rosenberg’s model is that our feelings are not reflections on the behaviour of others but indicators of our needs. Although popular usage of the word, ‘feeling’, includes attitudes or opinions, Rosenberg (2003:37-47) emphasises the importance of differentiating between thoughts and feelings, underlining that thoughts, not feelings, are expressed when the word ‘feel’ is followed by:

- words such as that, like, as if when used to introduce a noun, pronoun or simile (for example, I feel that you should know better; I feel like a failure; I feel as if I’m living with a wall);
- pronouns such as I, you, he, she, they, it (for example, I feel I am constantly on call; I feel it is useless); and
- names or nouns referring to people (for example, I feel Amy has been pretty responsible; I feel my boss is being manipulative)

These sample statements would be more accurate if the words ‘I feel’ were replaced with the words ‘I think’ (or ‘I believe’ or ‘in my opinion’). In this regard, Rosenberg usefully provides a list of ‘thought’ words frequently confused as feelings (see Table 2.4 below).
Table 2.4: Thought words often used as feelings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abandoned</th>
<th>Criticised</th>
<th>Misunderstood</th>
<th>Tricked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abused</td>
<td>Diminished</td>
<td>Neglected</td>
<td>Unheard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacked</td>
<td>Distrusted</td>
<td>Overworked</td>
<td>Unseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belittled</td>
<td>Ignored</td>
<td>Patronized</td>
<td>Unappreciated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayed</td>
<td>Insulted</td>
<td>Pressured</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxed-in</td>
<td>Interrupted</td>
<td>Provoked</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied</td>
<td>Intimidated</td>
<td>Put down</td>
<td>Unwanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheated</td>
<td>Invalidated</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coerced</td>
<td>Let down</td>
<td>Ripped-off</td>
<td>Violated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-opted</td>
<td>Manipulated</td>
<td>Taken for granted</td>
<td>Wronged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornered</td>
<td></td>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rosenberg 2003

In explaining the limitation of the words in the above table (also known as ‘victim verbs’), Rosenberg offers the following example: if we say ‘I feel ignored’, we might be:

- observing that the other person has turned away or remained silent;
- interpreting such behaviour as ‘ignoring’ behaviour;
- feeling sad if our current need is for attention; or
- feeling relieved if our current need is rest and solitude.

Becoming aware of the sometimes unintentional implications of blame and criticism in a ‘developed repertoire’ can significantly alter the tone of an exchange and affect the outcome of a conflict situation. Pruitt and Kim (2004:8) define conflict in perceptual terms because, as they explain, perceptions have an immediate impact on conflict behaviour and the choice of strategy whereas reality works more slowly and with less certainty; for this reason, perceptions can turn objective conditions into experienced conflict. In addition, contradictory or opposing stories reflect different parties’ versions of reality and part of the conflict resolution process is to help disputants to hear and understand the other person’s
story (Johnson 2001:278). Thus, instead of evaluating the behaviour, Rosenberg (2003:49-55) suggests that we correctly identify our feeling and the need which triggered it.

Accurately identifying feelings and managing emotions is the domain of emotional intelligence which attracted popular interest after the publication of Daniel Goleman’s (1995) bestseller although its historical roots can be traced to the nineteenth century (Bar-On 2010:57). The Bar-On model of emotional intelligence defines emotional-social intelligences as:

an array of interrelated emotional and social competencies and skills that determine how effectively individuals understand and express themselves, understand others and relate with them and cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures.

There is some debate in the literature as to whether emotional intelligence is an ability to process emotional information or a personality tendency; however, both Goleman (1995) and Reuven Bar-On (2010) describe emotional intelligence as a cognitive competency although they acknowledge the influence of personality characteristics such as warmth, empathy and persistence. The Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test also indicates emotional intelligence as a competency and specifies the competencies involved in processing emotional information. Caruso, Mayer and Salovey (2002:306) define emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive, appraise and express emotion; to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” and their model illustrates emotional intelligence as comprising four abilities:

- Identifying or perceiving emotions – awareness and expression of emotions in oneself or others;
- using these emotions to facilitate thought – the degree to which emotions can be used to solve problems;
• understanding emotions – how well one understands the emotional meanings, transitions and situations; and
• managing emotions – the degree to which one is able to integrate emotional intelligence into one’s thinking (Mayer 2001:3-24; Caruso, Mayer & Salovey 2002:306-307).

Cherniss, Extein, Goleman and Weissberg (2006:242) note that the components of the major models of emotional intelligence can be ranged along two broad dimensions: the awareness and management of emotions (one’s own and others). A key aspect of emotional intelligence is, thus, the ability to identify accurately feelings and in this regard, Rosenberg (2003) lists over 200 positive and negative feeling subtleties beyond the usual 'good-okay-tired-angry-happy-sad' range.\(^{21}\)

The third aspect of Rosenberg’s model centres on noticing the needs in a conflict situation. As mentioned, Burton’s Human Needs Theory (1997) stresses the importance of addressing these needs in order to uncover the root cause of conflict and underlines the emotional impact of any frustration of highly valued beliefs. Rosenberg (2003:52-55) echoes Burton in regarding unmet needs as behind all conflict behaviour, especially emotional reactions, and regards personal interests (desires, concerns, and fears) as strategies to meet needs. For example, Rosenberg contends that the cause of anger is not what other people say or do but an unmet need, exacerbated by an attitude which makes it difficult to get that need met. When unaware of the root feeling, or unable to clearly express a need and make a specific request, most people tend to get angry. For this reason, Rosenberg regards rage as the experience of powerlessness, usually triggered by someone else’s behaviour but interpreted in a judgemental way. Similarly, Wilmot

\(^{21}\) Becoming aware of a feeling is different from expressing it. Zukav (2002:45) stresses that, contrary to popular belief, people who often express feelings can have what he calls a “pass-through” effect of emotions and that angry outbursts are emotional experiences, but usually not emotional explorations.
and Hocker (2007:50) maintain that “behaviours usually do not carry meaning by themselves – meaning is created through the interactions … all behaviour is up for interpretation … perceptions of behaviour are at the heart of the conflict process …[and] … fuel the dispute engine”.

In Rosenberg’s needs-based empathy development process, therefore, a key strategy to avoid anger is expressing needs and desires in non-inflammatory language and the last aspect of his model concerns requests and the language used in such request. His contention is that if needs are expressed indirectly through the use of evaluations, interpretations and images, the other party is likely to hear criticism and will become defensive or counter-attack. Rosenberg maintains that the main reasons needs are not met are that the needs are not expressed or, if they are expressed, that the words used are not specific.

Rosenberg maintains that this focus on feelings and needs does not have to be explicit and can also be silent. Little (2002:148) notes that Rosenberg’s process works even when only one party has knowledge of the process and cites the reaction of one of her participants when she applied the model with her boyfriend:

> And I whipped the NVC book out … and it just like, totally helped … finally I just sat down and I was like” “You know what, like, this is fucked … we need to do something about this” and then we just totally used it. And it was like, WOW! Like, it was totally cool, it just … totally worked.

Rosenberg’s (2003: 15-22) emphasis on the importance of non-judgemental thinking and the effect it can have on interactions between people is similar to Bohm’s (1966) concept of Dialogue:

> Suspension of … judgments lies at the very heart of Dialogue … it is not easily grasped because [it] is both unfamiliar and subtle … it does not mean repressing or suppressing or even postponing [our reactions]. It means … giving … our feelings … our serious attention. If a group is able to suspend such feelings and give its attention to them … the overall process can … slow down and reveal … deeper, more subtle meanings (ibid).
Suspending judgement in the way that Bohm advocates can facilitate access to the nuanced feelings that Rosenberg (2003:41-47) mentions and is what Rosenberg means by non-judgemental thinking. The ‘slowing down’ of reactions in this way increases attention which, in turn, clarifies and deepens the communication. Kline (2010) claims that “the quality of ... [our] attention profoundly affects the quality of other people’s thinking” and that, in fact, the quality of our attention determines the quality of other people’s thinking (original emphases).

Being able to give quality attention to our conflict partner is a key factor in successful conflict management and central to deep listening and effective dialogue is the development of empathy. However, empathy is a frequently misunderstood term, often mistakenly aligned to sympathy or pity. Little (2002:214) clarifies this distinction: sympathy is recognising one’s own emotional response to another’s experience whereas empathy focuses attention on the other’s experience. Empathy also includes the basic human capacity for cognitive perspective-taking, affective consideration for the other’s experience and social behaviour that facilitates interpersonal connection. Self-empathy extends the same perspective-taking and care towards oneself. Although we are all capable of empathy and self-empathy, Little (ibid) believes that development of this capacity into socially recognised behaviours requires role-modelled examples, encouragement and direct personal experience (as is provided, for example, in NVC and AVP workshops).

To express empathy, Rosenberg (2003:113-117) believes the key ingredient is presence: the ability to be fully present with another person and what s/he is experiencing. He holds that it is this quality of presence that distinguishes empathy from mental understanding or sympathy which, although comprising similar feelings, are not empathy. Rosenberg makes the point that empathy extends beyond understanding another’s feelings to valuing the fundamental human needs (original emphases) triggering any feelings in a situation, whether these needs are positive or negative and whether they are being met or not. As Little explains
Rosenberg (2002:215) is unconventional in that he proposes that this quality of care and attention can also be extended towards oneself and, in fact, claims that unless we learn to view ourselves empathetically, we will have difficulty extending empathy to others. Rosenberg (2003:45) explains that developing empathy involves two steps:

- **Feelings**: silently focusing on what the other person might be feeling
- **Needs**: silently focusing on what the other person might need

In her work with marginalised adolescents, Little (2002:147) describes their reaction to development of empathy:

> Yah it’s weird cos I just figured we’d just start yelling but I found that when I was talking calmly about feelings and needs then he was talking more calmly. And then I have a really bad problem with interrupted and so if I would interrupt him he’d be like ‘Don’t fuckin’ interrupt me’ and usually I would just be like ‘Aw fuck, blah-blah-blah’ and just yell back. And [instead] I was like ‘Sorry what were you saying?’ Yah and so it just worked out really well and I really enjoyed it.

As Little explains, through a dynamic interplay between honesty and empathy (including self-empathy), conflict parties can generate creative solutions that meet their needs rather than argue over whose judgements are right or wrong. The model is most effective when it is used to ensure that an observation is a description based on the five senses (not a diagnosis), a feeling is not a thought, a need is not strategy and a request is not a demand.

In Rosenberg’s model self-empathy is practised by identifying one’s feelings and then connecting them to the underlying need (met or unmet). Little (2002:66) gives an example of self-empathetic thinking: ‘No wonder I feel so …. I really need ….’ which needs to be continued until the emotional tension relaxes. Little (2002:66-68) notes that self-empathy can be used for self-calming, increasing self-respect, personal accountability as well as increased empathy for another’s feelings and needs. The young people of her study found that learning about self-empathy was a new and critical piece of the conflict puzzle for them: they reported a greater
capacity for self-calming, and the ability to generate a wider range of strategies to meet their needs.

Closely aligned to empathy, and equally misunderstood, is the concept of forgiveness. After more than a decade of working with forgiveness in the aftermath of trauma, Henderson (2007:43-46) concludes that one of the two main reasons why people choose not to forgive is the “demanding nature of empathy” and that the quality most needed for an empathetic connection with a conflict partner is courage.

Although Henderson’s work concerns victims of trauma, her findings are important for conflict situations. She refers to a definition of empathy as “identification with and understanding of, another’s situation, feelings and motives’ which, as she underlines, highlights the inherent injustice of forgiveness: that we are called upon to have feelings for someone who has probably showed no regard for ours. Exploring the uncanny bond that often develops a victim and a perpetrator of violence, Henderson defines forgiveness as ‘letting go with love”, seeing it as a homeopathic remedy in which, by holding the ‘toxic’ individual in a non-judgemental way in our consciousness, we are released from him/her. She points out that the word ‘forgiveness’ is rooted in ancient Greek definitions which talk of the ‘removal of boundaries’ and ‘merging of spaces’ and explains that it is because of this merging of spaces that many victims feel inextricably bound to their perpetrators but is also often the reason that some victims intuitively understand that retaliation is only inflicting self-hurt and are able to forgive.

Henderson’s work has shown her that with forgiveness comes “the release of precious energy …[because] hypervigilance [which is] often the normal state for a traumatised person who hasn’t forgiven …siphons off energy … keeping one’s life deadlocked” and that “only the act of forgiveness seems to have the power to melt

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22 The other reason is an unwillingness to look directly at the injury caused which usually means re-experiencing the injury caused (Henderson 2007:43).
the death-grip bond between perpetuators and victims” (2007:43). Importantly, Henderson stresses that forgiving someone does not necessarily mean trusting them again and that, while forgiveness may free the perpetrator and that sometimes reconciliation is possible, the primary aim of forgiveness (which can be a private ritual) is to release the victim.

These ideas are pertinent to all conflict situations, not only those involving deep trauma. For example, Henderson explains that the process of developing empathy for someone who has threatened or hurt us can be a slow process which needs to be done intentionally, one step at a time, by “undefining the differences” and deliberately searching for redeeming qualities in the other person in order to gain entry into compassionate consciousness and reflect on the feelings of the conflict party. As Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001:196) underline, competent conflict management rebuilds broken relationships and heal hurts, wounds and resentments by considering the perspective of the conflict partner. Rosenberg (2003:113-117) observes that irrespective of how empathy is expressed culturally, the ability to empathise can be developed by focusing attention on what the other is observing, feeling, needing and requesting and paying attention to voice tone although he concedes that it is often more difficult to empathise with those who appear to possess more power, status or resources.

In summary, empathy allows a wider perspective and enables a more objective view of a conflict situation and NVC addresses emotional awareness and management, empathy development (including self-empathy) in a way that can be adapted to the cultural and development needs of different groups (Little 2002:29). Rosenberg’s work, therefore, makes a critical connection between emotional states and needs by identifying needs as the root of feelings and claiming that feelings are stimulated by needs (met or unmet). As Little underlines, what a person thinks or imagines about needs being met or unmet triggers feelings.
For the purposes of this research study, empathy is understood as a basic human capacity although the ways that empathy can be expressed seem to be learned (Henderson 2007; Little 2002; LeBaron 2004; Rosenberg 2003 & 2005).

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

With the aim of providing a conceptual framework for this study which explores youth’s perceptions of their conflict situations, this chapter has outlined the field of conflict resolution, the important difference between conflict and violence and considered the pervasiveness of structural violence. It has discussed the different terminology used and explored the features of the main conflict management strategies in interpersonal conflict. The chapter has highlighted how intercultural understanding is rooted in self-awareness and awareness of others and considered the use of local peace-building platforms for social change. It also considered how AVP can be used as such a platform at a local community level since AVP can stimulate awareness of unconsciously-held conflict management strategies in order to take the first steps in perceiving and reacting to conflict situations in a nonviolent way. Finally, the chapter examined the implications of Rosenberg’s NVC model for exploring the nature of feelings and needs as well as the importance of empathy, especially self-empathy, in the interpersonal conflict management process.

The following chapter presents the second section of the literature review which gives an overview of South African youth, their relationship to conflict and violence and the main challenges they face growing up in the ‘new’ South Africa. Together, the two chapters provide a conceptual framework for this study which explores how an AVP workshop can affect so called ‘at-risk’ young people’s perceptions of conflict situations.
CHAPTER 3
YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the second section of the literature review of this study which is divided into two chapters: the previous chapter overviewed the field of conflict resolution and discussed interpersonal conflict (also of young people), the concept of social change and the role that AVP can play in this process given its aim of transforming conflict nonviolently. The chapter also explored the importance of ethical communication and the development of empathy.

This chapter discusses South African youth, their relationship to conflict and violence and the main challenges they face growing up in the ‘new’ South Africa. Together, the two chapters provide a conceptual framework for this study which explores how an AVP workshop can affect so called ‘at-risk’ young people’s perceptions of conflict situations.

Accordingly, this chapter begins by defining youth globally and then exploring what being young in South Africa means today: young adults’ relationship to violence and crime, their vulnerability and resilience and their current status as regards health, education as well as economic participation and social integration. The chapter concludes by summarising youth development in South Africa.

3.2 YOUTH TODAY – A GLOBAL AND LOCAL DEFINITION

There is no single definition of the term, ‘youth’. Referring to the common practice of an age-based definition, Richter and Panday (2007:4) explain that “young people are not a fixed category, neither historically, politically, culturally, socially nor personally” and comment how not only are young people in transition but that “youth itself is a transitional construct”. While a “lengthened transition” to adulthood is increasingly globally, the report, Growing up global: changing transitions to adulthood in developing countries (Lloyd 2005), notes that AIDS and
poverty often force early adulthood, especially in Africa where the number of child-headed households has increased significantly. However, similar to other countries (including the United States of America where youth believe they only reach adulthood after the age of 30), young people in South Africa are generally defined as people between 14-35 and the onset of adulthood (being capable of supporting and keeping one’s family safe, running a house, caring for children, taking responsibility for one’s actions) is regarded as happening in their thirties (ibid:4).

The definition of youth needs to be elastic in other ways: Graham, Bruce and Perold (2010:37) explain that in southern Africa, such an age range is by no means a homogenous group as it can encompass “young people still at school as well as … people in search of employment … living with parents … bringing up siblings or starting families of their own”. Given the different socio-economic conditions, cultural diversities and varying legal definitions of youth across the globe, Richter and Panday (2007:5) conclude that perhaps the “concept of change … best captures what it means to be a young person”. The literature on youth seems to generally perceive youth, young people and adolescents as neither children nor adults, but as something ‘in between’ (van Dijk 2008: 25). Morrow, Panday and Richter (2005:3) stress the importance of not seeing young people as “... unformed or incomplete adults but rather as young adults with their own strengths, talents and energies” and Richter and Panday (2007:292) point to “our desire for [youth] to act responsibly … [and] … our reluctance to give [them] opportunities to assume responsibility”.

There are many calls in the literature to give young people opportunities and support, not least because of the sheer numbers of young people today which are the largest ever in human history (Richter & Panday (2007:295) and which demand the creation of opportunities for their development and participation. Youth aged 12-24 years currently make up 1.5 of the global population of 7 billion and nearly 90 per cent of these live in developing countries with Africa having the largest share (Human Sciences Research Council: 2010). Allsopp and Thumbadoo (2002)
estimate that 45 per cent the African population is under 20 years (approximately 16 million) and, in virtually every Arab country, more than half the population is under 30 years old.

Because of these numbers, youth can have considerable influence in the political and cultural development of a society especially now that youth everywhere are interconnected by means of social networking. Social technologist Salkowitz (2010:20), who calls youth born after 1980 the ‘Net generation’, believes that, unlike the rich, old world (the United States of America, Europe and Japan which have aging populations), the poor, young world (India, Nigeria, Mexico, Brasil, Indonesia, Colombia, Philippines, Vietnam and South Africa) where 4.2 billion of the Net generation live, is poised to transform the global knowledge economy.23

Many authors stress the significance of such change. McDonald (1999:4) talks of the rupture of the industrial society model where youth was a structured transition from childhood to adulthood taking place in specific stages, for example, obtaining permanent employment, going into a stable relationship and then establishing a new household and regards this model as now “profoundly disorganised”. Similarly, social analysts such as Manuel Castells (2007:258) who predicted the emergence of ‘mass self-communication’,24 underline how power relationships can be modified by the new locally-based but globally-connected communication environment. Castells argues that while social movements are increasingly present in this new communication space, so are corporate media and mainstream politics and, as a result, there is “a historical shift of the public sphere from the institutional realm to the new communication space” (ibid:238). He regards a

23 A knowledge-based economy relies primarily on the use of ideas and technology and is transforming the labour market globally as it requires a new model of education and lifelong learning. Developing countries risk marginalisation if their systems do not equip learners for such an economy by emphasising the lifelong creation, application, analysis and synthesis of knowledge (Lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy, TechKnowLogia, Jan-March 2003).

24 ‘Mass self-communication’ is a term that Castells uses to refer to communication which is based on horizontal networks related to the culture and technology of the network society (Castells 2007:239).
central component of the information society – openness – as an important component of democracy and good governance, essential for strengthening tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for diversity. Castells sees the increasingly contested terrain of the public space of the network society as a “new historical stage in which a new form of society is being given birth … through conflict, struggle, pain, and often violence” (ibid:258).

As seen in the ‘Arab Spring’ youth uprisings of early 2011 in the Middle East and North Africa, youth and their communication environment have, in fact, been at the forefront of this ‘new historical stage’, sometimes with an efficiency that surprised many: the Egyptian youth protest organised in January 2011, collected over 100,000 signed participants via Facebook and Twitter in six days and more than double that number gathered in protest in Tahrir Square (Godsell 2011).

These expressions of young people’s frustrations with the governments of their countries, especially as regards their inability to provide jobs for youth, coming as they do at a time of economic near-collapse worldwide, seem to herald the beginning of new global value systems. Increasingly effective in the rising climate of global interdependence, with a fast-growing, youth-dominated technology, the voices of the youth are making themselves heard, especially as regards the need for change. Discussing the problems of the future, Homer Dixon (1999:266,294) speaks of how the challenge of the modern world is not to preserve the status quo but “to adapt to, thrive in and shape for the better, a world of constant change” and his vision of the worldwide network technology where “we can basically all have a conversation together” is already a reality. For example, organisations such as Avaaz.org, a global civic organisation operating in 15

25 Physicists such as Fritjof Capra (1986:289-295) have long spoken of how the view of the world as separate parts of a mechanical system and the belief in unlimited economic growth, which have dominated Western culture for several hundred years, need to be replaced by the recognition of the world as a network of interconnected and interdependent phenomena. He uses the term ‘ecological literacy’ to refer to sustainable human communities based on principles of interdependence and natural cycles instead of on linear industrial systems. Key concepts in such sustainable systems include interdependence, recycling, partnership, flexibility, diversity and personal empowerment.
languages with over ten million members in 193 countries, watchdogs human rights violations and corruption by funding media campaigns and lobbying governments via a single, global team, its agenda set by its continued ‘conversation’ with its members. Its young founder claims that although most people worldwide agree on issues such as human rights, poverty, corruption and the environment, the only way to achieve sufficient political will to tackle such issues is by getting a global community to demand it (Bentley: 2011).

Thus, today’s youth are initiating change, a role which, historically, youth have always taken. In a review of books on various aspects of European youth culture in the twentieth century, Heilbronner (2008:576) shows how youth cultures have played a pivotal role in the development of Western cultures and how, for instance, from the 1960s, the identities of European youth became less nation-specific, less politicised and more consumer orientated, a development which he attributes to the “plebeian turn that many European cultures took from the 1960s onwards [and during] the sexual revolution” (ibid:590-591). During this period, Heilbronner explains “youth cultures changed from a culture initiated by … the establishment to a culture initiated by young people”, resulting in the dominance of the “blue jeans and rock music” culture of developed, mostly capitalist market economies which has become the symbol of modern youth the world over.26

The repercussions of the 2011 Middle Eastern youth protests (and even the later youth riots in London and Manchester) serve to bolster Heilbronner’s (2008:577) contention that “[youth are] … sources of opposition, challenging existing norms and values and bringing social change through collective generational organisation”. Heilbronner (2008:576) refers to Karl Mannheim’s theory of ‘generations in conflict’ and how the generation which grew up after the first World War “tended to think of itself as a distinct social or cultural entity, a historical agent

26 One recent example of the extent to which these values have spread across the globe is the ‘battle hymn’ which youth in Tunisia, Bahrain and Egypt shared in January 2011 when they took a stand against their dictators. Written by a Tunisian rapper and inspired by American political activists, the song includes lines such as ‘I talk with no fear/Although I know I will get only trouble/I see injustice everywhere’ (Ghosh 2011).
in its own right,” an attitude that perhaps has become the mark of modern youth. Heilbronner also mentions how Mannheim, like other contemporary writers on youth culture, argues that youth can only be fully understood in historical and cultural terms.

However, the challenges facing the youth of today are more complex than those which faced previous generations. The ecological, economic, social and political problems facing humanity in the twenty-first century are unprecedented (Ashwell 2009:19). In his studies of the collapse of past societies, Diamond (2006:21) identifies five major causes of collapse: environmental damage, climate change, loss of relationships with friendly neighbours, rise of hostile neighbours and political and social factors. He shows that, although such crises are nothing new, the global scale of today’s problems has not occurred before. Although one of the positive effects of globalisation is, as already mentioned, increased access to social media and the social and political awareness this can develop, globalisation’s free market also brings many disadvantages: the unprecedented demands of a global market, transnational corporations and population migration has changed how societies and countries do business. For some authors (Brock-Utne 2000; Nolan 2008), global capitalism has highlighted the core contradictions of the capitalist system: on the one hand, free from the constraints of guilds, custom or governmental regulations but, on the other hand, subject to its own uncontrollable structures. In under-developed countries, globalisation is experienced largely through structural adjustment programmes designed to reduce public expenditure by cutting social services, privatising the public sector and opening local economy to international competition. This often has various negative ripple effects such as reduced health and education services, reductions in employment and, with changes in the labour market, less job security, all particularly affecting poorer communities.27 Women are increasingly obliged to

27 The peace researcher, Birgit Brock-Utne (2000:132), refers to the increased disparity between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ that the globalisation of capital causes and how children and women suffer as a result of the “feminization of poverty”.
care for the sick and elderly and, despite the positives, new communication techniques also make poor people more aware of other people’s higher living standards, thus creating a greater sense of deprivation. As a result, although the ever-increasing connections being made across the globe are augmenting mobility of people, products and ideas and their sense of belonging to a global village, the rapidity with which this is happening is also creating “value confusion” (Ashwell 2010:10).

The impact of this value confusion is all-pervasive: looking at various African studies of the controversial role of youth in politics, conflicts and rebellious movements, Abbink (2005:3) notes the particularly uneven generational conflict across Africa and, in another study on African youth, Straker (2007:7) stresses how complicated and cosmopolitan life has become for African youth, even in rural areas because of the “variety and sophistication of the … interpretive schemes through which these youths [must now] depict and judge possible local futures”.

In addition to these not inconsiderable challenges facing youth globally, South African youth are also still dealing with the legacy of apartheid. Writing on the identities of South African youth, Soudien (2007b:9) portrays the complexity of the social environment in which young South Africans find themselves and how it is so much more complicated than that of their forebears:

the mix of ingredients that have come to characterise young lives in South Africa … life and family histories disrupted by either the loss or absence of appropriate role models in their families and their immediately social circles … the combustive chemistry of race, class, religion, language and gender … [and] the re-articulation of all of these in the melee of globalisation.

Thus, in addition to the massive global changes which are affecting young people everywhere, especially in terms of ‘value confusion’, many young people in South Africa are still trying to solve what Soudien (2007a:10) calls the “youth puzzle … how … to find their social, ethical and intellectual bearings in the maelstrom of modern South Africa”.

Because of the complex nature of the South African ‘youth puzzle’, the following section explores in greater detail what being young in South Africa today means.

3.3 GROWING UP IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

South Africa’s population comprises mostly young people. Approximately 54 per cent of the country’s population is under 24 years of age and the proportion of the population defined as ‘youth’ (14-35 years of age) is nearly 40 per cent (Morrow, Panday & Richter 2005:3). Because of their role in the South African revolution of 1976, South African youth are quite prominent and South African young people “represent the country’s heroic past, complex present and unknown future filled with potential” (ibid). The many youth studies done in South Africa from 1993-2005\(^{28}\) conclude that the situation of South African youth is a cause for grave concern and needs to be a central issue in national development.

Although the emerging South African youth are more materialistic, more technologically literate, better educated and better connected than the previous generation, popular attitudes towards South African youth (like popular attitudes to youth globally), vacillate between seeing them as an important national resource (especially for nationalist projects) and as a potential political threat or, at least, a development challenge. However, the literature on South African youth (Allsopp & Thumbadoo 2002; Dawes 2005; Morrow, Panday & Richter 2005; Richter & Panday 2007; Soudien 2007a, 2007b, 2010; Graham, Bruce & Perold 2010) is consistent in seeing youth as an important social investment, especially in the light of South Africa’s current ‘youth bulge’.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{28}\) For example, in 1993 Growing up tough: a national survey of South African youth by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) and the Joint Enrichment Project; in 1994 Youth in the New South Africa by the Cooperative Research Programme; Youth 2000: a study of youth in South Africa by CASE; 2002 State of youth report by the National Youth Commission; and in 2002: the First South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey by the Medical Research Council.

\(^{29}\) Also called a ‘demographic dividend’, a youth bulge is a result of improving conditions combined with falling fertility rates and child dependency ratios. As a bulge in the working-age population, it gives a country a significant opportunity to benefit from the talents of a large number of young people (Human Sciences Research Council. 2010. The World Development Report of 2007 indicates that South Africa will experience
For such investment to be effective, the nature of the challenges facing contemporary South African youth needs to be understood. Broadly comparing the ‘then and now’ generations (the struggle heroes of 1976 and post-apartheid youth), Soudien (2007b:1) stresses that the main common need of both generations (and of youth everywhere) is the need for intimacy. He underlines that, in order to be able to understand why young people respond to the world as they do, this psychological dimension of their lives needs to be taken into account and refers to Erikson’s (1968) sixth life-stage task of early adulthood - the challenge of intimacy versus isolation and developing the virtue of love - emphasising the importance of intimacy as a social space in order for the youth to have some sense of where they want to go as adults. This overlapping of the life-stage tasks in Erikson’s model is one of the reasons that adolescence can be a turning point in the life of a young person, since its life-stage task of identity versus role confusion provides the opportunity to integrate any unresolved challenges from previous life-stage tasks such as mistrust, shame, guilt or inferiority (Ashwell 2008:211). Adolescent role confusion can also include the gendered nature of identity (Graham, Bruce & Perold 2010:14) as it is during this period that youth question and explore sexual identity and how young men and women are socialised with regard to their masculinity and femininity can influence subsequent relations between the sexes, especially when prevailing role models are not positive.

These considerations of the possibility of a turning point that could break negative cycles that may have developed in childhood are relevant to this study and its young participants. As explained, the focus of an AVP workshop is on creating a safe space where the type of self-reflection that could cause such a turning point can take place, since, as mentioned, AVP workshops enhance participants’ sense of connection with themselves and with each other. These ideas are, thus, especially important for the youth of this study whose so-called ‘at-risk’ vulnerability a youth bulge for the next three to four decades. Taljaard (2008:2) recommends that South Africa implement policies to take advantage of this “demographic window of opportunity”.

a youth bulge for the next three to four decades. Taljaard (2008:2) recommends that South Africa implement policies to take advantage of this “demographic window of opportunity”.

status could include, as already mentioned, one or two missing parent(s), no formal income in the family or an abusive home environment.

Also important in this stage of young adulthood is peer acceptance since, as Bauman (2004:20) puts it, the need for identity is born out of the crisis of belonging" and "we need relationships in which we count for something … for the sake of the cohesion and logic of own being" (ibid:68). For South African youth, relationships with their peers have been greatly facilitated by the cellphone which has become an essential tool of youth culture. Morrow et al (2005:33) note that:

Young South Africans … use modern technology with great flair and dexterity … and texting … has become a crucial mode of communication and networking for young people [and] electronic arcade games … the internet, email and e-chat rooms are available to growing numbers through community centres … community radio is [also] a cheap and often youth-dominated medium with great potential for local activism … this new technology and new uses of old technology, may have the potential for young people to make … [an] innovative contribution to the country’s intellectual and political life.30

Linked to the importance of peer acceptance is young people’s need for self-esteem which McDonald (1999:203) observes is replacing institutions and cultural norms as the primary socialisation factor, especially for young people who are poor in an affluent society because “their lifeworlds are not organised in terms of roles, norms and transmitted patterns of socialisation … [thus] the demand for self-esteem replaces being socialised into a social identity”. McDonald also sees this

30 MXit, for instance, a South African social network, has 23 million registered users from 127 different countries and receives an average of 40,000 registrations daily (MXit. 2010. Sunday Times Lifestyle. Page 18. December 5) offering users not only the internet in an almost-free format but also education initiatives and HIV/AIDS and drug counselling. In South Africa, MXit is more popular than either Facebook or Twitter and CEO and founder, Herman Heunis, believes the mobile phone (and cellphone banking) is the ‘silver bullet’ for Africa because it enables nations to communicate freely and not only “cuts across disparities of income and geography [but] … is used as much by gogos and their grandchildren in remote villages as the scene kids who live in gated estates” (ibid:18).
struggle of young people to construct an experience of ‘us’ as the reason they have such a critical need to be respected.

Thus, the need for intimacy, peer acceptance, self-esteem and respect from others are critical issues for young people. Soudien (2007b:2) makes the point that, although the need for intimacy does not change in the process of growing up, the social, political and economic conditions in which intimacy can be expressed, do change and this, he underlines, is the main difference between the ‘then’ and the ‘now’ generations of South African youth: that for many young people, the pre-1994 struggle against apartheid filled, to an extent, the role of surrogate parent by providing guidance and opportunities and “the comfort of thinking with each other about the great questions of the day” (ibid:10). Also, whereas the dominant social factor in South Africa between 1948 and 1994 was race, the current social environment for young South Africans, especially for those of colour, is now deeply paradoxical as “it is both of and against apartheid” (ibid:11) and also because they find themselves in a society that is characterised by so much diversity, of rich and poor, colour, gender, class, religion and, not insignificantly, of cultural habits, practices and beliefs that are at once modern and largely capitalist but also ... traditional involving customs and rituals such as ancestor worship, initiation (ibid:12).

Soudien also points out that while modern middle-class South Africa is, as everywhere in the capitalist world, consumed by the instant gratification syndrome, there is amongst young black South Africans (especially amongst young black males), a simultaneous increasing interest in traditional practices rooted “in the mystery of custom, magic and belief” (ibid:6).

The significance and attraction of such traditional practices need to be carefully considered. Moore (2000:33) explains that in many traditional cultures, a person becomes adult by hearing the secret stories of the community which have been handed down over generations and how, invariably, the initiate has to endure certain ordeals designed to draw out the adult with the aim of touching the young
person so deeply that he or she experiences a transformation of character. Sharing feelings of vulnerability and nakedness (physical or emotional) are central elements in such rituals and the intimate bonds formed between young people at these times can last a lifetime.\textsuperscript{31}

However, while young blacks seek to honour their traditional culture and deepen bonds of intimacy with their peers, they also aspire to middle-class values because middle-class culture is, as Soudien (2007b:7) observes:

> the primary medium into which dominant systems of enculturation such as schools, families and even the media, wish their young to enter – young Chinese, young Nigerians and young Guatemalans, and all their cousins everywhere in the world. It is what Greenwich has come to stand for in terms of geographical position in the world - our essential point of reference ... we all wish to be assimilated into it.

It is this straddling of worlds that Soudien (ibid) highlights as demanding complex ‘headwork’ from young black South Africans not least of all because, as he notes, middle-class culture is suspicious of non-middle class ways of being and doing, of other tastes and preferences and, like all dominant cultures, requires the “disavowing” of other ways of being. Soudien believes, therefore, that for most young South Africans, growing up in under-resourced homes speaking languages with little ‘market value’, this kind of growing up can be a “life-long burden” because there is seldom anyone to facilitate the discourse of the dominant culture and without help from interested adults to work their way through the mix of the old and the new, many young people are making their own worlds (ibid:7-8). Soudien, thus, holds that many contemporary South African adolescents carry the double burden of poverty and cultural alienation and that even though the children of the fast-growing African middle-class are similar to children of colour growing up in the

\textsuperscript{31} Middle-class youth in the developed world seek similar bonding experiences by participating in American Indian-based ‘sweat lodges’ which are equally ritualistic, intimate and nature-based.
developed world, this experience is different in South Africa because of the predominance of middle-class values.

To summarise, this section has outlined the reality of growing up in South Africa, especially for the so-called ‘at-risk’ black youth who are the subject of this study. The section has pointed to the challenge that these young people face living between the world of their traditional culture and the values of the South African middle-class and has emphasised the lack of guidance available to them. In addition, the section has shown how these young people’s need for intimacy and self-esteem as well as for respect from their peers, normal at this stage of their growth, is heightened by the nature of the challenges they face in South Africa today. The section has also highlighted these young people’s need for understanding and support from adults.

The following section discusses the relationship of South African youth to violence and crime and their vulnerability and resilience in this regard. These considerations give important contextual information for this study which features so-called ‘at-risk’ youth, in other words, youth who are potentially vulnerable to negative influences due to their compromised family backgrounds.

3.3.1 South African youth: violence and crime, vulnerability and resilience

In addition to carrying the double burden of poverty and cultural alienation, young people growing up in South Africa today are exposed to exceptionally high levels of violence. In their comprehensive study on strategies to overcome South African youth exclusion, vulnerability and violence, Graham, Bruce and Perold (2010:11) define the term, ‘youth violence’, as twofold: firstly, the involvement of young people, whether as victims or perpetrators, in incidents involving physical force, with or without a weapon, and secondly, the many ways in which violence is normalised which include a range of anti-social behaviour. Thus, as already stressed in the previous chapter, while conflict can be constructive, violence is usually destructive. In addition, direct violence (assault, torture and war) often
hides more insidious, chronic social structured or institutional violence (Opotow 2000:404; Jeong 2008:181).

The final report of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) on the violent nature of crime in South Africa done between 2007 and 2009 (Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime? 2009:5-10) broadly identified the sources of violence in South Africa as:

- armed violence linked to a subculture of violence and criminality;
- inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation;
- vulnerability of young people linked to inadequate child rearing and poor youth socialisation;
- perceptions and values related to violence and crime; and
- reliance on the criminal justice system.

According to Graham et al (2010:11), young people are “disproportionately affected” by violence, both as victims and as perpetrators and, while young men are far more likely to be victimised and to perpetrate violence than young women, young women’s involvement in violence is increasing, mostly as victims of sexual and domestic violence and often because of cultural and social expectations. Invariably, these young girls lack recourse because “prevailing social attitudes … consider domestic violence to be a private matter” (ibid:11).

These attitudes point to the normalisation of violence which is a prominent feature of South African violence. Such normalisation includes early and continued

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32 CSVR’s study on the violent crime in South Africa resulted in the following reports:
1) A concept paper The violent nature of crime in South Africa, June 2007
2) A study of murder: Streets of pain, streets of sorrow, June 2008
3) A study on sexual violence: A state of sexual tyranny, December 2008
4) The socioeconomic aspects of violence: Adding insult to injury, October 2008
5) Case studies on perpetrators of violent crime, December 2008
6) Summary report on key findings and recommendations, February 2009
7) Supplement to final report: Why does South Africa have such high rates of crime? April 2009
exposure to violence in the family and community as well as young men’s perception that they need to use violence to protect themselves, to obtain the respect of others or cultural beliefs that legitimise coercive sexual behaviour against women (Burton 2007:4). For example, in her study on the prevention of relationship violence from the perspective of South African youth, Pretorius (2004:111) comments that the narratives of her participants were “dominated by centrality of the family environment in the unfolding of acts of violence”. Graham et al (2010:37) also stress that there are various forms of violence that, while being “coercive and detrimental”, are not regarded as criminal and could even be regarded as ‘normal’.

Only when violence is no longer normalised does it become part of official statistics but again, as mentioned, some violence might remain ‘invisible’ (Graham et al 2010:45), for example, the relative invisibility of male-on-male violence or the fact that violence affects poorer people more often than commonly recognised. Also, many people see physical disciplining of children as natural, many schools regard bullying and fighting amongst boys as normal and, in some cultures, both women and men accept some degree of physical violence between intimate partners. For violence to be seen as criminal, it needs to be defined as a crime in criminal law but even so, both victims and perpetrators may not think the crime warrants police attention or the police themselves might regard it as a private matter. Defining violence as criminal then depends not only on the law but also on social conventions and attitudes and often changing these perceptions is a slow and difficult process (Graham et al 2010:44). Many South Africans believe that physical punishment is the only punishment that is 'heard' and communities often take it on themselves to physically punish offenders. However, such acceptance of violence in communities, schools and homes contributes to increasing violent behaviour. Graham et al (2010:46) explain that socially-conditioned views of violence “… may also play out at a later stage when [they] … are more likely to engage in public acts of violence such as bullying, political violence and
involvement in gangs”. Thus, the normalisation of violence in South Africa represents a grave threat.

One of the results of such frequent exposure to violence is that South African youth frequently clash with the law. Thirty-six per cent of South Africa’s prison population as well as 53 per cent of prisoners awaiting trial are under 26 years of age and 69 percent of those detained by the police are 18-35 years old (Dawes 2008:21). In addition, Dawes claims that 36 per cent of all non-natural deaths in South Africa occur in the 15-29 age group. CSVR’s study on South Africa’s murder rate reports that between 2001-2005 approximately 21 per cent of suspects in argument-type murders and 31 per cent of suspects in crime-type murders were 19 years old or younger and that argument-type killings are a major generator of South Africa’s murder rate (Streets of Pain 2008:2 & 117).

Apart from warning of the effects of prison exposure to hardened law-breakers, the literature is also consistent in showing how experienced violence leads to feelings of helplessness and anger and concern about the effects of growing up with violence has long been voiced. In a study commissioned by the University of Cape Town’s Children Institute in 2003, Farr, Dawes and Parker comment that the scale of violence in South Africa amounts to “a national public health crisis”. They explain how exposure to violence affects children’s emotional functioning and socialisation and stress the urgency of addressing the sources of violence (Farr, Dawes & Parker 2003:31).

Olivier (2007) ascribes the pervasive violence in South Africa to the effects on the collective South African psyche of two main traumas the country has undergone: firstly, the imposition of apartheid and secondly, in 1994, the transition to “a radically different socio-political … framework” embracing “global, neoliberal economic principles” [which means that] those people who possess the fewest economically marketable skills [become] also the most vulnerable”. Olivier maintains that such reconfiguring of the order of South African society allows only a relatively small percentage of the population (those with technology skills) to
engage in economic activities linked to globalisation; that the majority (mostly the illiterate and unskilled workers) remain excluded and that until a new sense of community can be negotiated (for example, in the form of a “shared vocabulary” of democracy), South Africa’s high levels violence will continue.

Graham et al also underline that children who grow up with negative family experiences (and especially the lack of a positive male role model), often become persistent offenders and concludes that “it is reasonable to assume that one of the pervasive consequences of institutionalised racism in South Africa is internalised feelings of inferiority which might also be identified as feelings of low self-worth” (ibid:6).

For some (mainly young men with no economic or educational prospects of achieving independence), “the experience of daily life at the bottom of a steep social hierarchy [can be] enraging” (Hanley:2009) and augment the risk of their involvement in violence. For other young people, this marginalisation increases vulnerability. The decline in positive adult male role models, as already noted, contributes to this possibility and to the corresponding increase of the influence of the peer group. As mentioned, disenchantment with how society operates increases young people’s need for self-esteem and respect from others, especially from their peers (McDonald 1999).

Lastly, the shift of South Africa’s position from “political and cultural pariah” (Graham et al 2010:35) to regional political and economic power has meant that it attracts high numbers of economic migrants from elsewhere in Africa and competition for employment has increased, sometimes resulting in violence, for example in the xenophobic violence of May 2008. Miller and Mushavatu (2010) mention ‘the subliminal cold war’ that the ‘Africanisation’ of South Africa has brought about and that “the social cleavage between African foreign nationals and black South Africans has become an important new characteristic of South African working class life in particular” and one which needs to be taken into account if social transformation strategies are to correspond with social reality.
Thus, in addition to the role confusion and need for self-esteem and peer acceptance characteristic of adolescence as already mentioned, the young South African faces innumerable challenges on a daily basis, many inherent in family relationships and community structures. The result can be a volatile mix especially since South African youth are frequently also stigmatised as perpetrators of crime. However, stereotyping youth in this way is often a failure to recognise the degree to which young people are victims of violence because in South Africa, most media reports on victims of violence focus on either the rich and famous or on women and young children, despite the fact that in many countries in Southern Africa, most victims of homicide are young men and, to a lesser but still significant extent, young women (Why does South Africa have such high rates of violent crime? 2007:29-30).

Aligned to the research question of this study, and especially relevant for its so-called ‘at risk’ youth participants, however, is the contention that young people can learn new strategies for dealing with violence. McDonald (1999:208) regards this ‘making of subjectivity’ as easier for cognitive, self-monitoring, risk-evaluating and strategically-acting individuals who have always had access to knowledge networks but extremely problematic for those sections of the population who do not have such access. He makes the point that young people who find themselves on the margins in this way can fail to “mobilise their subjectivity” and thus, fail to become such “entrepreneurs of the self”, stressing that being poor in an affluent society means:

being immobile in a society of movement … [these youth] struggle to construct an experience of ‘us’ … they are not able to construct a strong identity in terms of ‘what they do’ …

Central to these ideas of how young people can construct their self-identity is the importance of positive role models because coping skills and qualities like resilience are learned reactions. Lack of role models with resilient coping skills and the absence of a father or another caring, nonviolent male puts boys at higher risk of violence, a situation which is exacerbated by Western media that portray
anti-social, reckless or violent men as heroes (Miedzian 2010:1). In a statement from CSVR (Why is South Africa so violent and what we should be doing about it?, 2010:4), Kirsten and Bruce sum up the situation in South Africa:

The childhood experiences of many children and young people in South Africa involve multiple levels of adversity including poverty, unstable living arrangements, absent, indifferent or violent fathers and alcohol or other substance abusive parents or relatives.

Family experiences of this nature present severe challenges for young people. Pretorius (2004:111) points to the adverse psychological consequences for youth who are caught in the middle of their parents’ relationship difficulties especially when abuse or violence is involved and Francis and Rimmensberger (2007:611), in a study on out-of-school youth in KwaZulu-Natal, refer to adolescents’ lack of positive support networks and how the youth themselves feel that their worlds are “severely limited by poverty, lack of education, employment and positive role models”. Discussing the importance of a father role model, Moore (2000:33) explains:

if my father is dead or if he was absent and cold, or if he was a tyrant, or if he abused me or if he was wonderful but is not here for me now, then who is my father now? Where do I get those feelings of protection, authority, confidence, know-how and wisdom that I need in order to live my life?

Moore (ibid) maintains that true fatherhood signifies initiation into family and culture in a profound, transformative way and that a father is one whose perspective and knowledge are tied to the forefathers, those who have gone before and have created the culture that the young person now takes into his hands. He emphasises that young people who lack the support of such a father are easy prey for father substitutes – people willing to play the part for their own gain, offering superficial tokens of fatherhood.

Against this backdrop of fatherlessness, value and role confusion, the need for peer acceptance, respect and a sense of belonging is heightened and often the only available identity to give ‘self-cohesion’ is that of criminal gangs. The final
CSVR report on violent crime in South Africa (2010:8) attributes the high levels of crime in South Africa to a subculture of violence and criminality and how young men in ‘criminal careers’ have active criminal lifestyles where the willingness to use weapons (firearms as well as knives) is often a prerequisite to gaining credibility.

The report explains that members of this subculture range from criminals operating individually, in informal groups or as formalised gangs. Graham et al (ibid) also explain that:

For young people to establish their identity they need to forge close identification with particular groups. Where young people are not able to access positive social capital or empowering social networks, they often become more vulnerable to high risk behaviour.

To overcome such extreme vulnerabilities, youth need support. Despite the numerous factors which can predispose South African young people to violence and a criminal lifestyle, it is important to not have preconceived ideas about youth and to respect their need to be treated like adults. Dawes (2005:32) sees the vulnerabilities of youth as evidence of a lack of youth development investment and the literature is replete with examples that affirm this:

- Graham et al (2010: 42-43) warn of the risk of stigmatising young people, stressing that it is important to recognise that most young people are not violent and that even those who have been violent, have often been so in a limited way and that frequently violence is “not … a dominant aspect of who they are”.

33 Leilde (2008:168) translates Khosa (1999:292) who maintains that “the poor have more to gain than lose in engaging in criminal practices or other anti-social behaviours” and maintains that some analysts regard gangs as strategies of economic survival and dignity for marginalised males, providing meaning through language, rites of passage and symbols. She claims there are an estimated 137 gangs on the Cape Flats with about 100 000 members and cites Standing (2003:14-15) who regards gangs as a rudimentary, alternative welfare system which has largely replaced council authority and operates as a form of organised counter-government.
Similarly, Swartz’s (2010) study of the ‘moral ecology’ of South Africa’s township youth shows that young people generally have the desire to be good people and, in fact, see themselves as good people although they recognise that they do not always follow through on these intentions.

Soudien (2007a:4) also advises against stereotyping young people, warning that adults do youth “a grave injustice by stigmatising them as incomplete, deficient and even deviant members of the human race” and draws attention to young people’s strong sense of self-awareness and optimism and their ability to deal with complexity and generate meaning.

Furthermore, consistently portraying youth in difficult circumstances as vulnerable, powerless victims which may result in them becoming “victims of victimhood” (O’Connel & Davidson 2005:59 in van Dijk 2008:18).

Richter and Panday (2007:5) regard young people as the “most vulnerable sector of the society as a result of poverty” and urge that while youth participation is important, it must be offset by “the urgent need for protection”

These and other studies (Allsopp & Thumbadoo 2002; Morrow, Panday & Richter 2005; Pretorius 2004 & Sommers 2003) call for interventions to address the unmet developmental needs of youth.

Traditionally, some of this support used to be met within their own communities, for example, Graham et al (2010:35) mention the “spirit of cooperation and reciprocity of African communities” and cite Patel and Wilson (2004) and how the “tradition of self-help, individual and collective responsibility for the well-being of families and kinship groups predates the colonial era”. However, Van Dijk’s (2008) more recent study of child-headed households shows that the resources of the extended family, long eroded by AIDS and chronic poverty, are not without limits and she refers to her experience of some relatives even being a threat to young orphans’ possessions and well-being (2008:128). Increasingly, therefore, the
systems that historically provided support for youth cannot always be relied upon and many young people find themselves without adult support.

Thus, what young South Africans, especially young, poor South Africans, need most is an informed understanding of the challenges they face. For this reason, Graham et al (2010:48) highlight the importance of locating youth support within a developmental approach which “seeks to reduce vulnerability factors and builds resiliency factors”. The report stresses the importance of an integrated and developmental approach that seeks to rehabilitate young people rather than stigmatise them and cites the South African Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 as an example of good policy (ibid:15).

Ashwell (2010: 231) also stresses the need for “ongoing support and not just isolated experiences” and how this can be done most effectively by schools organising youth development activities and for positive youth development at a governmental level, especially of programmes which address the risk factors for involvement in crime. Graham et al (2010:48) also bring attention to the responsibility of government to ensure that all frameworks affecting young people address the issue of safety, especially in schools, and that police, teachers and parents need to respond adequately to any situation that puts young people at risk, including domestic issues.

Discussing the provision of support to youth, most current literature on youth stresses the importance of recognising young people’s strength and optimism. For example, a report for the United States International Development in 2003 on Africa’s Youth at Risk concludes that Africa’s youth constitute “a largely untapped resource for ingenuity, stability and economic growth (Sommers 2003:3). The literature (Graham et al; Burton 2007; McDonald 1999; Pretorius 2004) also consistently stresses the importance of approaching youth from an asset-based perspective which looks at the factors that protect young people from involvement
in crime and violence. These reports recognise the need at policy level to acknowledge the strengths and capacity of young people to be resilient.\footnote{Fine, Weis, Wesen & Wong (in Denzin & Lincoln 2000:20) regard the debate of whether historically oppressed groups are victimised and damaged or resilient and strong as “an artificial and dangerous dichotomy” because of the implications of the “fixed choices” involved. Taking their remarks into account, it is more likely that disadvantaged people in general and disadvantaged youth in particular, are constantly moving along a continuum of succumbing to feelings of overwhelming powerlessness and gaining increasing strength for survival.}

Lack of resilience can also be seen as resourcelessness which, as mentioned, Franklin links to violence (in Vellacott 2008:134), underlining the feelings of powerlessness behind violence and emphasising the creativity needed in presenting alternatives to violence, especially to youth. Similarly, Van Dijk (2008) concludes that if support for such young people is to be effective, it needs to take into account the often creative coping strategies that they have developed and Sharp (2002:15) hopes that children and youth can be seen as “capable of generating coherent critiques of injustice, formulating radical change or making social history’.

In the same vein, Dawes (2008:32) underlines that the focus in youth development needs to be on problem-reduction using an approach that builds on the strengths, talents and enthusiasm of the young, that participates with them to find solutions and that connects them to the supports, networks and knowledge they need for inclusion in a rapidly globalising and transforming world.

These recommendations are significant for this study which explores how AVP – a programme that seeks to teach young people how to transform conflicts nonviolently and build self-esteem – influences young people’s perceptions of conflict.

This section has explored the challenges of young South Africans as regards violence and crime, noting that youth are frequently affected by violence both as victims and perpetrators and how the high visibility of this violence – invariably
manifested in clashes with the law - hides the equally pervasive historical and structural violence. The section has shown how inequality contributes to violence as do negative role models and societal stigmatisation of youth and emphasised the challenges of being young and poor in an affluent society and how the primary need of such youth is for guidance and support that respects their optimism and creativity.

In their study on strategies to overcome youth exclusion, vulnerability and violence, Graham et al (2010) broadly categorise the main concerns of youth as: health, education, poverty, unemployment as well as social exclusion and marginalisation. The following sections give an overview of how these concerns can affect South African youth which includes the participants of this study.

3.3.2 South African youth: health and well-being

The greatest health challenge facing young South Africans continues to be HIV/AIDS. As Richter & Panday (2007:297) note:

... young people are at the heart of the HIV/AIDS epidemic [which] represents one of their most significant challenges. Young people are also ...the critical link in family life, being both producers and reproducers of family capital.

According to loveLife (2010), a countrywide, government-funded programme of community-level HIV/AIDS outreach to young people led by a national volunteer corps of over 1 200 young people with 18 multi-purpose youth facilities, South African teenagers have a 50 per cent chance of contracting HIV/AIDS in their lifetimes and half of South Africa’s new HIV/AIDS infections occur before the age of 25 years (lovellifeFactSheet 2010). In 2009, 5.6 million South Africans were known to be infected, with the highest prevalence rate (18.1 percent) occurring in the age group 15-49 years. HIV/AIDS also grows fastest in the 15-24 year age group (Urban crime prevention and youth at risk 2005:59) despite claims that 18-24 year old youth are 50 per cent more likely to use a condom at a first sex encounter than older youth (Dawes 2005:23). One contributing factor to the high
rates of unsafe sexual activity among youngsters aged 12, 13 and 14 years is that, because many have alcoholic and neglectful parents, they often seek comfort from their friends.

However, the danger of HIV-AIDS is not only the high prevalence rate. Dawes stresses that the main threat of HIV-AIDS is the number of unnatural child-headed households that are left in its wake. The South African Institute of Race Relations estimates that 5 700 000 or 32 per cent of all children in South Africa will have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS by 2015 and Van Dijk (2008) underlines the strong link between HIV/AIDS prevalence and poverty, especially in the Eastern Cape where only about 30 per cent of children live with an employed parent. Current estimates of children aged 2-18 who have lost at least one parent to HIV/AIDS (South African HIV Prevalence Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey 2008) give a figure of 2.5 million, with almost a quarter of these in the Eastern Cape. Richter (2010) maintains that AIDS is primarily a family disease because infections run through families, families carry the burdens of infection and because research shows that family-centred approaches to prevention and treatment are more effective.

Although initial fears that South Africa would be plagued by a generation of unsocialised, ‘delinquent’ orphans seem to have been unfounded (Barnett & Whiteside 2002), AIDS-orphaned children are regarded as a particularly vulnerable group. According to Cluver, Gardner and Operario (2007:7), AIDS-


36 Professor Leslie Bank, Director, Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research, is cited as saying the reason for this higher incidence of HIV/AIDS orphans in the Eastern Cape is that people who are HIV positive tend to return home to die. A research study of more than 2 000 rural households in the Eastern Cape in 2008 reported that more than 30 per cent of households had buried a family member in the last year revealing the burden placed on rural households in this regard (Matomela:2010).

37 Cluver, Gardner and Operario (2007) interviewed 1025 children and adolescents (aged 9-10) in urban township areas of Cape Town using socio-demographic questionnaires and standardised scales for assessing depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, peer problems, delinquency and conduct problems. The study aimed to investigate the psychological consequences of AIDS orphanhood compared to control groups of children and adolescents orphaned by other causes, and non-orphans.
orphaned children are “at heightened risk of mental health problems, and may experience particularly debilitating symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress and suicidal ideation” and need targeted intervention programmes “to ameliorate the psychological sequelae of losing a parent to AIDS.” Two factors highlighted in Cluver et al’s study are significant for this study which includes HIV/AIDS orphans: firstly, the difficulty that these children can have in relating to their peers and secondly, the importance of supportive interventions for this already-vulnerable group.

Bray’s (2003) study of South African AIDS orphans also shows that, despite the “multiple layers of disadvantage” (ibid:53) that these children suffer, the wider social breakdown that was predicted has not happened. Bray believes that such predictions misrepresent the problems faced by these children and their families and divert attention from the support they need. In her comprehensive report on child-headed households, Van Dijk (2008) also constantly emphasises that child-headed households need support.

However, strongly linked to the HIV/AIDS statistics in a cause-effect cycle, is the feeling of hopelessness that the disease can generate amongst young people, including those who are not HIV/AIDS positive. Negative worldviews can have a significant impact on young people’s sense of competence and adolescents with negative views of themselves and the world are susceptible to risk behaviour which can result in a self-perpetuating cycle of ill-health, especially as regard HIV/AIDS. In addition, feelings of hopelessness can increase ‘risk tolerance’: often when youth have fewer life prospects, they tend to indulge in reckless behaviour. According to loveLife, most young people know how to avoid HIV/AIDS infection but “have also internalised the risk and so continue to tolerate the risk” (loveLife Fact Sheet 2010).

This tendency of South African youth to high risk behaviour is well-documented. For example, The Second South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (2010:84) reports on the high prevalence of certain risk behaviours (such as substance
abuse, unprotected sex and suicidal or mental ill-health related behaviours), especially by youth with poor life prospects. Although the report concludes that youth are, on the overall, a positive force in society, it also stresses that their susceptibility to easily available merchandise like cigarettes, fast foods and alcohol. Morrow et al (2005:23) report that “being African, living in a rural area, having little formal education, low household income and not working are all associated with below average self-rated health”.

Poor nutrition and dissipative lifestyles bring other health challenges, not only susceptibility to HIV/AIDS. The Healthy Active Kids Report Card for 2010 (Discovery Vitality & Sports Science Institute of South Africa 2010:10) which surveys South African children from 5-20 years of age, shows an increase in the tendency for South African teenagers to be overweight (17-20 per cent) or obese (4-5 per cent). The report, which also mentions the prevalence of alcohol and tobacco use amongst school learners, gives South African youth a C- for overall health (the same as 2007) and highlights the decline in young people’s physical activity and their increased sedentary lifestyle. However, the report also acknowledges that physical education is being re-included in the school curriculum, together with the promotion of food gardens and the development of tuck shop guidelines.

In conclusion, good health remains a primary challenge for the majority of young South Africans and the youth of this study will have been affected by the pervasiveness of this challenge and its extensive implications.

3.3.3 South African youth: education and skills development

Recognising that South Africa has “inherited education and training systems skewed by racial inequality”, Morrow et al (ibid) regard education and training as lifelong pursuits, starting before and continuing after the age-range defined as ‘youth’ (14-35 years) and summarise the two main challenges of South African education for youth as firstly, the lack of quality and appropriateness of available education and the number of young people who drop out of the system at either
secondary or tertiary level and, secondly, the often inadequate life skills training available which means that young people are invariably ill-prepared to take decisions regarding their lives. The report concludes that issues of class and race saturate the educational system and that “it is a difficult matter of encouraging equity, expanding provision and at the same time ensuring educational quality”. However, the report acknowledges that since 1994, education opportunity has expanded significantly, especially for women (female enrolment in schools now exceeds that of males) and that young people value education, seeing it as a means of obtaining work (ibid) and the young people of this study are typical in this regard.

Educational institutions are critical in the lives of young people primarily because schools and universities provide an important window onto how national and regional forces take shape locally and this can be instrumental “in the construction of new expectations and new ways of being in the world” (Adely 2009:373). Being able to imagine new ways of being is a critical factor for young people today, especially if they are to become ‘entrepreneurs of self’ (McDonald 1999), which, as discussed in chapter 2, includes the development of resilience and coping skills, both central concepts in this study. Surveys conducted at loveLife show that what drives new HIV/AIDS infections is young people’s response to circumstances (lovelifeFactSheet 2010); thus, young people need support to believe that they do have choices.

However, education remains a critical issue in South Africa. Many young people, particularly those from poor backgrounds (the majority of whom are black), are still

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38 Morrow et al (2005:19) note the major positive changes in South Africa’s schooling system since the South Africa Schools Act of 1996 which deracialised schooling admitting that “given South Africa’s geographic realities, the racial profile of most schools in rural and township areas has not changed substantially” but that “the slow process of transforming the educational system from one based on racial caste to one based on social class [was begun because] … while the majority of impoverished youth are black, increasing numbers of better-off black families send their children to formerly white schools. These schools are involved in many subtle and contradictory ways in the remaking of South African class and race system. Most youth, however, attend less privileged schools whose pupils are drawn solely from the black community”.

at school in their early 20s which makes secondary schooling a significant area for those concerned with youth development (Morrow et al 2005:19). Graham et al (2010:21) also document how many young people struggle to complete secondary education and develop sustainable livelihoods and that young people are “marginalised within their communities and have very few opportunities to participate meaningfully in society”.

Early school leavers are often struggling with problems at home such as family conflict, grief, violence or sexual abuse and financial difficulties which can entrench the cycle of poverty and reduced access to education. Richter and Panday (2007:297) refer to the “re-cycled impact of lack of protection in childhood, through non-consensual sex and truncated educational participation, which carries lifelong consequences for young people and their families” especially since education also has significant intergenerational effects, for example, educated parents, especially educated mothers, are more likely to enrol their children in school. There is, thus, a close relationship between levels of education and poverty. Also, in spite of improved access to education, and increased funding for schools, the quality of education in many schools remains low and “approximately half a million learners drop out of school each year” (Ashwell 2010:21).

In 2005, the South African Department of Education’s Directorate on Higher Education Planning reported that, in 2000, 30 per cent of South African tertiary students dropped out of their first year of study, a further 20 per cent dropped out in their second or third year and that, on average, only 15 per cent finish their degrees in the specified time (Cosser & Letseka 2010:3). It is often these drop-outs, invariably discouraged, frustrated and bored, who can become easy targets for criminal syndicates (Altbeker 2008:49).

Because of this, Graham et al (2010:10) stress that, in order “to build resilience …to violence and crime, as well as [to the] contextually bound factors that increase the vulnerability of young people”, young people need support, especially at a policy level. This emphasis on mending the fabric of community life by building
resilience and coping skills is frequently recommended in the literature: young people need holistic approaches whereby educational organisations work together with health and other community organisations. In this regard, Dawes (2005:25-27) urges that all forms of youth education be directly linked to the world of work and that youth are assisted to build social networks and strengthen family bonds because only a small percentage of young people are able to interact with the world from within supportive families. Dawes (ibid) also stresses the need for social institutions to work together to try to keep young people out of prisons especially since youth can seldom afford bail and are vulnerable to the sexual abuse; and that attitudes and norms that support gender-based violence need to be addressed. The aims of this research study are directly aligned to such concerns which it seeks to address by its collaboration with Umzi Wethu.

3.3.4 South African youth: economic participation and poverty

Poverty and unemployment hinder South African youth’s progress as much as HIV/AIDS, both impacting most heavily on the black population, particularly young people. Children and youth aged 18 to 24 years are the most impoverished sections of the population especially young people with little education and especially women and rural youth (Dawes 2008:8). A South African analysis done by Woolard shows how youth poverty is a result of unemployment and exclusion from economic activity as well as a result of economic dependence on poor households.

Youth poverty is, thus, a serious concern needing urgent attention. Research shows that the most effective way of tackling youth poverty is to break the cycle of

40 Govender, Kambaran, Patchet, Ruddle, Torr and van Zyl (2007:9) comment on how the recent economic growth of Asia has changed world poverty figures, making poverty an increasingly African phenomenon and predict that in a few years’ time Africa could have a monopoly on world poverty.
poverty early (France 2008:502) but, using data from the 2005 General Household Survey, Leatt (2006) points to the relationship between youth poverty and unemployment which shows that 42 per cent of South Africa’s children live in a household where neither parent is employed (a figure which she mentions should be taken as indicative, given that income tends to be under-reported and does not usually include, for example, maintenance, money sent by families from abroad or investments). The South African government regards an income of R800 per month per household as ‘indigent’ and local governments are given funding based on the number of such householders in their area (ibid). According to Leatt (2006:27), 55 per cent or 10 million of South Africa’s children were living in indigent households in 2005. Morrow et al (2005:10) report that one third of all South African youth live in poverty including the 16 per cent that form part of the ‘ultra poor’ and that ultra-poverty is most common among 18-24 year olds.\textsuperscript{41}

However, the nature of poverty is complex. Van Dijk (2008:86) makes the point that income is not the only measure of poverty and that another important indicator is malnutrition which results in continued lowered resistance to infection, diminished learning ability and, in severe cases, stunted growth.\textsuperscript{42}

The most significant poverty alleviation measure in South Africa are social grants, especially for children and the elderly, and such grants (which constitute social assistance in South Africa) help in “lifting households out of deep poverty” (Leatt

\textsuperscript{41} According to Govender et al (2007:9), poverty measures are sensitive to the level of the poverty line (the most commonly used measure is the headcount index) and that reported figures for poverty in South Africa differ because there is no official national poverty line. Govender et al also comment that while most research shows increased poverty in South Africa between 1995 and 2000, most poverty measures did not take into account the increased provision of health care, education, housing, water and electricity to the poor during this period.

\textsuperscript{42} Stunting has increased and is currently estimated at over 25 per cent of rural children and about 12 per cent of urban primary school children (\textit{The Healthy Active Kids Report Card for 2010, Discovery Vitality & Sports Science Institute of South Africa} 2010:10).
2006:29) as even grants not specifically for children are often used to benefit children.43

However, the unemployed do not receive any social assistance and if young people do not have the resources and support to manage their transitions into independent living, the risks of them being poor increase as moving from dependency to autonomy is a costly process for young people (France 2008:496 & 502), especially since many young people do not have experienced support networks to help them. Indeed, the main argument for focussing on youth unemployment is the need to prevent the creation of another generation of long-term unemployed. Altman (2009:4) explains that the longer one is unemployed or underemployed, the harder it is to reverse the effects on self-esteem and there is a greater chance of long-term unemployment amongst youth who have weaker searching skills and resources.

In addition, as already mentioned, global trends complicate job-finding. As Richter and Panday (2007:293) document, “pathways are no longer linear and … the combination of worsening employment prospects for young people across the world and extended education, leads to longer financial and residential dependence on families”. Most families can ill-afford such dependence and, importantly, “living under precarious conditions early in life often replicates and entrenches the cycle of intergenerational poverty and underdevelopment” (ibid).

In addition, the expected positive changes of globalisation in the form of increased tourism, improved communications and construction of leisure sites have not always materialised (Straker 2007). For instance, in keeping with global trends, many permanent jobs have been replaced with temporary contracts and less low-

43 Fears that such grants will create a ‘dependency culture’ have been refuted in a report on youth labour market challenges by Noble and Ntshongwana (2008:1) who argue that such a “worrying discourse … ignores the role that social grants can play in restoring dignity to the unemployed and in helping to place them in a better position to seek employment [and] also ignores evidence that the unemployed would much rather work”.
skilled work is available and in many ways, globalisation’s “increasing … emphasis on materialism and celebrity” (Gilchrist et al 2007:4) has highlighted for South African youth the disparity between their aspirations and the economic reality in which they live. While the new democracy in South Africa has contributed to an ever-increasing affluent black middle-class, the poor remain excluded, especially in rural areas which are still isolated by past patterns of male and youth labour. Increasingly, amongst South Africa’s elite, there is evidence of what Wheatley calls a “transactional culture” which promotes self-interest and scarcity and in which people strive to take as much as they can and accumulate more than they need (Wheatley & Frieze 2011).

For all these reasons, youth unemployment is high. More than two-thirds of South Africans between the ages 18-35 are unemployed and, of unemployed youth in the 25-34 age group, 90 per cent are black (Govender et al 2007:10). Rural youth and women are worst affected. Current figures estimate South African youth unemployment at about 72 per cent.

Thus, many young black South Africans lose hope of ever finding work. Francis and Rimmensberger (2007), in a study on out-of-school youth in KwaZulu-Natal, refer to adolescents’ lack of “coping strategies … [and] positive support networks” and how the youth themselves feel that “their worlds … [can be] narrowed down by poverty, a lack of education, employment and positive role models” (ibid:611). It is these young people who, believing they will never find a job, are vulnerable to a criminal lifestyle or substance abuse and it is these so-called ‘at risk’ young people that organisations like Umzi Wethu recruit for their year-long employability programme and who are the participants of this study.

Yet, despite these dire figures and numerous challenges, especially of a world which is changing so rapidly that almost nothing is as it was for their parents, most studies on youth underline youth’s creativity and optimism and note that the general mood of South African youth is positive. According to the 2010 South African Social Attitudes survey (Gaibie 2010), although black African respondents
were reported as the unhappiest and most dissatisfied with life, they were also the most optimistic about the future and many authors believe that South African youth are awakening to a sense of their own power, especially in collaboration with the outside world. For example, Soudien (2007a:4) refers to the increasing self-awareness and optimism of South African youth, their increasing ability to deal with complexity and, in a similar vein, McDonald (1999) warns against underestimating or stereotyping youth, stressing that many youth are inventing new ways of living in a changing world.\textsuperscript{44}

These considerations are relevant for this study which seeks to build on youth’s primary characteristic: its resilience which, more than just a capacity for change or the ability to withstand difficult conditions, can be defined as the ability to also cope well with everyday life and is influenced by individual beliefs and attitudes (Merk 2009:37). The following and final sub-section of this overview of the challenges facing South African youth outlines the extent to which young people participate in civic society.

\subsection*{3.3.5 South African youth: social integration and civic engagement}

Building social networks is an important aspect of community participation and youth who are active in some form of organisation are less likely to engage in self-destructive behaviour. How involved young people are in youth and community organisations\textsuperscript{45} is also an important predictor of later involvement in community

\textsuperscript{44} One example is the global hip hop culture which describes itself as committed to peace and youth liberation. Initiatives such as the grass roots project, Masizakhe (‘Building each other’), in Port Elizabeth (which was documented by an independent American company in an 80-minute colour film in 2008), encourages “young [South] Africans [to] take responsibility to build a post-apartheid nation …. [and shows] … how performance (rap) poetry has a street-smart power that educates wisely in a deeply African oral cultural way” (Third World Newsreel 2011 [Online]. Available: twn@twn.org/catalog/masizakhe 5 March 2009).

\textsuperscript{45} Morrow et al (2007:32) mention various important government and civil initiatives for youth participation which “rest on a foundation of initiatives by youth themselves in many spheres” such as the National Youth Commission, Umsobomvu Youth Fund and the South African Youth Council as well as initiatives which help with social integration such as the National Youth Service Programme and the Building for Sport and Recreation Programme which works with the Siyadlala Mass Participation Programme (ibid:33).
because patterns of participation established when young tend to continue into adulthood. Morrow et al (2005:29) regard the current low levels of participation by young South Africans in organised activities as due to civic passivity, long-term health problems as well as excessive television viewing but note that reduced youth participation in, for example, elections is a global phenomenon and that young people in South Africa use varied networks. They note though that large numbers of young South Africans from all social backgrounds participate in religious observance and in the accompanying social networks and that the African National Congress Youth League has an estimated membership of more than 500 000 and that, in line with global trends, it has shifted from party to issue-based politics, for instance, HIV/AIDS activism, environmental and social or cultural matters which has increased its influence (ibid:30).

However, Morrow et al (2005:29) also show that access to sports and recreational facilities, as well as to information technology is open mainly to middle class youth, and, similar to the lingering racial divisions in education, there are inequalities in the provision of school sporting facilities and in participation in school sports as well as differences of access for radio, television, internet usage as well as books, newspapers and magazines. Thus, historical patterns of provision continue and, as usual, it is the rural areas that have the lowest rate of use of these facilities.

Also, social class is now becoming a more important determinant of participation than race: the 2010 South African Social Attitudes Survey shows that about half of South Africans have a good quality of life and that the lives of only a minority of South Africans are improving through redress strategies (Gaibie 2010:1). This widespread inequality in South Africa is, perhaps, the most persistent effect of apartheid. A study of inequality of household income and expenditure done for 116 countries (United Nations Human Development Report, 2007-2008) ranked South
Africa tenth in the world. Altbeker (2008:5) claims that the poorest 20 per cent of the population in South Africa earns less than four per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while the richest 10 per cent earns nearly 45 per cent. Similarly, a report from the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2010) underlines South Africa’s inequality: in 2008, the richest 10 per cent of South African households earned nearly 40 times more than the poorest 50 per cent and the richest 10 per cent earned nearly 150 times more than the poorest 10 per cent.

These figures indicate to what extent many young people are still disadvantaged by the legacy of South Africa’s past, even though it is now 16 years since South Africa’s 1996 Constitution and Bill of Rights sought to redress the imbalances caused by apartheid. Richter and Panday (2007:295) comment that most young people have not benefitted from the post-apartheid democratic dividend because young people are often regarded as “too uninformed, incapacitated and dispersed to pose much of a threat to the ‘new’ regimes”. Similarly, Altbeker (2008:48) talks of South Africa’s “broken promise” and the unique character of South Africa’s inequality as:

driven by the systematic exclusion of millions of people from participation in the labour market [which] has important effects on the way many millions of people interpret the gap between the implicit and explicit promise of equality, on the one hand, and the reality of deeply entrenched inequality on the other. (ibid:49).

This inequality is also mirrored in the poverty levels between provinces: for example, the poorest provinces are KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape as these are the provinces that, under apartheid, included the former ‘homelands’ which were largely rural areas with a high concentration of people. Epidemiologists such as Wilkinson and Pickett (2009:5) claim that high levels of inequality in a society increase the rate of teenage pregnancy, violence, obesity,

46 Govender et al (2007:9) report that recent trends in world inequality show a departure from the trend of the last 200 years and that “world inequality among individuals is even higher than the inequality that exists within famously unequal societies such as Brazil and South Africa”.
imprisonment and, most importantly, destroy relationships between individuals of different races and classes. This is especially obvious in South Africa where “the lack of opportunities to meet, determined by entrenched geographical and educational patterns, make contact difficult [and] friendships across racial lines are still relatively limited” (Morrow et al 2005:), and one of the many long-term benefits of programmes like Umzi Wethu and AVP is the creation of such opportunities.

As Wilkinson and Pickett’s (2009:5) studies demonstrate, it is not just the poor who are adversely affected by inequality but the whole of a society suffers when inequality exists. Of all crimes, the most closely related to high levels of inequality are those involving violence which, as discussed in chapter 2, can result from the mishandling of conflict.

To summarise, this section has looked at the current landscape for the majority of South African youth, exploring their relationship to conflict, violence and crime as well as their vulnerability and resilience with regard to their health, education and employment challenges and the impact that poverty, social marginalisation and inequality has on their behaviour and civic engagement. Attention has been drawn to the severity of these challenges and how the literature consistently underlines that poor, marginalised and previously disadvantaged South African youth need support – in the form of role models, community programmes, institutional policy as well as peer support - in order to build their self-esteem and resilience to adequately respond to the many opportunities they have for risk behaviour. These young people need to be given opportunities to affirm their worth and to draw on the cultural resources of their communities by participating in forums for decision and policy-making in a meaningful way with opportunities to interact with each other and with other generations. Specifically, these youth need more

47 This is perhaps AVP’s major strength: that it facilitates a safe, intimate space where people of all ages, cultures and background can share themselves from multiple perspectives. In addition, AVP provides the invaluable resource of an international network of like-minded people.
opportunities at local government level in order to help shape community priorities. The young participants of this study have been given such an opportunity by the Umzi Wethu programme.

Given the importance of youth development in South Africa, the following section looks briefly at how youth development policy has evolved in Africa, since it provides a framework for addressing youth issues in policies and for a programme such as AVP which is the subject of this research study.

3.3.6 **South African youth development**

As mentioned, youth development is increasingly being recognised as a critical area for social investment especially if South Africa is to benefit from the demographic window of opportunity that its youth bulge offers over the next three to four decades (Taljaard 2008:1). To take advantage of the opportunities that youth can offer, youth need to be seen as a resource. This section briefly outlines how youth development has evolved and discusses its guiding principles and main characteristics.

Looking at which youth development approaches are more effective, Richter and Richter (2007:298-299) identify the main characteristics of successful youth development as:

- Taking a holistic approach – youth development needs to meet young people’s needs, especially their need for guidance, support and involvement in order to enhance their self-esteem;
- recognising youth as a diverse resource;
- acknowledging life-cycle nature of youth development which aims to build the participation of young people from childhood through to “civic, political, social and economic engagement” (ibid);
- supporting young women to become economically active;
- relating to context – current development efforts tend to focus too much on the development of job skills and neglect the social context such as the
importance of families, schools and communities in providing support as well as integrated youth programmes on national development agendas; and

- encouraging active participation of young people in decision-making processes.

According to Richter and Panday (2007:299-301), the first generation of youth policies in the early 1960s aligned youth organisations with political processes and youth councils were mostly controlled by the political system and excluded from policy-making. However, youth development began as a movement in the early 1980s and underwent a paradigm shift in the 1990s when its aim was defined as building on the strengths of young people and addressing the structural constraints to their development. This defined goal of youth development policy was, thus, twofold: to expand opportunities for young people to help them deal with the challenges of a changing world and to provide youth with experiences to build their capacity to make choices appropriate to a successful transition into adulthood (ibid). These goals are significant for AVP, the subject of this research study, as AVP works nationally and internationally organising experiential workshops which offer young people opportunities of this nature, sharing strategies for transforming conflict nonviolently and building self-esteem.

The year 1985 was declared by the United Nations (UN) as International Youth Year and by the 1990s, youth policy development in Africa had progressed to the point that “youth consultation and participation became a cornerstone of policy development, at least in theory” (Richter & Panday 2007:300-301). South Africa began to participate fully in global youth matters in 1995 when it complied with the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond.

In addition, Morrow et al (2005:3) explain that South African youth development policy was best expressed in the 1997 National Youth Policy and the National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDFF) of 2000-2007 which challenged the prevailing idea of youth development as “a dilettante form of social work”
(ibid:20) and stressed the need for youth development to be part of overall social policy, emphasising the need for redress, non-discrimination, diversity, responsiveness, sustainability, participation, inclusiveness, transparency and accessibility. In 1999, the South African Parliament formed a Portfolio Committee on Youth, Women and the Disabled which put youth on its political agenda (ibid).

By 2000, the World Programme of Action for Youth had defined its priorities as: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, and participation in decision making and, in 2003, the UN World Youth Report added five more: globalisation, information and communication HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and inter-generational relations. In 2005, the report, Young people today, and in 2015, saw young people from rich and poor countries as part of the same world, increasingly similar but growing apart (Richter & Panday 2007:300-301). In Africa at this time, there was a pressing need for practical ways to address the challenges facing young people and to encourage their participation in civic society. Youth participation is difficult to achieve because integrating youth in society means providing them with opportunities and, as Richter and Panday (2007:297) note, African youth are discouraged by autocracy, war, poor governance and lack of opportunities in education and work. However, two initiatives made a significant contribution to youth development in Africa: firstly, the African Youth Charter of 2002 (AYC) which accelerated socio-economic integration across the continent by promoting partnerships between governments and especially women and youth. The AYC represents a benchmark for youth development in Africa as it defines the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of youth people as well as those of the state, especially as regards youth participation, education, sustainable livelihoods and health. The adoption of the charter by African Union Heads of State in July 2006 created new optimism for African youth development (ibid:303). Secondly, the World Development Report 2007 which recommends investment in five major life transition areas: learning beyond primary school; starting a productive working life at the appropriate age; adopting a healthy lifestyle; forming a family; and exercising
citizenship to enable young people to establish their identities as individuals (ibid:302).

The report emphasises the need to give young people opportunities in early childhood, to improve their access to information in order to enhance their capabilities to make choices and to give youth who have made 'bad' life choices a second chance. Similarly, Taljaard (2008:3) emphasises that ‘damage control’ policies which help young people recover from earlier unwise choices can benefit society well into the future and recommends that South Africa implement restorative justice programmes in order to reduce the ‘criminal capital’ that incarcerated youth often develop from exposure to other lawbreakers and to aid social re-integration.

These recommendations are again significant in terms of the subject of this research study as AVP has been leading interventions of this nature in prisons worldwide since the early 1970s and has gained considerable experience in this regard.

Concluding the outline of youth development history in Africa, Morrow et al (2005:5) mention South Africa’s pivotal role in organisations such as the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as well as in coordinating the regional response to the global Youth Employment Summit (YES), commenting that “today South Africa draws from and contributes to Africa-wide and worldwide youth research policy and practice”.

Richter and Panday (2007:304-305) summarise the current situation regarding youth development as follows:

- Given adequate opportunities, young people in South Africa can become a positive mobilising force for human and economic development. However, they need to keep healthy, receive relevant education and participate in decisions that affect them.
Participation cannot be defined according to how previous generations participated. For example, political rights are not always attractive for youth battling with poverty. Youth development, therefore, needs to address this generation’s main challenges: access to prevention and treatment of HIV, better education, access to work, better service delivery and protection from environmental degradation.

Participation is also no longer only through community organisations, societies and sports clubs but also virtual spaces such as blogs, chat rooms, and other social networking sites.

For youth to make informed choices that best suit their needs and their talents, their participation must always be balanced by protection and rights by needs. This means no coercion or exploitation of youth by the government or other organisations. Education must be safeguarded, work life meaningful, provisions need to be made for health.

Morrow et al (2005:v) also point to the importance of young women being encouraged to succeed in conventional male careers and Panday and Richter (2007:298) stress the centrality of participation in family and community life, underlining that neither the youth nor the state benefit if youth are excluded from these spaces.

This sub-section has outlined the history and nature of youth development in Africa and South Africa which has shown the importance of supporting young people especially using an approach which acknowledges their strengths and helps connect them to the knowledge and networks they need.

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has broadly discussed the challenges of growing up in South Africa today, primarily from the point of view of the so-called ‘at-risk’ black youth who are the subjects of this study and indicating the ample evidence that such youth face innumerable challenges on a daily basis: apart from exposure to excessively high levels of violence and crime as well as compromised health, education and
employment opportunities, such young people cannot always rely on their families or communities to support them financially or emotionally in their efforts to make sense of the demanding and contradictory worlds they inhabit. Notwithstanding these obstacles, they manage an encouraging optimism and resilience and many have taken ownership of technology to connect themselves to each other and to the greater world. The fortunate ones who have managed to stay in the education system and who are already networked and supported are inspired by youth in other countries in their clothes, music and poetry. However, the majority of these young people are still struggling to free themselves of past restrictions and, with little stability in their lives, their personal relationships – important for youth everywhere – become even more important and self-esteem, together with the respect of their peers takes central stage. What emerges most clearly from an exploration of recent studies on youth is their need for support at every level – opportunities, information, encouragement, dialogue, guidelines, programmes and policies.

It is within this context that this study takes place – acknowledgement of the support that young people need in order to build self-esteem and maintain respectful relationships with their peers so that they can achieve the intimacy they seek and grow their personal stability as they face a fast-changing, unstable world. AVP’s aim is to help young people sidestep the violence which results from unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships and ineffective community structures by affirming their self-worth and empowering them to respond to everyday conflict situations in a nonviolent way which increases their options for the life choices they make.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research design and methodology of this research study is discussed, together with the data collection methods employed. Babbie and Mouton (2001:72-74) define scientific inquiry as “making observations and interpreting what you’ve done” and clarify the distinction between the research design (the plan of how the research will be conducted) and research methodology (the methods and tools to be used in the research process). Cresswell (2009:5) refers to research design as the plan or proposal to conduct research which needs to make explicit:

- its worldview assumption;
- its strategies of inquiry (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods); and
- its research methods (data collection, analysis and interpretation).

In defining the concept of ‘worldview’, Cresswell refers to the definition given by Guba (1990:17) which is “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Cresswell 2009:6) and Webster and Mertova (2007:6) explain that a worldview can be seen as a particular way of understanding or viewing truth or knowledge and can also refer to the central assumptions of a culture or sub-culture which are reflected in its stories. Worldview is, thus, closely aligned with the human factors of human activity and experience (ibid:6) and, at the individual level, worldview also refers to diverse ways of seeing our purpose, values and relationships (Le Baron & Pillay 2006:5) and is used frequently in the context of this study which explores participants’ worldviews.

In terms of this study, the research design assumes a social interpretivist worldview and uses qualitative research methods which rely as much as possible on the participants’ view of the situation being studied on the premise that
individuals develop varied subjective meanings of their experiences (Cresswell 2009:8). The interpretive researcher not only probes the meaning that people make in their lives but “looks for the way in which people make meaning in their lives …and what meaning they make” (Henning 2004:20, original emphases). Thus, the interpretive researcher looks for the “frames that shape the meaning” (ibid:20).

This examination of the experiences, feelings and perceptions of participants in an “inductive style [with] a focus on individual meaning” (Cresswell 2009:4) is, therefore, the primary strategy of inquiry of this study which acknowledges the risk of researcher bias (as discussed in chapter 1). To reduce this risk, co-facilitators’ and participants’ observations and interpretations have been taken into account and data has been collected from various sources: initial questionnaires, observations of a two-day workshop and by using narrative analysis to explore participants’ conflict narratives as well as focus groups discussions. The study has, therefore, employed triangulation to verify its findings from independent measures. The collaborative analysis of the conflict narratives also included two external AVP consultants to achieve what Silverman (2004:229) refers to as “inter-rater” reliability where the same data is analysed by different ‘raters’ and the differences discussed. Similarly, Henning (2004:20) talks of interpretive research as a “communal process informed … scrutinized and/or endorsed by others” with data collection methods that aim to capture ‘insider’ knowledge.

The study’s process of data collection has, therefore, been (in the following order):

- semi-structured questionnaires which included a request for written or spoken conflict narratives (accounts of personally-experienced conflict situations);
- a two-day AVP workshop which ended by revisiting the conflict narratives;
- narrative analysis – with four co-facilitators and an AVP consultant - of the pre- and post-workshop conflict narratives; and
• focus groups with volunteers (after three months and again after six months).

In discussing the methodological decisions made, this chapter gives an overview of the principles of the research design implemented, looking at the implications of the interpretive approach. The chapter will then discuss each data collection method used and the steps taken to increase reliability and validity.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In designing a research study, Henning (2004:15) urges, as a first step, clarification between epistemology and methodology. She defines epistemology as “the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know the world” and methodology as the specific methods of inquiry used. Henning (ibid:16) stresses the importance of taking this relationship between a study’s philosophy and its practice into account when deciding the positioning of a research study. Similarly, Cresswell (2009:6) explains that research design brings together the worldview of the research, its specific strategies of inquiry and its research methods. He regards research designs as research plans and procedures that “span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (ibid:3) and adds that choice of design is also influenced by the issue being studied, the personal experience of the researcher and audience for whom the researcher writes.

Because this study explores the personal perceptions of conflict of a mixed gender group of 18 so-called at-risk young adults before and after exposure to specific conflict management strategies, its goals are those of interpretive research which applies “the mental processes of interpretation …[and is] influenced by and interacts with social contexts” (Henning 2004:20).

Kelly (2006:346) usefully summarises interpretation of qualitative material on a fundamental interpretive continuum, on the one side of which are ‘insider’ or “first person perspectives derived through empathetic, context-bound research” and on the other side of which are ‘outsider’ or “third person perspectives which are more experience-distant”. He refers to Ricoeur’s (1979) term, ‘distanciation’, which he
describes as the process of understanding a context from outside that context (Kelly 2006:348), which he contrasts with ‘empathy’, namely, the understanding gained from within the context of an experience. Kelly underlines how both perspectives need to be taken into account to gain a better understanding of the situation under study and Henning (2004:20) also refers to the data collection methods of interpretive research that aim to capture ‘insider’ knowledge. These ideas are important for this study where the researcher was both a co-participant in the workshop (gaining an ‘insider’ perspective) and a co-facilitator and interviewer (with an ‘outsider’ perspective).

This emphasis on experiential knowledge, as well as the collaborative interpretation process, is the primary reason for positioning this study in the social interpretivist worldview as the viewpoints of the study’s participants as well as those of the four co-facilitators and the external AVP consultants and especially, the mutual sharing of these viewpoints, are central to the study as well as to the goals of AVP which achieves its objectives in such an interactive space. Also, because the aims of this study are, from the ‘outside’, to document the ‘inside’ perceptions of the participants’ conflict situations, they align with this ‘insider-outsider’ definition and with the contrast of “the act of interpretation … with lived experience” (Kelly 2006:346). Thus, the study fulfills the primary goal of interpretive research, namely, an exploratory study which can lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of detailed, accurate and replicable data (Babbie & Mouton 2001:80).

In showing how the interpretive framework “frames” an inquiry, Henning (2004:16-23) outlines the methodological implications and explains that “unstructured observation, open interviewing, idiographic descriptions and qualitative data analysis are all ways to capture ‘insider’ knowledge”. Accordingly, the data collection methods of this study – questionnaires, unstructured workshop observation, conflict narrative and focus groups analysis – aim at recording the ‘insider’ knowledge of the participants as well as any specific shifts in perspective that occurred as a result of the AVP workshop. The decisions for the design of the
study have also been guided by the four dimensions advised by Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006:37) which are:

- the purpose of the research
- the theoretical paradigm informing the research
- the context of the research
- the research techniques employed to collect and analyse data.

To summarise, the social interpretivist worldview of this study, as the overarching ‘frame’ and broad, overall explanation (Creswell 2009:61-70), has informed the choice of data collection methods, all of which aim to document ‘insider’ knowledge. The purpose of the study is, thus, “to not only understand, but to actively interpret the voices of [the participants]” (Kelly 2006:350). Kelly cites Gergen’s (1985) idea of qualitative research being essentially generative and creating “new ways of understanding” (Kelly:350). This emphasis on rich experiential data is a defining characteristic of interpretive research (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006:39).

The aim of making these considered decisions in the design stage of research has also been to achieve design coherence which Terre Blanche et al (2006:39) view as “consistency between the researcher’s paradigmatic assumptions, the purpose of the research and the eventual conclusions”. In this regard, a central concept for the design coherence of this study is the concept of ‘multiple perspectives’. Discussing how an exchange of different perspectives can contribute to new understandings of a given reality, Halfman and Couzij (2008:44) claim that the primary strength of the AVP process is in “the sharing of individuals’ unique narratives and the development this fosters” and that “AVP aims at enriching participants’ worldviews by bringing multiple perspectives together, simultaneously

48 Terre Blanche et al (2006:40) define ‘paradigms’ as “systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions [which] act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the researcher and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation”. As already mentioned, the overarching paradigm of this study is social interpretivism.
enriching participants’ understanding of events from the past and situations they will encounter in the future”. It is the merging of these ‘multiple perspectives’ and the effect that this can have on participants’ worldviews that this study aims to capture and document. The study’s design has also taken note of Henning’s (2004:150-151) caution that “in searching for the truth value of knowledge … with a pragmatic character, usability of knowledge is primary” in that it will feed the results of the study back into the AVP community as well as making them available to the UmziWethu programme.

Also taken into account, as discussed in chapter 1 when explaining the researcher’s role, is how the interpretive researcher sees research as “an interactive process shaped by his or her own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:8). Recognising that conducting narrative research in a cross-cultural context means accessing frameworks of meaning different from our own, Andrews (2007:489) stresses the importance of our willingness and ability to imagine a world other than the one we know. She argues that this ‘narrative imagination’ is helped by personal ‘lived experience’ of different cultures and cites Geertz’s (1973) classic statement that culture and meaning cannot be separated.

In this study, to help address the cultural differences between the white, middle-aged, middle-class researcher and the young Xhosa participants of the study, two Xhosa AVP co-facilitators helped with the administration of the questionnaires (available in English and Xhosa) and participated in the workshop and joint analysis sessions. However, because an AVP workshop creates the opportunity for facilitators and participants to share aspects of their personal worldviews and, thus, develop a certain intimacy, a degree of this cultural difference was eased.

The following section discusses the research methods used.
4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methodology which has been employed in this study, giving details of the data collection procedures and discussing their reliability and validity.

Of primary significance is the study’s sourcing of data from a variety of sources, namely, the semi-structured questionnaire which included a request for written or spoken conflict narratives, the AVP workshop which concluded with a request to review the previous written or spoken conflict narrative and, finally, the post-workshop focus groups (after three and six weeks).

The desirability of such a range and variety of qualitative data sources is extensively supported in the literature. For example, mentioning a range of interconnected interpretive practices such as case studies, personal experience, introspection, life stories, interviews, cultural artefacts and interactional and visual texts, Denzin and Lincoln (2008:4) stress that the interpretive researcher frequently makes “a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study” in order to gain as complete an understanding as possible. Similarly, Silverman (2001:11-23) mentions how the four major methods used by qualitative researchers – observation, analysing texts and documents, interviews and recording and transcribing – are often combined. Also, talking specifically of research in conflict analysis and resolution, Druckman (2005:13) points out that “the conflict researcher benefits from a ‘tool kit’ … to perform analyses on a broad spectrum of problems” because conflict analysis and resolution “is an interdisciplinary field … [and] “no particular methodology (experiments, surveys or case studies) has a corner on this market”.

Using data from a variety of sources also creates the opportunity for the data to ‘speak to each other’. For example, Fine, Weis, Weseen & Wong (2000:119) explain that in their work they were seeking not just a coherent synthesis of data or methods but “with a firm reliance on multiple methods, we sought to cross over, converse with, and tap into the different kinds of data” and Henning (2004:103)
emphasises that strength of an inquiry is built not only on the use of a variety of data collection methods and sources (generally known as triangulation of methods), but also using different approaches to ‘working the data’.

Triangulation of data collection sources is only one type of triangulation.\(^{49}\) Kelly (2006:380) defines triangulation as “the use of multiple perspectives against which to check one’s own position” and cites Denzin’s (1970) list of four basic types of triangulation:

- data triangulation – using a variety of data sources.
- investigator triangulation – using several different evaluators.
- theory triangulation – using multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data.
- methodology triangulation - using different methods to “look for convergent evidence” (ibid:380)

In accordance with this list, this research study employs more than one form of triangulation: investigator triangulation in phases 3 and 4 (the AVP workshop and the analysis of the conflict narratives) and methodology triangulation (questionnaires, workshop, conflict narratives and focus groups), subjecting the data to interpretation from more than one perspective.

Henning’s idea of “working the data” is similar to Creswell’s (2008:176) notions of the ‘holistic account’ that qualitative researchers try to develop as a multi-faceted picture of the issue under study. This involves the development of ‘multiple perspectives’ to give “the simultaneous display of multiple, refracted realities” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:8). Equally important is Kelly’s (2010:355) injunction that

\(^{49}\) Henning argues against the use of the word, ‘triangulation’, because she considers qualitative methodology as “interpreting and sourcing in various ways” to build a complete picture or text rather than calculating a position from three different vantage points” but stresses the importance of validity and refers to the views of Steinar Kvale (2002) and Yvonna Lincoln (2002).
to maintain the balance between the particular and the general, the interpretative researcher needs to “keep one eye on the development of the whole and the other on the parts which are integrated therein”. In this study, the profile of the participants’ perceptions of conflict (provided by the questionnaires) was the backdrop against which to analyse the conflict narratives which in turn provided the subject matter to be explored in the focus groups.

Terre Blanche et al (2006:321) regard staying close to the data as essential for good interpretive analysis and refer to Geertz’s (1973) definition of a ‘thick’ description of the data (converted from the raw, ‘thin’ description) as “a thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions and context of the phenomenon”. Henning (2005:6) adds that ‘thick’ description “gives more than facts and empirical content … [and] also interprets the information in the light of other empirical information in the same study, as well as from the basis of a theoretical framework that locates the study”. It is these “[thick] rich descriptions of the social world [that] qualitative researchers believe are valuable (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:16; Silverman 2001:222). Chambliss and Schutt (2010:276) regard the ‘thick’ description as conveying “a sense of what social reality is like from the standpoint of the natural actors in that setting”.

In addition to being the primary provider of such descriptions, the researcher has also been the main data-collecting instrument. As Creswell (2008:175) confirms, qualitative researchers tend to collect data themselves and usually do not rely on instruments developed by other researchers. In the case of the present study, although the study has included the observations and interpretations of co-facilitators as well as the participants, all data has been gathered and transcribed by the researcher and, where assistance was sought, re-checked by the researcher.

50 Henning also ascribes these terms to Geertz (1973;1993) but claims they originated with Gilbert Ryle, the philosopher.
Before discussing the data collection procedures, the following section details the nature of the participants.

4.3.1 Participants

As mentioned in chapter 1, the participants of this study were a pre-selected group of 18 young Xhosa adults (18 to 25 years old), all from the Eastern Cape, nine females and nine males. These young adults participated in the Umzi Wethu Academy programme of The Wilderness Foundation aimed at increasing youth employability. All participants were selected on the grounds of their vulnerability status\(^{51}\) by means of the referral-based selection process explained in chapter 1. Thus the participants of this research study can be regarded as a fairly representative sample of at-risk youth.

The participants studied and worked together for the duration of the research period which constituted an invaluable opportunity to gain ‘insider’ knowledge from a group of young people who participated in the same AVP workshop and who faced similar challenges on an everyday basis. Especially valuable was the opportunity to explore whether these young people – given their common support base – were able over time to implement any shift in perspective gained during the workshop and whether such changes made any significant difference to the quality of their relationships. These considerations have been explored by means of focus group discussions three months and six months after the workshop. These focus groups were attended on a voluntary basis by students interested in continuing the self-reflective process begun in the workshop.

All the research for the present study (the initial survey, the workshop, focus groups and joint data analysis sessions) was conducted on the premises of Umzi Wethu in Port Elizabeth and by email with the co-facilitators and external AVP consultants. The study has, thus, conformed with conventional qualitative practice

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\(^{51}\) As already mentioned, this vulnerability status could include one or two missing parent(s), no formal income in the family or an abusive home environment.
of collecting data at the site where participants are experiencing the issue under study and where they have face-to-face interaction as distinct from a contrived research situation such as a laboratory (Creswell 2008:175). The Umzi Wethu premises comprise administrative offices, the student residential areas and the coffee shop (open to the general public) where the students are trained in kitchen and front-of-house duties; thus, their daily interactions are not only amongst themselves and the Umzi Wethu staff but also with members of the general public. Each group of Umzi Wethu students lives at these premises for their year of study.

4.3.2 Data collection procedures

In discussing the data collection process for this study, this section also looks at how the issues of reliability and validity have been addressed. As already mentioned, the research study has been conducted in five phases:

- phase 1: questionnaire and pre-workshop conflict narratives
- phase 2: workshop and post-workshop conflict narratives
- phase 3: analysis of pre- and post-workshop conflict narratives
- phase 4: first focus groups (after three months)
- phase 5: second focus groups (after six months)

Because the researcher’s overall ‘holistic’ interpretation has been ‘patched’ together by these five different forms of interaction with the participants, Denzin and Lincoln’s term, bricoleur (maker of quilts), seems applicable as it refers to the interactive process which is the main feature of this study. The following section looks at each of these data collection methods - at each piece of the ‘quilt’ - in turn.

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52 According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008:37), their term, bricoleur, is contested by Hammersley (1999) who regards the word as meaning ‘mythmaker’ and suggests that it be replaced with the idea of boatbuilder.
4.3.2.1 Phase 1 - questionnaires

In order to obtain contextual information from the participants regarding their perceptions of conflict, an initial, semi-structured questionnaire (in both English and Xhosa, the participants’ home language) was distributed (see Appendix B). Questions 1-8 of the questionnaire have been adapted from Snodgrass (2006) and question 9 was adapted from the compendium of assessment tools given by Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn & Behrens (2005). To ensure that each participant understood the questions in the same way, the questionnaire consisted largely of closed-ended questions, most of which made use of a Likert scale in which 1 was ‘Strongly disagree’, 2 was ‘Agree’, 3 was ‘Neutral’, 4 was ‘Disagree’ and 5 was ‘Strongly agree’ (Likert 1932). One of three open-ended questions asked participants to recount a conflict narrative: a short (15-30 lines) description of a personally-experienced conflict situation.

The advantages of questionnaires include that they can be given to large groups, anonymously and at little expense and are generally regarded as the preferred data collection method (Chambliss & Schutt 2010:185), although one disadvantage can be the poor response rate. However, in the case of this research study where the participants were a small, fixed group and the questionnaire was completed by the participants in the presence of the researcher, this disadvantage did not apply.

4.3.2.2 Phase 2: AVP workshop – researcher’s observations

The workshop in this study, as already mentioned, was a two-day AVP Basic workshop which, although adapted to the participants of this study, adhered to the standard AVP structure (AVP Manual 2002) and, for this reason, this section will describe the main strategies and features of these workshops.

As explained in chapter 1, AVP workshops use games, exercises and role plays to allow participants to learn and practice the interpersonal communication skills needed to transform conflict nonviolently. Novek (2011:336) further details:
Through small group sharing and one-to-one interaction, the workshops build a sense of community and trust. Exercises focus on building self-esteem, improving listening skills and self-expression, replacing competition with cooperation and learning to be open to the inner goodness all people possess. Participants work on learning habits of mind that accept the possibility of change and forgiveness. The attitudes that reduce antagonism are simple but profound: affirmation, respect, empathy. These states of mind help people learn how to respond to serious conflicts in their lives without resorting to abuse, assault or worse.

Accordingly, in this study, the workshop exercises, done in pairs or small groups, addressed what AVP calls its “Five Pillars”. The Australian AVP website defines these Five Pillars as:

- Affirmation (building self-esteem and trust);
- Communication (improving listening skills and assertive expression);
- Cooperation (developing cooperative attitudes);
- Community Building (establishing and nurturing connections with others in a group); and
- Creative Conflict Transformation (transforming conflict situations).

\textit{(AVP New Australia, 2008)}.

A key aspect of an AVP is its developed sense of play. Emphasising that play is a profound biological process, Brown and Vaughan (2009:5) explain that play not only energises and enlivens but also trains us for the unexpected, renews our natural optimism, fosters empathy and opens us to innovation and creativity. Although an AVP workshop addresses serious issues and has many quiet, contemplative moments, its standard structure includes short periods of pure play and this balance is perhaps what makes AVP so appealing to young people.

In addition, the \textit{AVP Basic Manual} (2002:A-3) defines the distinguishing features of the AVP process as one of seeking and sharing, not of teaching and stresses that AVP does not provide answers to problems but provides a “seeker friendly” environment (ibid:A3) which encourages workshop participants to find their own answers.
This emphasis on encouraging participants to find their own solutions to their conflicts is well-supported in conflict management literature (Avruch 1998; Lederach 1995; 2000a; 2000b; 2005) which stresses the importance of local shared common sense. For instance, Avruch and Black (1991:29) regard conflict as integral to “the [local] assumptions and perceptions that individuals hold about the world”. Thus, because how we talk about our conflicts shapes how we perceive and react to these conflicts (Winslade & Monk 2001:41), being afforded the possibility of what Briggs (1996:4) refers to as “the creative space ... in the intersection between conflict and narrative” where narrators can ‘re-imagine’ their conflicts and possibly manage them more successfully (as can happen in an AVP workshop), is a valuable opportunity for young people in the process of constructing new ways of being.

In addition, since AVP offers an embodied, lived experience of trust and acceptance (Novek 2011:339), it helps participants recognise the similarity of their own struggles to those of others in order to develop empathy and, importantly, self-empathy so that they can meet their needs by changing the unconscious negative thought or behaviour patterns that limit intimacy without resorting to self-destructive behaviour. In her exploration of the impact of AVP on participants’ perceptions in Uganda, May (2006:118) concludes that exposure to AVP workshops benefitted participants in four primary ways: raising awareness regarding how conflict arises, impacting positively on ethnic divisions, initiating personal empowerment processes and influencing gender sensitivity, especially for men.

Similarly, Miller and Shuford (2005:1) summarise the teachings of AVP as:

the need to respect and care for self and others, and with this focus, participants develop positive self-images ... effective conflict resolution skills – listening, problem-solving, cooperation, assertiveness skills. [AVP] also focuses on positive, healthy attitudes ... when a person’s attitude toward self, others and conflict changes, their world is transformed. They see the world and others differently, and this change stays with them, often for the rest of their lives.
AVP’s primary goal is, therefore, to encourage workshop participants to develop a positive view of themselves and of the differences they encounter in other people in order to be able to celebrate diversity and to transform conflict situations nonviolently. This view that conflict can be positive and that there are choices regarding its management is repeatedly stressed.

Bitel (1998; 1999:3) who conducted a study of AVP in three British prisons, believes that AVP workshops reverse the cycle of development that leads to a life of crime, namely, difficult life circumstances which lead to low self-esteem, a lack of trust, disempowerment, a lack of responsibility and, ultimately, violence. He feels that, by building self-worth and developing trust and responsibility, AVP interrupts this cycle and enables people to choose alternatives to violence in situations of conflict (ibid:3).

Other studies of AVP (Phillips 2002; Sloane 2002; Tomlinson 2007; Walrath 2001) confirm that the strength of the AVP workshop is the awareness it creates for nonviolent strategies of resolving conflict. Delahanty (2003:1), who overviews of the effectiveness of AVP workshops, details the ground rules of an AVP workshop as follows:

Each AVP workshop is an experiential workshop, based on a set of ground rules (no put downs; affirm self and others; listen and don’t interrupt or speak too long; observe confidentiality; volunteer only yourself; right to pass) and a strategically designed series of exercises, including games ... which quickly build a community of safety and trust within the group and allow the kind of open sharing that makes the workshop successful.

Delahanty (ibid:1) also emphasises that it is an essential AVP requirement that every participant in an AVP workshop does so on a voluntary basis and that each workshop is led by two or more facilitators, stressing that the use of the term ‘facilitator’ instead of ‘trainer’ is another indication of the philosophy of AVP.
Thus, in conflict management terms, the overall aim of an AVP workshop is to bring awareness to the dominant discourses\textsuperscript{53} in participants’ thinking in order to deconstruct attitudes, behaviour and language that can cause ineffective ways of handling conflict. This ‘deconstruction’ is a slow process and “includes the conscious shaping, albeit in some small way, of the discourses out of which needs and interests are produced” (Winslade & Monk 2001:62). As already explained in chapter 2, Rosenberg (2003:41-43) sees this deconstruction process as being grounded in a more careful use of words, especially those that imply blame or demands and which often cause relationship problems. For this reason, the dangers of such ‘life-alienating’ language (retributive concepts such as blaming, labelling, threatening, judging and denial of responsibility) are brought to participants’ awareness in a session on ‘I-messages’ which includes the main features of Rosenberg’s NonViolent Communication (NVC) and also stresses the negative effects of self-labelling. Such a session is especially valuable for so-called ‘at risk’ young people such as the participants of this study who, as mentioned in chapter 3, may carry residual effects of stigma, affecting self-esteem.

As described in chapter 2, a powerful concluding exercise in the workshop is that of role plays where volunteer participants form groups and role play a conflict situation of their choice. A workshop can include one to three role plays and often it is the role play that workshop participants remember most and which brings about a change in their attitude towards conflict. The following summary of \textit{Why AVP uses role play} (AVP Basic Manual 2002) provides the rationale for using role plays:

\begin{itemize}
  \item to create a visual, non-judgemental image of the conflict;
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{53} The word ‘discourse’ here is used in the sense that Gee (1990) defines it. He refers to ‘Discourse’ which he regards as the ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, reading and writing that identify one as a member of a particular Discourse community.
to gain a better understanding of the needs of each person in the conflict situation – and how this understanding can move the conflict;

- to create a safe space to model alternative behaviour;

- to illustrate different ways of reacting to conflict situations so that participants; have an opportunity to reflect on what they have done in the past and what they would like to do now; and

- to portray a privileged, ‘insider’ experience of the emotions involved.

The role plays in this study’s workshop were video-recorded with the permission of the participants and copies of the video were made available to all the co-facilitators as well as to the participants.

To summarise, probably the key feature of AVP is that it “addresses the important psychological need for connection with others … by teaching attitude skills such as self-awareness, empathy and community building”(Miller & Shuford 2005:11) and, as Miller and Shuford note, this profound sense of intimate connection and community which exposure to AVP can bring about, “… is not a temporary change. It is, to a significant degree, a permanent change”.

Such a ‘sense of connection’ is frequently mentioned by participants of AVP workshops. Halfman and Couzij (2008:43) believe that it is due largely to how the AVP workshop in structured with its emphasis on individual ‘power for good’ and the ‘safe space’ created by its structured, activity-based programme. They comment as follows:

In every workshop that we participated in, whether it was in the Netherlands with a group of Amsterdammers or in Leeukop Correctional Services in Johannesburg, with a group of South Africans, the end result was always the same – a strong sense of connectedness. In two days, people who had never met before – and who would have probably never met otherwise – became equal members of a group, perhaps even friends. Somehow, the group’s diversity was transformed into a power for cohesion.

The ‘sense of connection’ that AVP workshops can provide is especially relevant in the light of young people’s need for intimacy as a social space and the limited
positive opportunities for this available to them (Soudien 2007b:1) as discussed in chapter 3. This feature of AVP, along with its ability to generate the increased self-awareness critical for the deep personal change that a nonviolent attitude to conflict requires, is significant for the youth of this study whose so-called 'at-risk' status increases their need for such connection.

In recording observations during the workshop, the researcher made use of the four sets of notes suggested by Spradley (in Silverman 2001:227):

- short notes at the time of each field session;
- expanded notes soon after each field session;
- a fieldwork journal to record problems; and
- a provisional running record of analysis and interpretation.

As much as possible, as suggested by Silverman (ibid:227), verbatim accounts of participants’ views were retained to maintain access to the raw data and to differentiate between the etic analyses (based on the researcher’s concepts) and the emic analyses (based on the conceptual framework of the participants). To strengthen the emic content of these analyses, the observational fieldnotes were supported by the audio and video recordings in order to include verbatim accounts of what the participants said and to keep the researcher’s influence to a minimum. Silverman regards such "low inference descriptors" (ibid) as a key factor to increasing reliability in qualitative studies. However, despite these precautions, the challenge of finding the balance between closeness and distance in the study was evident.

4.3.2.3 Phase 3: narrative analysis of the conflict narratives

As mentioned, this research study uses a narrative analysis approach to examine the pre- and post-workshop conflict narratives of 18 at-risk Xhosa youth in conjunction with self-administered questionnaires and focus groups in order to explore how the experience of an AVP workshop affects their perceptions of conflict situations.
Narrative has a well-developed cross-disciplinary tradition in various academic disciplines such as literary studies, narratology and social linguistics with the terms ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ often used interchangeably. Riessman (2008:105) maintains that “social reality is constructed through interaction” and defines stories as “social artefacts, telling us as much about society and culture as they do about a person or a group. She suggests that just as groups, organisations and governments construct who they are and how they want to be known, individuals in the modern world must also construct their identity, primarily through storytelling, and cites Bruner (1987:15) who believes that we become the autobiographical narrative that we tell about our lives. As discussed in chapter 3, this construction process can reach a ‘turning point’ in adolescence when young people begin to construct their adult identities.

Patterson (2000:4-5) also argues that narrative is “the primary way in which people make meaning of their experiences in the world” and sees the narration of experience as “crucial to meaning-making” and “inseparable from the linguistic, social and political process of story-telling”. This sense of storytelling is central to the AVP process which Halfman and Couzij (2008:43) summarise as “experiencing the strengths of diversity by opening up to others and by exchanging thoughts, feelings and worldviews”. In motivating their use of narrative analysis to look at the differences in conflict twin stories, Halfman and Couzij (ibid) stress that “telling a story is not simply communicating with others, it is also communicating with oneself.”

In the last twenty five years, narrative analysis has become increasingly popular in social research. Researchers who use narrative analysis believe that they “are able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning [and] bring them into useful dialogue with each other … to understand more about individual and social change” (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou 2008:1). Although conventionally associated with literary texts, narrative analysis has become increasingly significant as a universal form of human sense making (Riessman 2008:154) and its primary strength is the access it can facilitate to values, belief
systems and approaches that are usually inaccessible when the focus is only on the literal content of a text. As Halfman and Couzij (2008:48) put it, narrative analysis opens a ‘back door’ to the worldviews of people and to the framework that informs their actions.

The connection between narrative theory and practice and conflict analysis is relatively recent. As an in-depth method of research, narrative analysis has been found to be especially useful for protracted, seemingly unresolvable conflicts as the ‘stories’ of how different parties view a conflict often help in untangling the conflict to allow the disputants to be able to hear the other’s person’s viewpoint (Johnston 2005: 278). Addressing questions such as what was said, who said it and to whom, narrative analysis of conflict looks at nuances and innuendos and allows for broad or thematic understandings of conflict processes and is both a research tool for analysis and a theoretical framework for what narratives explain about people and conflict (Johnston 2005:277). For these reasons, the narrative approach was chosen for this study which explores young people’s perceptions of their conflict situations through their narratives of conflict. Also, the role of stories in conflict situations is similar to the function of story sharing in an AVP workshop where participants reflect on contrasting experiences “until the group’s diversity is celebrated and … participants come to realize that their sense of reality is not necessarily shared by the people around them … [and] … often start to question their own, often strongly held, personal beliefs and convictions” (Halfman & Couzij 2008:42). This process is the basis of the experiential learning process of an AVP workshop, and allowing participants to experience these multiple perspectives enables a subsequent widening of worldviews.

In applying narrative analysis, Riessman (2008:3) explains that what makes texts ‘narrative’ is sequence and consequence and how “events are selected, organized, connected and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience” (ibid). She also refers to narrative as a “bounded segment of talk that is temporally ordered and recapitulates a sequence of events” (Riessman 2008:116). Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008:11) make the point that narrative is almost always about time –
not just sequential time but also change through time and transformation is also assumed to be integral to narrative: the co-presence of futurity and past in the present, the reconstruction of the past by new ‘presents’ and the projection of the present into future imaginings.

Riessman (2008:3) proposes four main approaches to different kinds of texts which have in common a storied form: thematic analysis, structural analysis, dialogic analysis and visual analysis but stresses that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be adapted and combined. The seminal work of William Labov in 1972 and the model he subsequently developed forms the basis of much early narrative research. However, many latterday researchers have come to see the emphasis Labov places on the story’s event (as opposed to the narrative functions of the text) as a limitation. For example, Patterson (2008:37) suggests that an experiential approach (which includes past, present, future, imagined and hypothetical experience as well as the context of the narrative) is often more appropriate. She suggests that researchers apply the Labovian model where appropriate but also to use “more inclusive definitional criteria” as needed.

The method most commonly employed in narrative analysis is thematic analysis which focuses on the content of the story and what carries the ‘plot’ forward as well as the sequence and ordering of events and any recurring patterns. However, as Squire et al (2008:5) explain, narrative research makes a distinction between looking at narratives from the point of view of events (seeing how the narrator talks of particular past events that happened to her/him in a more or less constant way) and looking at narratives as stories of experience (which encompasses general imagined phenomena, including events) and believe that such stories often change


55 For example, Patterson (2008:37) mentions Attanucci (1993); Bell (1988); Ferrara (1994); Harris (2001); Koven (2002); Peterson and McCabe (1983); Polanyi (1981) and Riessman (1990).
over time as the narrator changes perspective. However, both types of narrative research look at the expression of the individual, internal representations of events, thoughts and feelings (ibid). Squire et al also mention a third form of narrative research which addresses co-constructed narratives that develop in face-to-face or email conversations between people and whose social codes and stories are dialogically constructed.

Thus, there are various ways to classify narratives. Phoenix (2008: 66) refers to Bruner’s (2002) distinction between canonical narratives (normative cultural expectations) and personal narratives and how these canonical narratives can provide insights into how narrators use culture and how cultural understandings can limit the stories that can be told. Phoenix also mentions the distinction between the ‘big story’ approach (the autobiographical or biography as the unit of analysis) or the ‘small story’ approach which looks at the everyday stories in social interaction which accomplishes certain tasks including identity-construction. Because this study explores the everyday conflict narratives of its participants, it takes a ‘small story’ approach.

Also of interest to the narrative researcher are the elements of ‘paralanguage’ – tone of voice, pauses, laughter – as well as body posture, gestures, facial expression, eye movements and other aspects of emotionality (Squire et al 2008:10) and Riessman (2008:116) explains that narrative analysis attends to the polyphonic nature of voice and its “non-linear, nontransparent interplay and orchestration of feelings and thoughts” which indicate power and positionality.

Riessman (2008:116) also stresses the importance of the researcher taking her/his position into account, for example, in this case, how my position as a white, middle-class researcher affected the students’ perception of me and our interactions as well as my interpretations of their voices and behaviour. As Riessman (2008:3)

56 Phoenix (2008:64) cites Georgakopolou’s (2006a:123) who sees the experience-centred approach as a second wave of narrative analysis that has ‘moved from the study of narrative-as-text (first wave) to the study of narrative-in-context.'
explains, “narratives are composed for particular audiences at moments in history, and they draw on taken-for-granted discourses and values circulating in a particular culture”. This connection of narratives to interpretive communities and collective identities is particularly relevant for this study because its participants are members of a specific cultural group and one that is different from mine. Also of relevance is the cross-cultural nature of the study because “as narrative researchers we are a … part of the data we collect and our presence is imprinted upon all that we do” (Squire et al 2008:17). However, as Squire et al (ibid) point out, all research assumes some interpretative authority and most of the assumptions are based on transparent – and, therefore, challengeable – theories. They also caution the experience-centred researcher not to neglect the significance of language, for example, the links between the interpersonal and cultural forms of language and give an example from their research of the word ‘race’ being seen by their informants as both a “a floating unstable fiction and a fundamental, un-erasable aspect of biography and social experience” (ibid:54, 111), a paradoxical definition which, for example, accurately reflects the experience of race in an AVP workshop.

In eliciting the initial pre-workshop conflict narrative, both oral and verbal instructions were given (a copy of the instructions which were given are included in Appendix B).

Although written conflict narratives are more reliable, in order to accommodate participants who preferred to talk, spoken, audio-taped narratives were also accepted. When completing the questionnaire, each participant could, thus, choose between narrating the conflict narrative orally (and having it audio-recorded) or writing it. In these cases, the recording was preceded by the question ‘Can you tell me about a conflict that you personally experienced?’

After the two day workshop, participants were handed the envelopes containing their initial conflict narratives and requested to reflect on them in the light of what
they had experienced in the workshop and to – if necessary – re-write them. Again, participants had the choice of using an oral (and audio-recorded) or written form.

Whatever the medium chosen by the participants, both ‘twin stories’ were analysed by means of the thematic approach to narrative analysis. As mentioned, this analysis has been done in collaboration with the four co-facilitators as well as two external AVP consultants to give “inter-rater reliability” (Silverman 2001:229).

In this joint thematic analysis, an inductive data analysis process has been applied. Silverman (2004:229) stresses the importance of standardising the categories used to analyse text and, accordingly, the co-facilitators and consultants were asked to consider the narratives with the following questions in mind:

- What, if any, are the key differences between the two narratives?
- Taking these differences (or lack thereof) into account, how has the AVP workshop influenced the participant’s perception of conflict and his/her perception of conflict situations?
- How might any such altered perception influence how the participant handles a conflict situation?

Their comments were included in the analysis.

Creswell (2008:175) also urges qualitative researchers to build their themes and categories “from the bottom up” by interacting with the participants, bearing in mind that “the interpretive practice of making sense of one’s findings is both artistic and political” (Denzin & Lincoln 2009:23). Such interaction with the participants has been especially true for this study primarily because of the communicative nature of the AVP workshop and the resultant sense of connectedness. As Halfman and Couzij (2008:45) underline, “the key to understanding AVP is to be found in the sharing of individuals’ unique narratives and the development this fosters”.
For the analysis of conflict twin stories, Halfman and Couzij (2008:87-89) suggest several focal points: the story’s point of departure and structure, the extent to which the conflict is externalised or reconstructed, the story’s sequence and coherence, the degree of narrator self-reflection or perspective-taking and the portrayal of the ‘other’. Central to their recommendations is the idea that conflict stories are usually theories about responsibility and show the techniques that narrators apply (consciously or unconsciously) to indicate how much responsibility they accept for the conflict. In this regard, the locus of control construct from social psychology could be relevant as it refers to the extent to which the narrator perceives himself or herself to be in control of what happens to him or her. Rotter (1996) originally proposed that people with an external locus of control see events affecting them as deriving from chance, fate or God’s will (and are, thus, less likely to change their behaviour as they do not believe that it will make any difference), whereas people with an internal locus of control (for example, in Western culture) regard events that affect them as dependent on their own efforts, abilities or behaviour and are, therefore, more likely to change their behaviour as they believe they can influence such events. Understanding an individual’s locus of control style is, therefore, key to understanding his/her worldview. However, as Daum and Wiebe (2003:10) point out, useful as locus of control is, it cannot account for all the influential factors involved in sense-making as people react to events from various dimensions of self (for example, personal meaning and self-concept which are also culturally influenced) and these are also considered in the analysis of the narratives.

While AVP encourages an internal locus of control, it also accommodates cultural beliefs of an external locus through its unique concept of ‘transforming power’. As explained earlier, although AVP does not promote any religious doctrine, it is based on the fundamental belief that there is a power for peace and good in everyone and that this power has the ability to transform violence (Shuford 2005:1). Whether we believe this power is within us or outside of us, AVP teaches that we can use it to transform ourselves and the situations in which we find ourselves (Chico & Paule 2005:10). This concept of transforming power is usually
what participants remember most about an AVP workshop. One of the Gacaca judges in Rwanda who participated in AVP training as part of the post-genocide reconciliation process, explained how it helped him: *for me, after learning about Transforming Power, I find I can even forgive the people who killed my relatives* (Chico & Paule 2005:14).

In addition to noticing the degree to which narrators accept responsibility for their conflict situations (that is, where they position their loci of control), Halfman and Couzij (2009:6) recommend examining twin stories from the perspective of other AVP core themes such as trust (in self and others), efficacy, openness and sensitivity to their ideas, openness and willing to question strongly-held personal beliefs as well as noting the various techniques that narrators employ to influence their audience. For example, sometimes they omit certain details of the conflict situation or use words such as ‘always’ or ‘never’ for emphasis. Other ‘red flag’ words include those that Rosenberg (2003:23-24) identifies as language that denies choice (words such as ‘have to’, ‘should’, ‘ought’, ‘must’ or ‘can’t’) which have similar constructs and implications in most languages. Although in cross-cultural situations and with second-language speakers such as the participants of this study, these language considerations may be less significant, they have, nevertheless, been taken into account when analysing the narratives.

In explaining the usefulness to research of narrative analysis, Riessman makes the point that, because narrators make specific choices in the selections, organisations, connections and evaluations of their narratives, they “interpret the past rather than reproduce it as it was” (Riessman2003:1). This view is especially relevant to conflict narratives because, as Halfman and Couzij (2009:6) demonstrate, consciously or unconsciously, the narrator can “leave out aspects of a conflict … create certain images of the different characters in [the] story” or use “specific words … to influence their audience”. Thus, they regard the influence of AVP as visible only when the ‘ideographic’ quality of participants’ accounts is preserved and the exact word choice retained (ibid:45).
Squire (2008:50) explains that a single interpretation of a narrative does not always emerge and that many researchers argue that there are multiple valid interpretations and multiple narrative ‘truths’. She also mentions that analysis involves considering the ethics of interpretation within the frame of the researchers’ and participants’ different powers over the data, especially when anonymity cannot be guaranteed but that researchers can obviate this problem by guaranteeing confidentiality. In the current study, detailed explanations of the implications of research participation were given and permission to audio-tape and video-tape was granted.

Riessman (2002) admits that narrative analysis can sometimes “over-personalis[e] the personal narrative” and stresses that narrative approaches are not suitable for large studies because of the meticulous attention required to interpret subtle nuances. However, with its relatively small sample of 18 young adults, narrative analysis was appropriate for the current study.

4.3.2.4 Phase 4: individual interviews

Provision was made at the outset of the study for the possibility of an additional data collection method – that of individual interviews - to clarify or extend the data obtained from the analysis of the conflict narratives. However, due to the busy Umzi Wethu schedule of the participants, this was not possible. Fortunately, to a large extent, the focus group discussions adequately fulfilled this purpose and only one individual interview was conducted at the request of a participant who wanted to deepen her personal understanding of how to apply AVP strategies to her life. This interview served primarily as an extension of the AVP workshop for the participant and has not been included in this study.
4.3.2.5 Phase 5: focus groups

The final step in the research process was the facilitation of post-workshop focus groups three months after the workshop and again six months after the workshop. Participation in these focus groups was strictly on a voluntary basis and, with the permission of the participants, all discussions were audio-recorded.

The main aim of these focus groups was to reflect more deeply, in a group setting, on the impact of the AVP workshop and to consider to what extent any shifts in perspective that might have occurred during the workshop had been retained and whether these shifts had altered participants' perceptions of conflict. With these considerations in mind, the focus groups essentially considered the following two questions:

- Did the AVP workshop change your perception of conflict?
- If so, how?

Chambliss and Schutte (2010:240) define focus groups as “a qualitative method that involves unstructured group interviews in which the focus group facilitator actively encourages discussion among participants on the topics of interest”. The participant viewpoints are, thus, emphasised as they interact with each other rather than with the researcher. Berg (2001:72) calls a focus group an “intentionally created conversation” in which the aim is to observe interaction and gain substantive content such as fragments of biography and life structure. Thus, the Umzi Wethu focus groups not only explored the opinions of the participants but also sought to gain insight into their motivations, attitudes and behaviour.

Chambliss and Schutte (2010:240) include in their suggested guidelines the importance of the neutrality and good listening skills of the facilitator as well as

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57 According to Fontana and Frey (2000:651) the term 'focus group' was coined by Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1956) to refer to “a situation in which the researcher/interviewer asks very specific questions about a topic after having already completed considerable research".
clear, easy-to-answer questions, a homogenous group of participants with no power differentials, purposeful sampling and audio recording. A confidentiality agreement is also recommended to ensure that participants do not disclose the information discussed to anyone outside the group. In the case of the Umzi Wethu focus group, this confidentiality agreement was done verbally.

Although focus group questions can be either structured or open-ended, when the questions are structured, the role of the facilitator is more directive. The questions for the focus groups conducted for this study were open-ended as the aim of the researcher was to encourage dialogue on the topic by being a “flexible, objective, empathetic good listener” (Fontana & Frey 2000:652) in order to uncover the hidden, more subtly-nuanced meanings in the participants’ answers.

There are various disadvantages in using focus groups. Chief amongst these is that the type of data obtained from the group interaction of a focus group is different from that of an individual interview. The following list is a summary of the disadvantages mentioned by Fontana and Frey (ibid:652):

- results of a focus group cannot be generalised;
- the group or group culture can put pressure on participants to conform to a particular point of view which can affect an individual's viewpoint negatively; and
- sensitive topics cannot be treated.

For these reasons, before the focus group discussions began, participants were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and they were encouraged to express divergent views and to take turns to avoid any one person dominating the discussion. Fontana and Frey (ibid:650) stress that a successful focus group depends largely on the expertise of the facilitator to establish ‘a balanced rapport’ between being friendly and impersonal and to obtain responses from the whole group. The researcher also needs to balance directive questioning with managing the dynamics of the group.
Creswell (2008:175) lists such concern for “participants’ meanings” as one of the key characteristics of interpretive research, stressing that the research focus needs to be on “learning the meaning that the participants hold, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research”. The conflict narratives and the focus group discussions were, for the most part, transcribed by the researcher personally so that “low-inference descriptors” (Silverman 2001:226) could be obtained whereby the possibility of misrepresenting the participants’ words could be reduced and, at the outset, participants were reminded of the confidentiality of all information they gave and how this information would be used.

Chambliss and Schutte (2010:240) regard focus group methods as “weak in developing reliable, generalizable results” but see them as ”indispensable for …quickly assessing the range of opinion of about an issue” which was the function of using focus groups in this study. Also, focus groups are relatively inexpensive to conduct and, as Fontana and Frey point out (ibid:652), they can be “stimulating for respondents, aiding recall”. Since the participants of this research study had interacted with each on a daily basis for ten months after the AVP workshop, this function of the focus group was especially useful for generating interaction regarding the ‘mutual remembering’ of the workshop. In addition, the focus groups presented opportunities for participants to reveal additional information about themselves and encouraged additional self-reflection– and group reflection - on attitudes and behaviour in conflict situations in their shared everyday life.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the research design and methodology of this study and discussed the implications of its social interpretivist worldview which relies on participants’ subjective experiences, feelings and perceptions in order to gain insight into their meaning-making strategies, especially of conflict situations. Attention was drawn to the delicacy of the interpretation of such qualitative data from both the ‘insider’ and 'outsider' perspectives, especially in cross-cultural research situations and how, in spite of the challenges involved, the researcher's
facilitator/observer status in the AVP workshop and the joint analysis process with the other co-facilitators enhanced such perspectives.

The chapter also detailed the data collection methods employed, explaining how collecting data from variety of sources (the initial questionnaires, unstructured workshop observations as well as from the conflict narrative and focus group analyses) triangulates and strengthens an inquiry.

Since the study included a standard AVP workshop, the main features of such a workshop were discussed, detailing the strategies that teach participants how to transform conflict nonviolently.

The chapter also overviewed narrative analysis as a research method explaining its suitability for the analysis of conflict situations and how this was applied in this study. Finally, the function of focus groups, especially as related to this study, was discussed. The following chapter presents the findings of the study.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review on conflict management strategies and South African youth provided in chapters 2 and 3 serve as the conceptual framework for this study which explores the perceptions of a specific group of so-called ‘at-risk’ young Xhosa males and females regarding their conflict situations.

This chapter explores the twin stories with the study’s central research question in mind: how does the experience of an AVP workshop affect how at-risk young adults perceive and manage conflict situations? In addition, the study’s sub-questions are also addressed:

- How do these young adults perceive and manage their conflict situations?
- What, if any, are the differences in how these conflict situations are perceived and handled after the experience of an AVP workshop?

Thus, the study investigates the participants’ stories to gain a sense of how the participants perceive and manage conflicts and, in particular, for the differences between their pre- and post-workshop narratives in order to explore how their perceptions of conflict were influenced by the workshop.

As indicated in chapter 4, data was collected in four phases:

- Phase 1: questionnaires
- Phase 2: researcher observations of the AVP workshop
- Phase 3: conflict narratives
- Phase 4: focus groups (three and six months intervals after the workshop)

The findings presented in this chapter, therefore, consist of the descriptive statistics which give a profile of the participants’ experience and perceptions of
conflict as well as an overview of their self-perceived conflict management strategies before the AVP workshop; observations recorded during the AVP workshop conducted, together with a discussion of the participants’ pre- and post-workshop conflict narratives and the subsequent focus groups.

Of primary importance to these findings is the socio-cultural context of the participants. As Henning (2004:65-66) maintains, the analysis process is the ‘heartbeat’ of a research study and while discursive work searches for meaning beyond the superficial, “the meaning is also laden with cultural value - the way that the participant has learned to categorise and organise her experience and then utter it in language, the way she has been initiated into [her] discourse community” (ibid). Adequately representing participants’ meanings is always a challenge for the researcher and the complexity of conducting responsible research is especially present when working outside of one’s culture and with groups more disadvantaged than one’s own. While the nature of this challenge was evident in this study, the researcher was encouraged by Selby’s (2004:144-148) contention that cultural difference can also be used as an interpretive resource and that even though working “fairly with disadvantage” may not always be possible, “there is much to be learned from exploring … beyond one’s cultural boundaries”. This was indeed the case in this study which was marked by participants’ open and generous sharing of their ideas and feelings with regard to their conflict situations.

This chapter begins by presenting the results of the self-administered questionnaires completed before the AVP workshop by all the participants. A copy of this questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.

5.2 PRE-WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRES

As already mentioned, there were 18 participants, 17 of whom were Xhosa-speaking and one was Afrikaans-speaking. All had completed Grade 12 and were between 18-25 years of age; there were eight females and nine males. The questionnaires, which consisted of seven fixed choice questions and two open-ended questions, were distributed in order to obtain a profile of participants’
experience of conflict as well as their attitudes to conflict and their conflict management behaviour. As explained in chapter 1, all participants were selected by Umzi Wethu on the basis of their so-called ‘at-risk’ vulnerability status which could include one or two missing parent(s), no formal income in the family or an abusive home environment.

The results of the questionnaires (tabled in Appendix C) reveal that, despite being classified as so-called ‘at-risk’ youth because of compromised family circumstances, the responses of these young people seem typical for their age group. Like most young adults in their age group, the primary cause of their conflicts lay in interpersonal communication and this was also their conflict area of most concern. They rated rumours as their most frequent conflict experience followed by competitive peer attitudes. Intolerance of differences, verbal fighting and boyfriend-girlfriend disputes were rated the next highest, with threats, insults and bullying around the mid-point on the scale. The frequency of physical fighting and damage to property was relatively low and fighting with a knife or a weapon was infrequent. Although they had witnessed insults, bullying and physical fighting, they had not personally experienced such incidents with the same frequency.

When asked to rate how they felt about their problems, whether they felt they had more, less or about the same number of problems as other people their age, most of the participants felt they had the same number of problems as their peers. Three participants felt they had fewer problems and two participants felt they had many more problems. In general, they felt accepted by their friends and treated fairly.

58 However, it must be noted that, while the Umzi Wethu selection criteria are based primarily on the ‘at-risk’ vulnerability status of applicants because the focus of their programme is to provide opportunities for such youth, their selection process must also inevitably consider applicants’ perceived aptitudes for such opportunities. To take this selectivity into account, future studies involving young people from the Umzi Wethu programme could consider a control group of young people who are not part of the programme.
Most participants indicated that if they were in need of help, they would turn to a parent, followed by a teacher or a sibling and, after that, another adult or another family member. Participants indicated that only as a last resort would they turn to a counsellor. An unfortunate omission in this question, only noticed in the results and especially relevant in the light of the importance of peer connection for this age group, is that the option of turning to a friend for help was not given. The option ‘Other (please specify)’ was given but most participants did not respond to this.

There were two open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Responses to ‘What is your greatest difficulty in relationships?’ were typical of young people still establishing a sense of identity and learning the boundaries of sharing: seven participants mentioned trust or issues of trust as their greatest difficulty in relationships while six participants named communication difficulties as the primary problem. Three participants mentioned respect and two said that reciprocity was the cause of their main difficulty in relationships.

Answers to ‘What do you suggest as a first step towards addressing this problem?’ were varied: ten participants felt that more communication would help, four felt frightened or unsure how to address the issue, two felt that providing terms and conditions to their relationships might help, one participant felt that giving respect could be the answer and one participant felt that s/he needed more acceptance in relationships. The results of this question were slightly at variance with the results of the earlier question where the majority of the participants said they were satisfied with how they were treated by their friends and indicate that interpersonal communication may be problematic for them.

The penultimate question explored participants’ conflict management strategies: nearly all the participants indicated that they felt there are better ways to solve problems than fighting, that they try to talk about a problem instead of fighting and that when their friends fight, they try to get them to stop. Similarly, most participants strongly disagreed that ‘a guy shows he really loves his girlfriend, if he
gets into fights with other guys over her’ or that it is ‘okay to hit someone to get them to do what they wanted’.

The last question further probed participants’ attitudes to conflict situations and conflict management strategies in 21 multiple-choice statements (see tables in Appendix C, differentiated into three scenarios). Summarising these results, nearly all the participants felt that it was ‘really wrong’ to respond physically to the following three scenarios:

- boys hitting back when insulted by another boy;
- girls hitting back when insulted by another girl; and
- boys hitting back when insulted by a girl.

Participants condoned boys shouting back at other boys’ insults more easily than boys shouting back at girls’ insults. Not surprisingly, participants felt that it is better to shout back than to hit back but only two felt that shouting back was ‘sort of okay’ and no-one felt it was ‘perfectly okay’. Although participants tolerated verbal abuse better than physical abuse, neither was well-regarded: most felt it was ‘really wrong’ for a girl to hit back when insulted by a boy; only one participant felt that hitting in any circumstance was ‘sort of okay’ and no-one felt it was ‘perfectly okay’.

Almost everyone felt that it was wrong for a girl to hit a boy or girl, although slightly fewer felt it was wrong for a boy to hit a girl or for a boy to hit a boy. Again, practically all the participants felt it was wrong to hit, shout at, insult or say bad things to people in general; to push people around when you are angry or talk behind their back if they upset you, although slightly fewer felt it was wrong to talk behind someone’s back if they behave badly or say bad things about people if you are angry. Only one participant felt that it was ‘sort of okay’ to insult, push and hit people or talk behind their back if they upset you and the same participant also felt that it was ‘perfectly okay’ to punish people if they upset you.

To summarise, these findings show that, with minor exceptions, the young people participating in this study exhibited attitudes and behaviour in keeping with youth
of their age group, providing a pre-workshop profile of participants who are not habitually or overtly violent, either physically or verbally and whose primary concern – similar to most young people their age - was trust and respect in relationships, especially with members of the opposite sex. Such findings underline the importance of not stigmatising youth as aggressive or violent or having preconceived ideas about a young person who is labelled ‘at-risk’ because of compromised family circumstances and are consistent with the conclusions of various authors (Allsopp & Thumbadoo 2002; Dawes 2005; Graham, Bruce & Perold; Swartz 2010; Soudien 2007a, 2007b, 2010; Richter & Panday 2007; Sommers 2003) who, as mentioned in chapter 2, stress instead the need for youth support.

5.3 RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS OF AVP WORKSHOP

Participation and enthusiasm during the workshop was high. No student sat out any of the exercises and, in general, a high morale was maintained throughout the two days. As co-facilitator and observer, three features of the workshop conducted at Umzi Wethu struck me:

- The intense, almost volatile quality of the participants’ engagement: after some initial reserve, once the ‘safe space’ was created and the open sharing began, participants seemed to have an urgent need to tell their stories and share their points of view. Their readiness to engage, their delight in playing the games and their interest in each other’s stories was consistent with the desire for intimacy typical of young people in their age group as discussed in chapter 3.

- Participants’ appreciation of the facilitators all being on the same level and also involved in the activities with them enhanced their participation.
• Participants’ frequent use of the word ‘guilt’ in connection with deprived or abusive circumstances. The use of this word could have had more to do with inappropriate second language word-choice than any deeper meaning: for example, perhaps the feeling being referred to aligns more to ‘shame’ than ‘guilt’. However, both words point to feelings of low self-worth. Some participants also used the expression ‘nobody’s perfect’ when referring to restricted family circumstances as though somehow they shared the blame for these circumstances. The use of such words reflect these young people’s experience of the burden of poverty and their efforts to rationalise it but is also significant in that such feelings of shame, guilt or inferiority could also represent the unresolved challenges of the early life-stage tasks in Erikson’s (1968) model (as discussed in chapter 3).

In summary, the workshop was well-received by the participants. Although some of the participants had doubts about attending, once into the process, enjoyment of the experience of nonviolence was high. Commenting on the high speed at which change can occur in an AVP workshop, Sloane (2002:21) argues that the shift from anti-social to pro-social behaviour does not develop linearly but reaches a ‘tipping point’ when a certain level of trust is reached within the group which is noticeable by, for example, increased interaction, laughing and handshaking. Sloane claims that, once past the tipping point, development of trust, social skills and ‘other-regarding’ behaviour accelerate quickly. As mentioned, the students’ willingness to engage seemed to indicate that this ‘tipping point’ was soon reached in the Umzi Wethu workshop and the Umzi Wethu student leader seemed to confirm this when he referred to the workshop in his audio-taped narrative and describing, on behalf of the group, their experience by saying:

You’ve been a part of us, you just gave us what we were supposed to have, you know, you didn’t act as a facilitators but you acted as a people who … want to work with us you know because … we disagree with you, you disagree with us, you gave us advice, we gave you advice … it was wonderful, I just want to thank you guys for coming … initially we thought this is waste of time, we are using all weekend saying …violence, violence I’m just going to hit someone before I do something for it but you guys …
our lives into another perspective, you know … we just have a different perspective about what we used to do, you know.

Importantly, in their comments on the workshop (see Appendix D, Report on AVP workshop), participants consistently drew on AVP ideas or themes which suggests that they had begun to internalise AVP core ideas and values and could apply them to their everyday lives. This is the core function of an AVP workshop: in his evaluation of an AVP study in New Zealand, Phillips (2002:37) stresses that “an important aspect of any workshop is that the material is easily generalised beyond the workshop setting … [and that] workshop concepts, ideas and experiences are applied to the everyday lives of workshop participants beyond the workshop setting”.

5.4 PRE- AND POST-WORKSHOP CONFLICT NARRATIVES

As previously explained, the third and central phase of this study applies narrative analysis to conflict stories because how we talk about our conflicts shapes how we perceive and react to them (Winslade & Monk 2001:41) and because stories are:

selective and perspectival … reflecting the power of memory to remember, forget, neglect and amplify moments in the stream of experience. We are forever composing an impression of ourselves, projecting a definition of who we are, and making claims about ourselves and the world we test out and negotiate with others.

(Riessman 2008:29)

For these reasons, the stories of personally-experienced conflict, as related by the participants in their own words, have been explored in an attempt to understand the perceptions, values and concerns of the participants, especially as regards conflict.

These stories were elicited from the students on two occasions: before they participated in the two-day workshop as part of the questionnaire and then again immediately after the workshop (a copy of the instructions given is included in Appendix B).
Although written conflict narratives were preferred because of their greater reliability, in order to accommodate participants who preferred to tell their stories orally, audio-taped narratives were also accepted. The choice to narrate their conflict stories personally was a personal preference of participants and not related to any language difficulties. In addition to a prior group explanation, audio-taped narratives were begun with the question ‘Please tell me a conflict situation that you personally experienced’.

After the two-day workshop, participants were asked to reflect on their initial conflict narratives (which they were given in an envelope) in the light of what they had experienced in the workshop and to re-write their stories. Again, participants had the choice of using an oral (and audio-recorded) or written form and with one exception, participants kept to their initial choice.

As explained in chapter 4, the resulting twin stories are explored using the thematic approach of narrative analysis in order to see whether participants’ experience of the AVP workshop had influenced their perceptions of the conflict situations they recounted before workshop. The analysis was done in collaboration with the co-facilitators of the workshop as well as two external AVP consultants, mainly by email and the following section presents the findings.

5.4.1 Thematic analysis of pre- and post-workshop conflict narratives

This section considers the pre- and post-workshop narratives of this study in terms of the research question, namely, to what degree the AVP workshop affected participants’ perceptions of their conflict situations, exploring the sense-making processes of these differences by means of thematic analysis and looking for the progression of themes as well as for any transformation or resolution. As emphasised, the study is primarily analysing the differences between the pre- and post-workshop narratives in order to explore how their perceptions of conflict were influenced by the workshop.
As explained in chapter 4, the thematic analysis of this study looks for the progression of themes as well as their transformation or resolution with a ‘small story’ emphasis which means a focus on emotions, worldviews, characters or events to illustrate why particular accounts are produced in particular ways, in other words, considering the sense-making processes (Phoenix 2008:67).

Of the total of 18 young people who participated in the study, 11 chose to write their narratives and seven audio-taped their stories. As mentioned, the analysis procedure included the four co-facilitators of the study's workshop as well as three independent AVP consultants all of whom were asked to consider the narratives with regard to the following questions:

- What, if any, are the key differences between the two narratives?
- Taking these differences (or lack thereof) into account, how has the AVP workshop influenced the participant’s perception of conflict and his/her perception of conflict situations?
- How might any such altered perception influence how the participant handles a conflict situation?

This collaboration was done by email, the facilitators and consultants responded by adding their comments to the analyses and these comments have been included. In addition, the final discussion of these analyses was sent to all facilitators and consultants for comment.

Firstly, to give an overall perspective of the type of conflict scenarios that were described by the participants: of the 18 narratives collected, eight concerned problematic relationships with peers, seven described conflict in the family, two talked of conflict in their communities and two reported on conflict with a former employer. Thus, in keeping with young of this age group, the majority of the conflicts uppermost in the minds of these young people were conflicts with people close to them: with their peers and within their family groups.
With regard to type of conflict described and their conflict behaviour, of the 18 narratives, five participants (two male and three female) mentioned conflict situations where they personally responded by fighting physically: one was a member of a gang fighting a rival gang (with knives) in another township; one reported fighting physically with her half-sister to evict her from their mother’s house; a young man detailed a physical fight with his girlfriend’s father and uncle, using a golf club and a hockey stick; a young girl described how she put a hot iron in the face of her abusive uncle and one young woman who defined herself as gay, described how she fought physically with boys to show them that she was not afraid of them. As is usual when conflict turns violent, all these stories reflected the speed with which the encounters became physical. The rest of the narratives – more than half (eight females and three males) - described conflict situations in which they did not fight physically but felt very angry and, for the most part, powerless.

Thus, although the profile obtained from the descriptive statistics showed that the participants seem typical of their age group in both their attitudes to conflict and their conflict management strategies, their stories reveal more details, especially of the pervasiveness of conflict in the young people’s family and community life. The nature and extent of this conflict also points to its normalisation: Galtung’s (1990:294) seminal work stresses that what is insidious about socially accepted violence is that the violent act is no longer seen as violent.

In keeping with young people facing Erikson’s (1968) life-stage tasks of identity versus role confusion as well as intimacy versus isolation, the most repeated subject matter in the Umzi Wethu conflict narratives is the difficulty of interpersonal communication and the need for assertive self-expression. Thus, all their narratives are “explicitly relational” (Phoenix 2008) and populated by either family members or friends, underlining the centrality of these relationships in the lives of the narrators whose primary task at this stage of their development is to form relationships which adequately mirror who they want to become. Andrews (2007:
493), although talking about people in general, aptly describes the challenge young people face during this stage:

Where we derive our most profound sense of belonging, that community that helps us define for ourselves who we are, is a place of flux, not only across our lifetimes but even across our days … the construction of a static ‘home’ community, marked by shared values, is just that, a construction, albeit one of deep personal and social significance, which resides in the imagination of the individual. Many of us experience our home and the meaning of home, in conflicting and sometimes incoherent ways.

As discussed in chapter 3, for young people whose home lives are often unstable or sites of struggle, being able to construct this sense of belonging can sometimes be almost impossibly difficult.

When comparing participants’ first and second conflict narratives of their study, Halfman and Couzij (2009:21) note that, in their post-workshop conflict narratives, participants often used language that could be identified as the type of language used in the AVP workshop. Halfman and Couzij regard this as evidence of small but important steps towards assimilating new perspectives and that, by doing this, the participant has begun “to internalise a different idea of what constitutes ‘socially accepted’ conflict behaviour and that “what the author experienced as desired behaviour in [the] first story has become undesired in the second version”. Halfman and Couzij suggest this means that, during the workshop, “the author has reflected on his or her own conflict behaviour”.

The similar changes evident in the second versions of the conflict narratives of this study are encouraging because changes in how we conceptualise a personally-experienced conflict situation can help alter our behaviour when we re-encounter a similar conflict (Winslade & Monk 2001; Lawler 2002). In comparing the participants’ pre- and post-workshop narratives, the main changes identified were reflected in the following themes:

- increased sense of self-responsibility;
• increased self-empathy (including increased self-trust, self-esteem and assertive self-expression); and
• willingness to question previously-held beliefs especially with regard to changes in the portrayal of the 'other'.

The progression of these themes are discussed below quoting from the both the pre-and post-workshop narratives, copies of which are given in Appendix E. Apart from some inclusions in square brackets to assist coherence, excerpts from the narratives are reproduced exactly as they were written or spoken by the participants but, for practical purposes, have been edited of hesitations and repetitions although, it must be stressed, these were taken into account during the analysis. The researcher’s questions in the spoken narratives – usually just the initially question ‘please tell me a conflict situation that you personally experienced’ – have also been omitted. For identification and to maintain the anonymity of the narrator, each narrative has been given a title. Excerpts from the original narratives are in italics.

5.4.1.1 Increased sense of self-responsibility

In conflict resolution terms, the increased ability of many of the narrators to take responsibility for their behaviour in the initial conflict situations that they recounted is an important change. As explained in chapter 4, conflict narratives are negotiations of ‘theories of responsibility’ (Cobb 1994 in Hansen 2003:1) that link the participants of a conflict to their actions and the outcomes of the conflict. Halfman and Couzij’s (2009:6) findings show how a shift in the way that self-responsibility is perceived is a critical step in the successful resolution of a conflict situation.

In this study, the narrators’ increased ability to take responsibility for their feelings and their behaviour can be attributed to being able to see their conflict situations from a wider perspective as a result of the AVP workshop. For example, the narrator of The Employer describes the effect of seeing her conflict situation from a wider perspective:
I really had a problem with anger, that’s what I know .... I mean I was trying so hard to be ... this sweet and kind person because I knew ....if we had to fight ... then it would be like .... a bomb in the house ... so you know, it’s [AVP] really helped me cos .... you will be safe all the time ... you know, you won’t be made to unnecessarily fight and all that because you can look at things in a different perspective.

In the same way, in his first version, the narrator of The Sleep Over describes how he finds himself retaliating against the golf club attack of his girlfriend’s irate father and uncles with a hockey stick, but his second version, he accepts responsibility for not having taken his girlfriend home in time. While in his first narrative, he discounts his responsibility regarding the time (before we knew the time) and leaves his girlfriend to deal with her parents (I decided that she will try ... again), in his second narrative, he acknowledges that he is also responsible (it wasn’t her problem but our problem because I both did not look at the time) and he apologises to his girlfriend’s father for not respecting the curfew (I apologise for the incident and ensure the parents it will not happen again). While this is wishful thinking, it does show that the narrator has reflected on his behaviour and has taken the step of owning his experience rather than blaming it on someone else which allows for the possibility of deeper, more meaningful relationships. He is more willing to face what actually happened and tell the truth to the parents (told her parents what really happen the night before), realising that a more respectful (or easier) way to appease his girlfriend’s parents would be to approach them directly and acknowledge what happened.

Similarly, in his first story, The Joker justifies laughing when a fellow student gets angry with him (it helped me) but in his second story he admits that this was probably not appropriate behaviour (okay I will say I was probably wrong to laugh) and acknowledges his avoidance (I didn’t answer her direct that I didn’t hit her) and that, had he explained himself, the escalation in the conflict might have been prevented (cos I could have at least tell her ... so that so it just end there). There is a revealing difference in how he recounts what he did in each story. In the first version he writes simply when she asked I just laugh but in the second version he is much more hesitant to admit his laughter: so she asked me why ... I ... instead
of telling her that I didn’t hit her, what I did was …. (pause) … to laugh, so I just laugh, … These are important self-reflections, not only the admission that laughing was not an appropriate reaction but also the realisation of how he contributed to prolonging the conflict. He now feels that in future, he will express himself differently, whether or not an accusation is correct (from now on I have to … if someone’s asking … I should have .. I could⁵⁹ … I would tell the someone I did not … if ever I did it, I will say I did it because … ja). Although he knows that he is not normally reactive (I never really acted, like in terms of … someone made me angry and .. I didn’t really act in terms of be angry or hit him) and knows that he can control himself (I was angry but I manage to control myself …. most of the time I don’t get that angry), his realisation that assertive self-expression can avoid or reduce conflict helps him take greater responsibility for his behaviour, feel less of a victim and also increases his self-trust and respect for others.

The narrator of The Gang Fight also sees how self-expression can deflect conflict and wants to help mediate conflicts around him (what I’ve learned in this two days is how to manage your anger even to the others, to your friends … to show them how can they manage their anger … by not fighting, just to learn to speak to each other …. because anger it becomes with a bad results sometimes… you see. It’s not the right thing to fight than to talk).

In The Half-sister, which recounts a physical fight between sisters (we fought and she wanted to hit my mom but we didn’t gave her any chance, then we fought like really), after the workshop the narrator also accepts more responsibility for her behaviour, recognising that she could have handled the conflict nonviolently (I now felt bad about happened that time because now I know that there’s a better [way], that I should have handle the conflict nonviolently). Although in her first story she

⁵⁹ His hesitation over the word ‘should’ could be result of the AVP workshop which teaches that ‘should’ is a ‘red flag’ word which blames (ourselves or others) and can invariably be constructively replaced by ‘could’ which implies choice.
makes no reference to her feelings, in her second version she refers to how both she and her sister felt (*and I felt really really bad about that as a results I and my sister got that anger*) which represents a first towards taking responsibility for how she feels.

Thus, the experiential process of an AVP workshop is akin to Paolo Freire's (1970) ‘conscientization process’ which Lederach (2005:162) refers to when talking of growing a ‘moral imagination’. Lederach explains that when people are encouraged to pay attention to what already lies within them, they will understand the strengths and weaknesses of their insights. For this reason, the workshop exercises of AVP consistently direct participants to their own inner resources in order to increase greater self-awareness. One participant expresses this increased self-awareness aptly when she says:

*I could say that AVP opened the door … that’s what I can say … there was something inside but… you just put a blind eye … but it’s there.*

Trustingly this ‘something’ inside grows self-esteem and self-confidence which, in turn, allows participants to trust that their feelings are a valid response to their circumstances. For example, before the workshop, the narrator of The Boyfriend feels angry at being included in her mother’s conflict with her boyfriend but her resentment goes no further than blaming her mother (*She does not understand how the fight affected me, she never ask how I felt*). After the workshop, however, she takes responsibility for her feelings, deciding to talk to her mother (*Now I know that I could of told my mother how that made me feel and I could of told her that I am and was part of the conflict, because we were living together. Now I have anger towards her, but I am going to change that and tell her that we must revisit the past and try to explain how I felt and what did the conflict do to me*). In addition, she now feels the responsibility to apply this strategy for dealing with other people’s conflicts (*when I see that a conflict involves me, and I know that I have a solution, I must communicate and try to solve the conflict without violence*).
Similarly, the narrator of The Employer resents and blames her manager in her first narrative (*that man who was treating me badly*) but in the second, she takes responsibility for over-reacting:

*…. I’ve taken … a look of things in another perspective … it’s something that I’ve learned now … so I could say that I also over-reacted, I could say that, … even though he didn’t have a … good way of putting it … I should have thought that long and hard … but the thing is I didn’t have much information.*

Also, her reference to the difference that having ‘information’ has made to how she handles conflict points to the importance of accessing knowledge networks and how such access can affect the lives of young people, especially those living in the margins of society (McDonald 1999:208).

With their increased sense of self-responsibility, some narrators also created new strategies for their conflict situations in their second versions which is a significant step for successful conflict management (Briggs 1996:4; Cobb 2008:116; Halfman & Couzij 2008:64). For instance, the narrator of The Soccer Game decided to no longer be a victim of his feelings, especially when playing a game, The Cheat realised the value of expressing his feelings and needs honestly and, as mentioned, The Half Sister recognised that the use of violence can be avoided. If participants are able to maintain these changed perceptions, their behaviour in their conflict situations could change, either immediately or gradually.

### 5.4.1.2 *Increased self-empathy (including increased self-trust, self-esteem and assertive self-expression)*

The second versions of the narratives also show increased self-empathy in the form of increased self-trust and self-esteem, all of which are encouraged in AVP workshops by means of experiential exercises designed to increase participants’ awareness of their feelings and needs.

Various studies of the value of AVP and NonViolent Communication in interpersonal communication training (Beck 2005; Blake 2002; Little 2002; Phillips 2002; Steckal 1994;) refer to the increased personal accountability and conflict
resolution confidence that can result from a greater awareness of feelings and needs. Little (2002:66), for example, regards the development of self-empathy as integral to the development of conflict resolution ability, because it forms part of an internal dialogue which can help solve internal conflicts and can result in increased empathy, both for oneself and others. The narrator of The Employer who initially recounted how she would fight physically in self-defence explicitly refers to this internal dialogue and how AVP helped her realise that she can choose how to react:

\[
\text{anger …. is like something that is forming inside … you can be able to control it in you and then say …. is it really necessary for you to go up …. you think about the thing that happened … then you say …. you know what, even though it makes me upset but …. you are able to put things together in you before you act … before you react …}
\]

Especially significant, therefore, were those narratives which showed a shift from victim thinking to self-empowerment and the development of an internal locus of control as seen in, for example, the narratives of The Postmaster, The Brother, The Aunt and The Accusation. This shift is a crucial one as it represents the move from making moralistic judgements (also of themselves) to being able to make “need-serving or life-serving” evaluations of themselves and others in which their needs are no longer seen as selfish or weak (Rosenberg 2003:41-47). These narrators were able to translate their negative internal messages into feelings and needs which is a critical first step in self-empathy.

Thus when the narrator of The Postmaster changes his perception of his conflict situation – no longer wanting to only be an angry victim of the postmaster who abused his power as an employer - his self-esteem and self-trust shifts to the point that he feels able to forgive the postmaster and even express his feelings about the situation to him. He mentions how he will use what he learned in the AVP workshop (I’m going to use that one … I-message because … then I have some closure on what happened). His narrative illustrates how “each tale of conflict, in the way that it is told, has the power to keep people locked in combat … [or] … free them from suffering. Each story can lead them closer to anger or forgiveness,
towards impasse or resolution, into stasis or transformation” (Cloke & Goldsmith 2000:2).

In the same way, in her first narrative, the narrator of The Aunt expresses the effect that her conflict with her aunt has on her self-image (*I thought I was no good person/I was not a good child, I thought maybe it was a mistake for me to be in this world because of the words my aunt used to say*) but her second narrative portrays her increased self-empathy and self-trust:

_I realised that I could have solved the problem with my aunt in a positive/different way. Now I’m feeling good cos know I’ve realised the situation I was in I could have spoken to my aunt about my situation ... I knew what I needed but I didn’t know how to ask for it but now I know that I’ll act differently._

This increased self-trust and feelings of self-empowerment can also be seen in the second version of The Boyfriend where the narrator realises that she has a right to feel angry and a right to express her anger (*now I have anger towards her but I am going to change that and tell her that we must revisit the past and try to explain how I felt and what did the conflict do to me*). Pretorius (2004:v) emphasises how exposure to relationship violence can negatively affect self-esteem and the feelings of self-worth thus this narrator’s decision to express her feelings is significant. Her increased self-confidence is evident in how she refers to her mother’s boyfriend: whereas in her first version, she only refers vaguely to his behaviour (*he was a drunken [but] when he was sober he was very nice to us and very talkative, he would make us laugh and we would forgive him anyway*), in the second version, she is more specific in her descriptions (*he was violent and verbal abusing*) and she no longer talks of him being nice when he was sober or how she and her mother forgave him. She is also more specific about her mother’s behaviour when she and her boyfriend fought (*my mother used to bite him up and there would be a big fight*). This increase in assertive self-expression in her second narrative also shows her greater self-trust.
The self-empowerment of the narrator of The Accusation comes through realising that she can learn to choose how to react to a threatening situation. In her first version, she describes her reaction when accused of something she did not do (so I get angry and start to swear and go and lay on my bed and start to cry) but in her second version she acknowledges that there is another way (I must think before I react. I learn in the AVP programme that you must try not to react before you haven’t think about the things first). Again, although this is just a small step, it is a critical one that could gradually grow to make an important difference to how she handles her conflict situations.

The narrator of The Lunch Box also revises her way of reacting to conflict. In her first story, she explains how she reacts to a friend betraying her confidence (I went to her and shouted at her we ended up hitting one another) and how this incident affected her (That had an inflict because I always want to shout when a person does me wrong). Her second story, however, indicates her realisation that shouting and hitting are probably not the best way of handling a problematic situation as she no longer uses these words (I confronted her and it was not nice there a conflict then) and, although she recognises the challenges involved when trust is broken, she no longer talks of wanting to shout (When you trust someone its not easy when they tell people what you have told them. Her use of ‘confront’ instead of ‘went’ also shows an increase in self-assertion.

Again, although these are small steps, they are critical ones. We talk about things in a particular way because we conceptualise them that way and then we act according to the way we conceptualise them (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:5). In the complex process of self-awareness and self-empowerment, the realisations of these narrators represent their first steps in separating what they are feeling from how they think others are behaving towards them. They are, therefore, still in the process of learning to distinguish between their feelings (physical sensations) and their evaluations of others (judgemental thoughts). As discussed in chapter 3, when we are able to recognise and express the needs behind our feelings, we have a better chance of getting them met (Rosenberg 2003:41-47). Thus, if these
participants can maintain their realisation that emotional reaction is a choice, they can make a major change to how they handle conflict and even develop strategies to meet their needs.

An example of this can be seen in the first narrative of The Brother where the narrator refers to her feelings of powerlessness (and here I was so lost trying to figure out and truly I didn’t know what to do, all I knew was I hate what I’m seeing) but in her second narrative, she is wanting to develop a strategy to meet not only her needs but those of her family with regard to their conflict situation (now I know better about conflict management, this won’t happen again. I’m gona share the AVP experience to all my loved ones).

In the first version of The Sibling, the narrator deals with his sister’s anger by avoiding the conflict (leaving her speaking shouting it helped me cos I thought that if I was on her way that I would shout and … … do all the swearing … I would even fight with her and it could have been worse you know) but after the workshop, he feels empowered to engage with an angry person and express himself by using the I-messages he has learned (I-message that’s something that stood out for me … the I-messages one is very easy, it is very polite, it is a way, a good way, to show someone that I’m not on the same level that you are because you are angry but I just want to tell you that I’m not in the same mood that you are).

The attitude and behaviour changes illustrated in the second versions of these narratives also underline the fluid nature of young people’s identity and consciousness, as well as their openness to new information, especially at this age which can be, as discussed in chapter 3, a ‘turning point’ opportunity to break negative childhood patterns and gain the increased self-esteem which is young people’s “primary socialisation factor” (McDonald 1999: 203). These considerations are especially important for the youth of this study because their vulnerability status increases the possibility of negative childhood patterns.
5.4.1.3 Willingness to change previously-held beliefs especially as regards portrayal of the other party

Many of changes in the second version of the narratives also indicated participants’ willingness to question previously-held personal beliefs especially as regards the other party. As mentioned, when we tell our conflict stories, we tend to cast ourselves in the role of victim and protagonist and the other party in the role of victimiser and antagonist (Cobb 2008:102) which, as Cobb explains, represent the ‘positions’ or moral locations of a narrative and are the “architecture of identity”. While the participants’ first narratives were not different in this regard, their second versions tended to show the other party in a more positive light or show a greater understanding of the point of view of the other party.

For example, in the second version of The Sleep Over, the narrator, instead of defending his position violently as he did in his first narrative, concedes the rights of his girlfriend’s parents (I apologise for the incident and ensure the parents it will not happen again). The Joker’s second story also shows how his portrayal of the other has shifted: in his first version he denigrates what his fellow student says to him (the bullshit coming out of her mouth) but in the second version, he is more able to see her behaviour as only typical of an angry person (you know when someone is angry telling a lot of things now about you). He also chooses to replace the word ‘butt’ used in his first story with “back” in the second story.

Similarly, in the first version of The Half Sister, the narrator expressly states ‘remember that she’s my half-sister’ as though to underline that a half-sister does not warrant as much loyalty or affection as a full sister, whereas in the second version, she makes no such statement, perhaps indicating a more positive view of her half-sister.

In her initial story, the narrator of The Employer is angry with the manager of the shop where she was briefly employed, blaming him as the reason she left but in her second narrative she admits that he was just doing his job: ‘I should have stayed ….at that shop…. I shouldn’t have left … those things that that man said …
Again, although these are small changes, they are important shifts in perception of the ‘other’ and can be directly related to self-esteem and trust. Sloane (2002) attributes the ability to see the value in others as directly following the development of trust. Explaining why AVP had a positive effect on approximately 600 inmates of a USA prison, he notes that once the inmates had been given the opportunity to develop trust, there was an “unmistakable transition as [the men] learnt that others are not necessarily a threat (ibid: 3). Also, as discussed in chapter 3, once we are aware of our own deeper needs and are more able to notice the needs of others, we begin to perceive relationships in a new light (Rosenberg 2003: 41-47).

5.4.2 Other key features of the narratives

In addition to exploring the main changes identified in the pre- and post-workshop narratives according to the three main themes of increased self-responsibility, increased self-trust and willingness to change previously-held beliefs, there are other specific features of the narratives showing cultural and social experiences of participants which are relevant to this study.

For example, some of the narrators present what Phoenix (2008) calls “exculpatory discourses” which construct themselves as moral agents who do the right thing even though it is not easy. Such narratives can also be regarded as key narratives, that is, a narrative that a participant tells repeatedly or perhaps uses as an unconscious attempt to gain sympathy from the audience. Although it is difficult to know to what degree the identity of the white middle-class researcher and participants’ perceptions of her supposed middle-class values influenced the language or content of the narratives, some narrators tried to present themselves in as positive a light as possible. For instance, The Cheat seems to take pains to present himself as someone who has learned the futility of infidelity but his language (*I’m doing a seventeen year old …. I sent her home*) suggests that he
still objectifies women and, thus, still operates within one of his culture’s dominant discourses.

Similarly, the narrator of The Employer explains pointedly that she does not steal the money even though her colleagues press her to do so (and seems to take pride in this) and, in the same way, the narrator of The Postmaster is pleased to report that he has taken the decision to forgive the boss who abused him.

Although these three stories are all personal narratives, they are also canonical narratives (Bruner 1990 in Phoenix 2008:69) because they underline key features of each narrator’s worldview, namely, that infidelity is undesirable behaviour (at least when talking to a woman), stealing is a crime and that being a Christian means being able to forgive. The narratives can also be seen as “tales of redemption” (McAdams 2006 in Phoenix 2008:69) because the stories involve transformation and give a positive outcome.

Using “identity as a resource” (Phoenix 2008:70) in this way, these narrators show the identity claims they are making on the basis of their stories and how they are in the process of constructing this identity. Their decisions to reinforce these aspects of their identity can be attributed, at least in part, to their experience of the AVP workshop. For instance, the narrator of The Postmaster refers explicitly to how some of the words used in the workshop spoke directly to him and his situation (but as I was here … somebody will say something and I say … now he’s talking to me) and made him recognise the difference between what he said and what he did (I’ve been dealing with this over and over saying that ay, but each and every day I am preaching to people that they must forgive somebody but I was struggling to forgive him) which motivated him to seek closure on an issue that had been disturbing his peace of mind. Such a narrative can also be regarded as a “culturally sanctioned script” (McAdams 2006 in Phoenix 2008:69) in that the values he is claims are upheld in his cultural community (in this case a Christian community).
The narrator of The Employer also makes an identity claim as part of her key narrative when she states “I was not raised like that’ and ‘I was not the person he wanted me to be’ showing how she takes meaning from her personal biography to construct her identity and how she is basing her claim to dignity in the ethic of her person (McDonald 1999:203) as well as showing her individualistic tendencies which are seen elsewhere in her narratives, for example, in how she defines herself as gay.

In addition, a canonical narrative is presented in The Community, where the narrator positions herself in opposition to her social group who believe that vigilantism is justified. Her story highlights the normalisation of violence in her community and how it can contribute to increasing violence: after spontaneously expressing her horror at seeing young boys killed in an act of vigilantism, she realises that her reaction is not shared by the people around her and that she is dangerously outnumbered. She feels frightened and confused. She makes strong identity claims as part of her key narrative when she says I was so angry and everyone was looking at me as if I’m saying something wrong… two women shouted at me as if I was saying a bad thing. Not having her strong feelings validated in any way by the people around her heightens her sense of aloneness. She intuitively knows that violence is not the way to solve problems but when she challenges the women who shouted at her (I went close to them saying You are the ones who opens each and every day taverns), she is aware of that she is putting herself in danger and goes home (I was against everyone who was at the park I left and went home very disappointed, furious, worried because I didn’t know what will happen to me if those angry people saw me again). She realises that the concerns she raises with regard to the values of her social community are complex and not easily resolved. Without any understanding or support for her feelings, she can only conclude there’s so much injustice in this country.

Her story exemplifies the socialised acceptance of using violence to solve problems in South African communities and how easily the ‘other’ can be dehumanised, and converted into an ‘it’, thus, setting the stage for violence
Her story also underlines the role that narrative can play in shaping understanding. As Cobb (2010:1) puts it:

Narratives matter. They shape the social world in which they circulate, reflecting and refracting the cultural limits of what narratives can be told, in what setting, to whom. From this perspective, they structure how we make sense of ourselves, as members of a community but they also structure how we understand right and wrong, good and evil.

Thus, this narrative is indicative of, as discussed in chapter 3, the type of complex ‘headwork’ demanded of young people caught between traditional and western cultures as well as the difficulty of resisting the internalisation of negative cultural messages (Semmler & Williams 2002:2). In addition, this story illustrates the socially-constructed nature of an individual’s multiple identities and how human dilemmas are manufactured in social contexts rather than embedded in human beings (ibid) – for example, no doubt the women who shouted at her and who were glad that ‘the dogs are finally dead’ are also caring mothers and friends. Thus, this story portrays something of the narrators’ wider social context and how a group’s identity and its “landscape of social memory” is linked to what its members keep alive in its constant “storying” process (Lederach’s 2005:142).

Also evident in the stories given by the participants’ of this study is the absence of positive role models which, as discussed in chapter 3, can perpetuate social patterns of using violence to solve problems or increase feelings of low self-worth. In The Sleep Over, the father and uncle of the narrator’s girlfriend come to reprimand the narrator armed with a golf club; the men in The Brother and The Boyfriend are physically and verbally abusive to women (in The Brother, the father also physically attacks his son for beating his girlfriend); in The Hot Iron, the young women feel threatened by the behaviour of their uncle from prison; in The Attack, the narrator is attacked by a former class mate; The Aunt is critical and

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60 This difficulty is also evident in The Half Sister narrative where the traditional healer’s diagnosis that the sick baby is being bewitched by the narrator’s mother and elder sister causes a physical fight among the sisters.
unsupportive; The Postmaster abuses his power and the colleagues in The Employer urge the narrator to steal. The reports of positive role models are limited to the woman of the police forum in The Gang Fight who take steps to reduce her community’s violence by organising that the two fighting gangs talk to each other with their parents and make peace and The Friend who helps the rape victim face her fears.

Linked to this lack of appropriate role models in the narrators’ social context is their reference to the treatment of women, some of whom are present in the stories largely through their non-representation or their passivity. For example, in The Half Sister, the mother of the three sisters who are fighting physically, is a silent presence who, while the centre of the conflict, does not seem able to influence the situation positively. In The Boyfriend, the mother of the narrator had a boyfriend who used to drink and when he does he was violent and verbal abusing me and my mother and the mother also fights physically and in The Brother, the narrator provides no details about the girlfriend who is regularly beaten. The status of his girlfriend is made visible by her invisibility, showing the extent of the normalisation of gender-based violence in her community. Taherzadeh (2005:147) points to this normalisation when she cites the words of a participant of a South African group study: “in my culture it is not anything strange when a man beats his wife. We grew up seeing our mothers being beaten, and no one ever reported these men to the police”. In the same way in The Brother, the narrator (a woman) mentions only that my brother usually does this [beat his girlfriend].

Although the narrators of these two latter stories felt angry at what they were witnessing, they felt powerless to do anything about it. As Winslade and Monk (2001:41) stress, since our point of view comes directly from our socio-cultural context, individual conflict narratives will inevitably echo the dominant political and social discourses and, as discussed in chapter 3, the insidious quality of the normalisation of violence is that it is not regarded as criminal, even by the victim. Making these tacit societal issues explicit, therefore, is an important first step towards addressing them.
Also of significance to this study is the direct reference to the value of the AVP workshop made by various participants in their second stories: the narrator of the Gang Fight refers to the ‘safe space’ created by AVP and how he would like to replicate it with children in the schools of his community; in The Brother, the narrator mentions how she hopes to use AVP tools with her community; the narrator of The Cheat talks of the ‘humongious impact’ of AVP and in The Postmaster, the narrator shares his AVP experience with a former employer with whom he had a conflict. The narrator of The Employer also mentions the effect of the AVP workshop had on her: \(\ldots \text{I can say that AVP has really done ... a huge, huge, huge impact in me.}\)

Although most of the comments by participants pointed to the positive effects of AVP, one outcome of an AVP workshop which needs careful handling is the possibility of participants feeling disappointed with themselves if they are not able to always put their newly-learned strategies into practice. As mentioned, a few narrators referred to feeling ‘bad’ about former behaviour now viewed as inappropriate in the light of the workshop or felt that they ‘should’ have handled their conflicts nonviolently. AVP actively discourages any form of negative self-image and, as noted, one of its starting points is to encourage participants to establish and maintain a positive view of themselves as well as of others as a basis for effective conflict resolution. Rosenberg (2003:23-24), for instance, decries words such as ‘must’ or ‘should’ which, he claims, only serve to increase a sense of inadequacy.

However, although feelings of regret, guilt or shame can compound feelings of frustration or anger, they can also encourage greater self-reflection which can lead to constructive behaviour. In the Soccer Game, for example, the student realises that he ‘\textit{shouldn’t allow the angermess to keep hurting}’ and vows to direct his focus in future to scoring goals for his team. Likewise, in The Half-sister, although, on reflection, the narrator ‘\textit{feels bad}’ about how she handled the conflict with her half-sister, she realises that she could have addressed the problem by talking instead.
Thus, notwithstanding that some of the participants admitted to feeling ‘bad’ or ‘guilty’, the change in their thinking could result in altered behaviour.

However, it must be conceded that self-disappointment is perhaps an inevitable (even if transient) component of any two-day workshop which initiates the first step of what is, in effect, a long-term process which, to be sustained, needs follow-up workshops, active forums and other methods of supporting the slow, long-term change from a victim thinking to self-empowerment. The process can be likened to the learning of another language and, in fact, Rosenberg (2003:3-4) talks of learning the ‘language of compassion’ as learning a new language with similar stages of hesitancies and mistakes and the need for practice to increase fluency.

Thus, after the initial euphoria of the workshop has worn off and the daily irritations begin again, old habit patterns inevitably reassert themselves and it is not always easy to remember the AVP tools and strategies.

For this reason, the issue of feeling guilty about not having handled a conflict situation in a nonviolent manner was among those addressed in the focus groups which emphasised that learning how to transform conflicts in a nonviolent way is a slow, lifelong process and that early attempts can often be unsuccessful while the new attitudes and skills are being assimilated and practised.

However, as already mentioned, the participants of this particular study had the advantage of living and working together for an additional ten months after the AVP workshop which meant they were able to remind each other of the AVP tools and strategies for resolving conflict nonviolently. This helped reinforce the content of the AVP workshop. As one participant explained:

> because most of the people would ... say AVP ... everything that happens ... AVP AVPAVP ...that had .... an impact on us ... many of us ... because

Although during this time the participants of this study were exposed to a number of other personal development workshops offered by the Umzi Wethu programme which clearly contributed to their personal growth, what was noteworthy to the researcher was the high recall of specifically AVP material, especially with regard to conflict situations.
The reason why I’m saying it has an impact is because people would always mention it ... because if it wasn’t there, there was nothing that would be said about .... they would just talk about the situation, not about what .... what’s this thing has helped the people ....It had a big impact even if ... even if it hasn’t come ... very big ... but it is ... it’s an ongoing thing ...

Another participant put it more graphically: ‘if we hadn’t done AVP, there would have long been blood’.

To conclude, in addressing the central research question of how an experience of an AVP workshop affects the way that at-risk young adults perceive and handle conflict situations, the narratives indicate that exposure to the AVP workshop values had a constructive and, in some cases, transformative effect on participants’ perceptions of their conflict situations. In addition, the narratives show that the workshop helped participants to review their conflict situations with greater confidence and to see where they habitually over or under-react to conflict situations, offering them various tools and strategies for dealing with conflict, especially in a nonviolent way, as well as ways to increase their empathy and self-empathy. Since the fundamental goal of AVP is to teach people how to transform conflicts nonviolently, these findings are encouraging.

5.5 FOCUS GROUPS

As described in chapter 4, in the fourth and final phase of the study, participants volunteered for focus groups conducted three months after the workshop and again after six months. These focus groups explored the changes in participants’ perceptions of conflict situations as a result of the AVP workshop and to what extent they had been able to integrate the AVP values and strategies into their everyday lives.

The focus group interviews of this study generally adhered to the traditional interviewing paradigm in which the interviewer avoids giving personal opinions (Fontana & Frey 2000:658). However, because participants in interviews are not so much a ‘target for information’ as someone who is retelling a story that exists in her life (Henning 2004:78) and “interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering
but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (Fontana & Frey 2000:646), on a few occasions, to encourage deeper dialogue on the nature of the AVP strategies and how to implement them, the researcher put these considerations aside. Fontana and Frey (ibid:658) cite Oakley’s (1981) contention that “there is no intimacy without reciprocity” and talk of how, especially amongst female researchers, there is a move to allow the development of closer relations between interviewer and respondent and that interviewers “can show their human side and answer questions and express feelings” (ibid:658). Fontana and Frey (ibid:659) claim that this new approach can provide greater insight into the lives of participants because “it encourages them to control the sequencing and the language of the interview and also allows them the freedom of open-ended responses.” Silverman (2001:288) also regards interview data as “never raw but always situated and textual” and uses Gubrium and Holstein’s (2002:17) term “discourse of empowerment” to refer to the meaning that is mutual constructed by the interviewer and interviewee. Thus, even though maintaining a balance between the ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ viewpoint was challenging, the focus groups were conducted with these aims in mind.

Also, because the focus groups took place after the collection of the conflict narratives, the study employed, to some extent, what Silverman (2001:233) refers to as “respondent validation” whereby the researcher takes initial findings back to the participant to confirm interpretation as the focus groups aimed specifically at clarifying the workshop material. Thus, the focus groups were “conversation[s] with a purpose” (Chambliss & Schutte 2010:237), conducted with the central aim of the research in mind, namely, to explore the extent to which the AVP workshop had influenced the participant’s perceptions of conflict.

With the permission of the participants, the focus groups were audio-recorded. Copies of these transcriptions are included as appendices G and H. What follows is a compilation of various excerpts of these discussions. The researcher’s voice has deliberately been removed from these excerpts even though I spoke in various
ways: to encourage dialogue, to deepen our sharing, to explain a point. Indeed, in transcribing these discussions, the difficulty of moving from the role of AVP facilitator to that of interviewer was highlighted for me because I was not always able to keep the two roles separate. In saying this I have purposefully, as Ely (2007:574) urges, used the first person so that I can personally acknowledge my shortcomings.\textsuperscript{62} However, in spite of these, the group discussions were lively and, as usual, participants were generous in the sharing of their views and eager to talk of their experiences of trying to implement what they learned in the workshop.

The first focus group, conducted three months after the AVP workshop on the Umzi Wethu premises, consisted of four female participants. The second focus group, conducted in the same venue three months later (that is, six months after the AVP workshop), was done with five participants: three males and two females. An additional interview was conducted with one of the female participants at her request but does not form part of this study. Each focus group discussion lasted approximately an hour and considered the following two questions:

- Did the AVP workshop change how you deal with conflict?
- If so, how?

The transcriptions were then subjected to a thematic analysis and the common themes were consolidated. Of note was that traditional gender filters seemed to affect participants’ responses to their conflict situations, for example, the female participants spoke mostly of the “self-in relationship” (Wilmot & Hocker 2007:56) with everyone affecting everyone else and the male participants (including one gay female) referred mostly to “offended person’s rights”. The following section describes these findings. Each focus group will be described separately and the section below begins with the discussion of the first group.

\textsuperscript{62} Because of this, the focus groups of this study could perhaps be more accurately described as group interviews.
5.5.1 First focus group (three months after the AVP workshop)

In answer to the question ‘Did AVP change how you deal with conflict and if so, how?’, the primary themes that emerged in the first focus group were: reduction in fighting and arguing, increased trust and improved relationships, greater self-empathy and awareness of personal needs, improved problem-solving and increased self-control. These themes, with verbatim quotes from the data, are discussed below.

All the participants (four females) of this group commented how the AVP workshop had altered their relationships with other people, particularly with regard to their reactions in interpersonal communication. For example, participant A said ‘Before the workshop I didn’t care. If you didn’t greet me, then so be it. I would not apologise or try to talk to you, if you were not speaking to me. Joining the discussion, participant B agreed:

Yes for me many things have changed. Seriously it has. My relationships have really improved, really they have. Because, as I said ... I would love to backchat ... just to show my fact that I am angry but you know what...Instead of being angry ..., but [one of the facilitators] said that when you .. when you spit out hatred to a person, it’s something that you are inviting in you if I want to put it that way. You are engraving it in you ... so I thought, man, why would I increase hatred in me? Because the minute I spit it out, it means that it is something in me. So just to shuffle off that hatred and stuff, I’ll just be quiet and try to just control myself. So it has been really, really great. It has worked wonders for me.

This comment seems to refer to one of the more profound underlying AVP principles, namely, that whatever qualities we tend to notice in someone else, we increase in ourselves and that part of the process of becoming aware of our thought and behaviour patterns in conflict, is becoming aware of what we habitually notice in other people. Connected to this, is the idea that we receive from people what we tend to give to them, which participant B, continuing the discussion, also acknowledged:

Yes, If you say something to me, you know I would make sure that I say something back. But I would be sarcastic, I won’t be as harsh but I will make
sure I say something. After AVP came, I realised that I get what I give to people. So when people talk to me, I keep quiet. It shutters the argument, you know, it solves it very quickly and the person gets to realise that okay this person is not talking to me. Then instead of increasing the argument, it just becomes more solve-able in a way if I were to put it that way. So for me it has made a difference.

For participant A, the improvement in their interpersonal communication was also related to the issue of trust: Yes, [our relationships have improved] because now we have more trust in each other. At least one of us speaks and we get on just fine.

These changes in participants’ attitudes are significant especially since, as mentioned earlier, the findings of the questionnaire showed that nearly all the participants named issues of trust, communication or reciprocity as the their main difficulty in relationships.

Another issue that was addressed by the group was self-empathy. Participant B referred to the difference AVP made for her: And for me personally how I react, and how I treat myself when in conflict. She mentioned how easy it is to forget our own needs especially when confronted with the needs of others: We tend to put other people first, and then we look after ourselves. Come to think about it, we forget what we need, to the extent of what other people need.

Participant B’s recognition of how she treats herself in a conflict situation and learning to think of her needs is critical because becoming aware of her needs can help her take responsibility for her reactions. As discussed in chapter 3, changing the commonplace ‘I feel angry because you …’ accusation to the more self-reflective ‘I feel angry because I need ...’ (Rosenberg 2003:184) can represent the difference between victim thinking and self-empowerment and can be a critical step for young people trying to break out of negative family patterns: for example, Xhosa women especially are socialised not to consider their own needs (Taherzadeh 2005:147).
Directly related to participants’ increased awareness of the importance of self-empathy, was their acknowledgement of increased empathy for others. Participant D referred to an improvement in her relationship with her mother, largely due to her increased capacity to listen:

> You can say that it has changed my life. Funny enough, a few months back I had a fight with my mum in the kitchen. She was just complaining about everything and I was so tired, I was from school, it was Friday night, so I just wanted to go to bed. But since I’ve learned, … I used to backchat, ja back then. So since I’ve learned about violence and everything …violence, ja … and respect … I didn’t backchat at all. She was just talking, and I was, like, listening, saying, like, ja Mum, ja Mum … while I know that I am not wrong but I did give her some space. I know that if, maybe I … I know don’t know how to put this …if maybe I did answer her back, maybe something bad would of happened. So since I didn’t …so …

Participant B also talked of being able to see conflict situations from a wider perspective and being able to take into account other people’s realities:

> And another thing that I got is that, to some people, the way they react, the arguments they make, it’s it’s beyond. , you know, it’s something … in most cases, it is something that comes from their history, it’s something that has happened to them. So the way they treat themselves now … you know, just exactly what I said. So I have learned that … to adapt to a person and try to find out why that person reacting that way. There might be a problem beyond the way she or he is reacting.. So ja, I got a chance to understand people better.

Such increased empathy for other people’s behaviour in a conflict situation is a significant change of perception. Bush and Folger (2005:22) talk of the “transformative potential … of empowerment [acknowledging someone’s value] and recognition [empathy for their situation or views] and Cobb (1994:52) mentions how conflict parties usually have a ‘closed’ interpretation of each other and the difference that “opening their story to new possibilities and interpretations” can make.

However, because conflict resolution is not simply a set of techniques that can be applied at will in a given situation but requires, as Wilmot and Hocker (2007:26) underline, “an examination of one’s most deeply held values and spiritual beliefs”,...
participants also admitted that changing their habitual conflict behaviour was neither straight-forward nor easy. Participant C opened the discussion on this point:

*I don’t want to lie, but at some point, it is not easy just to change suddenly. I still get upset, but I can say that I think of the consequences before I react. Even sometimes, after I’ve overacted then I would think, even though it is not easy to apologise. But I try to show the person that I was wrong. It’s a huge step to admit to yourself that you are wrong, because some people won’t do that. For me, it’s nice to just let the person talk, not to be in the same motion. If you’re fighting you are both in a high level of being angry. So that will cause a fight. So I don’t know. Sometimes I will let a person talk, but sometimes I will talk more. AVP did help me to realise it.*

Her increased ability to think of the consequences before she reacts and to notice when she ‘overacts’ are significant changes of conflict attitude and behaviour. Participant B also admitted:

*Putting it into practice. There are times that a person would say something that pushes you so that you want to explode. I don’t react the same way I used to. If I had to put in on a level, I would say I was at level 10. Now I am on a level 6. So I am getting there. I am not there yet, but I am getting there. So there is a difference on how I react.*

These acknowledgments of the slowness of the habit-changing process are also important changes in conflict behaviour as they show participants’ growing awareness of the embedded nature of their “developed repertoire” (Wilmot & Hocker 2007:8) of conflict behaviour and the value of small steps of improvement and self-acceptance. Importantly, these recognitions also highlighted the idea of multiple perspectives for participants and that there is more than one way to interpret experiences, especially conflict experiences.

One significant change in developed repertoire came from participant C, a gay female who admitted that she frequently had physical fights, also with boys. She felt that she had taken an important step in ‘transforming her power’ (referring to AVP exercise of this name). She explained that after the workshop she did not fight physically as she usually did:
I had a chance to beat him up, but I didn’t … I didn’t beat him up. I just let him go. But he kept on coming back. I told him, it is not that I am scared of you, that you should know, it is just that I am not going to fight with you. For the sake of my self-respect. The consequence is that I transformed power (laughs).

Her change of attitude towards fighting physically is also reflected in her conflict narrative and represents a profound change of attitude. She admits that after the AVP workshop she no longer saw being able to fight physically – formerly something she was proud to mention - as desirable.

Participants also referred to other AVP techniques that they now use in solving conflicts showing their realisation that the more choices of communication behaviour they have, the better able they are to resolve conflicts. For example, participant D felt capable of helping others with their conflict situations:

*When I see maybe my friend is fighting or arguing over something,… I try to make them understand that these actions are not the solution. They must try to communicate and not waste time with fighting.*

In a similar vein, participant A related her experience of practising the I-messages:

*This other time, when someone did something. Then you put a video on for what they did, and you tell them how you felt about that thing. I’ve put that to practice, and really it is working. You are not attacking that person, but you get a chance to attack the problem. So you make it better for the both of you.*

This distinction that Participant A makes between attacking the person or the problem represents a pivotal change in attitude which Participant B agreed with and shared her similar experience of ‘de-personalising’ the problem when mediating a family conflict:

*I tried not to be on any one’s side, not on my mother’s or my brother’s side. So I get them that idea to fix it. So I was fixing it, but outside the problem. There’s not many in our family, we should not fight against each other. It was being solved. I did in on two sides. If I did choose a side, maybe my brother would be angry and it could be worse. He could be cross with both of us. But instead I chose to be on a distance.*
Finally, asked about the main issues in their disagreements, participants spontaneously responded: favouritism, jealousy, gossiping and money problems. Their descriptions of family money problems indicate changing cultural mores. For instance, participant D explained her family’s financial situation in this way:

*If you are working, as long as you are working you the owner of the house. It doesn’t matter if you are young or not. Then let’s say for instance, my younger brother is working, he is going to own the whole place while our parents are in there but I wouldn’t like it if he says something which is very disrespectful to my mother. Then the conflict starts.*

This ‘blurring of generational identity’ is similar to what McDonald (1999:4) describes when he talks of how contemporary families are now structured less in terms of social status than in terms of communication and, in this case, of financial power. McDonald regards the weakening of cultural models of transmission as the primary cause of generational identity breakdown, underlining the challenge for young people of living at a time when, as discussed in chapter 3, previously-accepted conventions are being redefined.

In summary, the discussion at this focus group was animated and enthusiasm for the AVP process was still high three months after the workshop. Participants agreed that the workshop had positively influenced their relationship with themselves and with their friends and families and some felt that these changes had been profound, even dramatic.

### 5.5.2 Second focus group (six months after workshop)

This group consisted of three male participants and two female participants and, as mentioned, while the previous focus group discussion had centred largely on the "self-in relationship" (Wilmot & Hocker 2007:56) this discussion was more concerned with "offended person’s rights" (ibid). As Wilmot and Hocker point out, "all conflicts are about power and self-esteem" and, in each conflict interaction, individuals either save face, lose face or damage face and that, because our sense of self is often tenuous, at the core of our self-concepts and how we want to be treated in relationship, are identity and relational issues which are invariably the
‘drivers’ of disputes (ibid:70). These considerations are especially relevant to the participants of this study because of the importance of self-esteem to young people in the process of constructing their adult identity and because these participants identified issues of trust and communication as their primary relationship challenge. This focus group also spoke of an increased awareness of how to deal with anger and, importantly, the acknowledgement that conflict cannot be solved when anger is present.

Asked ‘Did the AVP workshop change how you deal with conflict and if so, how?’, participant E began the discussion by mentioning his heightened awareness of how to avoid conflict: *What AVP changed in my life is that now I can quickly avoid conflict. When I see there is a conflict coming, I can quickly avoid the conflict.* He attributed this change to a change of attitude and to taking responsibility for his attitude and behaviour:

*If you change your attitude. If that someone is saying sorry, you don’t shout at him. Maybe it is a mistake. You say, okay I’m good. Or you can, like my story, if you want a better attitude cause you will fight, and then you will lose. Many people will lose faith on you, because you make it difficult to talk. So it will be your own problem.*

Participant H, a female, explained the influence that AVP had on her thinking and how it helped her to have the confidence to express herself:

*I learned how to control my anger, because I was one, if you make me angry, I won’t speak to you forever. Sometimes it is just difficult to understand that he didn’t mean it or he didn’t mean to hurt you. But I learned that if you are angry, or if somebody makes you angry, you don’t have to snap and because if both of you are angry, you are not going to solve it. Now if somebody is in a fight, or the person is angry with me, I will just say that I will come back. Because if both of us is angry, trying to shout at each other is not going to help. So I will say, if you are right or if you have cooled down, I will come back and we can talk. You are not right now in the situation. So if both of us is angry, I will now walk away, just to clear your mind. I learned to communicate. I was very shy and I didn’t want to speak .. but now I speak, I really speak.*
Agreeing, participant F explained that AVP made him realise how he handled conflict prior to the workshop:

*To me, when I was doing AVP I was thinking that the complainers should make things right or to solve it. A solution. Something like that. Life is short .. [before AVP] I don't want to sit at the same table with XXXX to discuss [any problem]. I would just want to go. Even if I left my home, and when I am with XXXX I would be angry. They must see I am serious about my mind. So XXXX would also be angry. Then the conflict start.*

In contrast, after the workshop, he realised:

*Now, I am thinking. To be angry...yes I understand [it’s a] natural thing. To be angry is not good. You can’t solve the problem by being angry and you cannot solve it when you are angry. You can just make the problem bigger ...For example, before if they did something wrong to me, I will be angry, very angry. It can maybe take two to three weeks or a month to come to my senses, and forgive okay. Now before I did the AVP workshop, I was having a problem with my fellow persons. Then I did the AVP and I did all the schemes on how to deal with those issues. Then I said to myself, okay I am going to XXXX, and I am going to the post office and go to my manager and then just make peace. But, okay it was fine, I was willing to do that. Because AVP helped me a lot.*

Participant F was, thus, able to confront his unresolved conflict with a former employer which, as he acknowledges, was affecting his other relationships. Lerner (1986:32) explains how the suppression of emotions not consistent with masculine power, such as empathy and compassion, can be expressed in aggression against others and Lederach (2005:119) stresses how we can only heal a past that is made visible. Wilmot and Hocker (2007:71) also point out how demeaning communication creates ongoing pain and dissatisfaction which can keep a conflict unresolved at a deep level, largely because “power is a property of the social relationship rather than a quality of the individual” (ibid: 104). For these reasons, being able to heal a past pain liberates not only the relationship under scrutiny but all relationships, underlining the importance of the change in Participant F’s thinking.
In telling his story, Participant F also referred to his awareness of how conflict arises in a social-economic context and how the strategies that he acquired in the AVP workshop could be shared with his family and greater community to ‘re-story history’ (Lederach 2005:40) and prevent the perpetuation of victim thinking and anger:

And one other thing about AVP, we are so fortunate, because for example I would say AVP, it is like we as people, does not matter if you are black or white, we are coming from a difficult time, so now AVP is there. For example, we have a lot of fighting and conflict and the things of the apartheid, but now AVP is there. Whereby we can say we will just take your past and put it aside, it won’t be easy to put your past aside, but if you can just take AVP and apply it to your life, then you will see a change. For example, your anger at the end of the day, it can lead you into prison or killing someone, but if you have applied u-AVP you say okay, I know how to avoid these things, and you start by applying it into yourself, and if you see that there is a change, then you go around your family and if you see now you have many supporters who will support me throughout, then you apply it to your community.

The insights that this participant gained from the workshop demonstrate how an intervention like AVP can support young South Africans by showing them that they always have a choice to transform conflict situations. As stressed in chapter 3, young people, especially young Xhosa men often lacking positive role models, need support in order to be able to imagine implementing such choices which have often been neglected in their communities.

In this regard, Participant G recounted an incident that occurred after the AVP workshop where he was able to exercise his AVP strategies:

I can apply them, the AVP skills. I was in a situation, there was this store that there was a man that was pulling a girl. The girl was crying and it was at night. I was in that situation, but it was a boy, not a man. He was older than a boy. It was at night, maybe past 11. I did go to that boy, and I was trying to smooth him. So I decided, I must act like I am angry with him, I must not smile. I talk like the girl is my sister, or I know the girl. He let the girl go. I was with my two friends, and we go with that girl. We turned around and go. We walk that girl.
Such increased awareness of others’ needs also comes about through the ‘re-naming process’ whereby participants recognise that language is not a value-neutral medium and that, as Rosenberg (2003:136) stresses, our language can obscure our awareness of personal responsibility. Once participants’ became aware of the components of responsibility, they were able to implement them. In this sense, language is a form of social action (Winslade & Monk 2001: 31-40) because words create our experience.

However, participants also acknowledged the responsibility and difficulty of being a role model:

> So for me, we as students have a responsibility. Every time I go to my area, I know those people are looking at me, and they will want me to apply these skills to them. It is so hard when you just snap, because these people remember, they will say, we thought you say we must not do these things but now you are here and you are doing these things.

In order to be able to withstand such frustrations and central to the successful integration of the changes the participants mentioned, is, thus, the extent to which they can develop their resilience and become ‘entrepreneurs of self’ (McDonald 1999:210) which, as discussed in chapter 3, entails constructing a coherent sense of self in relation to others. Participant I talked of her management of this process:

> I would say …AVP had a very big impact in my life. I've changed. Sometimes I will get annoyed with people who deliberately … tease you with small things. There is something inside you that says, “it’s just nothing” … I will say, you know what, I feel good about myself being so confident. Because a person wants to change your mood. We must not let them change our mood, in a way that they want to. Because I remember last month, I went home. There was this guy that came into our house and try to beat up my cousin. He was drunk … when I stopped him, he wanted to hit me … I could have done anything to him, but I decided not to. He was so drunk, I had a picture of me doing things to him, but I said to him, I’m not going to do anything. It’s not that I’m scared of him, I’m not going to lose my dignity over you. Then I let him go. He made a lot of noise outside. I feel so great. I feel relieved that I didn’t fight back the way he wanted me to. So AVP has really worked for me, even though I’m still working on this. I’m not saying that I am perfect. It is something that is there. It’s played a big role in my life. I'm using it everywhere I go.
Some participants saw changing one’s own attitude and behaviour as easier than mediating other people’s conflict. Participant E described his frustration at not yet being able to help mediate other people’s conflict:

*what I still weak at is when someone ... meet my friend is arguing with another guy, I am still at weak to make my friend to calm down or to make that guy to calm down, I am still weak. But when it is on me, maybe the conflict is about me, I am quickly to let myself to calm down, but when it is my friend, what I do is just getting involved to what the conversation is about and then I am not decreasing the conflict but I make the conflict to be big.*

Thus, as mentioned in the other focus group, participants acknowledged the difficulty of putting the workshop ideas into practice. However, in doing so, they are showing their increased awareness and taking an important step: that of trying new conflict attitudes and behaviour. Participant F also spoke of the difference between knowing the theory and implementing it, especially with regard to the book he was given at the workshop:

*So for me it is like I’m doing a crime if I read that book and if there is such an incident that happens so that makes me angry, then it means you not reading that book very well, because if in everything that is on that book, it deals with anger, how to control yourself, something like that. So I will just calm down and I would just leave, maybe tomorrow I will call for you, and I will apply the I-message, for example I don’t want you to re-step me, I needed you just to recognise me as a person and I need you to listen to my point of view and then I will listen to your point of view.*

Participant I encouraged both these participants, stressing that, while ‘it’s easy to talk, not so easy to do’, sometimes the progress we make is not visible to us, but it is to others. Giving a sense of how participants might speak to each other about the AVP workshop material outside of the focus group, she said:

*What I want to say is that ... people who don’t want to recognise you, who tease ... like XXXX with his anger ... but he can control himself. You don’t see yourself. Sometimes when somebody explodes, they ...each and everyone has changed. Because of all of us, if you do something, it’s like ... you feel discouraged and you get angry. I know it beats you up, because you really learned and still let things happen, you still have a different story to how things happen. Even if sometimes you are wrong, but over reacting is not a solution.*
Participant F explained the difficulty mentioned was managing the responses of family to his new attitudes:

*I agree ... for example, there was a lot of fight where I came from, but now me, personally, I attend this workshop. Then I go back where I came from, and I try to apply this into my relationship generally. But now they start asking questions. What happened so suddenly?*

In addition to the surprise generated by their changed attitudes and behaviour when implementing nonviolent strategies, participants found themselves dealing with the violence implicit in certain attitudes of their communities, for example, the habit of reacting to conflict in a confrontational or physically violent manner and the socially-embedded idea that only cowards do not fight. Participant I named this for the group:

*People are not used to that. They are used to people acting on conflict. You must fight back, otherwise you are a coward. So for me, sometimes it’s not even about talking. You know, even when you keep quiet, they still want to argue. They don’t want you to keep quiet and just do what they want to. They want to push you and say very harsh words. Some people want you to put a fist in their face when you are talking to them.*

Participant I agreed and explained:

*Normally when you are being aggressive and before AVP, sometimes you wouldn’t care how the other person feel, and wouldn’t regret what you have said. You wouldn’t care how they feel, as long as you are satisfied and said what you wanted. You want to define yourself. [my emphases]. At that moment, if it was one of us, if someone snaps, I don’t know, I would also snap. But, every time, it is that thing about the conflict you learned and how does it go. That long process in my head, after the regret, every time. When I do something sometimes I wouldn’t feel to go to a person and brush him off, it is sometimes not easy to say sorry. But you try to put yourself in there, so that a person would feel that you would regret what you did.*

Asked for last comments, Participant I concluded:

*... My last comment is that I am very grateful that I had this opportunity, and I am going to make sure that people that are surrounding my life ..., even if its family, and those outside the family ... I don’t know when I will get this opportunity again. It saves you in many ways because you are somebody*
else, nobody know you there. And when you are upset and freaking out, nobody knows how to handle you, because sometimes it’s easier when you are in your own community. Because people know you better, and they will try and stop you. For example, you go overseas, it’s not even your own country, and how do you feel if people judge you? You always get upset.

This recognition of the value of learning conflict management skills that can ‘save you …when you are upset’ underline how internalising AVP values can stimulate reflection on habitual reactive behaviour and facilitate more proactive responses. This type of reflection is especially valuable for young people still in the process of defining themselves as it can generate internal reference points to provide the support that, as discussed in chapter 3, young people need at this stage of development to reverse any habitual negative patterns.

To summarise, the discussions of this second focus group were informative and lively and yielded rich material on the participants’ experiences of conflict, their inner personal struggles and their difficulties in relationships as well as their challenges with implementing what they had learned in the AVP workshop. Time constraints prevented deepening the conversation but what emerged clearly was the centrality of the relationships of family and friends for participants. Their conflict situations primarily involved disagreements with friends, girlfriends and boyfriends and members of their family, although two participants had also encountered conflict in work and sport situations. Most of the participants felt more able to manage their conflicts successfully and showed increased responsibility for their behaviour. Especially important to the participants was the role they felt they could play in influencing conflicts in their families and communities. This was particularly significant given that this focus group was conducted six months after the workshop which indicated the extent to which participants had internalised the core values of AVP. However, the difficulties involved in challenging habitual and culturally established ways of dealing with conflict were acknowledged. Participants also recognised the challenges involved when they were not able to practise what they preached. Notwithstanding these reservations, participants showed signs of having made good progress in integrating the AVP workshop
material into their everyday lives and, perhaps most important of all, of recognising that the process of applying AVP values to their conflict situations is slow and ongoing.\textsuperscript{63}

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter began by presenting a pre-workshop profile of the participants which showed that the participants’ attitudes to conflict and conflict management were in keeping with those of young people of their age group and that many had difficulties with interpersonal communication as well as issues of self-esteem, trust and respect. In addition to the participant profile and researcher reflections on the workshop, the chapter presented analyses of the pre- and post-workshop conflict narratives and reported on the two focus group discussions held three months and six months after the workshop.

The analyses of the conflict narratives as well as the comments made in the focus group discussions indicate that the experience of the AVP workshop made a significant impact on the participants’ attitudes to conflict situations in general and, in particular, to their own conflict behaviour. As a result of being exposed to AVP values, participants consistently reported greater capacity for self-reflection, increased responsibility and increased empathy and self-empathy. For some of the participants, these changes were profound. Although some of the participants acknowledged the difficulty of applying AVP values to everyday life, they also recognised that such difficulty is inherent in any personal development challenge and that any process of change consists of many tiny steps. Another important recognition made by participants was the degree to which cultural expectations can sometimes encourage violence or prescribe certain conflict behaviour.

\textsuperscript{63} To support this ongoing process, a Facebook forum was created so that participants could share their experiences and difficulties with other AVP groups in Africa. A limitation of this idea is that not all the participants use Facebook yet but perhaps this will change in time.
In the AVP evaluations of the workshop (see Appendix D), in answer to the question ‘What did you think of the workshop on the overall?’, 13 of the 18 participants commented on how much they had learned; three thought the workshop was ‘excellent’, ‘cool’ and ‘full of experience’ respectively; one participant felt ‘honoured and blessed to participate’ and one participant said how it had ‘boosted [his/her] self-esteem’. Two participants referred specifically to anger management (it was good to learn about [how] to manage anger; learned a lot and [am] more aware of how to control my anger and emotions).

Answering the question ‘What was the most important thing you learned?’, more than half the participants mentioned anger management, the importance of thinking before reacting and many specifically named conflict management. The value of being listened to (sometimes a person just needs to be listened to and not be given advice always) and being able to express feelings and needs was also mentioned, together with respect and self-respect. One participant stressed the ‘I-messages’, another the realisation of not being the only one with problems (I have learnt that I am not alone in my problems) and one participant realised how past conditioning can influence present behaviour (many people get angry because of the past … or personal insecurities let them behave certain way).

The focus groups provided a space for sharing such increased awareness and had the effect of further widening participants’ perspectives. In addition, the discussions on the mutual remembering of pertinent aspects of the AVP workshop as well the sharing of new conflict attitudes and behaviour served to encourage the assimilation of AVP values. The following and final chapter presents the overall conclusions of this study and provides recommendations.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions of this study and offers recommendations based on the analyses of the pre- and post-workshop conflict narratives and the two focus group discussions.

In addressing the central research question of how the experience of an AVP workshop affects the way at-risk young adults perceive and manage conflict situations, the results of the study can be summarised, firstly, in terms of its two sub-questions which were:

- how the participants of this study perceive and manage their conflict situations; and
- how the participants perceive and manage their conflict situations after the experience of an AVP workshop.

The following sections discuss how the findings of the study address these two sub-questions.

6.2 HOW PARTICIPANTS PERCEIVE AND MANAGE THEIR CONFLICT SITUATIONS

As already discussed, the pre-workshop profile of the participants showed that, in keeping with most young people of their age group, participants of this study most commonly perceived their conflict situations as difficulties of interpersonal communication, trust and respect. Exploring their conflict narratives, however, revealed that most participants often felt angry – at how members of their immediate or greater family are behaving, at how they are being treated by members of their family or by peers, or at the lack of support and conflict in their families and their communities. They dealt with this anger by either being reactive
and shouting or fighting physically or by suppressing the anger, often turning it inwards on themselves. Their narratives also showed that they also often felt powerless to deal with their conflict situations. This combination of anger and powerlessness, especially of youth who are labelled ‘at-risk’ due to compromised family circumstances which, as this study has shown, is a label that can be given to a disproportionately high percentage of young black South Africans today, can be seen as a potential seedbed of violence as it is these feelings and needs which, when unaddressed, render young people vulnerable to perpetuating family cycles of destructive conflict or to the criminal lifestyle and gangsterism.

Because, as shown in this study, such vulnerability is heightened by the challenging and contradictory demands of young people’s worlds, healthy construction of an adult identity – always a difficult task, even with supportive communities – is not always possible. Writing on the relationship between identity construction and peace and conflict, and how peace-promoting identities can be constructed, Slocum-Bradley (2008:6) cites Appiah (2005) who summarises the constraints of individual identity-construction:

Neither the picture in which there is just an authentic nugget of selfhood, the core that is distinctively me, waiting to be dug out, nor the notion that I can simply make up any self I choose, should tempt us … we make up selves from a tool kit of options, made available by our culture and society. We do make choices, but we don’t, individually, determine the options among which we choose.

Thus for these young people to be able to construct identities that enable peace-promoting acts, their ‘tool kit of options’ needs to be expanded beyond what is currently available to them. Especially important amongst such options is any support that enables resilience development in order to help young people make constructive life choices. Specifically, development of resilience concerns attitudinal changes regarding self-image and perceptions of other people (especially those seen as threatening).
6.3 HOW PARTICIPANTS PERCEIVED AND MANAGE THEIR CONFLICT SITUATIONS AFTER THE AVP WORKSHOP

As discussed in chapter 5, the experience of the AVP workshop made a significant impact on the participants’ attitudes to their conflict situations. As mentioned, the workshop sought to motivate the following attitudes and behaviour in participants:

- a positive view of self and others;
- a positive view of the differences among people;
- acknowledgement of the power in all people to transform potentially violent conflicts; and
- the ability to find and apply alternatives to violence in conflict.

The significance of the impact of the workshop is thus detailed as: raised awareness of participants’ perceptions of violence, especially violence which not always visible such as that of inegalitarian social structures or gender-based violence; positive impact on their perceptions of the ‘other’; positive impact on their attitudes to relationships; and increased self-esteem and self-empowerment.

The sub-sections below evaluate each of these impacts.

6.3.1 Raised awareness of participants’ perceptions of conflict and violence (including social and gender-based violence)

The raised awareness of everyday manifestations of violence that participants reported is encouraging. The reports of instances of violence that participants had not always previously construed as violence (for instance, abusive behaviour by family members or friends as well as their own use of violent tactics in conflict situations) indicate how the AVP workshop stimulated reflection on unconsciously-held conflict management strategies. Importantly, this increased awareness helped participants realise how handling or mishandling conflict can influence the course of a conflict and represents invaluable first steps in dealing with conflict situations in a nonviolent way.
In addition, recognising how cultural expectations can sometimes encourage violence or prescribe certain conflict behaviour and realising the extent of the socialised acceptance of violence as a way to solve problems in their communities, helped participants to see how these factors can negatively affect their social and emotional well-being. Such realisations also highlighted for participants how deeper cultural understanding is rooted in self-awareness and awareness of others and the role that they can play in reducing community conflict.

These are significant, probably long-term, changes in participants’ perceptions of conflict situations and young people who maintain such awareness can become a constructive societal force.

6.3.2 Positive impact on participants’ perceptions of the ‘other’

Participants’ altered perceptions of the ‘other’ of their conflict narratives is also an encouraging change. Their altered perceptions not only indicate young people’s willingness to change their views and their flexibility in this regard, but also the rapidity with which they are able to grasp the concept of extending respect in order to receive respect. As discussed, becoming aware of our perceptions of the ‘other’ in conflict situations is critical to resolving conflicts nonviolently and represents an important post-workshop altered perception.

6.3.3 Positive impact on participants’ attitudes to relationships

As documented, because of AVP’s interactive learning process, participants experienced – many for the first time – a deep sense of connection to each other. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised: youth’s need for intimacy has been stressed in chapter 3 as well as the importance that personal relationships have for them, especially those of their peers. For some participants, these relationships with peers are even more important than their families. As discussed in chapter 5, a significant outcome of the workshop for many participants was gaining the sense of not being the only person struggling with conflict in the family or with friends or facing feelings of low self-esteem and insecurity. As mentioned,
most participants reported that the sense of camaraderie experienced in the workshop was liberating and transformative. Importantly, this sense of connection to others enhances the mutual respect and esteem that are essential for fostering cooperation (Sloane 2002:4) and, as this study has shown, relationship building – whether at the micro or macro level – is critical for peacebuilding (Lederach 2005). Participants, therefore, felt more able to manage their conflict situations after the AVP workshop.

6.3.4 Self-empowerment of participants

The increase in self-esteem reported by participants is perhaps the factor most likely to contribute to participants’ future resilience, especially in the light of participants’ reports of feeling empowered to respond to everyday conflict situations. The participants’ noticeable increase in self-assertion, their enhanced communication skills and increased willingness to engage with each other as well as their increased awareness of their role in society and in family will, perhaps, decide how they perceive and manage future conflict situations. Healthy self-esteem enables personal stability and respectful relationships which, as already noted, are the bedrock of peacebuilding. Given the importance of peer relationships and the central role that relationships play in networking, improved self-esteem is the most direct route to resilience development. As this study has shown, empathy, especially self-empathy, is essential for the interpersonal conflict management process and can increase life choice options.

Thus, addressing the central research question of how the experience of an AVP workshop affects how at-risk young adults perceive and manage conflict situations, the overall conclusion of this study is that AVP can positively influence young people’s perceptions and management of conflict situations.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study had two methodological limitations as follows:
• Ideally, such a study - or at least the workshop - needs to be conducted in the mother tongue of the participants, in this case, Xhosa. Although this was not possible for this study, the next best option was to create a multilingual team which more than adequately addressed the aims of the study. However, Xhosa facilitators conducting such a study in the home language of the participants, could, no doubt, increase the extent and depth of the investigation.

• The initial questionnaire which aimed at exploring the participants’ attitudes to conflict could, perhaps, have included additional questions on the type of conflict commonly experienced in families and communities. This would have given a more in-depth profile of the kinds of everyday violence to which young people are exposed. Also, as mentioned in chapter 5, the omission of an important option for one of the questions was unfortunate.

However, the findings display an overall cohesion which shows that the study was not seriously hampered by these limitations. In addition, future research can benefit by taking these considerations into account.

To conclude, the findings of this study confirm what the current literature on South Africa youth repeatedly emphasises regarding the effects of South Africa’s longstanding, socially structured violence on young people today. An organisation like Umzi Wethu fulfils an extremely valuable role in offering young people, especially so-called ‘at-risk’ young people, a way out of entrenched poverty or abusive family patterns and including AVP in its programme can help Umzi Wethu achieve its aims. Specifically, these findings emphasise young people’s need for guidance and support, especially with regard to dealing with everyday conflict situations.
6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be made as a result of this study:

6.5.1 Investment in youth development

As this study has repeatedly demonstrated, young people are capable of generating positive personal and social change but, especially in South Africa, they need support to let go of past negative patterns. Every effort needs to be made to build young people’s resilience by helping them reduce unproductive thinking as well as non-resilient beliefs and attitudes which are often manifestations of unconscious family patterns. Because of the opportunity granted to them by Umzi Wethu and their exposure to AVP, the young people of this study stand a good chance of developing sufficient resilience to make effective life choices and prevent everyday conflicts from becoming destructive. However, more young people need this opportunity and positive youth development at a governmental level is an essential social investment which needs to address this generation’s main challenges which are access to prevention and treatment of HIV, better education, access to work, better service delivery and protection from environmental degradation (Richter & Panday 2007:304-305).

6.5.2 Creating platforms for youth support and building peace for social change

The inclusion of AVP as a personal development and conflict management component of a holistic youth development programme is recommended in order to raise awareness of violence and to build relationships and self-esteem. As such a component, AVP could function as a peace-building platform for social change by providing young people with the space they need to address these critical issues in their lives and by helping them handle conflict situations nonviolently.

As explained in chapter 2, such youth development programmes need to function in collaboration with other youth organisations. Lederach (2005:100) underlines that building peace is a change process based on building relationships and
developing support infrastructures and emphasises that constructive social change and peacebuilding strategy requires the creation of something new from what is available (my emphases). Importantly, he stresses that it is not a question of how many initiatives are taken but that such relational spaces have exponential potential. In partnership with existing like-minded organisations, and if implemented in a sustainable manner, AVP could make an important contribution to any holistic programme aiming to provide the positive role modelling that young South Africans need in order to make effective life choices.

In making such recommendations, I would like to acknowledge that, as mentioned in chapter 1, Phaphama Initiatives has already been implementing such a strategy since 1990. However, the Eastern Cape is still under-resourced in terms of AVP facilitators and the above recommendations are primarily with regard to strengthening AVP activity in this province, as well as learning from AVP initiatives in other African countries where it is being successfully implemented. For example, the latest report on AVP in Rwanda concludes that “in Rwanda AVP is beginning … to feel like a movement: a movement of hope, of healing, of slow reconciliation, of possibility” (Chico & Paule 2005:24).

However, in recognising the potential of AVP to raise awareness of how to deal with conflict nonviolently, certain provisos are necessary for it to be effective:

- Workshops need to be facilitated in the mother tongue of participants or by multicultural teams in a strategised training programme; thus, training of bilingual facilitators is needed. If initially funded, such training could operate on a paid internship system and could, in time, include exchange programmes with other African countries currently implementing AVP in order to increase learning opportunities.

- Follow-up workshops, forums and discussion groups are essential. Nonviolence as a conflict management strategy is not easy to implement especially in communities where violence is normalised and longstanding,
therefore all participants of an AVP workshop need to be able to join an ongoing support group in their area and have the possibility of connecting with likeminded people nationally and internationally. Such a network could also help address the need of South African youth for support in the form of inspirational information, encouragement and dialogue as well as for connection to networks beyond their immediate communities.

- Although the decision was taken not to include individual interviews in this study, in future studies these could be a valuable additional source of data. While focus group discussions are useful to encourage peer interaction, the slower pace of one-on-one discussions can allow individual interviewees to deepen their reflections and perhaps gain increased clarification on specific points of their conflict management strategies.

Although, as Sloane (2002:23) underlines, no amount of AVP or other training can supplant hunger, poverty or unemployment frustration, holistic youth development programmes with an AVP component can provide the type of support that young South Africans, especially young black South Africans, require at this critical moment in the history of their country when a break from the past is called for and new ways need to be imagined. Burgess (2008:179) sums it up: “Nonviolence is revolutionary … not revolutionary in the usual violent sense … but in a profound turning of the world in a radically new direction …”
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CONFIRMATION OF RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

Dear Shena,

I hereby acknowledge the discussions between yourself and Umzi Wethu/Wilderness Foundation regarding your proposed research which aims to explore the reaction of our students to the Alternatives to Violence (AVP) training program.

Umzi Wethu hereby gives you permission to present these workshops to our students as scheduled in conjunction with myself. Permission is also given to gather data during this process providing you obtain the necessary informed consent from the students at the outset of this process. We'd also request that on completion of the study, your research results be made available to our evaluation coordinator to supplement the ongoing evaluation of the Umzi Wethu program.

I can also confirm that the Umzi Wethu program has a full-time Counselling Psychologist registered with the HPCSA on its staff. This person will be involved in assisting with the facilitation of your AVP program and will be on hand to provide post workshop debriefing and counselling as may be required.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul Longe
Academy Manager: Umzi Wethu
APPENDIX B : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

INSTRUCTION SHEET

Please answer each question honestly. There are no ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers. All the answers you give will be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL - only the researchers will read what you write. If any of this material is published, your name will never be given and a pseudonym (a false name) will be used in order to protect your identity.

If you have any questions about what you need to do, please ask the researcher.

Conflict stories

All of us experience disagreements and conflicts in our lives.

Please share with us a short story (15-30 lines) about a disagreement that you were personally involved with. What happened? What did you do? What did you say? What did the other person or other people do and say? Please be as specific as you can. Write your story on the blank paper provided.

You can take as much time as you need to write this story but try not to write more than about 30 lines.

If remembering such a situation is difficult, the following exercise might help:

Remembering exercise

What do you find irritating?

Complete this sentence “I can’t stand it when people …..”

64 Adapted from Halfman and Couzij (2008:120).
When was the last time this happened?

Choose an example and describe it. What did you do? What did the other person do?

When you have finished writing your story put your form in the envelope provided and then complete the rest of the questionnaire.
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please circle the option that best describes your ideas or experience.

1. Conflict

How often have you experienced the following types of conflict?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of conflict</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Very seldom</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Intolerance of differences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Competitive attitudes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Rumours and gossiping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Insults and bullying</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Threats</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Verbal fighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Boyfriend-girlfriend disputes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Physical fighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Damage to property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Fighting with a knife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Using a gun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Other (please specify)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 1-8 have been adapted from Snodgrass (2006) and questions 9 and 10 from the compendium of assessment tools given by Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn & Behrens (2005).
2. How often have you **personally** witnessed these types of conflict?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of conflict</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Very seldom</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Rumours and gossiping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Insults and bullying</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Threats</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Physical fighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Damage to property</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Using a gun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

**When I’m with my friends** …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I am always treated fairly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I am treated with respect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I am given equal opportunity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) I am treated with compassion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I am accepted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement:

**If I need help, I would probably get it from ...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of help</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) a parent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) a brother or sister</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) another family member</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) a friend</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) another adult</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) a church minister</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) other (specify)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Please indicate the statement that you feel best describes you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have many more problems than most people of my age.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have about the same amount of problems as most other people of my age.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have fewer problems than most other people of my age.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What would you say is your greatest difficulty in relationships?

7. What would you suggest as a first step towards addressing this problem?
8. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1) If I am angry with someone I just ignore them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2) If am angry with someone I will find a way to punish them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3) Even if other people think I'm strange, I always try to stop a fight.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4) It's okay for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5) Sometimes a person doesn't have any choice but to fight.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6) When my friends fight I try to get them to stop.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7) There are better ways to solve problems than fighting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8) I try to talk out a problem instead of fighting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9) If people do something to make me really angry, they deserve to be punished.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10) A guy shows he really loves his girlfriend if he gets into fights with other guys over her.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Please circle the choice that best describes your ideas or experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perfectly okay</th>
<th>Sort of okay</th>
<th>Sort of wrong</th>
<th>Really wrong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1) Suppose a boy insults another boy, Simphiwe. Is it okay for Simphiwe to shout back at him?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2) Do you think it's okay for Simphiwe to hit him?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3) Suppose a boy insults a girl. Do you think it's okay for the girl to shout at him?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4) Do you think it's okay for the girl to hit him?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5) Suppose a girl insults another girl, Xolisa. Do you think it's okay for Xolisa to shout at her?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6) Do you think it's okay for Xolisa to hit her?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7) Suppose a girl insults a boy. Do you think it's okay for the boy to shout at her?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8) Do you think it's okay for the boy to hit her?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9) Suppose a boy hits another boy, Luvuyo. Do you think it's okay for Luvuyo to hit him back?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10) Suppose a boy hits a girl. Do you think it's okay for the girl to hit him back?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11) Suppose a girl hits another girl, Nosiphiwo. Do you think it's okay for Nosiphiwo to hit her back?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12) Suppose a girl hits a boy. Do you think it's okay for the boy to hit her back?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.13) In general, is it okay to hit other people?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.14) If you are angry, is it okay to say bad things to other people?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.15) In general, is it okay to shout at others and say bad things?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.16) Is it usually okay to push other people around if you are angry?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.17) Is it okay to insult other people?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.18) Is it okay to take your anger out on others by saying bad things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when you are angry?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.19) Is it okay to punish someone if they upset you in some way?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.20) Is it okay to talk behind someone’s back if they behave badly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.21) Is it okay to talk behind someone’s back if they upset you in some way?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your time
APPENDIX C: RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Note: Cronbach’s alpha coefficients greater than 0.70, the recommended minimum value for reliability (Nunally 1978: 85-94), were observed for these indices. Nunally argues that in the early stages of basic research, coefficients between .50 and .69 are sufficient evidence of adequate reliability. The observed Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were all in this interval or better, thus confirming the reliability of the reward categories’ summated scores.

Table 4.1: Types of conflict experienced by participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of conflict</th>
<th>Frequency of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intolerance of differences</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition over schoolwork</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumours</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insults and bullying</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal fighting</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend-girlfriend disputes</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical fighting</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage to property</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting with a knife</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a gun</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Never=1; Very seldom=2; Monthly=3; Weekly=4; Daily=5.
Table 4.2: Types of conflict personally witnessed by participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of conflict</th>
<th>Degree of involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intolerance of differences</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition over schoolwork</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumours</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insults and bullying</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal fighting</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend-girlfriend disputes</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical fighting</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage to property</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting with a knife</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a gun</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Never=1; Very seldom=2; Monthly=3; Weekly=4; Daily=5.
Table 4.3: Participants’ view of treatment by friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How I am treated by my friends</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am always treated fairly</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am treated with respect</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am given equal opportunity</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am treated with compassion</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am accepted</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Strongly disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly agree=5.

Table 4.4: Participants’ support system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who I would ask for help</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Another adult</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teacher</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another family member</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A brother/sister</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Strongly disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly agree=5.
Table 4.5: Participants’ view of personal problems

Compared with other young people my age, I have ...

![Bar chart showing the number of students' views on personal problems.]

- Many more problems: 2 students
- The same number of problems: 13 students
- Fewer problems: 3 students

Compared with other young people my age, I have many more problems.
Table 4.6: Participants’ attitudes to conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If I am angry with someone, I just ignore them.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I am angry with someone, I will find a way to punish them.</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even if other people think I am strange, I always try to stop a fight.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is okay for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want.</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes a person does not have any choice but to fight.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop.</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are better ways to solve problems than fighting.</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to talk out a problem instead of fighting.</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If people do something to make me really angry, they deserve to be punished.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guy shows he really loves his girlfriend, if he gets into fights with other guys over her.</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.49</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Strongly disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly agree=5.
Table 4.7.1: Participants’ views on boy-girl insults (Insult: Q9.1-Q9.8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Optional response</th>
<th>Perfectly okay (=1)</th>
<th>Sort of okay (=2)</th>
<th>Sort of wrong (=3)</th>
<th>Really wrong (=4)</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boy insults boy</td>
<td>Shout back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>6 (33%)</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>16 (89%)</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy insults girl</td>
<td>Shout back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>7 (39%)</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>14 (78%)</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl insults girl</td>
<td>Shout back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>10 (56%)</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>16 (89%)</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl insults boy</td>
<td>Shout back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
<td>13 (72%)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>16 (89%)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7.2: Participants’ views on hitting (Hit: Q9.9 – Q9.12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Perfectly okay (=1)</th>
<th>Sort of okay (=2)</th>
<th>Sort of wrong (=3)</th>
<th>Really wrong (=4)</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boy hits boy</td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>11 (61%)</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy hits girl</td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>12 (67%)</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl hits girl</td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>12 (67%)</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl hits boy</td>
<td>Hit back</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>15 (83%)</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.7.3 : Participants' views on general conflict behaviour (Opinion: Q9.13-Q9.21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Perfectly ok (=1)</th>
<th>Sort of ok (=2)</th>
<th>Sort of wrong (=3)</th>
<th>Really wrong (=4)</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hit other people, in general</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>17 (94%)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say bad things to other people, if angry</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
<td>14 (78%)</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shout at others and say bad things, in general</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>17 (94%)</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push other people around, if angry</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>16 (89%)</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult other people, in general</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>17 (94%)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take anger out on others by saying bad things</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>16 (89%)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punish someone if they upset you</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>13 (72%)</td>
<td>3.56 3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk behind someone’s back if they behave badly</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
<td>14 (78%)</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk behind someone’s back if they upset you</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>16 (89%)</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D: AVP UMZI WETHU REPORT

AVP WORKSHOP REPORT

Level: Basic

Venue: Umzi Wethu, Port Elizabeth

Dates: 4-5 September 2010

Facilitators: Nosiphiwo Mani, Mlu Dywili, Dr Lesley and Pauline and Mitchell and Shena Lamb

No. of participants: 19 (one participant did not return the second day)

Agenda & participants’ names: Umzi Wethu Group 9 (attached)

Recommendations:

- 16 participants would like to be on an AVP mailing list
- 15 participants would like to do an Advanced AVP workshop, two of whom would like to become AVP facilitators.
- AVP Basic workshop could be included the standard Umzi Wethu orientation.

Facilities: Good

Team: Worked well together

The group: All participants are students of the Umzi Wethu hospitality training programme and live, study and work together at the Umzi Wethu premises in Port Elizabeth. At the time of the workshop they had known each other for about one month.
Gender balance: 9 men, 9 women.

Ethnic origins: 18 African (Xhosa); 1 Coloured

Age profile: 18-26 years

PARTICIPANTS’ WRITTEN EVALUATIONS (spelling uncorrected)

1. The workshop: how do you feel about the workshop overall?

- It was great and healing because it should/thought us about dealing and understanding certain things
- It was great and I learned a lot and also enjoyed myself a lot
- I learned a lot and more aware of how to control my anger and emotions
- I think it’s been grate having people explaining for us what violence is
- It was very good, I have learnt a lot, I am willing to use my skills in the place I stay at, in everywhere I go to
- Excellent
- It is a good experience and another way of self-growth
- The workshop was perfect, and I feel very happy, excited that I have met programe like AVP
- I feel so proud because it help in terms of learning and life skills
- It was very interesting, it also helped me – info, boosting my self-esteem
- I felt honoured and blessed to be in such increadable workshop. I’m overwhelmed.
- This workshop was very nice and full of experience
- I feel so happy and I have learn how to deal with things
- It was very great I learn a lot of things
- It was good to learn about to manage anger
- Very cool, I loved it and it help me
I'm happy that I have the workshop
It is a good educating programme

2. What do you believe was the most important thing you learned?

- Dealing with conflict, anger and listening/being a good listener
- That sometimes a person just needs to be listened to and not be given advise always
- Many people get angry because of the past, how I was raised or bcz of personal insecurities let them behave certain way
- How to control anger and respecting yourself for who you are
- The session about Crossing Over, I have learnt that I am not alone in my problems and I am lucky to have my life.
- How to control emotions when your angry, think before you react
- Self-awareness
- Good communication and participation more specially with the small group work, I felt free/comfortable to express my views.
- It show how can I manage to soften down my angerness and also skills in how you can prevent conflict.
- The “I” messaging was very powerful to me. I will implement it to me.
- To be able to share my filling and to get the help that I needed the most so I'm so greatful.
- What I believe is the most important thing is know how to stop a conflict
- The most important thing I’ve learned how to deal with anger.
- How to control my anger/and that I must think before react
- Anger management
- Control the anger and ending conflict
- How to control my anger and there is no need of violence
- Beyond all things, I should not only believe myself but to listen and respect and trust me
3. **If anything, what do you believe was the least important thing you learned?**

- I don’t have the least because everything we did was important and healing
- Nothing was least important, everything was good
- ------
- Nothing really
- N/A
- ------
- Everything was important and it was a good learning curve
- Nothing because everything was important and was a lesson to me
- No
- Nothing was least to me.
- Is to think before we act because you will be amazed of you self in term of self control
- Nothing
- Is that in AVP we don’t stand, we all sit down and we are equal.
- How to work as a group together
- Nothing
- Control my anger
- To me everything that I learned was important
- ----- 

4. **What did you think of the workshop’s content?**

- It was great and wonderful, especially the parts where we had to do energizers.
- It was real and straight to the point
- It is perfect and I wish it can be available at communities, schools and churches for that matter
- Everything was good, the facilitators and the whole group
• Everything was organised perfectly, including the time preparation
• It was very well explained 😊
• Its more than what I expected
• It was good and I enjoyed everything
• It was good and emphasize good things in life and say non to violence
• It was very informational and easy to be understood in simple English.
• It’s pretty much increadable and I’ve got no word to discribe it’s wow
• It have made me a better person because now I can control my anger now
  I have anger management
• Is about violents and it was about good leadership
• It was awesome
• It straight forward
• It was very good
• I think it’s good
• It’s nice, and I wish so many would get the chance to learn it

5. Facilitation: how did you feel about the facilitation?

• It was good because we were one and it felt good seeing that the facilitators
  are sitting with us.
• They are really good and didn’t think of themselves as superior
• They are all perfect
• Very good. Encouraging, positive and energetic.
• They are proffesions and they where with us in everything they did
• They were understandble and they were sitting just like us so we were at
  the same level
• It is awesome
• Was perfect because you don’t feel like there is someone who’s above. We
  were all in the same level.
• They’re good teaching good morals and quality right things in life as they
  are same generation as us
• It was good because they don't stand up – that show that they are not superior.
• Yho!! They are so great intelligent amazing to work with, so understanding they are so awesome
• They are so good and nice. They know what they are talking about.
• I think everything was explained in such a way even our facilitators they were enjoying our company and they know what they are doing.
• They are very understandable
• They were good specialy when we did the L&L
• They were super
• It was great
• Awesome!! Is all I say 😊

6. Organisation: how did you feel about how the workshop was organised?

• Good, everything was fun and enjoyable and interesting because I thought it would be boring but it didn’t
• It was great and everything was on time to start and we wanted more time
• It was not well announced and we were not clear about many things that were not fully explained
• It’s been grate, enjoyed it.
• Very good, the facilitators are reliable
• It was well organised
• The venue was perfect
• Everything was organised perfectly.
• ---
• Punctuality was one of their strengths
• It’s beautiful and it’s well organised and so clear for everyone to understand
• The workshop was organised very well, everything was fine.
• It was perfectly organised.
7. **What did you think of the food?**

- Fine except for the drinks (juice) cos I don’t like juice but everything was cool
- It was good compliments to the chef
- Delisous
- Mhmmm! The food was very nice.
- Great
- It was nicely
- The food was delicious
- Perfect
- Good and nice
- Food was good (compliments to the chef)
- It was nice healthy and lovely
- The food was good as usual.
- ----- 
- It was okay
- Nice
- Very nice
- The food was great
- It was great no doubt

8. **Was attention given to any special needs you might have?**
• Yes coz I manage to express my feeling and talk about things that were troubling me and they were given special needs.
• Don’t really have special needs
• Yes
• Yes
• Yes, I needed to share my problems/challenges so I did when we were in groups.
• Yes
• Yes, to some and more of my needs
• I got every attention I needed.
• Everything how to be a better person and nonviolent
• Yes I think so.
• Oh yes to each any every angle that I was struggling with in my life so happy to be part of it all
• Yes and it was given very well. You can feel it.
• Yes, because if you have a problem we discuss about it and trying to find a solution.
• Yes, we were treat at the same
• Yes
• Yes big tym
• Yes
• Emotional attention and management I learned
APPENDIX E: CONFLICT NARRATIVES

**Narrative 1 The Joker**

*Pre-workshop narrative (written)*

There was an incident with me and the other lady. She accused me of hitting her on the butt. She first asked if I hit her on the butt, and I didn’t answer because I thought she was just playing but she was serious. When she asked again, I laughed. She then sneered at me, calling me names. I was angry but I managed to control myself. I just laugh at her as she was swearing at me. I find it funny because I didn’t hit her on the butt. As she is women hitting her will get me into trouble. I decided to just pretend as if I did not have ears to listen to the bullshit that was coming of her mouth. I was angry but wore a false face which is to pretend. It helped me. I can’t stand it when people don’t give respect.

*Post-workshop narrative (taped)*

I never really acted, like in terms of someone made me angry and I didn’t really act in terms of being angry or hit him because what happened we were in the kitchen... there were three of us... ja... including her... what happened is that she thought I hit her on the back so harassing... so she asked, 'who hit me?' and I didn’t reply then she asks why... I instead of telling her that I didn’t hit her, what I did was... (pause)... to laugh, so I just laugh, like... I didn’t answer her direct that I didn’t hit her, I just laughed and say Do you really think I can hit you, you know and.... So she was very angry you know she... she said things that... things of verbally... she was really angry and tell me a lot of things, things I didn’t really know... like, you know when someone is angry telling a lot of things now about you, you always think you are clever and everything and... things like that... (pause)... ja in terms of AVP these two days I... nothing has changed for me in terms of dealing with anger because I’m the way I always approach myself... because most of the time I don’t get that angry... you know, it just like when someone like... calling me up no-one is answering the phone... I will be angry for that minute but immediately I start to see the person, I become myself and I smile and do everything...(pause) okay I will say I was probably wrong to laugh, you know cos I could have at least tell her I didn’t... not hit her so that so that it just end there... just because it... ja... just to end there... like... from now on I have to.... if someone’s asking.... I should have just... I should... I could... I would tell the someone I did not... if ever I did it I will say I did it because... ja...
Narrative 2 The Gang Fight

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)
It started uh it was Friday when I think so but when I have heard the story I was not there by the time it started. There was one of our friends was robbed by a boy who lived in our location but it started in the tavern. They were there, drinking there so that they this time fighting verbally but it turns to physical. The boy who robbed the boy who lived in my location was stabbed so he slept in hospital. So what’s going on, they wanted revenge, they come back to these boys I’m sitting with and they also stab these boys so it was that conflict involved that location. It was like a gangsterism thing, such thing like that. So yes I was going to play soccer in the field so I was going there since there was a complaint so I get in by the way. They hit me also with a baseball bat at the back when I finished playing the match. So it was that conflict involved of the two locations so each location cannot enter into another location and this one cannot enter to, to another location, it was … such thing like that. So it turns into taverns, when we are going to tavern, all the time it became a fight, a fight, a fight, a fight. So certain of our boys were stabbed and two of that other location boys also were stabbed. But it turns to go to police so that there was a … one mama who was in the police forum … he heared by this, this fighting so he travels to make a peace to both of these sides so he call us both to the police station then, the.. Ja the big boys. They called the two groups and they tried to discuss with our parents all that stuff so that we can make … uh … peace to each other. So but they’ve told … they spoke and they come together into peace. But now they’re in a relationship with both. It’s nice. Ja we talked. We made peace so that now there’s no fight now. And it’s a truth story.

Post-workshop narrative (taped)
Ja the story first started on the tavern, in the tavern …concerning all of the friends … so one of our friends get robbed by another boy who’s living in another location … have got 11 …it was 11 at night so … the boy who robbed this boy, he also stabbed this boy with a knife so then there were these guys from my location, they wanted revenge so that the one he was stabbed so they stabbed another boy there from that group … so it was like a gangterism … so we all fighted then the result it was seven of my boys get stabbed … and also on that side three get stabbed … so there was one lady who was in the forum … police forum … so she tries … to group us together all, the two different groups… to the police station … when we arrived there he called the super … the super tried to make peace between the two groups so that we …. He also … she also called our parents to be there when we were there so that we can talk to each other … so we talked to each other so we make a peace then the super tries to make a peace so that he really … he really knows that we make a peace. At the weekend we goes to the soccer field as we are playing soccer then he see that we are not fighting … (Continued)
Narrative 2 The Gang Fight (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

we are making a friendship so things go right ... there's no fighting now, we just friends ... I can visit them, they can visit us ... so ... something like that ... there's a bond now but the bond started with fighting and it ends to friendship ... something like that. So what I learned to AVP... you must not first make a ... a reaction. What must ... what we must have done there, we must go to the police and report that case ... of that guy who robbed one guy to us .. so that it's going to be a case ... Ja the story first started on the tavern, in the tavern ...concerning all of the friends ... so one of our friends get robbed by another boy who's living in another location ... have got 11 ...it was 11 at night so ... Ilandovo the boy who robbed this boy, he also stabbed this boy with a knife so then there were these guys from my location, they wanted revenge so that the one he was stabbed so they stabbed another boy there from that group ... so it was like a gangterism ... so we all fighted then the result it was seven of my boys get stabbed ... and also on that side three get stabbed ... so there was one lady who was in the forum ... police forum ... so she tries ... to group us together all, the two different groups... to the police station ... when we arrived there he called the super ... the super tried to make peace between the two groups so that we .... He also ... she also called our parents to be there when we were there so that we can talk to each other ... so we talked to each other so we make a peace then the super tries to make a peace so that he really ... he really knows that we make a peace. At the weekend we goes to the soccer field as we are playing soccer then he see that we are not fighting, we are making a friendship so things go right ... there's no fighting now, we just friends ... I can visit them, they can visit us ... so ... something like that ... there's a bond now but the bond started with fighting and it ends to friendship ... something like that. So what I learned to AVP... you must not first make a ... a reaction. What must ... what we must have done there, we must go to the police and report that case ... of that guy who robbed one guy to us .. so that it's going to be a case ...maybe that one get caught, maybe doing prison ... so that it's going to be right. But you know by a revenge, that one not right. As a man in our culture we are... mans also, we must talk with every man, talk man to man so that we make it clear each and every one ....

What I've learned in this two days is how to manage your anger even to the others, to your friends ... to show them how can they manage their anger ... by not fighting, just to learn to speak to each other .... because anger it becomes with a bad results sometimes... you see. It's not the right thing to fight than to talk. So AVP also give skills that I will apply ... (Continued)
Narrative 2 The Gang Fight (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

when I arrive where I’m living so that in schools, maybe in schools to the young ones so that they grow with …. this idea, how to prevent violence, all that stuff. And the steps.

I think when I … give them that knowledge, I will tell them about this story, what have been done to me … and I make to be sad, more sad, so that they realise that now I change. And I will want that trust, to make that circle because they are … they are little children to make that round circle, that bond so that they … they have that open space for me to share their problems, all their stuff … maybe their … their violent thing is at home sometimes, you see, so to make that space so that they trust me so that I can apply it to them so that they become open to me so they have spoken all that stuff …
Narrative 3  The Postmaster

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

I think it was 2008. I started with post office there in XXXX ... I was there as a postman delivering the mail. Okay. Then I delivered there the whole year ne? Then I ... it was 2009 I think 2009, October then I ... started with some problems with my manager, the postmaster. He's a black guy ... then he will come to me, he will shout at me Hey man I think the people ... they say they are not receiving their mails.

Where are these people I said no postmaster you can go to my locker because there at the post office each and every postman has got his own locker whereby you keep your mails ... for ... for example let's say I'm delivering the location so all the mails for the location is on my locker ... then I'm going to deliver those letters every day. But I say if you can check here on my locker there are no letters -- each and every -- I deliver all letters then he'll say no but the people they were here. Then I say okay it's easy postmaster because each and every day they are having a review meeting half past seven, can't you tell them that you ... that the next day they must come here maybe nine o'clock before I went up to deliver and I'm going to wait for them so that they can tell me no .... where is ... where is our ... letters? Then ... he was failing to do that because I would wait till maybe half past nine and I said no postmaster where are the people? And he say no they are not coming so you have to go and deliver then I will go and deliver and he was doing it repeatedly. Then, I ... okay then till one day ... then I decided I can't take it anymore then I have to report it to the ... SD, the one who's ... for example, it's postmaster then on top of the postmaster there is a manager then I reported to him then he came there and to assess the situation and he said no man I don't see anything here because then he said okay we need uh the evidence ... for example there at the post office ... maybe the customers went there then it's very dirty and the service is very slow then they start whereby ... they will complain And yes ... and he said okay what, what must they do they must go there and complain so that they can speak with something that is written there. Then ... he didn't do that. After I found out one guy came this year -- it was January but no, you know what, this postmaster ... I think he's having a... a lady so now she wants that lady to come to work on my place so he was just creating this story. And I said no man for me as a Christian I don't like to fight because you see it's adapting ... it's affecting my work because ... after he was doing that then I couldn't commit 100 percent because there is this person who don't trust you see because for me I said each and every time, even if I'm sick I will go out there and deliver those letters, even if it's raining, it's hot, I'm going there because we got that letters that we deliver whatever it is so I was honest -- to me -- even if, when he was accusing me, sometimes I will just keep quiet then ... (Continued)
Narrative 3  The Postmaster (Continued)

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

I will go … after my work then I will go to my room and then I will pray there, to God saying that okay I have this problem so what must I do God because this guy is accusing me. Because each and every day I was delivering those letters …the delivery Then after we received this information about those letters I went to him and I say no you didn’t say from the first place that there somebody that you want to put in on my job then I will leave because I see you don’t want me here. So if you don’t want me here then there is no reason for me to stay here so I will leave. Then I decided – ja it was Feb then … ja it was January then in January I decided okay on the 3rd of February I wrote a resignation letter. Then I decided … but I said okay … because of I was honest, I’m going to work for the whole month of February, the end of February ya February, 26th February then I resigned at the post office. And yes … and he said okay what, what must they do they must go there and complain so that they can speak with something that is written there. Then … he didn’t do that. After I found out one guy came this year – it was January but no, you know what, this postmaster … I think he’s having a… a lady so now she wants that lady to come to work on my place so he was just creating this story. And I said no man for me as a Christian I don’t like to fight because you see it’s adapting … it’s affecting my work because … after he was doing that then I couldn’t commit 100 percent because there is this person who don’t trust you see because for me I said each and every time, even if I’m sick I will go out there and deliver those letters, even if it’s raining, it’s hot, I’m going there because we got that letters that we deliver whatever it is so I was honest – to me – even if, when he was accusing me, sometimes I will just keep quiet then I will go, after my work then I will go to my room and then I will pray there, to God saying that okay I have this problem so what must I do God because this guy is accusing me. Because each and every day I was delivering those letters …the delivery Then after we received this information about those letters I went to him and I say no you didn’t say from the first place that there somebody that you want to put in on my job then I will leave because I see you don’t want me here. So if you don’t want me here then there is no reason for me to stay here so I will leave. Then I decided – ja it was Feb then … ja it was January then in January I decided okay on the 3rd of February I wrote a resignation letter. Then I decided … but I said okay … because of I was honest, I’m going to work for the whole month of February, the end of February ya February, 26th February then I resigned at the post office.  (Continued)
Narrative 3  The Postmaster (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

That one I'm going to use that one .... I-message because I mean for these two days then I have some closure on what happened because by the time that I was there and by the time I was resigning I was having that anger first and foremost for me after ... he did that to me ... then I thought that this guy he didn't respect me, secondly he didn’t come to me and .... so that we can sort things out but he just take the actions because he is the boss ... and I felt that he was abusing me, you know because as a manager he was abusing the powers of the office so that ... he was the manager so what he says goes, without coming to me and so that we can discuss the matter ... then I feel that ja for example I thought after I left the post office I will never forgive him but as I was here then I just ... sometimes ... somebody will say something and I say ... now he’s talking to me ... for example, sometimes, as a pity because ... I, I like to proclaim myself as Christian ... I've been dealing with this over and over saying that ay, but each and every day I am preaching to people that they must forgive somebody but I was struggling to forgive him because of what he did to me on the past but as I was in this workshop then I decided okay for me ... I think after next week I will be going to XXXX for a weekend because I will be there Friday but I decided that in the morning Saturday I will go there to the post office and I’m just praying if he was, he’s in because ... for example if this weekend he’s in for Saturday then maybe next Saturday he’s not in, then he’s not staying in XXXX he’s staying in I think XXX, so if he’s in so I will go to him and try to find some closure ... so that I can go to him and then for example I won’t say because you did this and that then that will come to him and then I will just open some... conversation so that we can shake hands so that I can forget about that.

Postscript to The Postmaster narrative (from second focus group six months later)

Then I said to myself, okay I am going to XXXX, and I am going to the post office and go to my manager and then just make peace. But, okay it was fine, I was willing to do that. Because AVP helped me a lot. So when I came to XXXX, I went to the office, but the problem was, that I didn't want to go inside. I was waiting outside. Can I go inside?  I was feeling strong. I had to swallow my pride and go inside. Just do this. Then I went inside. He was shocked when I came inside. Because he was the one that did me wrong... (Continued)
Postscript to this narrative (from second focus group six months later) (Continued)

Then we spoke. Then he even asked me, “Why did you change your mind”? I thought that after you left, you would never talk to me again. I said no, now that I am here in PE, you see some things happen, and then those things start changing your life. I said I did go to a workshop called AVP. For example, last time I went to him, I didn’t talk to him, I just borrow him the book, said he must read, so that you can learn to work with your staff. Then I gave it to him on Friday, then Saturday and Sunday so that he can go through the book. Each and every time I go to XXXX, I am just going to give him that book. You read this chapter, you do this and you do that. Ja, he is reading it. And sometimes he will come and challenge me about something, and he will say “How do you deal with this? And now he is reading to change and reading to learn.

Narrative 4 The Rejection

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

I’ve been ….. in so many conflict situations I don’t know where to start …. okay. I will tell the last one. It was … two month ago – it was my girlfriend – she lives with her parents – and she’s the mother of my son – like I don’t work – she wanted some money and I didn’t have it and then the things that …. You know my baby was suffering and she – he was sick and she was putting a lot of pressure on me and then she said she wanted to break up she said I wasn’t … like I haven’t got work and don’t work … I tried to explain to her but she doesn’t want … she didn’t…. understand … she’s just say I don’t want to work …I’m irresponsible and she was going to leave me. Okay I said to her … and she’s pregnant … ja two months ago …. so I feel hurt and sad … but now I’m here and she’s in XXXX … I told her that I was doing this course and she said it doesn’t pay …. yes … that’s my story.

No post-workshop version
Narrative 5 The Sibling

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

I had a conflict that I will never forget between me and my sister. We had a very big conflict because we family wise, we’ve got this differences you know, she’s my sister but she’s not my biological sister you know … yeah so we …we had this conflict with my mother according to her, she loved me more than her you know. Then she … she came one day and she shouted at me, she just … acted crazy telling me that I’m not even the person that supposed to be in that family but I’m the one being loved a lot and everything and that time … there was an anger that was in me you know there was an anger that wanted me to just jump on you and fight with her you know and we …we sharing this … verbal fight and it … for about certain time so after few minutes… after few minutes of shouting, swearing doing saying everything you know I was realising this is not worth it you know for me to just shout and for me to fight with her it was you know it … and I just … as I was shouting with her I … I saw that there must be someone between me and her which could be down on her so that this conflict can end you know and I decided that I’m gonna be that person that’s gonna just shut my mouth and she can carry on shouting and I can just walk away from her because the reason why she’s shouting is because I’m standing in front of her and I’m busy replying on what she’s saying and I thought okay let me go, let me just leave her in peace and left her with peace and after a few hours I came back home and she’s there and she she’s just spoke with me politely that I’m sorry for what I’ve said sorry for what I’ve did because I’ve been calling you lies but I’m making you feel bad you know and thought that for me leaving her speaking shouting it helped me cos I thought that if … I was … on… her … way that I would shout and … and … do all the swearing … I would even fight with her and it could have been worse you know for me to walk out of the conflict that we … we… were shouting because of that … just sat down and she said sorry and we got along and we called our Mom and we said to her can you please explain one thing to us that we do not have a limited love for us you love us equally you know you love us as … as your own children. And she sat with us and she spoke with us and she liked the fact that I left my sister and I run away from her … the problem you know I’m not afraid to say I can run away from the problem, I don’t … I don’t create a problem and run away from it. If I created a problem I have to face because been created the problem but if … if a problem it wasn’t meant to happen and I’m there and I do have ways to run away from it, I certainly do and I don’t bury my conflicts, I don’t, I don’t take them heavy and um I forget about them, I take my conflicts I put them down and I see if .. what can I do to solve my conflicts.
Narrative 5 The Sibling (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

I just liked it you know the fact that I was told to join the workshop ... I was like, omigod, I'm going back to the student days of mine, you know, and uh I felt that I'm going to be left out coz I'm, a staff member, I'm not a student and I wondered that how I'm going to react coz these are students and they will act like students you know but for me being in the ... the the atmosphere that was created by you guys as the facilitators ... you, you ... dis- like put me aside as okay we not going to ask XXXX because he's a staff member, we're not going to let XXXX answer because he's a staff member, you've put me, you've putted me in the same on the same level as you guys and the students so I felt once in ... in, in the moment of the workshop, I felt like I am a student again ... you know I had that feeling yeah I felt like I was a par I felt like I was a student, I feel I like I'm a student, I'm naughty, I'm laughing like ... I don't remember the last time that I laughed like that in my life ...

That I spoke about last time and to me it still have the fact that yes I did like that I just just sat, I just walked out the room you know and I let my sister do everything that she wanted to say and I just circled the room and I came back again and you see ... getting along again but ... I-message that's something that stood out for me and I mean everything was good was good but just for one time the I-messages, the I-messages one is very easy, it is very polite it is a way a good way to show someone that I'm not on the same level that you are because you are angry but I'm just I just, just want to tell you that I'm not in the, in the same mood that you are. I want us to fix things I want us to be, to be okay you know coz you mentioned something like people do not ignore you but people they just act as the camera you know because when they came in they don't greet you they like a camera ... a camera would never touch you would never ask you something, the camera is just being a camera and you said something and I've just learnt uh that is wonderful, that is powerful and to use that, you don't ... and this new thing that I I thought I was going to imagine that I thought before I go to this person that I want to, to solve matters with, I think I should go and just pick something that I should compliment her with like I like her t-shirt ... I like her t-shirt and I know and she's gonna she or he's gonna be like ... oh don't talk to me and I will like no I like your t-shirt ... just to get myself something to say before I use my I-message. Yeah I'll just say the word of thanks ... I'd like to say to people who taught you how to do this facilitation thing ... that who taught you how to do the facilitation thing... I would like to tell them that thank you for, for teaching you so well that you came to us and you, you, you've been a part of us, you just gave us what we ... (Continued)
Narrative 5 The Sibling (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

were supposed to have, you know, you didn’t act as a facilitators but you acted as a people who
likes to, who want, want to work with us you know because you all come, we, we, we asked such
question, we disagree with you, you disagree with us, you gave us advice, we gave you advice,
you gave us lots of wisdom that we’ve got, you gave your, us a few of your theories and uh it
was wonderful, I just want to thank you guys for coming and give us most of all the information
that, initially we thought this is waste of time we are using all weekend saying violence, violence
I’m just going to hit someone before I do something for it but you guys you came, you put our
lives into another perspective, you know, now we worked on the, we just, we just, have a different
perspective about what we used to do, you know ... now we know how to solve conflicts you
know ... so I won’t, I won’t be worried you know if I, I’ve just heard that XX shouted ast XX and
how XX t and so the conflict’s gonna be solved and so there will be less conflict with the rest,
you know and take this information outside ... we hope that ... people thought that you going to
give them the information, they gonna listen and and gonna use it, you know, that’s why we, we
want the materials, the pamphlets and everything and books and ... just to have a proof ... most
of the people they say uh give me the proof, where’s that thing, tell me, show me ... you know,
so we can just show them, this is it ... ja
Narrative 6 The Employer

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

I’ve got a story that. that relies on exactly what you are here about … I was … I was … um … I … I failed my grade … I failed my grade … I failed my grade 12 in 2007 okay I failed my grade 12 in 2007 so… I was not used to staying at home so …I went to find a job so I’ve worked … I worked … for four days … for four days then I quit the job because I couldn’t handle it because I’m not used to people who don’t res… because I’m used of teachers at school that respect us and they listen to us most of the time so in the workplace I thought to myself I have to learn … I have to ….. the boss of the place … not the manager …. I’ve got a … you see my hair is like this, it’s natural hair … I don’t like to put cream on my head … I don’t like to put chemicals on my hair … so he asked me that I should plait my hair like the others so I told him I cannot do that because I can’t handle … it’s too sore … my scalp it’s too sensitive …. so that’s where the problems begin … that’s where where I started having problems with them.

Yes I felt indignant besides that … we ..the money would …. we were not used to the computer system … the money would get lost all the time … you would end up getting paid, some they would steal the money ….I told my colleagues I’m gonna leave this place and they said so if you are going to leave why don’t you take the money with you when you know you will not come back because you’ve worked and worked and worked and you never get paid … I was not raised like that … I touched the money and I feel it and feel it and I just put it in … and I said I’m just gonna leave it like that … I’m not gonna take it … I know that I’m going to do something better for myself … and I saw that man in XXXX, that man who was treating me badly and he couldn’t even look at me because he knew that I was a better person … I was not the person that he wanted me to be.
Narrative 6 The Employer (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

So about the hair thing .... now that I've grown and I've taken ... taken look of things in another perspective ... it's something that I've learned now ... I should have put maybe a hairnet on .... yes that's another thing that I could say ... I should have stayed .... at that shop.... I shouldn't have left ... those things that that man said ... cos... he was doing ... he was saying ... it was the procedure of the place ... of that of that certain establishment cos that's how they do things there ... so I could say that I also over-reacted, I could say that, even ...even though he didn't have a ... good way of putting it ... I should have thought that long and hard ... but the thing is I didn't have much information .... I was just feeling that it's like I'm being discriminated.

Narrative 7 The Cheat

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

It was me and my girlfriend ... um I'm doing um a seventeen year who's doing matric this year. Um I cheated once on her. It was last year. I didn't cheat with someone who's very close to her, she's very far. I mean my girlfriend lives in XXXX then she found out about that. She was paging my phone and found out about ... that we were texting each other with another girl. And then one day she came to my place ... and she was paging my phone and then ... decided to ask me a question about this girl and... I denied everything. I said no, no, no it wasn't me who was sending this text, it was a friend of mine who used my phone. Okay it was ... it was fine but she was mad at me in that moment ... okay ...I sent her home ... Do you know that she took the numbers ... the number and then ... she started calling that girl ... asking the questions about me ... does she know ... she knows me ... and she came back another time and ... she poured water on my back .... so ...I was very angry ... I almost ... made a stupid mistake to ... I was angry ... so I ... but I didn't ... hit her ... I was about to do it ... I was very angry. At that time there was ... I was swearing at her ... she was holding me, she was going to do something to me ... I'm sorry but ... I apologised to her and after that .... my other ...my other external relationship .... I .. I decided to cancel it and focus on her ... I learnt that being dishonest with a person while you think you are making yourself happy by being dishonest or maybe cheating you making somebody hurt ....yes you are also hurting yourself because ... it's a secret thing, it ... it ... revolves around, it's gonna ... go back to you Ja I thought it was a cool thing like ... to have two or more girls .. it was cool, ja teenager so I wish ... I wish that other people would know that ... people who are younger than me, my experience ....
Narrative 7 The Cheat (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

Okay, what I’ve learnt from the AVP especially the I-messaging thing … I think in my previous situation I should have … implemented it … just like … to tell her how I felt … what caused me to do those things … you see … what I needed … so that … so that it wouldn’t lead to that situation that I have done … that it made … that I-messaging thing is an amazing thing now … I’m gonna start living on that thing on a daily basis … I’ve even started it today from a friend of mine with another girl in the room took the charger off and then she was going to be crazy and then remember I-messages, AVP … she said oh, remind me that again and I started the video spot, where you talk about the situation not … don’t judge now … what did what, she said the fact that somebody took my cell phone off the charger so that was the start and like, no at least I learned something, I made a difference in somebody else’s life … so this programme to me made a humongous impact so I gonna start teaching others about what I’ve learnt … I’m not going to be very selfish about this information, it’s very powerful information, it can change many people … and I’m really interested to do the advanced certificate … I’m looking forward.
Narrative 8 The Soccer Game

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

It was Saturday ... Somerset East. We were going to play a tournament so as a team we used to sit at the same room, sit at the same room and then go to the field. It was 3 o'clock. I was not feeling good that day. I used to – when I was going to play a match that day I was ... I used to feel well – excited about the game but that day I was ... my spirit was down so my coach asked me what's happening I say Coach I don't know but ... and my coach ask me Do you ... you will play? Yes I will play Coach and then I go to the field. The game started and the players play. But uh before the ... uh the first half ends I was ... I was cheeky – every, every ... I don't ... I don't everything ... everything that that says to me, I don't like ... I'm not listening to ... I do what I want ... I'm not listening to all the people that say No Athini you must do this man, I don't listen to them ... then we go to the second half. My coach started to talk to me and say, You must do this ... the thing you are doing on the field are wrong – you must stop shouting the .... You must stop shouting the players, you must be yourself ... what's happening today? I say Coach I don't know and I start the game. The score was 1-1 and it goes to extra time. We play ... so in extra time it's ... time if we lose, if the team score we lose and if we score, we win. So one of the openings player kick me at my knee and I fall down. I didn't do any ... I wake up there frustrated the player And I push I push the player – the player push back and we start fighting and then my team mates come and separate us. I've got a ... I've got a red card also that player with a red card and my team loses the match because of me because they ... after I get the red card then there there a shortage in the field, the player was not enough then ... we lose that game. And then my coach started shout at me and I get angry and I just take my things and go. And that was my worst bad day in my life. Even at home, even at home nobody ... I was talking to nobody. I was just sitting alone in my room. After, the day after that day, Sunday I sitted down and I think that as a stupid thing I ever do ....
Narrative 8 The Soccer Game  (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (taped)

What I have learned in that day I shouldn’t allow the anger …. the angerness to keep on hurting. I would have arrived at the field and tried to … to react with my angerness to … to take it down and not to think about it, to think about the game, the game’s own result, to think about the game, think positive things about the game, like uh wanting to score goals, not to think about ‘I’m angry today’ … I will, I will do this in the field … I will think about the game and make sure I’m get in my team spirit, be in the same … same … same spirit with my team, my team mates and then go to the field … to … to go to the conflict, actually … there’s, the thing that learned this past few days, I … I have learned, go to the player that kick me in my ankle … to push him, I will just to the player and say, player you have … you have kicked in my ankle and it’s pain … and, and maybe he will respond and say sorry and then we shake hands and continue with the game then I will I will I will have a direct heart and I will have caused my team …

And what I have learned, anything I want to … what I’ve learned … how to control your anger cos .. I’m short-tempered, that’s it … I, I not sure short-tempered about to fight …. okay I can talk wrong things, like be rude, so what I’ve learned this past two days how to control yourself and I think it’s a good thing for me .. cos I like to have fun but when it comes to being angry with me, I, I’ve, … I mean but now I think I will have fun the rest of my life … cos I know how to control.
Narrative 9 The Attack

Pre-workshop narrative (taped)

So I’ve been in a conflict, it was … 2008. Yes I was in Grahamstown I went through to … to my grandmother but she’s not my grandmother as such but she’s like … she’s my cousin’s brother’s grandmother, you see, ja … and … she asked me to to go and … connect … the … electric lines for the … for the lights like …. Two tube, like tubing … Something like that, then I was tubing the three rooms …. Then I finished the first one, the second, the third one I didn’t finished it but … it… it was late … it was … it was … time, the time was past 9 by the time when I left there so I said … I told her that I will come back tomorrow and finish it tomorrow then she said it’s okay and I went home and … on my way home then … I met the guy … this guy was … he’s my former class … he’s my schoolmate … former schoolmate at Higher Primary I was doing Grade 6 and she [he] was doing Grade 5 and we were playing at the same team at school playing under … … under 12 … ja … and he said to me do you have, can you please give ten rand and I thought he was joking and I said no I don’t have a ten rand, I said I don’t have a ten rand I just … and I pass. By the time I pass I just had a punch into my face, you see like my teeth is broken, ja, and I had a punch on my face and it was … it was … a big shock Mam, I don’t know if he … he was wearing something … something like steel, I don’t know but he punched me in that part …that I moved away, this guy … he mean business .. then I stepped back then I told myself no I don’t have to be angry I have to think and I used my art … my martial arts skills and he tried to punch me for the second then I tried to defend myself then I hold his arm then I throw him down then I punched him I punched him I punched him … and by the time I was trying to to … to lift up my head there was the second guy was coming … these guys were two, they were trying to rob me … all the time. Then, like, I tried to to to … to move myself from him, understand? Then tried to … meet this guy who who’s coming, like … to meet him half way but this guy was carrying a knife but I didn’t see him at that time because I was fighting and I was angry at that time, but at the same time I was trying to to concentrate because I don’t concentrate those guys … they will stab me to death … I tried … but then this guy had a chance, this second time had a chance to kick me and stab me if … there’s a scratch here but I used Bio-oil to to treat it. I fought and fought but there was a lady I don’t know if she was passing or … but she just screamed and said there’s somebody’s being robbed here then they tried to run but I hold this one I beat him because I was angry, I was cross I was very cross and

(No post-workshop narrative as participant had to attend a funeral on the second day of workshop)
Narrative 10 The Half Sister

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

Had a fight with my sister (half-sister). Her baby son was very ill/sick, then we took him to Dora Nginza Hospital, and the doctors sees nothing but the baby don’t get better. After that she took her son into the traditional healer and they said he being bewitched by my mom and my elder sister, so she came home with that anger and said things indirectly about my mom. Then it was on a weekend when she came drunk at home and she was making fun of my mom, said horrible things about her and it was only me, my mom and my older sister. We tried to stopped her about she was doing and saying thing but she didn’t. Remember she’s my half-sister and then me and my sister decided to take her out of the house because making noise, then she chapped/slap and I slapped her back, that when the fight started. We fought and she wanted to hit my mom but we didn’t gave her any chance, then we fought like really then she left after that and we took all of her stuff away from home. After two weeks she came back and we thought she came to apologise but never instead she wanted to have fight again. And she said I will never pass/walk in the street we will fight again and again. Fortunately she then became a Christian and she came into my home and apologise for what she has done and things she have said. And her baby passed away because of asthma. And she said every time her late son got sick she would go to traditional healers and mention different people, so she said she find it useless to go there because she’s gonna find herself left with no one.

Post-workshop narrative (written)

I had a fight with my half-sister. I now felt bad about happened that time because now I know that there’s a better that I should have handle the conflict nonviolently. The story goes like this, her little boy/baby got sick and then my mom and my sister took her to hospital and the doctor find nothing but the baby don’t get better, she then go to the traditional healer for help and then he said the cause maker is my mom and my elder sister and I felt really really bad about that as a results I and my sister got that anger that she can accuse my mom about the sickness of her son. I then end-up fighting with her for the insulting because she come in at my home drunk and saying/said bad thing about my mother that she has bewitched his son. I and my sister end-up beating her up and throw her stuff away at home. She then came again and I thought that she would apologise but she didn’t so I and my sister throw her away home again. To cut it short she came after some to apologise and her baby boy passed away.
Narrative 11 The Sleep-over

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

I dated a girl for about 3 years and were very close. One day we were sitting in my house and cuddling before we knew the time pasted so quick and it was to late to take her home because the time was around 12 mid-night. I took her home but the house was already locked and we cannot get inside and we decided she would sleep over my house and she slept. Early in the morning the next day she got home and an hour later I saw her entering my door saying that her parents chased her away and she must return where she come from.

I decided that she will try to again to go to her house in the midday because we thought that her parents were angry we just let them cool-down. The day gone by she return again home but same problem rose she returned. My mother return from work and asked me about her because she noticed that she is still wearing the same clothes as yesterday. She asked her that if her parent knew that she was at my house and she said yes because they knew me and know where my house is at.

Later that day her father and uncles popped by my house and started shouting at me that I don’t respect her, if I was I would have taken her early, and shouted end up want to beat me. I told them they can’t or will not beat me at my house because I know all the tools whereabouts of my house and I will not stand and watch them beat me.

My mother came asked what is going on as I try to explain, the father jump for me with golf stick, before I know I was bleeding and I took my hockey stick and go to him and told him he must repeat what he just did, as he tried the second time I beaten him in his ribs. As the uncles came running I ran away. Since then I never talked to that girl, I never saw her again, she was taken to live somewhere else.
Narrative 11 The Sleep-over (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (written)

I dated a girl about 3 years. I was with her in my house we were talking and enjoying each other’s company. The day passed on so quickly and we realise later that the time was already late to take her home. We tried to get her home but there where no answers at the gate and it was locked. So we decided that she would sleep over by my house and early in the morning she would return to her house.

Early in the morning she return she got home but few minutes she was standing on my door again saying her parents said she must return to where she slept. I took her home and enter the house with her and told her parents what really happen the night before and it wasn’t her problem but our problem because I both did not look at the time and saw it too late to return home. I apologise for the incident and ensure the parents it will not happen again; if it did they must come to my house and take her by force.
Narrative 12  The Hot Iron

Pre-workshop (written)

I was sitting at home with my sister. Our parents were gone out, then our uncle came to our house he was from jail in Patensie near Hankey. He greet us and asked for something to eat then we made him. He then ate after that he went outside on the tap. He was standing on the sink and took out all of his clothes, then people were starting to stare at him. We taught we should phone our parents then we did, but unfortunately they were in Jeffrey’s bay in a business meeting. After he has done taking a bath outside he went to his old friend and he came back at night. We were watching tv and my sister was bussy ironing our school uniform then he turned of the tv and said “this is my brother’s tv no one will watch it”, because he was drink I asked nicely can you please turn it on again. He started swearing me and my sister and I took that hot iron and putted it in his face, because I was very cross. Even now we don’t get along, because he got jail attitudes.

Post-workshop narrative (written)

I was left at home with my sister. Our parents were gone out, so my uncle came to our house, he was from prison, so he asked for food and we gave him, then he eated after that he went outside and gone to the tap he standed on the sink while he has took all of his clothes of; he was naked and people started to stare at him. So we phoned our parents unfortunately they were in a meeting at Jeffrey’s Bay so they could come. So after he was done taken a bath he went to his old friends and came back at night I was washing dishes, my sister was ironing and we were playing tv. He come drunked and switch off the tv and telling us it’s his brother’s tv and shouted us and swearing that’s were I became cross and putted the hot iron on his face. We never spoked until today.
Narrative 13 The Accusation

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

I can’t stand it when people keep on telling me that I have do that thing and I know I didn’t do it. The last it happened was on the 01 September this year. Example: this one student insist that he gave me my charger in my hands but he did not, so I get angry and start to swear and go and lay on my bed and start to cry because I know that he didn’t gave it to me. He just walk out of the room and go to he’s room.

I say to him that if you gave it to me than why don’t I know about it, and then he say that he gave it my hands and he saw me put it in my bag, and I say but I know that the last time you charge your phone in front of the rest, and what must I do with a charger because I don’t have my phone, He say that he is not mad and I could not hear what else he was saying because he was speaking Xhosa with this other guy. After that he find it in my red bag and ask me so how did it come in here I say I don’t know, and start to get so angry that I take my frustrations out on the other people, and he come and say that I must apologize to him, and I say I am not because I didn’t do anything wrong.

Post-workshop story (written)

My conflict story. I think I was in that I should not swear at the other guy but to speak nicely, and I must think before I react. I learn in the AVP programme that you must try not to react before you haven’t think about the things first.
Narrative 14 The Brother

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

If I remember clearly it was on Friday midnight round-about 19:30 somewhere there. I was with my parents, uncle, nephew and my little niece. So nicely sitting watching television, took our food and then ate.

I still remember my mother stood up and went to her room, when she got back, my brother was busy yelling outside, we all ran out trying to think what’s going on. Went closer to him only to find he was in his room, pitch-black dark all we heard was screams yells and even sounds of his room thing’s falling, start to wander what’s going on. The next it was my brother then his girlfriend.

My mother and dad shouted his to see what’s going-on and bear in mind my mum is not so healthy she’s diabetic. I got so mad because I hate seeing my mother not being able to breath and crying her lungs out because of an old man who loves alcohol, the next thing my daddy got sick and knocked the door down because judging from the sound that was coming from inside it was trauma that was happening and all the neighbours were all listening, my dad got in end start to pull my brother out with a huge smack asking him what’s going on and would he treat a lady like that, beatd my brother so badly that he bleed so badly he could’ve been in a coma the following minute.

My brother was so screaming trying to stop dad from beating him and here I was so lost trying to figure out and truly I didn’t know what to do, all I knew was I hate what I’m seeing. It went as a grudge for a very long time in our home and forced to be in-between my father and brother who were not talking together, it was so sad, that it tended my mother to immediate doctor, apart from that they did sort it out and only to find my father could’ve talked with my brother because all action’s of my brother were caused by our past.
Narrative 14 The Brother  (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (written)

It was on Friday that, in the evening I was with my parents, uncle, niece and nephew. We were nicely sitting in our lounge. My mother stood up only to hurry coming back saying he heard a sound at our backyard. It was our drinking brother, who was beating her girlfriend because anger my dad got sick because my brother usually does this.

He went in his room beated him, before even asking, heated him hard that he bleed so badly and days after that my brother and dad were not getting along anymore that they so affected us, my mother ended up in hospital because of this and its attitudes hence she was a diabetic person. If only I were to turn it back I’d ask my dad to handle the situation in a better way things would’ve been better, just try to understand what made my brother to do that.

Hence now I know better about conflict management, this won’t happen again. I’m gonna share the AVP experience to all my loved ones.
Narrative 15 The Aunt

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

I’m from New Brighton and I live with my aunt and her husband and my 4 cousins. This is my story. What I find irritating the most is being compared to someone, because all of us as beings we equal and everyone is unique and I’m unique. But all of my life I’ve find this happening to me I was always compared to my younger cousin and that made me angry, tearful and unhappy with the way I was. I thought I was no good person I was not a good child, I thought maybe it was a mistake for me to be in this world because of the words my aunt used to say but today I’m this grown woman because of her, I’ve grown because of the way she was treating me, I’m strong and I stand on my own, I work every day to build a brighter future for me and my family. She always used to compare me with my cousin she would say that I’m not like her, she’s better than me she does everything she’s been told without asking why. How I was always trying to do things right so that she can be happy but they were not enough. I tried and tried then I realised that the more I was trying the more things went wrong and she would shout at me and say bad words that brings a person down to earth that you can do everything, you can kill yourself, throw yourself in a building, run away from home etc. Everyone had to do everything she said even if you don’t like it but I was always asking or even if I didn’t ask I would get chicky or my face would turn. I did everything she used to say I must do then one day I was thinking about all the things I’ve done, everything that worries me. I used to write down everything that was happening in my life in my diary. Then while I was ready my diary I realised that all my life I’ve been pleasing people trying to make people happy, then I asked myself about the last time I had fun, I was free and the time I was proud of something I did then that’s when I realised that I’ve been living a life whereby I was trying to make people happy forgetting that I was also a person but now I’m thankful for everything she has done because it has turned me to a strong woman I can stand on my own and I’ve been given an opportunity to study further and I’ve learned a lot of things by being a person and coping with certain things. Thanks!!!
Narrative 15 The Aunt (Continued)

Post-workshop narrative (written)

It’s Natural again and this is my story. I had anger I was angry because I hated to be compared but know I realised that I could have solved the problem with my aunt in a positive/different way. Now I’m feeling good cos know I’ve realised the situation I was in I could have spoken to my aunt about my situation and how I felt about it but I choose to keep quiet for such a long time. not expressing my feelings because then I would get chicky or cry when I’m being compared and when she shouts at me I would look behind the words. Now I realise that I could have spoken about the way I was treated I could have looked at the situation and find out when it happen, how did I feel, of course I new how I felt but I didn’t know how to express that, I knew what I needed but I didn’t know how to ask for it but now I know that I’ll act differently and starting from now I will talk about what’s troubling without fighting or being angry and want to beat or have a grudge on someone.

Now coming from the AVP programme I have learned how to deal with conflict, anger etc. and I will practice to live a different way by practising the 4 AVP Building Blocks about Conflict Resolution. Thanks!!
Narrative 16 The Lunch Box

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

I was in a conflict situation with my friend when I told her my personal problem that I had. It was when I was school I didn’t have enough money to buy all the things that the other kids were buying. She kept on asking when I will have money because I always have my lunch box and the others are buying popcorons before and after school and I told her that my father was not working only my mother is so we are having problems I only have money when my mother gets paid. After few days I told her my situation she told my other friends so they were asking a lot of questions. I went to her and shouted at her we ended up hitting one another. We went to the office and our parents were called. After that I always watch who I’m friends with before I even share anything with them I let them share first and after they do then I share anything. That had an inflict because I always want to shout when a person does me wrong.

Post-workshop narrative (written)

I was at school and my friends gossip about me but I only told one friend about my situation that I didn’t have money at school like they had at that time because my father was not working then and there was a problem because I only had my lunch box with me not money to buy sweets like the other children. I confronted her and it was not nice there a conflict then. When you trust someone its not easy when they tell people what you have told them.
Narrative 17 The Community

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

It was 6.30 pm, Wednesday evening, I was coming from our church prayer meeting, when I saw a crowd of people coming towards my direction, and then I saw a Police squad and 4 police cars smashed and crushed, in the park near my home area.

I stopped and asked 2 women who were standing among those crowds of people, what’s going on? I desperately asked a buy who was hearing my question answers 3 school boys were killed by street committee members and community members and they were burned in front of the Police. I was shocked and couldn’t speak I ran to the Park with many people in a circle there was bodies of 2 boys aged 15-17 lying there. I couldn’t even look and I immediately cried and as I was crying 2 middle age ladies were talking to each saying I’m glad the dogs are finally dead. I turned to hear the and went close to them, I find out that these boys robbed a boy of same age night before and killed him, so the whole day everyone was looking and searching for them I was very angry, disappointed, stressed, I said to the ladies, how could you say dogs referring to young boys who is our future leaders, who will be the businessman tomorrow, they shouted at me asking if I encourages these tsotsies to kill people or what. I went close to them saying You are the ones who opens each and every day taverns because there is about 4 sheeebeens in that small area, they don’t stop the people who let young people drink the whole night and stab and rape each other, and those people whom they know are selling drugs and pills they never burn them instead they talk to them nicely because they ask for Imali Ezalayo (Mashonisa). I was so angry and everyone was looking at me as if I’m saying something wrong. I realised that I was in danger I was against everyone who was at the park I left and went home very disappointed, furious, worried because I didn’t know what will happen to me if those angry people saw me again but in my heart I knew that they were very wrong. Because they looked at the consequence of rude behaviour instead of finding out what might be the cause, remember I was not even related to any of the victims I was looking at a broader picture or outside the box. What can we say there is so much injustice in this country.
Narrative 17 The Community

Post-workshop narrative (written)

Wednesday evening on my way from the church, I saw crowd of people in the park, they were very angry and there was a crashed police car the three were driving out of the area. I was so surprised and couldn’t understand what’s going on.

I stopped and asked two men and nobody was listening to me, I heard that 3 boys were killed and burned which killed a boy of the same last Sunday. I ran to the place and saw the bodies of the 2 boys burned immediately. I felt angry and disappointed, I asked what did they do sympathetic and two women who were close to me shouted at me as if I was saying a bad thing, I felt weak and I said to them How could you kill these young boys, the future presidents and leaders.

And everyone looked at me and I could see their anger and I felt sad and scared of them, I felt so disappointed because nobody was listening or paying any attention on what I was saying, I felt ignored or out of space no one could relate to what I felt instead everyone was against me. I sadly went home I even cried and told my family.
Narrative 18 The Friend

Pre-workshop narrative (written)

A friend of mine was raped just a few months ago. She was going home late at night, and she saw three guys following her. She carried on walking without thinking anything bad will happen. These guys grabbed her at the back and asked her for a cell phone, she told them she doesn’t have one and [they] just took off her clothes, stabbed her and then raped her. She was very stressed about the whole situation and wanted to hang herself because she didn’t know those guys and what diseases they may have. I tried to be there for her in so many ways. I prayed for her, went to visit her in hospital every time I got a chance. I told her that whatever God takes you to, he pulls you through it. He hasn’t brought you this for to live you, everything will be fine and that those guys will get what’s coming to them. She believed that really thing will work out fine in the end. And now she is doing so well, she recovered perfectly and she thanks the Lord all that his done for her.

Post-workshop narrative (written)

I had a friend who was in a stressful situation. She was depressed, felt like taking her life because of what happened to her. She got robbed and raped by three guys while she was walking home. They asked for a cell phone and she did not have one with her, so they stabbed her, kicked her and ripped her clothes off then raped her. She couldn’t speak to anyone about what happened to her for days. She hated men for a very long time because of what had happened to her. She wanted to die, couldn’t live with the fact that something like had happened to her. She started asking herself why her.

I was there for her as a friend, supported her in every way I knew how. I told her that it wasn’t her fault and that what doesn’t kill her makes you stronger. God doesn’t put you in a situation you can’t handle, what he takes you to, he puts you through it. She is now well, happy and strong.
Narrative 19 The Boyfriend

Pre-workshop narrative (written)
My mother and her boyfriend, used to fight at home, my mother's boyfriend was a drunken when he was sober he was very nice to us and very talkative, he would make us laugh and we would forgive him anyway.

But there is this one time that, the verbal conflict became physical and my hurt her boyfriend bad, the boyfriend was weak and drunk while they fight, so my mother went to the police to report it, she was given a warning. But when the boyfriend is sober, he used to say that he does not remember anything so my mother got angry and they separated.

She does not understand how the fight effected me, she never ask of how I felt, and how I feel, her relationships were her own business she used to say. And I will never ever want to experience conflict anywhere.

Post-workshop narrative (written)
My mother had a boyfriend who used to drink, and when he does he was violent and verbal abusing me and my mother, so my mother used to bite him up then there would be a big fight, and at that time I was young and I was not able to stop the fighting. So I became angry but I did not tell my mother.

Now I know that I could of told my mother how that made me feel and I could of told her that I am and was part of the conflict, because we were living together. Now I have anger towards her, but I am going to change that and tell her that we must revisited the past and try to explain how I felt and what did the conflict do to me.

When I see that a conflict involves me, and I know that I have a solution, I must, communicate and try to solve the conflict without violence. Sometimes I must take a risk of being teased at, by working away/coming down when I am fighting with someone. Now I will help when, people are fighting and I will be able to stop the fighting, nonviolent.
APPENDIX F : AVP WORKSHOP AGENDA UMZI WETHU SEPT 2011

Day 1 Session 1 (08:30-10:30): Focus: Affirmation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gathering: <em>What I have left behind me, what I have brought with me and what I hope to gain from this workshop</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Opening talk: Brief AVP history and philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Boundary agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Agenda review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Adjective name game</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Light and Lively: <em>The Big Wind blows</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Crossover</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Group brainstorm: <em>What is violence?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Evaluation of session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Closing gathering – <em>Shaking hands</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>TEA BREAK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Session 2 (11:00 – 13:00): Focus: Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gathering: <em>I feel good about myself when…</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agenda review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Concentric circles</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Light and Lively: <em>Palm trees</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group sharing: <em>A conflict I solved nonviolently</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Evaluation of session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Closing gathering: <em>Something I learned here this morning</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Session 3 (14:00-16:30): Cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gathering: <em>My adjective name is …. and what is needed for me to work well in a team is …</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agenda review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Group exercise: ‘I’-messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Light and Lively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Broken Squares</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Quick decisions</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Transforming Power</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Evaluation of session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Closing gathering: <em>Something I have learned about myself</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Day 2 Session 4 (08:30-11:00): Trust and community building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gathering: <em>Insights from yesterday’s sessions</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agenda review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Labels</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Light and Lively: <em>Animal Parade</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Empathy cards</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Evaluation of session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Closing gathering: <em>What I look for in a friend</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>TEA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Session 5 (11:00-13:00) Conflict Resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gathering: <em>How I deal with anger to me and from me</em> …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Role plays of volunteered conflict situations</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>De-briefing of role players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Closing gathering: <em>Zip Zap Boing!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Session 6 (14:00-16:30): Taking AVP into our everyday lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gathering: <em>Who am I?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Revisiting original conflict narratives</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>Affirmation posters</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Group exercise: <em>AVP tool box</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Evaluations of the workshop (individual written evaluations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Certificate ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Final closing gathering: <em>Strength bombardment circle</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G : FIRST FOCUS GROUP 09/12/2010 (THREE MONTHS AFTER WORKSHOP)

Interviewees: four female participants

SL = researcher and participants A, B, C and D

SL: Okay, so my question is how did the AVP workshop affect your view of conflict? And if it made any change, maybe you can tell me how. And you know, you can talk freely, I mean …. (pause) I want you to talk, I don’t want to talk. (laughter)

A: Well for me it’s shown that fighting over something or getting angry with someone, is not a way to solve a problem um and …it’s … it’s changed many things on how I see conflict. I used to have fights with friends, and I …. (pause) I’ll wait for them to apologise, but now I go to them and tell them that look, I am sorry that something happened and that we should just forget about the whole thing. I mean it’s not going to solve anything.

SL: And you find that this is working for you? Are your relationships improving?

A: Yes.

SL: Do you feel that that your relationships have improved?

A: Yes, they have. Because now we have more trust in each other. We listen when someone … one of us speaks and we get on just fine.

SL: And you think it’s really different from before the workshop?

A: Yes.

SL: Before the workshop?

A: Before the workshop …. oh I … I … didn’t care. I was like … if you didn’t greet me, then so be it. I’m not going to come over, I’m not going to come over … I’m
not going to apologise or try to talk to you, if you don’t … if you are not speaking to me.

SL:  (pause) okay … Anybody else?

B: For me many things changed. Seriously it has. Because at first, I used to have my ego, my pride you know.

A: Yes you did.

B: If you say something to me, you know I will make sure that I say something back. But I would be sarcastic, I won’t be as harsh but I will make sure say something. After AVP came, I realized that I get what I give to people. So when people talk to me, I keep quiet. It shutters the argument, you know, it solves it very quickly and the person gets to realise that okay this person is not talking to me. Then instead of increasing the argument, it just becomes more solve-able in a way if I were to put it that way. So for me it has made a difference. And for me personally how I react, and how I treat myself when there’s a conflict in between. Ja. And another thing that I got is that, to some people, the way they react, the arguments they make, it’s it’s beyond, you know, it’s something … in most cases, it is something that comes from their history, it’s something that has happened to them. So the way they treat themselves now … you know, just exactly what I said. So I have learned that … to adapt to a person and try to find out why that person reacting that way. There might be a problem beyond the way she or he is reacting.. so ja, I got a chance to understand people better.

SL: And that you feel you got this from the workshop, this … this new way of working?

B: Um.

SL: Okay … and you feel your relationships have improved?
B: They have REALLY improved, really they have. Because, as I said, I was an agnostic person you know. I would love to backchat and that and you know just to show my fact that I am angry but you know what... Instead of being angry ..., there was another lady, who ... what is her name ... again? She was with you ... in the other presentation.

SL: The facilitator, XXXX?

B: Yes, XXXX. Well she said that when you .. when you spit out hatred to a person, it's something that you are invading in you if I want to put it that way. You are engraving it in you ... So I thought, man, why would I increase hatred in me? Because the minute I spit it out, it means that it is something on me. So just to shuttle off that hatred and stuff, I'll just be quiet and try to just control myself. So it has been really, really great. It has worked wonders for me.

SL: Fantastic, good to know. Okay. XXXX?

C: I don’t want to lie, but at some point, it is not easy just to change suddenly. I still get upset, but what I can say that ... that AVP helped me is ... now that ... I think of the consequences before ... before I react., even sometimes when I've reacted already then I would think ... even though it's not ... it's not really easy to apologise to somebody but um ... I try to show the person that, that I was wrong. I mean .... It's a huge step to admit to yourself that you are wrong because some people they don't want to do that. It has helped me in such a way that .... for me, it's nice to ... just let the person talk the way they feel, not to be in the same emotion, like If you’re fighting ... you both in a high level of being angry. So that will cause a fight. So I don’t like fights. So sometimes I will let the person talk but sometimes I will talk more. I could say I’m still learning but I could say that AVP has helped me to realise.

_____________________

66 Participants’ names and place names have been substituted by XXXX.
SL: Hmm, okay interesting. Yes great. And what would you say is the main difficulties of trying to put into practice ... these new ideas?

B: Ja well for me .... yeah....putting it into practice.ne? But there are times that a person would say something that just pushes you to an experience where you just wanna explode. I don't react the same way I used to. If I were to put in on a level, I used to be at level 10 and I would say I am on a level 6 now. So I am getting there. I am not there but I am getting there. So there is a difference in how I react.

SL: Um ... okay ... so you feel it as a process. Something you are working with still.

B: Ja it is a process.

SL: Something that you are working with still. Okay. And in those moments when you feel so angry, do you remember to think about your need, what you are needing?

B: Ooh this ja .... this other time, this .... where someone did something. Then you play a video for them back on what they did, and you tell them how you felt about that thing and I ... I've put that to practice, and really it is working. It's making the argument .... You know, you know, you are not attacking the person, but you get a chance to attack the problem. Then you go straight with that problem so you're making the person notice okay so I'm hurting the person make it better for the both of you.

SL: Yes. So you remember to say what you feel and what you need.

B: And how I feel from what you do.

SL: But even ... is to connect that feeling to that need. Do you remember to think about your needs?

B: Honestly, I don't.
SL: Ja. Because the feeling is so .... Okay if you are angry, what would you say your need is. I mean, in the sense that .... maybe you can think of an example... the last time you felt irritated or angry? Maybe you can try and think of what was your need in that situation?

C: I would say .... I just ... I had .. I had a ... a huge argument, after AVP ... with the person that lives in my area. And I remember, I was so upset ... because I was at a point that .... I had a chance to beat him up,...but I didn't. ... he was down ... On my mind... I wanted to hit him, but there was something inside that tells me that he is not worth it. He just ... must just get up and leave the house, because he was in my house when he was doing that. And I remember that when I was shouting at him, I was shouting at him ... I told him that, it is not that I am scared of you, it's just that ... but I was upset. It is not something that I am proud of, but that I am expressing the way that I felt at that time. So I told him that, you know what, you have destroyed my dignity. Because I am raising my voice. People are sleeping and everyone is listening to me which is .... I am not the kind of person who raise her voice, especially that time. I really felt that that person, that that ... guy took my dignity out of me. I didn't stop respecting him for ... I didn't beat him up. I just let him go. But he kept on coming back that he wanted to hit but I kept on telling him it is not that I am scared of you, that you should know, it is just that I am not going to fight you. For the sake of my respect, I respect myself (pause). The consequence is that I was transforming power (laughs).

SL: Hmmmm. (Pause). Any other examples that you can think of? Sort of everyday things, even small ones. Even minor small irritations, something ...?

A: The thing that irritates me is that when someone laughs, and then another person falls for it. For just a silly thing. It irritates me. There is a guy at Res that likes to laugh a lot. And I tell you, it irritates me. I get so irritated when he does that. I just tell him in his face, and it makes that problem inside me less complicated. For me it is just getting out.
SL: Ah, do you say … you irritate me, or do you say I feel irritated?

A: I say I feel irritated.

SL: Okay and if you connect that to a need, I feel irritated because I need ….what do you think is the need? (Pause). It is very difficult. This is really difficult. It is like changing the whole way of thinking. If you say something like, I need … I need people to respect each other. That is a need.

C: Yes.

SL: I need people to respect each other in my presence. You know, no one can really argue with that. Do you know what I mean?

B: Yes because really we tend to put other people first, and then we put ourselves …. Because now, come to think about it, we always say don’t do this, don’t do that., forgetting what we need. To an extent that we just do for other people.

SL: Yes, we give them too much influence on us.

D: I didn’t know that if you want someone to stop something that they don’t. I mean, Like XXXX is saying, when somebody laughs, I never thought of it. Ja sometimes when someone laughs, it is irritating, but I just … just ignore get, the way I feel inside, I hate it, I hate it. I don’t want to give the person the attention cos . It is very easy for people to say, it is none of your business if I laugh or not.

(Participant D enters the room and joins in on the conversation.)

What we are talking about and perhaps you can answer this question is: what effect did the AVP workshop have, did it change your ideas about conflict, relationships and how? Did your relationships improve, was there something you did differently.
D: You can say that it has changed my life. Funny enough, a few months back I had a fight with my mum in the kitchen. She was just complaining about everything and I was so tired I was from school, it was Friday night, so I just wanted to go to bed. But since I’ve learned, … I used to backchat, ja back then. So since I’ve learned about violence and everything …

SL: Since you’ve learnt about?

D: Violence, ja … and respect … I didn’t backchat at all. She was just talking, and I was , like, listening, saying, like, ja Mum, ja Mum … while I know that I am not wrong but I did give her some space. J and … um I know that if, maybe I … I know don’t know how to put this …if maybe I did answer her back, maybe something bad would of happened. So since, I didn’t … so …. (pause).

SL: So it was a first step. Something changed. It is not easy. It’s not easy not to answer when they are saying something and you just want to say “oh please” and you want to get in. So that is great, it is a real big step. Okay, So,anything else, that was with your mother, is there anything else generally? Do you feel that your relationships have improved?

D: Jaja, they have

SL: Can you name some things that you are doing now, that you weren’t doing before?

D: Oh ja When I see maybe my friends are fighting or are arguing about something, I … I try to find out… try to make them understand that this fighting is not the solution solution of the problems so they must try to communicate rather than fighting. The time is wasted when fighting than communication.

SL: And how to communicate? What’s the best way to bring it into a real communication?
D: I think it’s about feelings, just to say it. They must understand each other’s feelings. I mean maybe ask how are you feeling now? And … can I do something to help? And you say no I need for you to do this something for me so that I don’t get angry again. Something like that. Not fighting always. Just feelings, connect with each other’s feelings.

SL: That is a good point. (Pause). Any other examples? Anything else or areas where you still have to do?

B: On Tuesday, I get home, and then my mother got her money. My two brothers, the younger one asks my mother to buy him a phone and give him the money. While my elder brother was there. He lost the phone while he was drinking. My brothers then argued and they had the conflict. The bigger one likes to be bossy. Why must he say something. It’s my mother’s money. She should say something about it, not him. My mother told me they were arguing. I was in the middle of them. So, the younger one likes to show off, he likes to be on a higher level. Now there was conflict in the house, I was stuck in between. My younger brother came and expressed his side of the story. I wanted to hear both sides. My bigger brother. So we were off to bed together. My mother was quiet. Then I was supposed to solve this thing. I don’t like it. It was December and we must solve this thing. We must be happy. Christmas is nearby and we should be talking. I told my mom that what my big brother did was not right. My mother should speak, because it is her money. We know it is not right, as my big brother lost the phone to alcohol, but no one says that you want to lose something. It was wrong of him to lose it. If you can’t afford to buy the phone, I think it is worse for the conflict. It’s better to say to my mother that I don’t have the money now, but if I have it, I will pay for it. I said to my bigger brother, ja if you want to control everything and you want my mother to use the money in a wiser way. You must be in control. He was speaking in a harsh voice. It will be better to tell my mother on how you want to fix it, as if you are in control.

At the end of the day, she is our mother, and we all must ask for everything that we want. She can say that she doesn’t have money.
I tried not to be on any one’s side, not on my mothers or my brother’s side. So I get them that idea to fix it. So I was fixing it, but outside the problem. There’s not many in our family, we should not fight against each other. It was being solved. I did in on two sides. If I did choose a side, maybe my brother would be angry and it could be worse. He could be cross with both of us. But instead I chose to be on a distance.

SL: You did express your feeling – you said how you felt and that you didn’t enjoy this conflict. It is important for women to say that it is unpleasant. I think a lot of conflict continues, because women won’t get involved. They don’t say anything, they keep quiet. Our voice is important. The women should say what they feel (pause).

C: I have another thing to say. What happened with the story that I was telling you about the guy that he was fighting with me, because I didn’t want to fight with him. It started with my cousin and I. She was drunk the one that I live with in the location. I was telling her, that because she stopped drinking. When she is drunk, she won’t listen. So every time when she is drunk I know she doesn’t listen to me …. I told her that if you could stop drinking, you can see what comes to you. I don’t know if it is because of the alcohol or anything. I think you also have problem with people. She said okay. I didn’t go back to her home, I stayed here for quite sometime. because every time I go there, she was drunk. The week that I came back, I heard that she stopped drinking and I didn’t know. I heard that she stopped drinking. I said no you are lying. Told her that she lied, because I know she was drinking. She said she was not drinking for a month. But me I live only with her. So, I always go back.

When she was drunk, the problem begin. She didn’t have a problem with anyone while she was not drinking. I had a fight while I was in the other house. Then I said when she was having this argument with this woman, I said to her, you know
what, I didn’t say that that woman was right or wrong, I didn’t criticise. I said, can’t you see that it is only a problem when you are drunk? She said, no, you talking about something that you don’t even know. You are taking people’s side. I said that I am not taking side. Do you notice that if you are drunk then with these complications? She then started arguing with me. She raised her voice

SL: Was she drunk?

C: Yes, she was drunk (laughs).

SL: It’s very difficult to talk with drunk people.

C: But me, I put sensitive even if you are, you will hear me clearly, even though you drunk (laughs). So I was telling her ....The sad thing about it, even though she’s upset, I laugh at her, when I’m doing ... then I started talking, she’s upset a lot but she’s the wrong one, I tell her the problem is the alcohol, admit it.. Admit it yourself. She said that I think that I am perfect. I said to her no, it is not that I don’t drink, but I drink here with my boyfriend, but did you saw my fighting? Did you see me walking around? I am not like you. I said no, okay, now you admit that you were wrong. She changed the whole situation. She wanted it to be come a conflict. Then I said to her, okay its fine, I think we must drop it. She wanted to dig so that we don’t stop t arguing. And though this guy came and wanted to meet her. Joh, it's like, He was waiting for me. This guy came straight to me. It was like he was waiting for me to say, stop what you were doing. He immediately, he wanted to come ... I don’t know how I did it to make him stay away from me. I said, no you knew I was here. I told him that he has a problem of being with people, that he knew doesn’t like me. Because I am gay. Some people will just swear at me in the street. I said I know people say this and this and that. If that people feel that way about me, obviously that person is my enemy. Because, I’ve done nothing wrong to them, and they just insult me, walking on the street. She was saying to me, no that is not my problem, the problems that you have with the people on the streets, but that doesn’t mean that I should not speak to you. I said, No I didn’t say that,
but when people are drunk, then I am sleeping up there. You come with …. As from today, I don’t go home anymore. She kicked me out of the house. I said to her, you know what; I am not worried about me, not going there. I wanted to be there for her because I could see she was not strong for herself. I said to you I’m not worried about the house; I am fine where I am staying. But the problem is that I really feel sorry for you, the fact that people are going to take advantage of you. Because when you’re drunk you do things that you don’t even realize the next morning. So even though she kicked me out of the house, I don’t feel angry towards her, because I don’t know what is driving her to do what the things she

SL: Drinking is another whole story. It is an addiction (pause). Tell me, um I have another question …. I also want to ask you, what the main subjects of the conflicts? If you have to say in general, people your age. What are their subject. With your friends, your boyfriends, and your family … what is the main or some of the main subjects of the conflicts?

B: I think it’s gonna be easier if you do it like this, you say family.

SL Okay, thank you. Family? What are the issues in family?

B: Favouritism … favouritism, jealousy, gossiping, money, Gossip --- trust issues. People talking behind your back. You tell someone something in confidence and they tell someone else.

SL: Favouritism. So you feel that the parent or the - mother or the father prefers one child more than the other. Anything else in the family?

A: i-jealous.

SL: Jealous … same thing. Favouritism. Feeling that this one is getting more whatever. It could be love or physical presents or support or better relationships.

A: i-gossips.
A: Love you can sense. My mother loves my brother more than me. You can just feel it you can see it. How she is. In most cases in our families.

SL: Do you think it is a gender thing?

B: No.

SL: Not preferring the sons?

B: No. But it also could be.

SL: Okay and anything else in the families?

B: Money.

SL: Yes, money is a big problem … all families. And the equal and unequal distribution ….some people get money for studies, and others don’t.

B: If you are working, as long as you are working you the owner of the house. It doesn’t matter if you are young or not. Then let’s say for instance, my younger brother is working, . He is going to own the whole place while our parents are in there but I wouldn’t like it if he says something which is very disrespectful to my mother. Then the conflict starts.

SL: Yes.

B: Yes.

SL: I hear you (pause). Anything else with family? And with friends, what is the most common conflict?

B: Gossip.

SL: Gossip --- trust issues. People talking behind your back. You tell someone something in confidence and they tell someone else?
B: Yes, also jealousy.

SL: Yes, being popular. The one who is popular … these are cross cultural things. And with the boyfriends. Conflicts, trust?

Group: Yes trust. (a lot of laughing)

SL: Yes, it takes a long time to build that trust.

B: They are also trying to change you/me. It also causes family conflict.

SL: Trying to change you?

B: They will say you came to me, when I was like this. Then they pledge what they believe, or how they see the world. They force it in you, so that you see it the same way. So, you must compromise in most cases. Then to some people will ask you …. it will be the conflict.

SL: Yes, it’s very difficult. And yet, in a sense good relationship, there is always an element of compromise. It depends how much.

C: Shena, do you think that if you try to change a person in a good way, and the person doesn’t want to change. Do you think it is a bad idea to give the person an advice?

SL: Advice as in good thing?

C: Like in terms of saying that, you want to change things.

SL: As in good things?

C: Yeh, it doesn’t matter if it is good or not. The most time it is that you don’t want to change at all. Let’s say that you want to stay as the person that you are. For that the person is violating your rights, by telling you the right thing? That right thing is gonna make you change who you are.
B: Not really. Cos, where there are two people there are going to be a compromise, because we are both different people. Now I’m talking about a person going on a ? Let’s say for instance in my home I’m not expected to arrive at say after 11 o clock, then he will force or bring something out to cause a conflict, so that I stay. So I say, this is how I do it at my home. I am talking about things like that … it’s important to say so I have to make the compromise, to meet you halfway.

SL: Also, if you want to say that you want to change someone for the better. It’s your opinion ‘the better’. Maybe somebody else doesn’t see it as “the better”. So it’s still …. problematic. To agree what is ‘the better’. We might think, this is the way but the other person says that’s not the way. That is the difficulty.

E: Ja it’s always like that.

SL: Okay, I won’t keep you longer. If there is just any further comment. If you want to say anything. Thinking AVP, the difference, conflict, what you have learned. Or maybe where you feel …. what you think is your main challenge. Where is your growing area? Where are you working in your conflict, because we have all these different aspects? We can learn to listen better, we can learn with how to deal with somebody’s anger, but not see them as the anger. Or we must try to get more in touch with our feelings and our need. What do we need? Who are we? Where do we stand for? What are our real needs? Where are we not meeting our needs? It is a big one. Especially for women, because we are so taught/conditioned to think of the other person’s need. So it’s maybe interesting to think … which is the area that YOU need to work on.

A: I think I need to work on … to control my anger. I like to backchat a lot. And I swear. Whenever I fight with someone, I just hold myself back, because I want to say something that’s big, so huge, and I swear … very much, I do. So I try to just control myself, and rather not say anything to a person.

SL: How do you try to control it? What do you do?
A: I just walk away,

SL: What techniques do you use?

A: I walk away …. or I think of a song. Something from Beyonce or Usher. I just need to get something else on my mind.

SL: Clever. So that's your area of …. working. So maybe you notice, you try and catch it when it is small. So it's easier to work with. Anything else?

D: Sometimes, as a young girl, someone will take it for granted. The things that I say, won't be taken seriously … make any changes. So maybe if you want to solve a family conflict, they won't even listen to you, because it is not making things better. I am working on that. So I'm trying to … (pause) …. 

SL: Trying to make yourself heard?

D: Yeah. How to make myself heard and how to convince them that I know what I have something to contribute.

SL: That you have something to contribute.

D: Yes that I am contributing to things.

SL: Those are all interesting, because those are all self-assertion techniques. There are many. A lot of them have to do with body posture and looking the person very directly in the face, throwing your voice and also choosing the moment. It's not easy, but it is great that you've ….. the minute you've recognise it, I mean you've named it. That is 50% of the work, because now you know what you are watching for. Great. Anything else?

B: I want to work with me. Seriously. I want to know my needs, because I love to consider people more. And it doesn't matter if I hurt. It'll be okay anyway. I prefer
to make feeling people better. If you want to put it, I want to be slightly selfish just to consider my need for once. That is what I want to work on.

SL: When you consider your needs, and you take that into account, then you have much more to give. It’s amazing how much more you have to give. Because, I think, especially for women, it’s quite a good thing to secretly, to sort of remind yourself, “me first”. Like in small ways. Not if you are offering food, you know, I mean in little things, like, now I need to go to the loo, I need to eat, I need to take five minutes, I need to rest for a while, and then I will do that. Whatever it is. But first, you want to recharge, get yourself together. Then, you know. I am probably nearly three times your age, but it took me so long to learn this. Really, only know, in maybe the last 15 years, I’ve learned these things. And it has made such a difference. Even now, now, today before coming here I quickly lay on the lawn, looked at the sky and got nice and relaxed and then I was okay, ready to go. It just makes such a difference. (Pause). Okay, time to go. Thank you all so much.
APPENDIX H: SECOND FOCUS GROUP  30/03/2011 (SIX MONTHS AFTER WORKSHOP)

Interviewees: three males, two females (one of whom arrived later)

SL = researcher and participants E (male), F (male), G (male), H (female), I (female, late arrival)

(initial part of the tape faulty)

E: For me mama, starting from what I remember from the workshop is the skills to avoid conflict and what AVP changed in my life is that now I can quickly avoid conflict. When I see there is a conflict coming, I can quickly avoid the conflict. But when it is on me, maybe the conflict is on me, what I still weak at is when someone meet my friend is arguing with another guy, I am still at weak to make my friend to calm down or to make that guy to calm down, I am still at weak. But when it is on me, maybe the conflict is about me, I am quickly to let myself to calm down, but when it is my friend, what I do is just getting involved to what the conversation is about and then I am not decreasing the conflict but I make the conflict to be big.

SL: Do you feel, for you, you feel that you’ve made there’s a shift, there’s been a change, for you, and how does it work, for you. I mean when you feel angry and you want to calm down. What do you do?

E: We have been taught you have to … use the I-messages or try not to speak, not to do anything just moving, take a walk.

SL: When you say the I-messages, what do you remember about the I-messages.

G: What you need to do when you are in, what a person need.
SL: Yes, about your need, you go back and concentrate on your needs. XXXX\textsuperscript{67}, just want to hear from you a little again, we interrupted you; we interrupted your train of thought … You were saying that you feel that it is easy in theory like G was saying, it is easy in theory to talk about it, but when you actually are in the situation with your emotions that is the big thing. With those emotions, that is when it is difficult.

F: Okay as I was saying you know, for example for me when I found myself on that position I don’t just react, you know, because, for example I read my timetable, to read that book of mine, for example I skip two days, then after two days I read it. So for me it is like I’m doing a crime if I read that book and if there is such an incident that happens so that makes me angry, then it means you not reading that book very well, because if in everything that is on that book, it deals with anger, how to control yourself, something like that. So I will just calm down and I would just leave, maybe tomorrow I will call for you, and I will apply the I-message, for example I don’t want you to re-step me, I needed you just to recognise me as a person and I need you to listen to my point of view and then I will listen to your point of view. Maybe for example I mean we need to look at things on a different prospective, whereby it will open a possibility by say ok this was the positive or negative things. For example both of us we speak negative things about each other, but if we can just focus on the positive side, for example to reverse the things before we have these fight we say ok we are overreacting now, you are angry now, we calm down and resolving things. Not just fight.

SL: Do you agree?

E: Ja, ja I agree with him, but you see, even the person that I am, It is hard. Like my problem is that. When someone teases me, I will ask him please man stops it I don’t like it, and he do that over and over again. Ja I try to calm down, but

\textsuperscript{67} Participants’ names and place names have been substituted by XXXX.
when he does it over and over again I just get hot. So I don’t want to say, it is hard. Ja we do try to apply what we learned.

SL: What do you remember the most from the workshop, what was the most important message for you.

E: For me, I liked I-messages.

SL: I-messages, do you use them?

E: Yes I do that.

SL: Anything else?

F: And one other thing about AVP, we are so fortunately, because for example I would say AVP, it is like we as people, does not matter if you are black or white, we are coming from a difficult time, so now AVP is there. For example we have a lot of fighting and conflict and the things of the apartheid, but now AVP is there. Whereby we can say we will just take your past and put it aside, it won’t be easy to put your past aside, but if you can just take AVP and apply it to your life, then you will see a change. For example, your anger at the end of the day, it can lead you into prison or killing someone, but if you have applied u-AVP you say ok I how to avoid these things, and you start by applying it into yourself, and if you see that there is a change, then you go around your family and if you see now you have many supporters, who will support me throughout, then you apply it to your community.

SL: At least you know where you are aiming. Even if you are not there. You have a direction. XXXX, do you want to say something else?

F: I’m all right

SL: So what I am hearing, is that the main difficulty is when your friends are arguing. How to deal with it … and how to try and make some peace between
them. Sometimes you can’t. Sometimes you need the conflict. Do you see the conflict as good, bad or neutral?

G: There are bad conflicts. There are good conflicts. It all depends which one.

SL: Before AVP did you think about conflict in a different way?

G: Yes

SL: How did you look at anger before AVP?

G: Before AVP it was just ordinary. Now it is bad.

SL: Bad? But your anger is natural.

G: Yes, it’s natural.

SL: It’s more about how your manage it. What you are going to do with it. Whether you let your anger dominate you, take over, or whether you express what is the cause (pause).

G: To me, when I was doing AVP. I was thinking that the complainers should make things right or to solve it. A solution. Something like that. Life is short. They don’t want to sit. Only me and my. I don’t want to sit at the same table with XXXX to discuss it. I would just want to go. Even if I left my home, and when I am with XXXX, I would be angry. They must see I am serious about my mind. So XXXX would also be angry. Then the conflict start.

SL: This was your attitude before AVP?

G: Yes, before.

SL: And now?
G: Now, I am thinking. To be angry...yes I understand natural thing. To be angry is not good. You can't solve the problem by being angry and you cannot solve it when you are angry. You can just make the problem bigger.

SL: So that makes quite a difference. How would you deal with that situation now?

G: I will try to understand, I don't have the money today, maybe next week Friday. I will try to understand and wait.

SL: Will you try to talk to her?

G: Yes.

SL: Well that is a good difference. Anything else from the workshop? I mean, a lot of time has passed. Out of 10, more or less where would you put yourself? Be realistic. It is very slow, it is like learning a new language.

Group stated: 7½ to 8

F: I don't want to lie. I want to attend to the problem, but I don't know how to correct it.

SL: It's difficult.

F: Yes, I have that problem.

F: You know why I give it 7 out of 10. For example, if they did something wrong to me, I will be angry, very angry. It can maybe take 2-3 weeks or a month to come to my senses, and forgive okay. Now before, I did the AVP workshop, I was having a problem with my fellow persons. Then I did the AVP and I did all the schemes on how to to deal with those issues. The I said to myself, okay I am going to XXXX, and I am going to the post office and go to my manager and then just make peace. But, okay it was fine, I was willing to do that. Because AVP helped me a lot. So when I came to XXXX, I went to the office, but the problem was, that I didn't want
to go inside. I was waiting outside. Can I go inside? I was feeling strong. I had to swallow my pride and go inside. Just do this. Then I went inside. He was shocked when I came inside. Because he was the one that did me wrong. Then we spoke. Then he even asked me, “Why did you change your mind”? I thought that after you left, you would never talk to me again. I said no, now that I am here in PE, you see some things happen, and then those things start changing your life. I said I did go to a workshop called AVP. For example, last time I went to him, I didn’t talk to him, I just borrow him the book, said he must read, so that you can learn to work with your staff. Then I gave it to him on Friday, then Saturday and Sunday so that he can go through the book. Each and every time I go to XXXX I am just going to give him that book. You read this chapter, you do this and

F: Ja, he is reading it. And sometimes he will come and challenge me about something, and he will say “How do you deal with this? And now he is reading to change and reading to learn.

F: Yes Mam, why I rate myself a 7, is because, I can apply them, the AVP skills. I was in a situation, there was this store that there was a man that was pulling a girl. The girl was crying and it was at night. I was in that situation, but it was a boy, not a man. He was older than a boy. It was at night, maybe past 11. I did go to that boy, and I was trying to smooth him. So I decided, I must act like I am angry with him, I must not smile. I talk like the girl is my sister, or I know the girl. He let the girl go. I was with my two friends, and we go with that girl. We turned around and go.

We walk that girl. So that is why I rate myself 7 or 7 and a half.

SL: You feel that this is something you did as a result of being exposed to AVP. It gave you another way of looking. And you XXXX?
H: The reason I gave me 8 out of 10 (laughing) learned how to control my anger, because I was one, if you make me angry, I won’t speak to you forever. Sometimes it is just difficult to understand that he didn’t mean it or he didn’t mean to hurt you. But I learned that if you are angry, or if somebody makes you angry, you don’t have to snap and because if both of you are angry, you are not going to solve it. Now if somebody is in a fight, or the person is angry with me, I will just say that I will come back. Because if both of us is angry, trying to shout at each other is not going to help. So I will say, if you are right or if you have cooled down, I will come back and we can talk. You are not right now in the situation. So if both of us is angry, I will now walk away, just to clear your mind. I learned to communicate. I was very shy and I didn't want to speak. Because I remember we had a programme, and I didn't speak much then because I am a very shy person. But now I speak. I really speak.

SL: And you think that the AVP workshop helped you to communicate?

H: Yes

SL: So it helped a lot for the anger management. It was a big one (pause).

G: Can I ask something? Let’s say I am argument. I don’t feel like I am shouting, I feels like I am just talking. But I will hear from you… “Why are you shouting at me”? (laughs).

SL: It sounds as if you are arguing with XXXX (laughs). No, it means that you are being, in that moment. … when people say ‘Don’t shout’, and you feel that you are not shouting, it means that you are being a bit emotional. You are being quite intense. That you are getting steamed up … hot. For you it is normal, you just want to put in extra energy there, and some people don’t mind. Some people will like it, maybe if you were with Italians and Spaniards. They talk with a lot of passion. But some people get frightened with too much emotion and they want to move away. So your tone of voice is very important (pause).
Okay, so what else about the workshop? Anything you can remember, some differences? We are nearly finished. But we can finish at any time. You say that it helps you with the I-messages. It is expressing your feelings, your needs and you talk about the anger management and you talk about the book. And you seem to be quite an example of taking responsibility. Do you feel that you are taking more responsibility for yourself?

Group: Yes

SL: Anything else that you want to mention? We can just chat, not so much about the workshop as such.

G: If you change your attitude. If that someone is saying sorry, you don’t shout at him. Maybe it is a mistake. You say, okay I’m good. Or you can I, like my story, if you want a better attitude cause you will fight, and then you will lose. Many people will lose faith on you, because you make it difficult to talk. So it will be your own problem

SL: Do you find that relationships have improved in general?

(Participant I arrives)

F: Yes, as a result of the AVP it has improved.

SL: What does the group say?

I: Yes, I am now allowed to talk (laughs)

F: No (laughs)

I: I am not going to interfere, but on my side. To be honest, at some point I could say, there is slightly, not 100%, would say 50%. Normally when you are being aggressive and before AVP, sometimes you wouldn’t care how the other person feel, and wouldn’t regret what you have said. You wouldn’t care how they
feel, as long as you are satisfied and said what you wanted. You want to define yourself. At that moment, if it was one of us, if someone snaps, I don’t know, I would also snap. But, every time, it is that thing about the conflict you learned and how does it go. That long process in my head, after the regret, every time. When I do something. Sometimes I wouldn’t feel to go to a person and brush him off, it is sometimes not easy to say sorry. But you try to put yourself in there, so that a person would feel that you would regret what you did.

F: I agree. Generally you know, for example, there was a lot of fight where I came from, but now me, personally, I attend this workshop. Then I go back where I came from, and I try to apply this into my relationship generally. But now they start asking questions. What happened so suddenly. Normally you came with this attitude and say we must not do this and now do this. Because if you do this, it might be bad. It may be the consequences of your actions. Then what did happen? Believe me, they will then test you! Because now for example, you said something two weeks ago, now you came back home and its okay. So for me, we as students have a responsibility. Every time I go to my area, I know those people are looking at me, and they will want me to apply these skills to them. It is so hard when you just snap, because these people remember, they will say, we thought you say we must not do these things but now you are here and you are doing these things. So yeah, I will say it is 50% because we are trying to help them, and show them how we do things and on the other hand, they are just there to test you.

SL: Do you have to tell them what you are doing? Maybe don’t give too many expectations. After all, we are all human. We are not saints.

F: And to me Mama. I have to thank you for bringing us the AVP programme. Because I think now, in my revision, I am starting to be a role model. I’m not saying, I am a role model, but I think the way things are going, I am starting to be model. I use to in a month, I use to get up to five complaints of fights, but now, I can say, almost a year, (it’s still not the end of the year), I’ve had no fights. For three months now, I didn’t get into any fight after the AVP programme. I was arguing, so there
the other guy hit me with a hammer. I said, XXXX, I’m not in a mood to fight. I’m not in the mood of big boss, so he think that I mean I am in the mood of fighting. So he hit me with a hammer

SL: Hit you with a hammer?

F: He hit me and run away. I didn’t want to chase him. Even my friend asked me what I am going to do. I said I don’t want to do anything. I will just let him go.

SL: Does he know you?

F: Yes, I know him.

SL: Did you speak to him?

F: I haven’t speak to him. I am not thinking of revenge, you know.

SL: The question was at the beginning was, I was asking the group, do you feel that the AVP workshop changed your attitude to conflict. Or changed how you see conflict? And if so, how? That was my question at the beginning of this session.

I: I would say to me, AVP had a very big impact in my life. I’ve changed. Sometimes I will get annoyed with people who deliberately, people who will tease you with small things. There is something inside you that says, “it’s just nothing”. You must just, it’s not about the bad thing that people do to you, just take the bad thing that they give to you, and apply that to a positive side. In the same way, I won’t feel stupid when they do something to me. Even though they think that I know, I am not saying all the time, but if I don’t respond, even if I see this person, it will piss me off. I just left them. I don’t do anything, I just keep quiet. I will say, you know what, I feel good about myself being so confident. Because a person wants to change your mood. We must not let them change our mood, in a way that they want to. Because I remember last month, I went home. There was this guy that came into our house and try to beat up my cousin. He was drunk. I try to stop. When I stopped him, he wanted to hit me. I knew he had problems with me, but he
couldn’t get through to me. He waited to my house to hit my cousin. I hold him, and I put him down. I could have done anything to him, but I decided not to. He was so drunk, I had a picture of me doing things to him, but I said to him, I’m not going to do anything. It’s not that I’m scared of him, I’m not going to lose my dignity over you. Then I let him go. He made a lot of noise outside. I feel so great. I feel relieved that I didn’t fight back the way he wanted me to. So AVP has really worked for me, even though I’m still working on this. I’m not saying that I am perfect. It is something that is there. It’s played a big role in my life. I’m using it everywhere I go.

SL: So it’s like a reference point. Like XXXX was saying that he was struggling with feeling angry. He still can explode and snap. As I said, it is normal. We are in process. It’s a process. We are not perfect. We must not be discouraged.

I: That I want to say is that. People who don’t want to recognise you, who tease. Like XXXX with his anger, but he can control himself. You don’t see yourself.

Sometimes when somebody explodes, they …each and everyone has changed. Because of all of us, if you do something, it’s like … ooh… its seems like a … you feel discouraged and you get angry. I know it beats you up, because you really learned and still let things happen, you still different story to how things happen. Even if sometimes you are wrong, but over reacting is not a solution.

SL: Do you think it has helped, the fact, that you all did AVP together as a group?

Group: Yes.

SL: Would be you be interested in doing the next advanced workshop?

Group: Yes.

I: I don’t know when I will get this opportunity again. It saves you in many ways,
because you are somebody else, nobody know you there. And when you are upset and freaking out, nobody knows how to handle you, because sometimes it’s easier when you are in your own community. Because people know you better, and they will try and stop you. For example, you go overseas, it’s not even your own country, and how do you feel if people judge you? You always get upset.

F: And mama, to give me the AVP advice. If we could do another program, for example, when I wear a t-shirt like this. People in XXXX will ask me what it is and I will explain. In AVP I don’t think, I have opportunities to tell other people about AVP.

(End of Side A, beginning of Side B)

SL: Okay, thank you, good suggestion….Okay, well I think most of you have been here for over an hour. Thank you very much for your input. It was very valuable, and …

I: , Maybe you can do it another time.

SL: If any of you want to talk alone, I am also very happy to do that. You can just let me know, and we can make a date. We can record it, or not record it. Whatever you prefer. I don’t mind. So I am available. Any last comments? (laughs)

I: I could say … My last comment is that I am very grateful that I had this opportunity, and I am going to make sure that people that are surrounding my life. Even if its family, and those outside the family. People are just supplied with the kind of person. They will tell you two stories. They not used to people just let things be. They will say “No it’s fine”. People are not used to that. They are use to people acting on conflict. You must fight back, otherwise you are a coward. So for me, sometimes it’s not even about talking. You know, even when you keep quiet, they still want to argue. They don’t want you to keep quiet and just do what they want to. They want to push you and day very harsh words. Some people want you to put a fist in their face when you are talking to them.
SL: But it is not about not talking. People often push, push push. They want a reaction. Because they want … they to engage with you. They want to talk to you. They want you to tell them how you feel. They want to know who you are. They want to know you more. So it’s not just about not talking. It’s about talking, but in a nonviolent way. So you can engage very deeply with these people. You can say how you are feeling now, and what your needs are. This is the idea. You can talk to them, but your attitude is not going to be provocative or angry. Or aggressive. You don’t have to go for conflict, you can ask other questions. In other words, you can engage with that person, you can talk to them, but you are not going to fight. I know it’s not easy to make that balance. It’s really difficult (pause).

Okay, we’ll call it a day. Thank you for your time and if you want to a one-to-one, just let me know.

End of side B