A Grounded Theory of Conflict between Child Care Counsellors and Adolescents in a Juvenile Justice Facility

by

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For Hannah-Le whose arrival has already made this world a better place

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ABSTRACT

Supervisor: Dr. Carol Stuart, Supervisor (Faculty of Graduate Studies)

This grounded theory study explored the reported experiences of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents within a juvenile justice program for young offenders. In particular, this research accessed the meanings that each party attributes to their experience of conflict, especially as it relates to the exercise of power. A critical theory lens was used to direct the guided conversations with participants. The nature of the influence exerted by the organizational system on the occurrence of conflict between the two and the meaning the participants attributed to that conflict was explored. Through grounded theory analysis the researcher develops a substantive theory of conflict with respect to the perception or expression of power between adolescents and counsellors and how conflict influences each parties experience of self and their roles within the juvenile justice setting. The application of this theory to practice and policy is discussed and indications for future research suggested. Practitioners are encouraged to broaden their understanding of the phenomenon of adolescents who act-out to include an appraisal of how systems can and do contribute to this phenomenon.

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CHAPTER 1

The Occurrence of Conflict between Child Care Counsellors and Adolescent Clients

After twenty-six years in the field of human service work, I am still amazed at the frequency with which conflict occurs in the daily operation of a residential program serving adolescents. It appears to be the "life-blood" or "pulse" of the program. My decision to study this social process came from my belief that the frequency with which the incidence of conflict occurred between child care counsellors and adolescent clients was in some way related to the social context or organisational system in which they were situated.

Child and youth care work is inherently stressful. Given the emotionally challenging nature of the work it is often difficult for the child care workers to reflect in a meaningful way on their interventions. However, I propose that often these interventions may not be in the best interests of the client so much as in the interests of maintaining the social order within the system. I chose to study the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and clients in a juvenile justice setting (referred to on occasions throughout this thesis as the "program" in the interest of brevity) in an attempt to assess the nature of the influence the organisational system exerted on the occurrence of conflict between the two and the meaning the participants attributed to that conflict.

Indeed, as this research revealed, the organisational system did greatly influence the intervention options available to the child care counsellors and in turn the degree of conflict between the counsellors and adolescent clients. It was also revealed that child care counsellors chose different interventions based on their assessments of situations, the individuals with whom they were relating, or their practice styles. This dynamic within

individuals with whom they were relating, or their practice styles. This dynamic within the system was, as yet, unarticulated but clearly manifest in the frequency and degree of conflict between the adolescents and child care counsellors within the system. It was my desire to reveal through this research the systemic influences on the adolescents' responses to the system; responses that are all too often deemed as acting-out or inappropriate. If in fact the actions of the persons in authority are resisted by adolescents "as a strategic consciousness, as a way of coping with the world, as a narrative on what is so troubling . . . .about us and our society" (Skrtic, 1990, p.11), then I believe that the adolescents' opposition could and should be considered as self advocacy rather than defiance or anti-social acting-out. Further, I believe that if we could find functional ways of responding to angry or disenfranchised adolescents we could begin to address a current shortfall in the service delivery system for adolescents. By providing services that address the systemic nature of the adolescents' dilemma, rather than maintaining a focus on the mere manifestation of their despondency or anger at the system, we could broaden our understanding of the phenomenon of adolescents who act-out to include an appraisal of how we as a society are contributing to this phenomenon.

This research project sought to understand the participants' experiences of conflict and in particular, the ways in which the reported experiences of conflict, and how the expression of power between child care counsellors and adolescents in a juvenile justice facility influenced the participants' actions and reactions to each other. Principally, this research is guided by the question: "How is power experienced in adolescent and child

care counsellor conflicts within a juvenile justice facility?"

Significance of the Problem

Many adolescents find themselves in the care of social services due in part to their families' inabilities to care for them. Counsellors employed in services for adolescents have a responsibility to care for teens and teach them appropriate ways of behaving in, and relating to, the world. Due to their life experiences, many of these adolescents bring behaviours that are anti-social and oppositional to authority figures. The counsellors that are charged with the responsibility of "managing" the adolescents are often recipients of these oppositional behaviours. Research has demonstrated that intangible elements of programs serving adolescents, such as staff-client interactions, are most crucial in influencing the adolescents' attitude and behaviours when compared to tangible elements such as program structure (Clarke, 1985; Palmer, 1995; Rutter & Giller, 1983).

Often child care counsellors in residential service organisations perceive an adolescent's oppositional behaviours as challenges to the maintenance of social order (Horan, 1988); the resulting tensions can sometimes manifest in the adults' abuse of the authority inherent in their professional role (Reitsma-Street, 1988). These types of reactive responses from child care counsellors often exacerbate the adolescent's problem behaviours. Developmentally, adolescents are seeking more autonomy and independence from adults (Erikson, 1963), so authoritarian responses from adults often elicit rebellious or more deviant behaviours from the adolescent. Palmer (1995), has noted that the personal characteristics of parole agents can have a direct impact on the parolee's rate of

recidivism and other measures of success. It appears that there are elements of a program that can directly impact the adolescents' success or failure at rehabilitation and yet these elements are not clearly identified in the organisational structure of most programs. The oversight on the part of programs to address the intangible elements that contribute to the make up of the program's culture may in and of itself contribute to the program's success or failure with adolescents.

Programs serving adolescents are not alone in their struggle to identify the intangible program elements that may contribute to the phenomenon of adolescent acting-out. Sullivan and Wilson (1995), noted that the failure of current theories to address all of the questions raised by this complex phenomenon can often result in the theory being completely rejected or the description of variables that might account for the phenomenon being simplified. The need to understand this phenomenon has resulted in what I believe to be an unjust characterisation or social construction of adolescents with problems. Often the portrayal is one of irresponsible and aggressive adolescents rather than disenfranchised and despondent adolescents.

This negative characterisation of adolescents who act-out, which is largely promoted in the mainstream culture, is inconsistent with the values I consider important for practice and is even more disconcerting when adopted by persons charged with providing care for adolescents. In proposing this research project, I surmised that this negative characterisation of adolescents served a purpose that related to the exercise of power in systems that served adolescents towards the maintenance of a social order. The

tendency to negatively characterise adolescents who have problems was of interest throughout this research in terms of how doing so served the system. Sullivan and Wilson (1995) noted that "by controlling what is defined as normal or nondeviant in everyday life, elite groups . . . maintain their power . . . . Oppression is thereby normalized, routinized, and institutionalized" (p.5).

Rather than look at the broader society's influence on adolescents' acting-out, research on this phenomenon has (barring **race and ethnicity** [Lochman & Wayland, 1994; Smith & Krohn, 1995]) generally focused on micro rather than macro systems of influence. These have included **peers** (Cashwell & Vacc, 1996; Lochman & Wayland, 1994; Salts, Lindholm, Goddard & Duncan, 1995; Yates, Hecht-Lewis, Fritsch, & Goodrich, 1994), **individual personality traits** (Cashwell & Vacc, 1996; Heaven, 1994; Lochman & Wayland, 1994; Salts et al., 1995; Yates et al., 1994), **and family processes** (Bakken & Romig, 1994; Cashwell & Vacc, 1996; Heaven, 1994; Mann-Feder, 1996; Pederson, 1994; Salts et al., 1995; Smith & Krohn, 1995; White, 1996; Yates et al., 1994). While the research has included contextual, cultural, individual, and family influences on behaviours of the adolescent, our frame of reference is principally that the problem resides within the adolescent (Leone, Bannon Walter, & Wolford, 1990).

The focus on micro variables has contributed to the field of theory; however, there is a scarcity of empirical work to support this theorising (Mann-Feder, 1996). Theorising is in and of itself plagued by ideologies (Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). Skrtic (1990) noted that "there is growing recognition that ultimately, knowledge production and utilisation .

. . (in the social sciences and humanities) . . . are moral and political acts with implications for human development and social justice" (p.7). Further, research that has been performed in this area is lagging behind advances in other fields (Curry, 1991). Leone et al. (1990) support this position and acknowledge that empirical research is particularly lacking regarding the phenomenon of adolescent acting-out as it relates to the broader systems. They propose that "there is a need to examine the ecological and structural factors that have the potential to exacerbate or mitigate (against) troublesome behaviour(s)" (p.293) if we are to advance our understanding of this phenomenon.

The suggestions that a broader view of this phenomenon is required if we are to advance our understanding of what contributes to the manifestation of adolescent acting-out is a recent development in the study of this phenomenon (Skrtic, 1990; Leone et al., 1990). Mann-Feder's study (1996) supports " the need for qualitative research focusing on the interaction of client attributes and the underlying components of treatment modalities"(p.5). In this manner we can further our understanding of the influences on adolescents' acting-out and their potential rehabilitation. The research reported here illuminates the nuances of the phenomenon of adolescent acting out and its location within a residential milieu. Eliciting the perspective of the adolescents' and the counsellors' experiences in a juvenile justice facility renders explicit the influence of the broader systems on adolescents' acting-out behaviours.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptual Lens

Preliminary Literature Review

This research examines how power is manifested in child care counsellor/client conflict. In particular, it identifies how the adolescent's behaviour is socially constructed by the "system" and how that in turn perpetuates the occurrence of acting-out behaviours in the adolescent, thereby resulting in further isolation or exclusion from society. The following review of the literature broadened my understanding of adolescent acting-out beyond the individuals' or families' responsibilities by delegating some of that responsibility to the community, service systems, and practitioners (Leone et al., 1990; Skrtic, 1990; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). The literature suggests that the responsibility of failing to rehabilitate adolescents falls to the latter rather than the former. This is a rather controversial position, but one that fits with my understanding of the phenomenon which I regard as being embedded within a number of systems; each of which has a shared responsibility in the manifestation of adolescent acting-out behaviours.

Consistent with a grounded theory approach to my research, I did not do a full literature review, nor did I propose a conceptual model at the initiation of this project (Creswell, 1997). My theoretical and practical experience of the phenomenon prepares me sufficiently to approach the research question and data collection. I used foreshadowing (see Chapter 3: The researchers personal context) to render explicit my

assumptions and biases regarding this phenomenon. My preconstructions of the phenomenon will be outlined and the literature that supports those constructions will be discussed in the following sections. I attempted to put these pre-constructed notions aside and ensure that the theory that emerged was well grounded in the data. Throughout the project, I used comparative data analyses to ensure the interplay between inductive and deductive reasoning.

Currently researchers of teenager's acting-out generally agree that there are multiple variables (family, individual/interpersonal, sociological, and community) that interact to either exacerbate or mediate against the adolescent's decision to engage in delinquent, criminal, or violent acts. Processes such as family cohesion and level of care were identified as being of particular influence and seen as positive qualities that equipped the adolescent to resist or refrain from such behaviours (Heaven, 1994; Smith, & Krohn, 1995; White,1996). These data are especially important to the providers of residential services to adolescents who are in some manner providing an alternate "family" environment and have the potential to model processes that positively influence the adolescents.

The reality of multiple variables interacting to produce the manifestation of acting-out behaviours in adolescents has not only challenged the research community in its efforts to isolate the variables involved, but has confounded efforts in the field of practice to "name the solution" to this current social ill (Cashwell & Vacc, 1996; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). Much of the recent writing on adolescent acting-out expresses genuine

concern with the current prevalence of adolescent delinquency and violence and the apparent impotence of society to address these issues (Heaven, 1994; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). Discouraging results from Mann-Feder's study (1996) indicated that treatment for adolescents who act-out may actually result in deterioration in behaviour despite improvement in other areas of personal functioning such as self esteem and self concept. The discouraging results and reported minimal success of later interventions aimed at rehabilitating known delinquents supports the position that more work is required to identify the multiple variables that interact to produce the manifestation of acting-out behaviours in adolescents and thereby create more effective treatment options for adolescents.

The collective essence of the literature on adolescent acting out acknowledges that a system's perspective to the viewing of this phenomenon is essential if we are to understand its complexity (Cashwell & Vacc, 1996; Leone et al., 1990; Skrtic, 1990; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). Rather than characterise the teenager as pathological in nature or fatally flawed, the authors structured their studies to expand the view of the behaviour as it is embedded within various systems. The interface of these systems – peers, school, interpersonal; community and family – contributes to the understanding of a phenomenon that currently challenges our thinking and therefore is often left prey to dominant discourse in the media. A systems perspective represents a shift from pathologising adolescents to understanding how they interface with the systems they find themselves in and how that in turn contributes to their anti-social behaviours (Skrtic, 1990; Leone et al.

1990). This is a view that I believe may serve to not only expand our understanding of this phenomenon, but also serve to empower the adolescent client and the system serving that adolescent, as we begin to view him/her as one manifestation of a social problem that is systemic in nature.

A Critical Theory Perspective

The conceptual lens of this research centres on the concept of power and how it is experienced by child care counsellors and clients in conflict with each other in juvenile justice facilities. In this research, it was my desire to render explicit the emic view, overlaid with the etic, including the social structure around the "phenomenon", the place that the adolescents hold in the juvenile justice facility's hierarchy or power base, the broader society and the literature on critical theory, and the social construction of "knowledge". "Knowledge is power . . . . (In recent years) the professions have emerged as the most powerful in society, particularly the professions that define and classify human beings" (Skrtic, 1990, p7). The power to label or name a group as deviant or normal, in and of itself denotes a difference in the power of one group over another and dictates how that group will be treated and perceived (Becker, 1974; Goffman, 1961; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995; Skrtic, 1990). Hollinger (1994) describes Critical theory and its aims as follows;

> "Critical theory is rooted deeply in the idea that knowledge is for human liberation – for the uncovering of lies, repression, false consciousness, self-deception, and exploitation – and is aimed at the practical task of changing the

world for the better" (p.84).

My choice to view the data through a critical theory lens was prompted by my desire to seek the adolescents' perceptions of how power is expressed in the microcosm of the residential milieu and how that relates to their sense of self within the broader society. In addition, I sought the counsellors' perceptions of how the residential milieu influenced their exercise of power in their responsibility to maintain, support, and promote the social order within that system.

At the turn of the century, intellectuals referred to professionalism in the service to human beings as "grand cultural reform, capable of restoring sanity to capitalist civilization" (Haskell, 1984). However, that promise has not been realised and the professions appear to be failing in their claim of delivering social order and equality to society's less fortunate (Leone et al., 1990). More recently, the professions serving social causes have been accused of being another form of self-aggrandizement (Collins, 1979), a capitalist solution for the failures of capitalism (Skrtic, 1990). Certainly, residential service organisations require a sense of social order. The question remains whether if in so doing it is creating a microcosm of the very society whose failings necessitated its creation.

Traditional notions of power hold that a few persons have the authority to manage and to coerce, if necessary, other people (Reitsma-Street & Rogerson, 1995). It is exactly this definition of power or authority that I believe exacerbates the acting-out behaviours of adolescents. My observations of social processes within service systems prompted my

choice to view this research data through a critical theory lens. Often persons who have power inherent in their role use methods of "ruling" to maintain the status quo; they adopt behaviours that ensure that they retain the power they have. Skrtic (1990) suggests that:

> By focusing our attention on factors external to adolescents themselves, . . . (and) rather than seeing troubled and troubling adolescents as a target for manipulation, we may yet come to see . . . (their acting out) as a strategic consciousness, as a way of coping with the world, as a narrative on what is so troubling . . . about us and our society (p.11).

Critical theory was used as a conceptual guide in the analyses of the data and served to illuminate the contribution the "system" or "ruling mechanisms" made to the adolescents' acting-out behaviours within the residential service system of study, and the workers' responses to them. The choice of a juvenile justice facility as the research site was prompted by my belief that it is a microcosm of the broader society and, as such reflective of the norms, values, and beliefs of current society.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Framing the Study

Rationale for Qualitative Research Methodology

Traditional or mainstream research grounded in positivism, generally attends to measurable and objective phenomena from which it can generate laws and theories to account for social behaviour (Maquire, 1987). This approach to knowledge production did not fit for my research topic, since the phenomenon I am interested in is neither "measurable" nor "objective". Rather, this research sought to elicit personal accounts of how child care counsellors and clients experience power during conflicts between them, and the meanings that they attribute to these experiences (Patton, 1980). The researcher seeks to understand a complex phenomenon whose variables require further definition and which current theories fail to adequately explain (Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). This task was best accomplished through grounded theory methodology, which allowed the concepts to emerge from the data. Rather than develop hypotheses regarding the phenomenon and then seeking to prove or disprove these, qualitative research relies on the participant to be the expert informant; the person who has a lived experience of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative design allows the flexibility required for expanding our understanding of the phenomenon of child care counsellor and client conflict as it is located within the broader system.

A hallmark of qualitative research today is its attendance to marginalised groups (Creswell, 1997). The isolation of troubled adolescents, particularly those placed in residential care (who are effectively removed from the mainstream), and the apparent lack of professional recognition afforded child care counsellors (Reitsma-Street, 1995) renders each of these groups somewhat marginalised. As such, they are unique cultures that lend themselves to the aims of a qualitative research inquiry.

Why a Grounded Theory Approach?

A qualitative design, such as grounded theory which is primarily interpretative in nature, suited my research needs since it was important that the data collection procedures chosen be consistent with the underlying assumptions of the methodological approach (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992; Morse, 1994). Focusing on the richness of human experience, this study sought to understand the social process of conflict from the perspective of adolescents in care and child care counsellors who have experienced such conflict within a residential service organisation. (Baker et al., 1992; Maguire, 1987; Morse, 1994). Using flexible data collection procedures, grounded theorists seek to discover the meanings that individuals give to events. The theory posits that humans develop these meanings by direct interaction with their environment (Baker et al.,1992).

This study revolved around data collection procedures that are consistent with those assumptions. Child care counsellors and clients were asked to describe their experiences of conflict and the meanings they attributed to this incidence. Grounded theory also posits that the way that individuals interact with a phenomenon is directly

linked to the manner in which he perceives that phenomenon and their relationship to it. Through this research I sought to illicit information from participants that illuminated their understanding of the concept of power within conflicts between clients and counsellors. Grounded theory research encourages the researcher to understand the individual's behaviour as they understand it, learn of their interpretation of self in their interactions, and share their definitions of a phenomenon (Anderson, 1991). In effect, the information I was seeking was the client's and counsellor's subjective accounts of their social actions during conflicts and their intentions in these actions, information that is best acquired through qualitative research methodology.

Congruent with its philosophical foundations in symbolic interactionism, grounded theory proposes that human interactions are understood in their social context (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). All behaviour is then viewed as symbolic in nature and individuals are believed to act and interact based on symbols that have meanings and value for them. It follows then, that the "meanings" that actors attribute to the "things" they are relating to determines the nature of their relationship with that thing. In this way, human beings develop their behaviours as they relate, such that meaning is constructed and behaviours modified through an interpretative process of relating within their social context (Anderson, 1991). My clinical experience supports this assumption. In my observations of persons in relationships within residential care environments, the person's understanding of a situation will determine how he will behave in that situation. For example, if a child care counsellor believes that a child is oppositional and unruly when

he refuses to get out of bed in the morning, the counsellor's interventions will likely be confrontative and challenging of the child. However, another child care counsellor may interpret the same child's behaviour as school phobia or sleepiness and offer support and encouragement instead. Depending on the meanings the child care counsellor attributes to the behaviours, he will respond accordingly. Similarly, if a client perceives that the counsellor's tone of voice, when giving feedback, suggests disapproval the client may react defensively; whereas the tone of voice could have been related to the counsellor's fatigue rather than disapproval. In this manner, individuals are constructing meanings that direct their responses to each other. A grounded theory analysis of these human interactions within their social context was used to render explicit the nuances inherent in the occurrence of conflict between clients and counsellors within a residential program.

Grounded theorists not only believe that social problems or concerns are understood within their social context but also assume that these social processes are shaped by the constraints the environment places on the participants (Spradley, 1979). They therefore posit that human beings actively shape their behaviours based on these constraints. This is a premise of symbolic interactionism, and a foundation of grounded theory analyses (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Certainly, my previous observations of the phenomenon of conflict in residential care bore out this assumption. I had observed repeatedly that the same client and child care counsellor who in the residential milieu were in frequent conflict could go out for a "one-to-one" time and experience no conflict. It appears that the "residential milieu" somehow contributes to the frequency and nature

of the conflict between child care counsellors and clients. If the environment contains social constraints that affect the behaviours of persons in that environment then a grounded theory analyses is best suited to the process of identifying the constraints of the social context that result in frequent incidents of conflict between adolescent clients and child care counsellors in residential settings. Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Glaser (1992) insist that research findings be grounded in the data, particularly with respect to the actions, interactions and social processes of people.

Grounded theory is unique amongst the qualitative methodologies in its unabashed aim of theory generation. Creswell notes that the purpose of a grounded theory methodology is "to generate or discover, a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon" (p.56, 1997). Based on data collected in the field the researcher writes theoretical propositions that explain and represent a model for understanding the social process being studied. Thornberry (1987) states that because most human behaviour occurs in social interaction, it is best explained by a model that focuses on interactive processes. It therefore follows that a grounded theory approach is best suited to the assumptions I have regarding this phenomenon, which is embedded in the relations, and interactions between child care counsellors and clients in a residential context.

Contextual Considerations for the Inquiry

The Researcher's Personal Context

In qualitative research, it is generally accepted that knowledge is constructed by

individuals, such that multiple realities can and do exist (Creswell, 1997). It was therefore important for me as the researcher to identify aspects of my beliefs, values, assumptions and biases that could influence my interpretation of the data and thereby contribute to the construction of knowledge in this research project.

I have worked and studied in the area of residential services for adolescents for twenty-six years. This particular area of research intrigues me since I have repeatedly observed adults in group homes abuse power in overt or covert ways with adolescents. The result is that often the adolescents will react negatively by rebelling, retaliating, or showing some other form of acting-out their feelings about this perceived injustice. The possible consequences of these responses are that the client is once again identified as "the problem" and little self reflection or professional accountability occurs on the part of the child care counsellor. The resulting characterisation of the teen as the problem appears to serve the system and maintain the status quo rather than serving the client whom the system is designed to help. I believe that often interventions with adolescents in residential settings may not be in the best interests of the client so much as aimed at the goal of maintaining the social order. This brings into question who establishes the social order and whether it is conducive to the client's best interests. If in fact the social ruling mechanisms imposed by those who have the authority are not in the best interests of the client, then would the client's opposition not be appropriate, or even required? Sullivan and Wilson (1995) having reviewed recent literature conclude that treatment programs for adolescents are falling short in their claims of rehabilitation and instead have become

instruments of oppression. This failure on the part of these services for adolescents lends support for the continued negative characterisation of adolescents and contributes to their sense of alienation from society.

From my observations of social processes within institutionalised service systems I have come to believe that power is a dynamic – a force that creates ever-changing actions and reactions in those engaged in social processes; its expression influences the behaviours of both parties that are interacting. These actions can be overt or covert, but are an aspect of the social process that is intangible and so not acknowledged as contributing to the incidence of conflict. In the role of a child and youth care worker, I believe that it is important to gain an awareness of how these intangible elements, in the incidence of conflict, can influence the other party (the client) and accordingly their response to overt attempts at "ruling" or control.

The Organisational Context

The site chosen for this research was a residential program for male juvenile offenders. The program had the capacity to serve eight residents, but averaged between four and six adolescents during this research. The staffing structure revolved around four full-time child care counsellors, a Director, two Night Staff, a Cook, and a Family Support Worker. All staff members except for the Director and Family Support Worker were unionised. Auxiliary child care counsellors supplemented the schedule that was required to cover a twenty-four hour day, seven days a week. Most of the full-time, front-line child care counsellors had worked in the program for over five years, three of them

for over ten.

During the last month of the research the staff members who were unionised were directed by their union to provide only essential services, as they attempted to pressure government regarding working conditions. This affected the program greatly, as the shop steward became the person responsible for the daily scheduling of child care counsellors and the Director assumed the Cook's responsibilities. An off-site school that usually accommodated the adolescents between nine and three was not deemed an essential service during the strike and so the adolescents were confined to the main building and child care counsellors became responsible for schooling and daily programming.

The program is funded through the Ministry for Children and Families in British Columbia, but had evolved from the juvenile justice system. The Ministry of the Attorney General was the funder before the amalgamation of all adolescent services into one Ministry in 1997. The program had not changed much as a result of the amalgamation and the model was more akin to an open custody facility than a social service group home. Further, adolescents were still court ordered to reside there and to abide by probation orders, so each adolescent's case was managed by a probation officer rather than a social worker.

Staff members noted that they had been initiating change in the program over the past five years, attempting to move away from the old behaviour modification program they began with, and move to a more therapeutic model of intervention. They felt that this change in the clinical model was still in process and that the change was somewhat

furthered by the arrival of a new Director three years ago.

In addition to the funding body, the program was affiliated with a broad based religious organisation that promoted service to society's less fortunate. Therefore, some of the child care counsellors considered their work less of a job than a ministry for God. While this was not an evident part of the program on a daily basis, it did guide the philosophy of some of the child care counsellors and influenced the moral and social milieu of the program.

Research Design

Data Collection

Representativeness in qualitative research depends upon the richness of the data acquired and not the number of participants. Since grounded theory research seeks to establish a conceptual framework that explains the phenomenon being investigated, participants were selected using a method known as theoretical sampling or intensity sampling. This meant that participants were selected based on their ability to contribute to the evolving theory (Creswell, 1997). This method involved selecting participants who were experiential experts and could be predicted to have the knowledge and experience sought to be investigated (Patton, 1980). Therefore, participants who reported experiencing conflicts within the program between clients and counsellors and who were willing and available to participate were then invited to participate in guided conversations regarding this phenomenon. For the purpose of this research, it was key

that the selected participants possessed an ability to be reflective of their experiences of conflict as it related to the concept of power (Baker et. al., 1992; Morse, 1994).

Before participant selection I visited the program on a number of occasions to meet with child care counsellors and adolescents, both formally in prearranged meetings and informally as a participant observer, to brief them on my research project. During these times, potential participants were given the opportunity to talk to me about my research interests, and review the abstract of my thesis proposal and the consent form (see Appendix A). It therefore became evident by the time of the guided conversation that persons who chose to participate were prepared to discuss topics that were germane to the phenomenon of power as they had experienced it in conflict situations. Three adolescents and four adults participated in audio taped guided conversations during the four and one half months of the research. In addition, three adolescents, one staff member, a parent, and a probation officer chose to speak with me in more natural settings such as in the kitchen, living room or garden without the use of a tape recorder. These conversations were logged as part of the participant observation process.

Sampling of participants occurred throughout the duration of the project and continued as concepts emerged in the data. At times in the guided conversation, participants would make suggestions as to whom else I might be able to speak with to enhance my understanding of the topic of inquiry. This led to the identification of persons who had not themselves come forward but could be instrumental to either verifying or refuting the information given. Towards the end of the research a child care counsellors'

strike limited the availability of some child care counsellors who had agreed to participate. Similarly, adolescents who had agreed to participate were precluded due to their leaving the program prematurely. Efforts to include these participants by phone as the concepts began to be saturated were unsuccessful due in part to their interest having diminished over time and their having moved on in their lives, and so were discontinued.

It is generally believed, in a grounded theory approach, that the researcher has gathered enough data when the data reach saturation; that is, that the concepts in the theory are sufficiently described in their variability and that they seem to explain all "'cases" in the data. At this point, data are beginning to repeat that which has already been reported, and no new categories may be formed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The sampling of participants ceased as saturation occurred and there appeared to be no new data being offered. Data collection was halted with some participants with whom I wished to do some member-checking, for the reasons just mentioned. However, I believed that there were sufficient data and triangling of data sources to cease data collection. In fact, saturation appeared to occur quite quickly with the adolescent participants who appeared to have established a "peer consensus" on how things at the program worked. As there were more adult participants than adolescent participants, the data collection with the adults was longer and more cross referencing and verifying of data took place before saturation began to occur in the concepts I had identified.

Adolescent Participants

The adolescent participants comprised six adolescent males, all of whom had been

court ordered to reside at the program. They ranged from fourteen to eighteen years of age. Of the six, five had served time in juvenile jails and two were returning to this particular program for a second time. Three of the participants were at the program at the beginning of my research, two remained for the four and one half month duration of my research and beyond, while one left after two months of my being on-site. The other three adolescents were admitted during the course of my research and remained at the resource after its completion.

Adult Participants

There were four male and three female adult participants. These included three full-time and one part time child care counsellor, an ancillary staff member, a probation officer, and a parent of one of the residing adolescents. The length of tenure for the child care counsellors ranged from over ten years to three weeks. The ancillary staff member, probation officer, and parent had been involved in the program for varying amounts of time and in various capacities, these ranged from five months to three years.

Participant Observation

Being comfortable in a setting is an advantage for the researcher seeking to establish rapport with participants. My obvious knowledge of and interest in child and youth care work was evidenced in my dialogue with participants as I began my visits to the program. I was also conscious of the fact that I was a visitor to the program and as such should conduct myself with respect and regard for the people who had generously

agreed to my presence.

During the initial visits to the program I did not expect that the adolescents would choose to participate in guided conversations with me so I participated in the routines of the shift, ate supper with them, and generally "hung-out" as an observer. As an observer though, my role was not purely neutral. The adolescents tested me on numerous occasions to see "where I sat" on issues between them and the child care counsellors. This then provided opportunities for me to clarify the boundaries of my role. For example, during my first supper with the group the adolescents were provoking a staff member by being rude and discourteous. When I casually said, "Didn't I see a sign in the office that says no put-downs?", the adolescents were quick to retort with, "Hey, you're meant to be on our side aren't you?" This then provided an opportunity for me to state where I stood on these behaviours without having to condone or condemn them. After a while, the adolescents understood that although I was not a staff member, I was not against the child care counsellors, nor solely there for the adolescents. It seemed important to establish these boundaries, since the topic of client counsellor conflict could be perceived by the adolescents as having some political connotation. Indeed, in some of the initial guided conversations, the adolescents approached the session as if I were a 'change-agent'; someone who was going to take their concerns forward and initiate change for them. This too provided an opportunity to clarify my role as a researcher, that of being as neutral as possible while sensitive to and keen to understand how they experienced conflicts with child care counsellors at the program.

When at the program I was respectful of all interactions and incidents as they occurred. I remained at a reasonable physical distance, left when it appeared that a situation was private, or offered a perspective if I thought it would be supportive. However, on one particular occasion, when the staff members were working essential services through the strike period, I found that my neutrality as "researcher" and the staff members' and clients' needs were at odds. Here is an entry from my field notes:

> I had arrived at the program to speak with a staff member who was supervising the adolescents that day. Another non-union worker who had been assigned to take a child care counsellor shift would stay with the adolescents during my guided conversation with the child care counsellor. Within a very short while of us being away from the adolescents, a conflict emerged among the adolescents and was escalating rapidly to threats and physical taunts, as the inexperienced staff member ran upstairs to interrupt our conversation.
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> It was important that the staff person I was talking with return to the main floor. At first, I stayed in the stairwell to respect the fact that likely the adolescents only required the senior adult to return and restore order. As I listened it became evident that the adolescents, five in total, were going to have difficulty settling down as they continued to provoke and taunt another adolescent who was on the verge of engaging in physical violence. Due to my having in some way been responsible for the staff person's absence, and being familiar with child care dynamics, I returned to the main floor and let the adolescents and adults see that

there was another person present. When the adolescent being persecuted ran out of the front door, I quietly went out on the front deck and sat on the railing so he could see me as accessible, but not intrusive. This also allowed the staff person in the program to focus on the adolescents inside who needed to be talked to about the scapegoating.

Eventually the adolescent returned and sat on the deck with me. He expressed his frustration with the victimisation that had been occurring since his arrival three days before and his plans that night for vengeance. I remained relatively neutral, pointing out how the other adolescents were pulling his strings and how he had other choices that could be more empowering. When the adult on the floor was able, he came outside and I briefed him on the conversation in front of the adolescent and then, as I heard the adolescents inside begin to taunt and call out derogatory comments I went inside and sat on the couch where they could see me.

One of the boys said, "You're a counsellor aren't you?". I said that I had worked in that capacity, but that in this situation I was a researcher. He then said, "Well you should talk to that kid, he's got a real problem". I then said, "Do you want to know what I think about situations where one person is picked on?" He said, "Sure" so I said, "I think it says more about the people doing the picking than the person being picked on". The adolescent had no retort. *End of field notes.*

At this point I knew that I had moved from the realm of researcher. This "shift" provided an opportunity to define myself as an adult in support of the program, the staff persons and all of the adolescents. As such my comments were fully intended by myself as an opportunity to model who I was and the fact that I would stand up for principles and values that I am sure the adolescents, on a better day, could recognise.

As can be discerned from the above account, participant observation provided its own challenges to my role and responsibilities as a researcher. The incident documented here was transcribed from my field notes, which provided a rich source of data collection throughout my time at the program. (The departure from the role of researcher is discussed under the following section, with respect to its potential impact on this research).

While the primary source of data collection was one-on-one guided conversations with expert informants, the variety of data collection methods, recommended in theory building, was critical to this project. The fact that much of my data collection was achieved through participant observation on-site warranted taking measures to ensure some checking of my assumptions and biases in the interpretation of such data. I therefore used two methods of note taking relative to my experiences at the program. The first method was the extensive use of a field journal that I wrote in after each visit, guided conversation, and phone call to the program or exchange with persons related to this project. During these times or directly after, I documented conversations and occurrences

I had witnessed at the program. I ensured that these included as many verbatim quotes from participants and concrete reports of actions and reactions as I could recall. In this manner, I sought to ensure that the data was as true and as accurate an account of the phenomenon as possible, such that a participant reading the account would recognise it as the event in which they had been involved. The actual documenting of events in such detail served to enhance my understanding of how the social processes unfolded at the program. They also raised questions regarding interactions that occurred at the program that I could explore with participants in our guided conversations. These notes were then cross referenced with the participants' reported experiences of the phenomenon and enhanced the data collected. In my analyses of the data my field notes also assisted in the clarification of the emerging concepts and the dimensionalising of those concepts, since in my recounting of events, participants would elaborate on the concepts and the nature of their occurrence. These field notes served as a rich source of data collection and, while enhancing my understanding of the dynamics at the program, were invaluable to the theory building in this research.

The second method used to record my observations at the program was the use of a reflexive journal, which was maintained throughout the process of this research. This journal provided a mechanism through which I was able to check my assumptions throughout the data analyses process. In this journal, I noted the impressions and assumptions I was making based on the phenomenon I was observing. For example, when observing a chore time I assumed that the adolescent's grumbling about the chores

was an attempt to have a voice about something they found to be unfair or discriminatory within the system. I then noted these impressions in the form of concepts at the page edge of my notes in a different colour pen. These impressions were then expanded on as I wrote in my reflexive journal and would then be the basis of further discussions with participants when we met next. The reflexive journal was utilised to ensure that I kept an account of my biases and assumptions about the phenomenon and as such, remained conscious of how I might be affecting the data analyses. In particular, I used the journal when I felt reactive, confused, or passionate about an event. Journaling in this way led me to seek deeper explanations for the phenomena I was observing (rather than jumping to conclusions); ask questions of myself and my role as a researcher; and define categories or generate questions to consider. These notes also became a source of data that was critiqued and analysed in the constant comparative analyses process and served to enhance the soundness and credibility of the research.

Interview Context

Traditionally in qualitative research, the researcher is considered the instrument of the data collection (Creswell, 1997). For the purposes of establishing rapport with potential participants, I scheduled informal meetings with both the staff group and the adolescent group, before the commencement of the study. This time was used to introduce to the group my research interest and explain how and why I came to choose the topic.

The initial meeting with the staff group was arranged by the Director in early May

1998 and was designed to seek their agreement to participating in my research at the program. I met with the full-time staff group at the beginning of their weekly staff meeting and gave them a brief description of my thesis topic. There was an opportunity for the staff members to ask any questions that they had regarding my research and what role I would play when at the program. After I left, the Director determined if any of the staff members were interested in participating, and because two staff members expressed initial interest, we proceeded to seek approval from the funders and managers of the program and the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee.

In preparation for the beginning of my work on-site in January 1999, I sent an introductory letter to the staff members and adolescents at the program. The letter informed them that: I would be visiting the program in the next two weeks; that I was intending to perform research on the subject of child care counsellor/client conflict; and that I was seeking their participation in my project (see Appendix B). In January 1999, I once again met with the staff group to discuss the on-site data collection and their participation. It was agreed at that meeting that I would return the next day to speak with the adolescents as a group and seek their participation.

While I was meeting with the staff group and the adolescent group, my primary aim was to establish rapport, let them see who I was as a human being, and to establish the boundaries of the relationship. Failure to establish clear boundaries can result in a blurring of the researcher's role and vacillation can occur between the roles of researcher, friend, and clinician (Lipson, 1993). This common failing of researchers in qualitative

methodologies can lead to challenges of rigor (Creswell, 1997). This would not only be damaging to my credibility as a researcher, but could also undermine the study, and be confusing to participants. I was therefore cautious not to counsel, advise or overly identify with the participants throughout the times I met with them at the program. This meant that when I was talking to the adolescents or adults in guided conversations, I was cautious to not reveal my understanding or interpretation on the topic of conversation. Further, I made every effort to not influence their reporting of their experiences by being overly encouraging or seemingly disinterested, depending on their account. This required that I kept a consciousness of my reflexivity throughout the guided conversation. I was not only monitoring the participants' accounts, but also my own reactions. The dual task was another means of monitoring my interpretation of events. For example, when I realised that I was hearing for the third time an adolescent say that the activity schedule was not being observed by a particular staff person, I checked my internal consciousness and reflexivity. I noted that I became suspicious that the adolescents were viewing me as a 'change-agent'; a person who would do something about this. I was aware that hearing this for the third time might cause me to appear disinterested or anxious to move on since I already had this information. It therefore behooved me to remain as neutral as possible, monitoring my non-verbal language as well as my verbal responses to the adolescent, in order to support the aims of the research and rapport. However, as noted in the previous section under participant observation, there was an occasion where I believed that the situation demanded that I step out of the researcher role in the interests of the program,

staff members and adolescents. This created a dilemma for me as I felt pulled in two distinct directions. I wished to remain neutral as the researcher and yet felt some responsibility as an adult with skills in adolescent programs to intervene to off-set a potentially explosive situation. This was done very consciously, if uncomfortably, as I almost felt myself step out of my "researcher skin" and depart from the role of researcher. I had adhered to this role quite successfully up until this point in my commitment to encourage the participants to view me as the researcher and not a counsellor or friend. Interestingly, the occasion documented earlier became the last time that I visited the program due to the strike that interrupted my data collection and so did not affect future research interactions with participants.

My approach, then, as the researcher, was to remain interested, curious, and objective as participants told me their stories. Similarly, I was cautious as to how much self disclosure I employed as part of the rapport building process, ensuring that it would not influence the participants' accounts of their experiences to more closely fit with mine. Another boundary that was considered was the location of the conversation. We chose the upstairs office, which allowed the participants to feel comfortable, because it was removed from the general hubbub and therefore allowed for the conversation to take place without interruption.

The method by which formal guided conversations were arranged evolved from my weekly visits to the program. I attended the program each Thursday for a prearranged participant observation shift of approximately six hours. On these occasions, either child

care counsellors or adolescents were asked if the following week they would like to participate in a guided conversation. I would then ensure that the required consent (which included that of legal guardian) could be acquired within that time and the session was confirmed. On many occasions, the child care counsellor's shifts or the adolescent's availability changed and so rescheduling and flexibility became important aspects of the relationship. In all of my contacts with the participants, I strove to maintain a relationship based on respect and an understanding of theirs and others' roles and responsibilities. Throughout the research there were many occurrences that interfered with the proposed timeline and schedule of data collection; it remained for me to remember that my agenda was not the primary agenda or purpose of the program, and I used my best discretion in assessing the need for establishing and maintaining the relationships with the program, staff members, and clients while slowly moving my research forward. I believe in this way I demonstrated respect for the participants and aided in the rapport being maintained throughout the four and one half month period of data collection.

As a further demonstration of respect for the participants, I was sensitive to their needs throughout the taping of the guided conversations. At the onset of the session, I would remind the participants that they were at liberty to decline to answer any questions they chose to throughout the conversation and further, that they could end the conversation whenever they felt they needed to. I would inform them that I had pre-coded the tape, indicating who I was speaking with and when. Sometimes I would play this part of the tape back to them so they could know how I coded their identity. I would also let

them know that I would be making notes throughout the conversation, and that these would be related to topics that I did not want to miss exploring further, but that I would not wish to cut into the conversation with at the time.

I would then proceed with the taping of the conversation. During the conversation, I would stay aware of non-verbal cues as to the participants' comfort level. These cues included yawning, looking at their watches, and appearing fatigued or distracted. On these occasions, I would check with the participant as to their comfort level and give them the option to proceed at the time (or not, and resume at a later date). On two occasions, the conversation did end at my suggestion. On other occasions, the person said that it was alright to proceed. At the end of the conversation I would leave the tape recorder on and then read back to the participant the notes I had taken, these were usually one word prompts and served as a second opportunity for the participant to elaborate on points, clarify what he had meant, or refute a specific term I had used to capture what they were saying. I believe this was not only valuable to the member checking of the data, but allayed any concerns the participant might have about my impressions of their account or why I wrote things down. I then would close the conversation by restating that the tape would be sent to a transcriptionist and that after I had used it in my analyses would be destroyed, as I would only retain the typed copy for my records.

Managing the Data

Guided Conversations and Research Process

The grounded theory approach to data collection requires that the concepts emerge from the data, and therefore a one-on-one guided conversation was best suited to this type of inquiry. I used a general conversation guide (see Appendix C) approach to data collection with each of the designated participants (Patton, 1980). This format worked well for the initial data collection phase, as it served to elicit data from the participants while allowing the flexibility to flow with the comfort level of the participant (Oakley, 1981). The conversation guide also ensured that each participant was asked to comment on similar topics while allowing for individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. This initial phase of the data collection provided rich descriptive data that led to the identification of the initial concepts (Patton, 1980).

As is common in qualitative field research, the questions changed as I gained an increased understanding of the phenomenon of conflict between child care counsellors and clients (Creswell, 1997). In keeping with the grounded theory method, I remained open to the emergence of concepts from the data and was aware that I could not previously have anticipated the questions that I would be led to ask as the data guided me. For this reason, the consent form ensured that participants were cognisant of this fact prior to agreeing to participate and further that they were assured that they could decline to answer any question that they were not comfortable with. The questions, comments and prompts advanced my understanding of theoretical issues and served to open up the

line of inquiry; they also directed the theoretical sampling and led me to speak with additional participants or revisit past participants.

As I anticipated, the second conversation with participants and the development of the rapport between us served to glean richer or deeper accounts of their understanding of this phenomenon. Some of the participants reported not recalling our first conversation while others had reflected on our time and actually came prepared to talk about examples of conflicts they had experienced within the program. As a result of my preliminary analyses and identification of themes, my questions in subsequent conversations were more grounded in the data and I believe matched more closely with the participants' understanding of the phenomenon. The analysis of the second conversation was then juxtaposed against the observation periods and other participants' reported experiences. This constant comparative analyses led me back to data in my first conversations with participants, notes from my initial visits, my field journal, reflexive journal and accounts from child care counsellors and adolescents. Through this process, there emerged aspects of the participants' reported experiences that were germane to their conflicts with each other.

It is important to note that the data collection phase spanned a four and one half month period during which time I visited the program weekly. Through this process, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of how conflict was experienced and understood by the participants and observe incidents that illustrated that understanding. In conversations with participants, I would reflect back to them the concepts that emerged

from the data analyses. In this manner, I was able to confirm or disconfirm the concepts and seek collateral checks against my understanding of the reported experiences.

Analysis

Due to this research project being qualitative in nature, an inductive, descriptive analysis of the data was performed. The process of data analysis in grounded theory research is systematic and follows a standard approach. With my first transcribed guided conversation, I conducted a line-by-line analysis to generate initial concepts. I then proceeded to conduct a guided conversation with a second participant and analysed that data line by line. Over forty concepts were generated through this process, further some broad categories, properties and dimensions presented in the data and relationships appeared to be suggested. My field notes taken during my observation shifts produced more concepts, some duplication and clarification of previously identified concepts, and some support for categories previously suggested. My reflexive journal provided a mechanism through which I was able to check my assumptions throughout the data analyses process. In this journal, I noted the impressions and assumptions I was making based on the phenomenon I was observing. I used my reflexive journal to document my hunches, concerns thoughts and impressions of the volumes of data that were presenting and the thoughts it was triggering in me as a curious researcher and experienced child care counsellor. I read and reread these notes as I sought to understand the social process I was witnessing at the program, and that participants were describing to me in their guided conversations with me. I proceeded to review the data, making notes and

memoing my impressions and interpretation of the data in my field and reflexive journals.

The second phase of my analyses of the data involved the cross referencing and coding of the counsellors' reported experiences to the adolescents' reported experiences. This microanalysis formed the basis for open and axial coding as I proceeded in my data collection. As I read and reread the data bits my analysis developed. I would then make memos with respect to questions the data would lead me to ask of participants. This also prepared me for the second conversations I would have with participants and served to sensitise me to aspects of the system that were germane to the incidence of conflict. In this way, the data analysis was interspersed with theorising about the phenomenon of conflict within the system and I was then better prepared to approach my future observation shifts with some preliminary concepts and themes upon which to build my ongoing analysis.

After open coding the additional data from guided conversations and observation notes, the data were rearranged in different ways, using a coding paradigm. Initially I sketched a coding paradigm for each of the guided conversations with each participant. My intent was to look for broader themes that could serve to collapse some of the concepts into categories but I also wanted to ensure that at least in the early stages I did not omit any data. These visual schemata of my data were instrumental in my developing a broad framework or paradigm that was inclusive and refined. In my analyses I used a method referred to as constant comparative analyses. As the analysis occurred assumptions I made were cross checked against the data, participants' accounts and

second guided conversations with participants. As I conducted the constant comparative analyses; rereading my field notes, asking questions of the questions I had asked, analysing the impressions and thoughts from my reflexive journal and reviewing my field journal and memos, the visual scheme grew and served to encompass all of the data, in a manner that informed my analysis. A micro-analysis of the categories revealed the actions or interactions that resulted from, and in, the manifestation of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 1997). This was a particularly challenging phase of the data analysis as I sought to collapse and include categories and data that were germane.

Finally, in selective coding, I identified a "story line" that integrated the categories in the axial coding phase. This was the meaning making process whereby a proposition or theory was rendered. I was able to generate some theoretical explanations of the social processes that contributed to the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and clients at the program. Through this intense data collection and analysis process a comprehensive conceptual framework of the components within the conflict between child care counsellors and clients in a juvenile justice facility emerged. This framework with its later refinements became the framework of a grounded theory which identified a central social process of purposeful conflict between child care counsellors and clients at a juvenile justice facility; the causal conditions, consequences and outcome of that process.

The documentation of the audit trail or "memoing" as it is called in the grounded theory approach (Creswell, 1997) was a particularly important facet of this methodology.

It entailed revisiting the copious notes taken on observation shifts and in my reflexive journal, and adding to them in the form of memos as I formed impressions and made interpretations of the data. Memoing proved particularly helpful on three counts; a) it provided core data which enhanced a more comprehensive view of the evolving theory of conflict at the program, b) it guarded against my biases as each of the memos was critically reviewed in relation to other data, and c) the memoing process was particularly helpful to the process of theory synthesising as concepts were collapsed into categories and causal relationships identified.

Criteria For Soundness/Credibility

Credibility and soundness were achieved through member checking and in discussions with my committee members as I progressed. The fact that much of my data collection was achieved through participant observation on-site warranted that I took measures to ensure some checking of my assumptions and biases in the interpretation of such data. During observation periods or directly after I took copious field notes on my observations and impressions, making sure that these included as many verbatim quotes from participants and concrete reports of actions and reactions that I had observed as possible. In this manner, I hoped to ensure that the data were as true and as accurate an account of the phenomenon as possible, such that a participant reading the account would recognise it as the event in which they participated. In fact, on occasion when on site, adolescents would ask me if I was writing about them and I would read to them from my notes if the piece applied to them. They were intrigued by the need to write such detailed

and dry observations but respected that that was just what I did. As a further check on my assumptions throughout the data analysis process I noted that during the course of my observations I was forming impressions and making assumptions based on the phenomenon I was observing. When observing a chore time, I interpreted that an adolescent's grumbling about the chores was an attempt to have a voice about something he found to be unfair or discriminatory within the system. I then noted these impressions in the form of concepts at the page edge of my notes in a different colour pen. These impressions were then expanded on as I wrote in my reflexive journal once I had the time to reflect on my experiences.

Establishing credibility of the findings occurred through a process known as 'member checking'. Conversations with different participants and subsequent conversations confirmed or disconfirmed concepts and themes as they emerged through the data analysis. This fit with my aim of developing a conceptual theory for the phenomenon of conflict between counsellors and clients in a juvenile justice facility. The act of checking concepts with participants served as an opportunity for participants to clarify or elaborate on their experiences. Often this process offered new data and direction to the analysis, which was used in the subsequent conversations and added strength to the findings (Reinharz, 1992). In general, I spoke with participants on two separate occasions, usually with a month or six weeks between the conversations. Due to discharges of adolescents and the strike by staff members, I was unable to speak with any participant for a third time. Some member checking occurred over the telephone with

participants with whom I had gained a solid rapport. In addition, the data collection included conversations that took place with individuals, but that were not tape recorded, during the participant observation shifts I conducted. These participants included those who had spoken with me in guided conversations and those who had elected not to speak with me in a one on one session, but still wished to have a voice in the research.

I documented cross-checking in the moment with the participants or witnesses to the phenomenon as an additional on-site data collection method. Often my interpretation of the phenomenon was different from that of the person with whom I checked the analysis. For example, one adult said he saw the behaviour as "the kids are just complaining for something to do", when my analysis was that the adolescents were genuinely attempting to express their unhappiness regarding an aspect of the system which affected them deeply and yet in which they had no recourse. Even when different interpretations surfaced, the value in this type of cross checking with participants was that the observations were validated, and confirmed as significant to others as well as myself. The fact that my own analysis was corrected was affirming because I was always interested in verifying the occurrence of conflict and the participants' experiences of that event. I documented and verified the data and phenomenon under observation through this process of cross checking. I knew that I would tend to "fit" the data into an already existing category and not necessarily look for discrepant data. This was the risk when, in the moment, upon returning to the analysis at home the verbatim account or concrete examples documented lent themselves well to a more critical analysis and reflection of

the dimensions of categories which was documented in the memoing process and served to flesh out the phenomenon under study. Saturation began to present as a phenomenon when I had truly identified the categories manifesting in the data. I was then noting that much of the data enhanced existing categories or was absorbed into them. It then became a challenge to seek or identify the negative case, those that did not fit into any of my categories. Here, for example I vacillated between was it "warm fuzzy relationships" with the child care counsellors as opposed to "hostile adversarial relationships". Was it non compliant adolescents who were bounced from the program? As I pondered this I was able to identify a particular event that I observed at the program that defied explanation within the confines of my theory of conflict between child care counsellors and clients at the program. I describe it briefly here for the purposes of demonstrating a negative case.

On an afternoon when shift change was occurring, a staff member, known to be strict and hold high expectations for "consequences" (throughout the document the term consequences is used to refer to the issuing of punishments by staff to the adolescents for behaviours deemed inappropriate by the adults) for the adolescents, came on for the evening shift. As was usual, the staff member asked one of the adolescents how he was doing. When the adolescent answered, "Fine", the staff member's retort was, "Well that's not what I hear". Another adolescent immediately began laughing and goading the first adolescent who then said, "Well, I guess you didn't hear what he did in the gym?" The adolescents then proceeded in a very jovial manner to compete in terms of who could "spill more beans" on the other. They were light and laughing, confessing actions in the

gym that other staff members had not seen and for which to date they had not received any consequences. The staff member kept an amused look on his or her face and showed no sign of issuing a consequence. The whole process seemed to serve some meaning to the participants and appeared to be enjoyable for all. Of particular note was not only that the boys were jovial, but that they were tittle-tattling on each other, each one telling what the other had done wrong and why they should receive consequences. This was contrary to the unspoken rule among the adolescents that you do not "rat" and on this occasion it was seemingly a comfortable process for the adolescents and interesting that the adult did not indicate that consequences would be forthcoming. This example is discussed further in Chapter 4 (see section on Cajoling staff) as it relates to the grounded theory that emerged through this research.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations include primarily the researcher's responsibility to the persons whose lives they are studying. Codes of Ethics regarding research with human subjects hold that the subjects' physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological well-being must be of primary regard. The participants' rights to privacy, dignity, confidentiality, personal safety and well being, and freedom from deception are prime considerations (Lipson, 1993). It was therefore of primary importance that I acquired informed consent from each participant (Lipson, 1993).

Informed consent is a critical principle in the consideration of ethical research. It refers to the subjects having been advised and informed about the aims of the research,

how the data may be used, and the scope of confidentiality they may anticipate (Lipson, 1993). Qualitative research, in particular grounded theory research, posed a particular challenge to the concept of informed consent because of its tendency to take shape through the research process. I could not predict all of the questions that I would eventually ask the participants. It therefore behoved me to ensure that the participants were informed of this at the outset of the project. The consent form in Appendix A captured the ethical considerations pertinent to this research site, topic and participants.

In addition to ensuring informed consent of all participants I also guaranteed the participants' rights to withdraw at anytime, and in fact when an adolescent had moved on from the program and agreed to stay in the project, I was mindful of the fact that this might not be something he would choose to do once "on the outside". As it turned out this was true. At that time, the issue became one of closure rather than trying to establish another time to meet. The adolescent in question had agreed to meet with me on three separate occasions since his discharge from the program. On each occasion when I telephoned to confirm my arrival in his hometown, he was not home. I considered this to be his way of declining to participate further and respected his right to withdraw at any time. I then made many attempts to reach him by phone to let him know that the project was ending and that I had appreciated his participation to the point that he had been willing and able. However, to date he has not been at his home when I have called. It is my intent to reach each of the adolescents when the thesis is completed to discuss their interest in hearing the outcome of the research and to debrief with them as the final

closure.

The ethical considerations that arose throughout the process of doing this research were many. As much as was possible I adhered to what I considered a principled approach to conducting my research, ensuring as best I could respect, trust, autonomy, empathy and non-exploitative relationships with the participants (Punch, 1994). I trust that I resolved the ethical dilemmas as they occurred in a principled manner with the support and direction of my committee, which amounted to a process of on-going, negotiated consent.

How the Data were Secured

When collecting data on site I used a simple coding system to protect the identity of participants. This was used on my introduction of tapes, in my on-site observation notes and in my reflexive journal. In fact, the participants became those codes in my mind and so identification for me was a simple process of numbers and letters. Once these data were in my possession, it was stored at my home in a secure filing cabinet.

Procedures for Gaining Ethical Approval

The University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee oversaw this research project. The consent form that was eventually approved by the committee (Appendix A) gave due consideration to the fact that the adolescents who might wish to participate were incarcerated, and might not be as free to give or to decline their consent. The research site was a satellite program of a larger system whose main offices were not

located where the program operated. It was necessary that I sought permission from this level of the organisation before I could consider doing research on-site. A letter was sent to the Executive Director (see Appendix D) prior to the research commencing in order to seek his approval. The provision of the consent forms and an outline of the research project accompanied the letter. Permission was granted.

A requirement of the research site was that there be an additional section in the consent form that sought a legal guardian's consent to the adolescent's participation. This provided an additional safety measure for the adolescents. However, some adolescents found this an annoying requirement that warranted their declining to participate due to severed ties with their legal guardians while others saw informing their legal guardian of their desire to participate as a breach of confidentiality. Those who chose to participate saw this requirement as a reasonable check and balance against a researcher's abuse of them as young incarcerated adults. Of those who chose not to participate because they objected to this requirement, I believe it was an opportunity for them to save face rather than merely decline to participate.

Approval from the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Committee was secured before the research was undertaken. Some of my data collection efforts had been thwarted in the later months due to a strike action of staff members and an extension was sought from the committee in late May. The extension was granted and the research was therefore not interrupted.

Summary

As previously noted, the choice of a grounded theory methodology was best suited to the aims of this research which specifically sought to reveal how power was experienced in incidents of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents in a juvenile justice facility. Of particular interest were the meanings that these individuals attributed to the incidents of conflict and how they understood their role in this social process. The underlying assumptions of grounded theory are that individuals develop meanings in direct interaction with and within their environment, further that human interactions are shaped by the constraints that the environment places on the individuals and finally, that behaviours are constructed as individuals relate. It was therefore important that I use data collection methods that were consistent with the underpinnings of this methodology. I chose methods that would elicit the individual's lived experience of conflict and serve to illuminate the system or environments influence on this social process. I therefore used guided conversations with a variety of participants and extensive participant observation sessions were conducted during the four and a half months of data collection.

The use of guided conversations encouraged the participants to openly disclose information they perceived as relevant to the incidence of conflict in their experiences at the facility. This permitted me to build a theory from the emic perspective; the adolescent and child care counsellors' perspective of conflict as they lived it. These accounts also served to reveal the etic view; that is the influence the participants perceived the system

placed on them and how that contributed to the occurrence of conflict between them. The use of participant observation also permitted me to document incidences of conflict between the participants and record a narrative of the etic perspective in my field notes; the narrative included notes pertaining to the social structure around the phenomenon and the influence the environment placed on the participants as they engaged in incidents of conflict between them.

The choice of this methodology and the data collection techniques ensured that the concepts that were developed in the analysis phase of the theory were sufficiently described in their variability and that saturation had occurred. A line-by-line analysis of all of the data, the grouping of concepts and categories, and triangulation of sources of data were the steps taken to form the conceptual map of the incidence of conflict and how power was manifest in that instance. I therefore sought through the use of this methodology to not only broaden the understanding of client/counsellor conflict within a juvenile justice facility, but also to give voice to those who participated in the research, and illuminate a social process that is often mystifying to the persons engaged in it as well as those who observe it.

CHAPTER 4

A Grounded Theory of Conflict Between Child Care Counsellors and Adolescents in a Juvenile Justice Facility

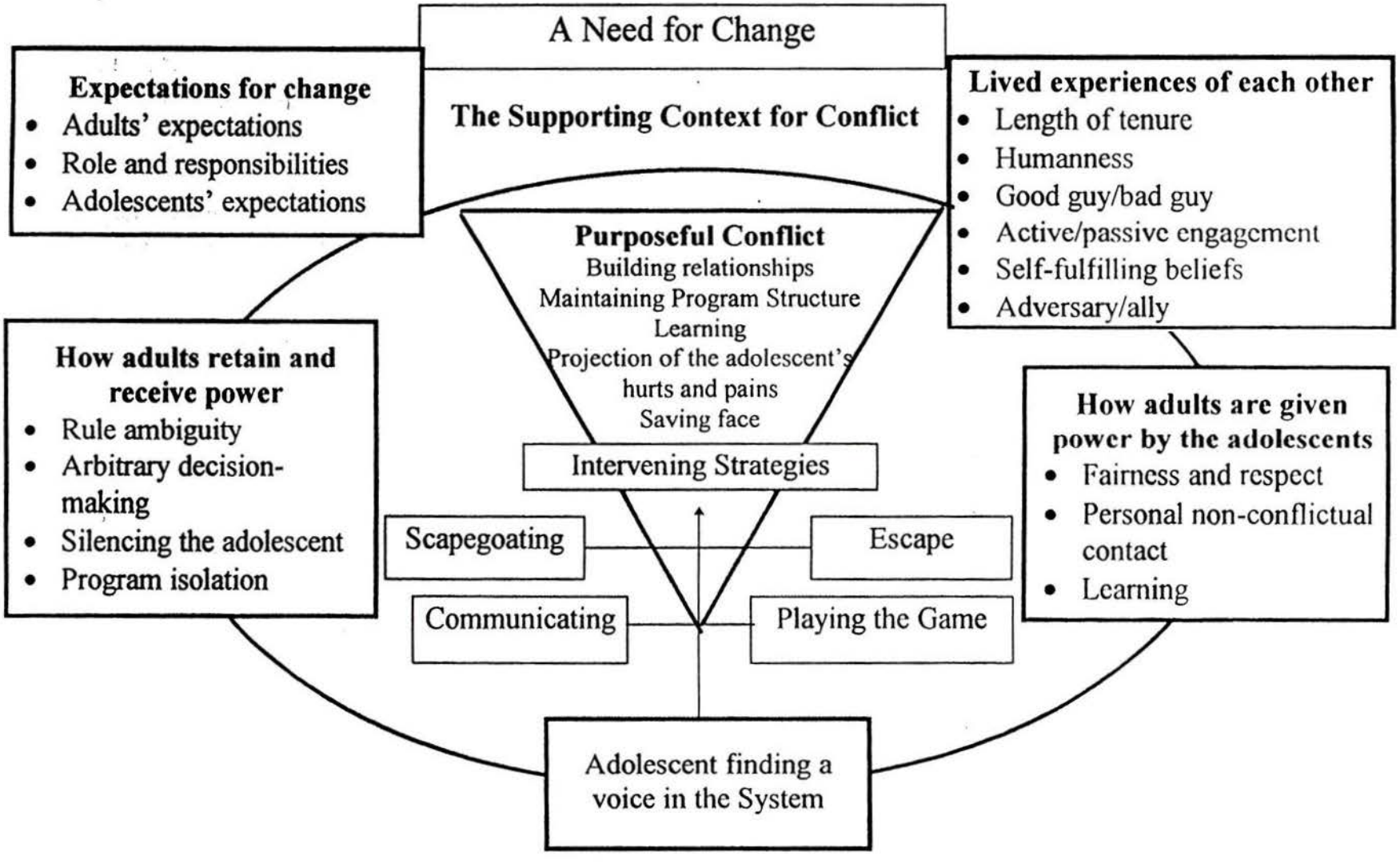
The Grounded Theory

The concepts that emerged through the data analysis led to the identification of **purposeful conflict** as the central theme of this research. While conflict was the phenomenon that I initially sought to explore through my research, the concepts that emerged from the data not only confirmed the existence of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents in a juvenile justice facility, but also served to expand my understanding of conflict as a meaningful social process for those persons who participated in this research.

The framework in Figure 1 (p.53) represents a conceptual map of the grounded theory of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents that emerged through this research. The first category in the framework represents an antecedent to the occurrence of conflict that was identified as the participants' sense of **a need for change.** Within this category there are two properties; **expectations for change** and **lived experiences of each other**. These properties are shown on the framework to flow out of the antecedent, **a need for change**. The property **expectations for change** was dimensionalised along continua of the adults' and adolescents' expectations of each other while the property **lived experiences of each other** was dimensionalised along continua

of the participants' perceptions of each other. The data revealed a distinct polarity between the adult and adolescent cultures at the program; this polarity contributed to the social process of conflict that the parties identified as being meaningful to them. In the framework, the two properties of the need for change are placed on the left and right sides of the central phenomenon to represent this polarity. **Purposeful conflict** was identified as the central phenomenon, this social process emerged through the data analysis as pivotal to the relationship between the child care counsellors and adolescents at the program as they each attempted to institute change in the other.

A Grounded Theory of Conflict between Child Care Counselors and Adolescents in a Juvenile Justice Facility



Within the concept of **purposeful conflict,** there were five conditions: **building relationships; maintaining program structure; learning; projection of the adolescent's hurts and pains;** and **saving face.** Further extrapolation of the theory led to the identification of the manner in which the organisational system supported the occurrence of conflict. The condition **supporting context for conflict** was therefore identified and comprised of two properties: **how adults retain and receive power** and **how adults are given power by the adolescents.** The condition **supporting context for conflict** is represented as an arch in the framework that spans the properties that permitted, and on occasion promoted, the occurrence of conflict in the program. The arch over the central theme also serves to provide a visual representation of how the category encompassed the social process of purposeful conflict at the juvenile justice facility.

Further extrapolation of the theory reveals the conditions within the properties related to **the supporting context for conflict**. The property how adults retain and receive power – comprises four conditions: **rule ambiguity; arbitrary decision-making; silencing the adolescent;** and **program isolation.** The property how adults are given power by the adolescents included three conditions which are: **fairness and respect; personal not conflictual contact;** and **learning.**

Flowing from the central theme and situated at the foot of the framework is the product or outcome of purposeful conflict which is represented by the category; **the adolescent finding a voice in the system.** It is accompanied by four intervening

strategies: **scapegoating; escaping; communicating;** and **playing the game.** These are shown on the framework as leading to the outcome; **the adolescents finding a voice in the system**, and are the strategies adopted by the adolescents in their attempts to be heard.

The grounded theory presented in this framework illustrates the antecedent of the conflict, individual and systemic factors that supported its occurrence, and the outcome of the conflict. The framework arose from perspectives offered by both adults and adolescents who participated in this project. The framework is therefore reflective of the participants' experiences of the social process of purposeful conflict as they experienced it within their daily lives at a juvenile justice facility.

Coding Guide

Throughout this chapter, there are numerous quotes that serve to support the emerging grounded theory. For the purposes of documenting the paper trail related to the data analysis, each quote was individually coded so that it could be traced to its original source in the data related to this research. The codes also identified for the researcher the individual, his role within the system, and the occasion when the quote was recorded. However, these codes are not included in this public domain thesis to preserve confidentiality, but will be in a secure location with the data and consent forms from this project. The decision to eliminate the codes from the copy that will go into circulation also enhances the readability of the document negating the need for the reader to scan

over and disregard coding in text. Where a quote is used the only identification a letter that designates the fact that they are: an adult (A); an adolescent (Y); a parent (P); or the researcher (R) is assigned. When one or more adults or adolescents are in discussion the adults or adolescents are numbered as A1, A2, A3, or Y1, Y2, or Y3. However, this does not correlate throughout the thesis, so that A1 is always the same adult, nor Y3 the same adolescent. The numbering serves only to separate the individuals conversing at that time. Therefore A1 refers to the first adult who spoke in the single exchange being documented (rather than a specific adult in the system). In some cases a "->" has been used to clarify the direction of the conversation, e.g., R->Y translates to, Researcher to Adolescent.

Often when I was speaking with participants they would, in mid quote, sometimes refer to another individual in the program by name. I have in my coded copy of this thesis substituted alternate names for those individuals, such that "John" became "Robert". This coding choice was an initial attempt to protect participants' confidentiality. However, upon review of the written thesis I realised that this "code" would not be too difficult to decipher and thereby could reveal an individual's identity. I have therefore removed these codes from this report and instead reveal only the person's status as [staff-member], [adult] or [co-adolescent(s)]. By using the word [staff-member] I can refrain from revealing the person's role in the system, which in some cases is only held by one individual (e.g., the cook). The term [adult] refers to adult persons who are not directly employed within the system, i.e., probation officer, teacher, parent or other non-staff person. Where appropriate, a relationship word is used, such as, [co-adolescent(s)] to

indicate that the individual is speaking about another adolescent in the program. Further, within the quote ellipses (. . .) are used to indicate that some of the quote has been omitted, while a break-off in the conversation will be represented by dashes (---), and a [pause] in the conversation will be noted in square brackets. Given these precautions, I believe I have sufficiently protected the participants from any breach of confidentiality. Throughout the document I have chosen to use the pronoun "he" principally to avoid the use of he/she which can become awkward, but also due to the fact that this research took place in a juvenile justice setting for males and it most cases the pronoun "he" adequately represents those parties referred to. In a couple of instances I have added an additional precaution, related to confidentiality, by changing the gender of the pronoun. This is principally related to persons who might be identified by other members of the system and did not influence the theory building or analyses of the data in anyway. The use of bolding is an emphasis that was added by myself in the participants' accounts to draw attention to the words within the quote that directly demonstrate the concept under discussion. Further, in the main body of the thesis bold is used to enhance the identification of the categories, dimensions, concepts and components of the grounded theory by the reader. I trust that these measures will assist the reader in following the quotations as they are embedded within the text, with the least amount of confusion, while still ensuring that individual participants are not revealed through their detailed accounts of their experiences within the system.

Explication of the Theory

During my analyses of the participants' accounts of how they experienced power in conflict situations, distinct concepts emerged that appeared to precipitate the incidence of conflict. These were grouped into the category the **need for change**. This category and its dimensions are delineated here and discussed in terms of how they contributed to the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and clients.

The Need for Change

The antecedent to the incidence of conflict was captured in the category, a **need for change,** and was manifest in the properties **expectations for change** and **lived experience of each other.** Within the property **expectations for change**, three dimensions were identified. These were: the **adults' expectations, role and responsibility,** and the **adolescents' expectations.** The properties and dimensions are outlined here as they relate to the antecedent **a need for change**.

Expectations for Change

Adult expectations. It was apparent through discussions with the adults that they expected that the adolescents would change their behaviour, attitudes, or beliefs while in the program:

> **A:** I guess the main interest I have came from my psych. and social majors that I had trained in. I really wanted to delve into why kids did what they did and why they were behaving the ways they were. And how we could maybe give them

some skills to **change their perception** of the way things were . . . as they went back into an environment that probably wasn't going to change a whole lot.

The adolescents had been referred to the program due to some identified problems that related to their way of "being" in society and so it was assumed that there was **a need for change** and that this was the purpose of their referral to the program. As child care counsellors and care providers it was therefore the inherent responsibility of the staff members to support and promote this change. Given a mandate that was condoned and supported by the referring systems, (Probation Officer, Police, Juvenile Court, parents) the child care counsellors claimed inherent authority over the adolescents. As one adolescent noted, **Y:** "Yep, here they expect a lot from you here, you gotta try hard, try to get through it."

Role and responsibility. The mandate, to promote change, and the inherent responsibility vested in the adult's role greatly influenced how the child care counsellors related to the adolescents. It established a dynamic that placed the adolescents as the "changee" (the person who would change) and the child care counsellors as the "changor" (the person who would support and promote the change). The expectation that the adolescents would change their behaviours, attitudes, or beliefs while in the program carried political and social implications for the adults' interventions with the adolescent clients. It became pivotal to the manner in which they perceived the adolescents and their counsellor role, and as such, contributed greatly to the incidence of conflict between the counsellors and the adolescents as the counsellors exerted their inherent authority in their

endeavour to change the client. As one staff-member said,

> **A:** I mean, they [the adolescents] are out there in the community. They are going to meet somebody like myself or they are going to meet somebody like my co-worker, and every situation is going to be different. They are going to have to **learn how to handle it differently** and **handle people differently.**

Not only were the child care counsellors charged with the responsibility of changing the adolescents but the program's reputation and perceived success was measured by this fact. In this manner, the adults' expectations were not in isolation; many others expected that the adolescents would change and laid that responsibility at the door of the child care counsellors as 'changors'. This captured the essence of the concept of a **need for change** from the adults' perspectives.

Adolescents' expectations. The adolescents acknowledged that they had been sent to the program because their behaviours were not acceptable to their family, society in general, or the juvenile justice system. Their references to **the need for change** were related in part to how they thought the program would assist them to change; for example, one adolescent said:

> **Y:** My parents wanted me to make some changes before I came home.
>
> **R:** What would you like to leave here with?
>
> **Y:** Well, hopefully some more responsibility. **Stop and think**. To not swear at my parents and stuff. **Not get in trouble** stuff like that.

However, within a very short time of discussing how they would like to change,

the adolescents would speak about their concerns about the system they found themselves in and in fact how it did not support them to change in the manner that they had expected. As one adolescent summarised:

> **Y:** I don't know --- I don't know why --- maybe they're not --- phew --- I don't know, maybe they're not --- maybe it's just that --- um, they had a bad childhood [pause] or something . . . and they feel that "now I'm in power now " . . . You know, with the adolescents . . . just, like, you have no rights . . . and just because they don't have a life . . . it doesn't mean that they should just try make us all pissed off. I mean be bad and mean. We're all here trying to do one thing --- . **we're all trying to change ourselves** . . . get out of here and **you're not helping us change** by manipulating and pissing us off. It just makes us more mad. It just gets us more time, more time.

The adolescents had entered the system with the expectation that they would be able to change and get back on track. However, they reported finding a system that did not in fact assist them to do this. This related to another of the adolescents' expectations and that was that the system would be accountable.

Many of the adolescents reported that their needs, wants, and expectations of the system before admission were not met upon admission. Adolescents reported that their interactions with the adults were often unsatisfactory, resulting in unjust and punitive consequences. Other adolescents expressed concerns that, despite their sense that there was a need for change in the program, nothing would change.

Y: They [staff-members] are all working together, they're all working together for the program . . . . they are not going to believe you. Never happens like that, because they think they have more power, which they do, because [sighs] there's nothing we can do about it. Nothing we can do about it. **Nothing we do is going to fix anything** [pause], it's just going to piss them off more.

****

Y: Well basically [the staff members] . . . just run the whole program. The [staff-member] doesn't do anything. He goes on whatever happens, whatever the staff do, happens. He was supposed to be a mediator with them, and maybe a change in the consequence but that never happens. **I mean all the new kids that come in [pause] think that that can be changed and that there is a complaint situation**. No way. **Not a chance. What staff says, goes.**

R: So when you say that you're allowed a mediation with the [staff-member]?

Y: Yes, like a third party to see what could be a different way of doing it or [pause] **I tried that. Got nowhere.**

The adolescents believed that the adults should be accountable for their actions and were angered when they found that this was not in evidence at the program.

R: So what would you like to see him do as [a leader staff-member]. What do you think his job should be?

Y: Direct. But he's not . . . if you ask . . . [staff member] if . . . [the staff-member] is his boss "no." . . . . He has no boss. **The program is run by the team**. . . . **a**

case manager therefore is in control of a certain amount . . . . He's a child care worker so **he's in control of---it's up to the team**. The [staff-member] doesn't have, **if the** [staff-member] **wants to change something he has to go through the team.** It's not just the [staff-member] over everything. Exactly what I was saying. I've had all these arguments with him.

As these preceding comments demonstrate, almost every adolescent, even those returning for a second term, identified that they had expected the program to be different. All had remarked that they thought it would be easier than jail and yet after admission most of the adolescents acknowledged that in many ways it was harder.

Y: It's better in a way . . . but it's worse in a way, that also makes it worse too I think because you can't – every action here has a reaction and for bad actions you get extra time. **In jail you can't get extra time** and you can get kicked out of this place and you also have to force yourself to stay.

****

Y: People thought that this place was easier than jail, **but actually, jail is easier** . . . .In jail they leave you alone if you don't want to do something, whereas here if you don't want to do something they get on your case.

****

A: In a way I think I got a sense by the end of his stay here that he was tricked into coming here, that he hasn't really agreed to work on any issues, **had taken it as an easier option to jail,** as an alternative. Um, I guess he thought because it

was an open custody program he would have freedom, to do whatever he wanted, . . . so I guess he came here thinking that that would work for him. It wasn't really going to be like prison, in his mind.

While the adolescents acknowledged that the system was not meeting their expectations, providing opportunities for change, or demonstrating any form of system accountability, they realised that there were very few options to the program they found themselves in. In this way, their expectation of choice was also denied.

All of the adolescents were running out of options when they conceded to their probation officers' (POs') or parents' wishes that they enter the program where this research took place:

Y: This is my second time in here. I've already graduated the program and I went back out and **it was my PO's idea**. He chose this instead of a different program because this one's shorter and he thought it was better than the other one so that's why I'm here.

Y: Have no home, or take this place and I can still live at home . . . .**to salvage my family**. So that's probably how I ended up here.

****

Y: Yeh, it's really hard [pause] life. You don't really feel like you want to be here [pause] and you feel really down and you just want to go home [pause] **well you're ordered to be somewhere, you gotta go right**?

Regardless of the lack of free will regarding their move into the program, the

adolescents still had expectations that their needs would be met upon admission. However, they reported that these needs, wants, and expectations prior to admission were largely unmet upon admission and this contributed to the broad theme, **a need to change** which the adolescents applied to the program's structure and staffing . The next section will discuss the participants' lived experience of each other and how that caused them to believe that there was **a need for change**.

Lived Experience of Each Other

Through the analysis process, the property **lived experience of each other** was identified as key to the antecedent of **a need for change**. Given the child care counsellors' mandate to **change the adolescents,** the staff members' approach when a adolescent first came to the program was to assume the role of the changor and identify what in fact needed to change about the adolescent.

Much of what was identified by the child care counsellors as **needing to change** was captured in how they talked about the adolescents and perceived the adolescents in the program. Verbal references to the adolescents by child care counsellors covered a broad spectrum and included derogatory terms as well as supportive, empathic references. These verbal assessments of the adolescents appeared to come not so much from the adult's personal experience of the adolescent to whom they were referring, so much as from their lived experience of adolescents in general and their perception of adolescent development.

Length of tenure. Child care counsellors reported differently about the

adolescents, relative to their lived experience and perceptions. Staff members who had worked at the program extensively appeared to be more prone to referring to the adolescents in a derogatory manner. For example:

> **A:** These young people are so **adept at learning to manipulate** . . . for numerous reasons . . . they are pretty good at figuring out where peoples' buttons are.
>
> **********
>
> **A:** The adolescents here are good **con-artists** [pause] they know how to play the system and are very convincing.
>
> **********
>
> **A:** I think my opinion of that is that they know that there are rules and they know what happens if they don't follow them. But with every new person and every mood of every person [pause] (it) differs . . . I think that **they try to see what they can get away with**. How far it's going to go. Maybe not go . . . the full way [pause] but they'll go half-way and see how that looks, and feel it out. . . . It just depends, I think, on what frame of mind they're at.

The effect of stereotyping an adolescent into a succinctly quantifiable unit was that, upon entry to the program, it allowed the child care counsellor to quickly assess how to work with a specific adolescent. If the adolescent was perceived as a "con-artist" then nothing he said should be believed; if he was a "manipulator," then it was important for child care counsellors to always control outcomes. The perception of the adolescent then became a prescription for how to relate to that adolescent in the adults' efforts to change

him, and as such, coloured the interventions of the child care counsellors with each of the adolescents.

Humanness. While some staff members characterised the adolescents with a negative stereotype, others viewed the adolescents in a more positive light. These adults were often peripheral within the organisation – relief staff members, newer staff members, or in some way auxiliary (e.g., the cook and teacher). Their perceptions of the adolescents came not so much from their reported lived experience of incarcerated adolescents as much as from their life experiences. Discussions with these participants about their perception of the adolescents were illustrated by their experiences and memories of being an adolescent themselves. For example:

> **A:** I remember too what it was like to be young and to be rebellious and the thing you strive the most for is "Oh, the day I can do what I want".

In addition, comments about the adolescents' seemingly inappropriate behaviours were empathic:

> **A:** The staff here are too rigid. **They forget what it's like to be a teen.** A lot of the behaviours are because they're bored.

Some staff members questioned the system that served the adolescents;

> **A:** They (the staff members) keep too much to the program and don't focus on **the human being**.

****

> **A:** I don't understand why they (the adolescents) can't talk to people in the street–

isn't that **a normal human right**?

****

It appears that while some staff members were comfortable in characterising the adolescents in derogatory terms others were not, and as such, questioned a program that responded to the adolescents as if they were problematic rather than simply **humans**.

> **Y:** (You're) doing something like a chore. You'll do the best you can and they'll pick out something that's so small . . . some itty bitty thing, **and be real mean and bad.** And you'll say I did it whatever and then do it again and they'll maybe even make you do it again (a third time) and **really try to piss you off**.

The perception of some staff members and the majority of the adolescents was that part of what needed to change was the manner in which staff members related to the adolescents; this was conceivably the other end of the continuum of humanness. Often the style and tone of an intervention and the attitude of the staff member was one of de-humanising the adolescent whom they were addressing. It appeared that this was driven in part by the adults' perception of the adolescent as **needing to change,** and so they approached the adolescent in a manner that was often experienced by the adolescents as disrespectful. The following passage illustrates such an exchange:

> **Y:** Why would you give me an extra chore?
>
> **A:** Oh, [name of adolescent] . . . it's so sad.
>
> **Y:** Why would you give me an extra chore?
>
> **A:** (sarcastically) Because you do so well.

Y: Why would you do that? It's not fair!

A: Did you go swimming today?

Y: Why don't you talk to some one who wants to talk to you?

A: (sarcastic) O.K. I'll try to phone someone.

Y: It's not funny, **you're trying to piss me off. Why would you do that**?

Through the data analysis it was determined that the adults' approach to the adolescents was a key antecedent to the incidence of conflict within the program and was supported by the adults' belief that the adolescents needed to change. While the adults' lived experience of the adolescents served to dictate much of how they would relate to and intervene with the adolescents in their efforts to promote change, this was also identified by the adolescents as an area that needed to change in terms of the manner in which the staff members related to and intervened with them.

The staff members' lived experience of the adolescents then operated as a "lens" through which all interactions with the adolescent clients were based. Length of tenure, stereotyping, and the degree of humanness were all manifestations of the adults' lived experience of the adolescents and were influential to the manner in which the adults approached their mandate to change the adolescent client. As such, the adults' interventions were coloured and shaped by their perception of the adolescents and led the adolescents to report that the adults' perception and treatment of them also needed to change.

Good guy/bad guy. The adolescents at the program were highly vocal about how

they perceived the child care counsellors and the manner in which they were treated by the adults. Impressions of the adults spanned a broad range, which categorised the child care counsellors in roles that seemed entrenched in the adolescents' view. Negative references to the child care counsellors included: liar, robocop, and dick; for example:

> **Y:** There's no way to talk to the staff if **we catch them lying** and we all do [pause] and there's another staff --- And we say you're lying you're full of this and that, you're lying...and the other staff will have to go on the other staff's side because there's only two of them, right? And then it doesn't get solved. It's us and them . . . I feel like . . . it's like we're fighting a war against them [pause] you know? . . . It's us and them, every time we come home [pause], it's us and them.
>
> **********
>
> **Y:** You know, I don't respect [staff-member] because he's **a dick**. [pause] I don't think he has a clue what any one of us are going through. Like he --- I don't know [pause] He's been praying to God his whole fricking life, I don't think he has a clue what any of us have been through or are going through . . . I don't think he has a clue.

The negative assessments and perceptions of the adults were compiled through the testing of the adults' reactions in interactions, direct experiences with the adult, and through observation of adults with co-adolescents. Together these contributed to the adolescents' lived experience of the adults working at the program. Their perceptions then of the adults were expressed within the dimension of active or passive engagement.

Active or passive engagement. Adults and adolescents in the program appeared to vacillate between active and passive engagement with each other. During my observation periods I would often see an adolescent or an adult begin a conversation with the other in an aggressive or hostile tone which I classified as an **active engagement**. On other occasions it was evident from my observations that the parties were either ignoring each other, despite overtures to engage, or were avoiding engagement, which I identified as **passive engagement**. An adult describes here how she experiences the adolescents' overtures at active engagement,

> **A:** There is always just **the testing to see how far they can go**. What kind of mood is [staff-member] in today? Is she going by the book or is she going to let us do this. Can I have an extra whatever? Is she going to give me more ice cream or less? You know it's . . . they're constantly --- and they'll feel you out by the smallest thing. They'll judge . . . **my experience is that they'll judge you for the rest of the time based on one little thing**.

****

On an occasion when an adolescent was speaking at group meeting about his argument that day with the teacher, this conversation took place between himself and a staff-member:

> **Y:** (in a resigned and exaggerated tone of mockery)Yeh, it was a bad day . . . ..[staff-member] . . . .the pun . . . ish . . . er.
>
> **A:** (shouting and interrupting the adolescent's turn to talk at the meeting) Don't

even try to pull that! You're not getting away with that . . . and trying to fool everyone. You can write an essay on that to show me you've understood your part!

Y: (in a resigned tone) Well that just tops the day off [pause]. I'm finished.

As can be noted from this exchange the staff-member was very quick to engage the adolescent actively, even aggressively, to assert her expectations of how he would describe the event in his day. For his part, the adolescent withdrew from the conversation, contact with the staff-member, and the group meeting. However, it was apparent that the tension between the adult and the adolescent was present, neither pursued the discussion further at that time, which demonstrates the passive engagement that lingered after the event. Unfortunately, in situations like this one, the unresolved tensions would erupt later and often baffle onlookers who had not seen the initial conflict. The following quote from an adolescent illustrates how he had adopted a passive engagement style with the adults at the program as a method of protecting himself:

Y: I stay right away from the adults [pause] and like, I don't talk to them and stuff because [pause] because it's not worth it--- **I've seen what they do to the other guys and it's not worth it,** [pause] and it's not worth it. [pause] . . . I watch the other kids and I learn from their mistakes . . . I don't make my own mistakes.

These assessments of the adults appeared to become quickly entrenched in a form of peer consensus amongst the resident adolescents that was gleaned from their testing and evaluating of the adults' responses to them. These assessments then coloured how the

adolescents related to, behaved towards the adults, and in turn served to reinforce the assessment the adolescents had made. The fact that the adolescents very quickly entrenched these assessments of the adults into their lived experience of the adults exacerbated the tensions between the two parties and was recognised as the dimension of self-fulfilling beliefs.

Self-fulfilling beliefs. If an adolescent believed that the adult was unfair and unjust, so accordingly did he approach that adult. It was difficult to ascertain which came first; the peer consensus or the adolescent's personal experience of the adult. However, the peer consensus was usually established within a matter of days of an adolescent entering the program, and prior to his admission, as was acknowledged by staff members and adolescents in the following quotations, regarding a staff person at the program:

A: It's a shame really, **his [staff-member] reputation precedes him**.

****

Y: There's only a couple . . . who like their job too much and they over-do it. [pause] I guess more than they have to [pause] . . . and like, [pause] like their job too much. [pause] **You hear about them before you get (here)** . . . You hear about them . . . and, "Oh, watch out for this guy", and now I'm here I see it [pause] see what they mean.

The adolescents' perceptions of adults in the system therefore also operated as a lens through which all interactions with the adults were coloured and viewed. This phenomenon was observed by myself when an adolescent would oppose one adult who

was giving them direction, while another adult could say almost the same thing and not encounter the same reaction or opposition from the adolescent. Staff members also acknowledged this phenomenon when talking about conflict:

> **A: It depends so much on how that individual young person reacts with that individual staff** and that can change the minute you change one or other of those people.

Congruent with the adolescents' perception of the adult was a belief that adults who reacted unfairly or unjustly to the testing should change although it was very much doubted by the adolescents that any change would occur. As one adolescent commented after a particularly tense exchange with a staff person who had resorted to shouting at him, **A:** "I'd like to see --- If she wants people to like her --- (She should) . . . treat us with respect".

The adolescents' objections to the manner in which the staff members responded to them was not so much associated with the fact that the child care counsellors assumed inherent authority over them, but related to how they assumed that role. This led to the identification of the dimension of adversary or ally.

Adversary or ally. Often the adolescent perceived an adult's intervention as "power tripping". This is demonstrated in the adolescent's, adult's, and parent's comments here:

> **A:** I mean --- I know who they mean when they talk about the people who apply the rules, quote unquote **apply the rules in a certain style** is what they are

referring to. [pause] I don't think it's that the others don't apply them, [pause] **it's the style with which they are applied**. [pause]. So do they view these people as having more power? I don't know ---

****

Y: There's no negotiating here [pause] everything is by the book, you can't smoke, calls are restricted. In jail, they ignore your swearing or they even give you smokes [pause] it's more personal [pause] you're more friends. Here they don't care if you're friends or not **they just power-trip you**.

****

Y: It's up to staff, (sighs) it's all up to staff ---

R: So there is a schedule, there are ---

Y: Like --- this is it right here. Theatre on Tuesday . . . . on Monday . . . . bowling . . . . bowling on Saturday, crafts and all that can be changed, no one went bowling, I think that was last week.

R: Okay, so you think you'd like to be going on the activities. But that ---

P: I don't know. I'm not really --- I'm just complaining. I don't know. **Staff have way too much power.** That's the bottom line. Really.

****

In a conversation between a parent and myself, the parent expressed concern that one of the staff members at the program was **"backing her son into a corner"**. The parent deduced that this was because the staff-member was **"frustrated with him".** The

staff-member identified by the parent was someone the parent considered should be an ally to the adolescent in the program. However, she went on to say that the fact that the staff-member was

> **P: Telling [the adolescent] that he can't leave until he's been [at the program] eight months** . . . . [was] like a set up for [the son who] is naturally oppositional and defiant. [Since] the program is only meant to be three months long.

The parent went on to express concerns that the son would see no option but to "“act-out" and thereby make “matters worse”. The parent further noted that the adolescent had been talking to his parents about **"feeling powerless in the situation with that particular staff-person".**

This account from a concerned parent encapsulated many of the similar concerns that the adolescents shared through the process of this research. Many of them described their lived experience of the staff-members as adversarial and hostile. Counter to these comments there were adults whom the adolescents acknowledged as “nice” and "“understanding”, and “more laid back”. These staff members were regarded by the adolescents as allies rather than adversaries:

> **Y:** Some are **nicer** . . . some are **understanding**, you know . . . . After you sit down and play a game with them or something . . . you know, and just the way that you can talk to them and stuff, you know, and it's just totally different . . . not acting-out . . . and you can talk to them and **they're understanding** they're not yelling and stuff. They're **more laid back**

****

Y: Like [staff-member] . . . [staff-member] has been working here just as long as [staff-member] and it --- **he's a lot nicer** --- and it doesn't . . . and I'll sit and I'll talk to him for like an hour and he'll give me some great ideas and stuff and --- like **to be a good staff you don't have to be a right down to the book**.

****

Y: He's a good guy [pause] kinda stands up for our rights . . . .and . . . he's worked very hard to keep . . . things how we like them and stuff . . . . He doesn't want it to be like a jail.

Staff members that were considered by the adolescents to be fair, just, and reasonable were approached by the adolescents with more regard and respect. These were the adults who were greeted when they came on shift, whom the adolescents sought for counsel and support and who they shared a joke or laugh with (this is discussed more fully later, under the concept of **how adults were given power by the adolescents**). The adults that the adolescents perceived in a more negative light were often the butt of the adolescents' anger, hostile jaunts and oppositional behaviours. (This is discussed more fully later, under the concept of **how the adolescents found a voice in the system** and falls within the dimension of **scapegoating.**) With respect to the adults whom the adolescents perceived in a negative light, this was clearly an area that the adolescents perceived as needing to change. As such, it was through this **finding a voice** that the adolescents' lived experiences of the adults influenced the level and incidence of conflict

between them.

The Polarisation that Prevailed Between the Adolescent and Adult Cultures.

These properties and dimensions of the concept **a need for change** demonstrate a polarisation of the adolescent and adult cultures. The fact that the adolescents and adults each had a different perception of what **needed to change** established the social process of **purposeful conflict** between the two parties and in turn contributed to the incidence and occurrence of conflict between them.

The evidence of a polarisation that prevailed between the adolescents and adult cultures is to be expected, due in part to the fact that the participants were asked to speak about incidents of conflict between them. However, this does not negate the fact that conflict was present at the program. It is important to note however that had the participants been asked to comment on areas where they experienced harmony or compatibility, the evolving concepts would have been quite different. It is important to acknowledge that there were many social processes manifesting in this system. What I describe here is reflective of one part of the system: the part pertaining to the conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents and therefore is not wholly reflective of the system as it is experienced day to day by the staff members and adolescents.

The Central Social Process: Purposeful Conflict

I have named the central social process identified through analysis of these data **Purposeful Conflict**. The dimensions of purposeful conflict are delineated here as they

relate to this social process and the manner in which the participants perceived that it served both them and the system. These dimensions demonstrate how conflict was viewed by the participants as purposeful in their relationships and work at the program. The dimensions were thus identified as: **building relationships, maintaining the program structure, learning, projection of the adolescent's hurts and pains,** and **saving face.** These are elaborated here and demonstrate how this social process applies to all participants' accounts of incidents of conflict in which they were involved.

Building Relationships

The adults regarded conflict as a means of building a relationship with the adolescents. For this reason, many of them reported that they did not shy away from conflict and some of them said they welcomed it. As a relationship building strategy it was the way that the adults moved into the adolescents' physical and psychological space; in their role as changor they initiated this **relationship strategy**. Needless to say, it very often resulted in conflict as the adolescents resisted the expectation that they change. The following quotations demonstrate the different perspective the adults and adolescents had on this dynamic.

> **R:** So what's a good day for you, a good shift?
>
> **A:** Good shift for me is lots of stuff coming out, lots of crises, a chance to do the work, sit down with them, talk it through, get a point across. **That's what builds** [pause] **I think, relationships and trust** and yah --- I'm ah --- When the house is full and it's just a-humming and there's crises going from place to place, I love

being here.

****

Y: Frustrates them [pause] **really bad --- because--- it really frustrates some people and they just get irritated and can't handle it the way they want you to handle it here**.... and **they don't want to talk to that person no more** and then they start fining you and giving you work hours and this and that and you start losing privileges --- and that and **---You start to feel negative towards that person** and **it just makes you mad** [pause] and **you just don't want to be here** [pause] and just don't want to ever see that person again. (sighs) **And if you were to see them on the outside you wouldn't even say Hi [pause] or anything like that**--- Like it's not right. [pause] You know? [pause] **Some staff they like to do that . . . piss you off,** but what can you do about it? You can try to fight and argue about it, but what good would that do, right?

****

A: It's a situation that's unique to residential. It is **a totally different relationship** [pause] **totally different conflict dynamic** here --- than in any other way that we work . . . .the only thing I've ever known that was similar [pause] and I hate to say it, is the things that occur in jails --- **How people relate to each other** and all the dynamics of --- and the things that go on [pause] the **power struggles** within that system.

As is evidenced here the adult and adolescent perceptions of conflict as a

relationship building strategy differed greatly. The adolescents generally characterised the adults' overtures towards a relationship as an invasion of their space while the adults acknowledged that they were actually moving into the adolescents' space to initiate a relationship, albeit it that this often precipitated more of a conflict than a relationship (This will be discussed in more detail later within the concept: **How the adults were given power by the adolescents**, since there appear to be certain acceptable ways that the adolescents condoned an adult moving into their space).

Maintaining the Program Structure

Maintaining the program structure was a significant element both in the adult and adolescent reporting of the occurrence of conflict. It was dimensionalised along a continuum of importance in order to demonstrate the polarity of the adolescent and adult cultures and the beliefs about the purpose of conflict.

Important versus unimportant. While the adults took the responsibility of **maintaining the program structure** very seriously, the adolescents found it an unnecessary demand, hence the conflict. Program structure referred to the program's routines, limits, and the expectations of the adolescents. Consequently, if an adolescent was 'out of line', the child care counsellor's role was to intervene. Often this was the precursor to conflict, but was deemed necessary and purposeful if the adult was to uphold the program structure. Here adults describe the importance of maintaining the program structure if challenged by the adolescents:

A: Because being new, I don't [pause] I'm coming into an area that is completely

new to me and a field that's new to me and I'm coming into a place that has these rules and I don't know them yet . . . .I'm always thinking. I've always got to remember; well if someone does this what does that mean, what does that look like then? How according to the rules am I supposed to react? And being that I'm new on the job **it's important for me to make sure, for the time being, that I do follow those rules** directly because I do need my job [pause] . . . and, you know, that aspect of it. But I when I say to be on top of things --- because if I let myself slip or something the kids are the first to catch me and they know when I don't know what the rules are supposed to be and in turn they take advantage of it. I want to be on top of things because I want to keep it consistent.

****

A: I was sort of the one who, I guess, I was seen by this resident as the person who [pause] **followed the program as closely as I do**. I guess --- **and liked the structure** and **wasn't prepared to put up with anything that undermined what the program was doing.** And really --- and **put the program forward of the resident** [pause] a little bit sometime(s) over individual residents that are here [pause] **put the program's functioning first**.

While the child care counsellors saw upholding the program structure as paramount, the adolescents perceived the adults enforcement of expectations as less constructive:

R->Y. So in that situation you see [staff-member's] behaviour as ---?

Y: Trying to get a reaction out of [adolescent]. **Whether he'll follow the rules** or whether he'll flip out at him.

R: Why do you think [staff-member] would do that?

Y: That's how he is. He always does that. Even the staff here tell him that. That's what he does. **That's his role**.

****

R: So what do you think [staff-member] is trying to do when he is doing that?

Y: Aggravate people . . . . seeing how the individuals will respond. Will they respond negative or (are) they just going to say okay, I'll go sit in that chair.

****

Y: It always happens around a show, when we want to watch something . . . ."**the program doesn't run around TV**". Whatever. We've got nothing to do. **That's the stuff that really pisses people off** . . . . like yesterday . . . we're not doing anything . . . we're all sitting around and doing nothing just talking . . . ."Can we have group now?". "Nope, . . . Group's later". What' s the point? We're all sitting around here now . . . well --- we're not doing anything . . . . "Why can't we have group now ?" **"Nope that's not the schedule [pause] the program has a schedule**, we have got to go by the schedule" . . . . that's what really pisses people off . . . . Just because we want to do something right now . . . it's not the point, it's what he wants.

Clearly evidenced in the adolescent's comments is the fact that he cannot see the

importance of a rigid program structure that requires such strict adherence, while the staff members expended a lot of energy and resources ensuring that these rules were maintained. This responsibility was extended by the staff members to include issues of safety, which they considered to be under threat if the program structure was not maintained.

Safety. When dealing with a conflict situation, staff members believed that it was of the utmost importance to "hold the line" and demonstrate that an adult had control in the situation. This was in part related to upholding the program structure, but also related to the staff member's sense that if things got out of control there would be safety infractions that could become a serious threat to everyone. Therefore when enforcing the program's structure, staff members were mindful of the fact that it was in the best interests of all that the structure be seen to be upheld. The following account from a staff-member explains her concerns when engaged in a conflict with one of the adolescents:

> **A:** At the same time you've got a group dynamic and everybody else is waiting to jump in. So they sit around like vultures **watching where this is going to go and whether they can get into it**.

Clearly, from her reported experience of conflict this counsellor believes that if she does not handle the situation adequately she will be vulnerable to the adolescent group contagion, whereby other adolescents will see an opportunity to step into the conflict and she will be out numbered and possibly lose control of the adolescents. This would be considered a safety issue and a threat to the program's structure that the adults

considered as paramount to everyone's safety. In the next quotation, an adult explains why one staff member may appear to over react when addressing the adolescents, particularly when feeling unsupported on shift:

> **A:** When [staff-member] is by himself he feels no one else is going **to hold the line.** "I'm the only rock here. I'm **the one that's going to keep the water from coming in and flooding everything** so I'm going to be --- " [pause] and he tends to [be] over stern, over react[ive], over [board on] discipline. Because he feels unsupported and he feels if it got out of hand there would only be him to deal with it.

From the adults' perspective presented in the last two quotations, there appears to be a real concern that they will lose their control over the adolescents and the program structure. They believe that this loss of control will lead to an escalation in the adolescents' acting-out behaviours which could result in violence and threats to staff-member and client safety. The adults appear to believe that situations where the adolescents out number the staff-member are tenuous and that as a result they have to be exceptionally vigilant in their monitoring of the dynamics and the potential for a conflict situation to escalate into a safety issue. This is the adults' rationale for engaging in fairly serious conflicts with the adolescents at the slightest indication that there is a threat to the maintenance of the program's structure, since an escalation in defiant behaviours would be considered unmanageable or potentially unsafe.

Learning

When referring to conflict with the adolescents, the staff members in general agreed that it was an opportunity for the adolescents to learn more appropriate ways of dealing with disagreements. Typically the adolescents at the program had experienced difficulty handling disagreements in the past and that had led them to act inappropriately in situations in their families, peer groups, schools, or communities. The opportunity to experience conflict with staff members in the program and not be permitted to act-out, was regarded by the child care counsellors as a positive spin-off of conflict and its purpose in the program.

R->A: So what do you think the adolescents gain from conflict?

A: They gain a better understanding and knowledge of **how to handle (conflict) in a proper way**. I mean, I invite occasions where we disagree and have conflict where we're also going to get a chance to sit down with somebody else and work through it in a managed, mature manner, **where they can pick up a few hints and learn how to do it** as they go along. That's what it's about. **That's one of the reasons they are here, I think**.

****

A: Residents come in here for numerous reasons and they have learned behaviours for how they deal with conflict and most of those tend not to work really well for them and tend to get them into all kinds of trouble. Whereas if they can come into this program and **learn that there can be conflict without**

violence [pause] without degradation of the other person or without [pause] ill treatment of the other person and you can still disagree or have conflicting viewpoints with other people without coming to blows or without thinking less of them, then in a way I think that's a skill that a lot of residents could benefit from in leaving this program with. So that when they do come up against conflict in the community, they have more things to go on instead of just thinking, "He disagrees with me so I hate him".

****

Y: Yes. Yes. You kind of do . . . you kind of need conflict somewhere. **Because to learn from it** but still [staff-member] takes it too far.

R: So it's not the conflict that's difficult, it's the consequences that ---

Y: It's having to always be right, you know . . . he always has to win.

****

Child care counsellors and adolescents at the program tended to agree that conflict served as a means of airing differences in their perceptions and coming to some consensus on the issue at hand. On occasions, the adolescents initiated it in an attempt to get clarity from the adult as to the adults' expectations; other times it was to address grievances or concerns they had. Adults acknowledged that when addressing issues with adolescents, the process invariably involved some form of conflict or disagreement. The adolescents and adults found it helpful when they could come to a resolution or agreement on how to proceed, and in this way, agreed that conflict was not always

negative; in fact from the above accounts, it appears that there was some consensus between the adults and adolescents that conflict provided a learning opportunity.

A Projection of Adolescents' Hurts and Pains

Child care counsellors identified that a large part of the work they did with the adolescents was related to past hurts and pains the adolescents had not yet resolved. They noted that these hurts and pains were often expressed in inappropriate ways towards the adults in the program and therefore were an aspect of the therapeutic work that resulted in conflict. They believed that because the adolescents did not know the pain they were carrying it was projected onto the adults in the program.

In the following quotation, a staff-member is describing a scenario she believes explains the adolescents' process of projection. I observed that the adolescents often scapegoated a particular staff-member who usually worked with the child care counsellor speaking in the following quotation. Here the child care counsellor explains the projection process:

> **A:** . . . And "dad's" there and you want to get (something). And "dad's" not going along with it or he's not kind of giving you a clear answer, or maybe he's just saying no and **then you're going to get really hostile**. Right?
>
> **R:** So what is the battle about?
>
> **A: It's about you don't love me**.
>
> **R:** Can you say more about that? Do you mean "If you won't give me what I want you don't love me?"

A: Yah, and you're just doing it to piss me off and **if you really loved me you wouldn't make me angry you'd say yes.**

Similarly, the following quotations demonstrate the adults' beliefs in the projection process:

A: We looked at **what traumatic things happened to this person that they may be transferring** [on to] . . . somebody that was totally unrelated to that [person] . . . . Because it was too painful to deal with and I think there was **a lot of things in that conflict situation that really was nothing between myself and the resident.**

****

A: It's almost like a family dynamic here. **We seem to get put into certain roles by the kids** and this person is the father and **all the stuff to do with fathers or males is worked out with him.** And it's worked out in a safe environment. So a lot of things come up . . . . For myself, **if adolescents come in here who have problems with their images of women or difficulty in their relationships with their mother or strong female presence or issues that need to be worked through, boom, they glom on to me.** That's where they get worked out . . . . I think what they are looking for (in the conflict) is for you to see beyond what they are doing. That somebody somewhere is there to recognise what they really mean.

Much of the adolescents' perceived hurts and grievances found their expression in a form of verbal catharsis. In general, the adolescents were not happy with their current

circumstances. Often venting and the initiation of **purposeful conflict** with child care counsellors became the social process or vehicle for the adolescents' frustration and anger at the situation they found themselves in. The fact that they also perceived that their needs, wants, and expectations were unmet within the program led the adolescents to believe that their venting on the child care counsellors was a valid action.

On occasions when the adolescents had care planning meetings and the outcomes were not to their liking or expectations, they vented their frustration on their adult case manager.

Y1->Y2: Did you lose your pass?

Y2: (Frustrated after leaving case planning meeting). **Ask the fat man.**

Y1: Did you lose your weekend pass too?

Y3: How come **they always screw people around**?

Y1: (To adult case manager) **Your dumb ass mouth in the meeting.**

A: That's enough.

Y2: Don't tell me what's enough.

Y3: You'd better not screw me around.

A->Y1: You're instigating, please leave [adolescent 1] alone.

Y2: I can talk to who ever I want to . . . . **it's just you I'm pissed at.**

Y1: Yeh, don't get me into it.

Y2: (Moves to look at Adolescent 3's model he is building, and as he does, he carries his dessert into the living room.)

A: Can you manage to eat your dessert in the dining room?

Y2: I don't know if I can manage that.

A: I'm sure you can manage that.

The child care counsellors understood this dynamic and worked hard to not take on this "venting" by the adolescents. Some were better able to redirect it, while others appeared to personalise it and become punitive and reactive:

Y1: (Grumbling about the long wait for dessert and the fact that even though he was kitchen helper, the adult on shift had told him it was not necessary for him to assist her.)

Y1: Do you want me to help you so you're not so slow?

A: You can go without dessert now.

Y1: Why would you take my dessert away [pause] just for what I said? I don't deserve that. Just because I said you might need some help? (In a mimicked woman's voice, *Oh she's a woman . . . .she might need help*).

A: (In a threatening angry tone, and glaring at the adolescents) That's your story and I'd be very careful with that!

Y2: Oh, don't say anything else man.

The above exchange demonstrates how quickly and arbitrarily child care counsellors were prepared to issue consequences if they perceived challenges to their authority or if an adolescent appeared to be exhibiting a behaviour of which the counsellor disapproved. (This process is explored in more detail later, within the concept

how adults receive and retain power and is explained within the dimensions **silencing of the adolescent's voice in the system** and **arbitrary decision-making**.) In the exchange above, the adolescent was venting some perceived grievance, since he was denied the role of kitchen helper. What resulted was a punitive consequence issued by a child care counsellor who objected to his grieving. As noted at the end of the quote, another adolescent stepped in and advised Y1 to drop the conversation. This is probably because further punitive consequences would follow if Y1 challenged the child care counsellor's decision further. Exchanges like this were observed daily by myself at the program and clearly served to disempower the adolescents. (This is addressed later within the concept **how the adults receive and retain power** and discussed in Chapter 4). The process of venting was used by the adolescents frequently at the program and served to engage the adults in the social process of **purposeful conflict** as a means to airing the grievances the adolescent had. The following quote from a staff-member describes the adolescents' process of venting,

> **R->A:** This evening, I don't know, you were downstairs, but it was [adolescent] who began going after [staff-member] and saying, **"You're a stupid man; all you do is eat and sit. That's all you do. Why don't you do any chores? Why don't you go home you're worthless,".** He was initiating [the conflict] . . . [adolescent] was getting angrier and angrier and [the adolescent] finally said, "Don't talk to me". The [staff-member] said, "Well what about?" "I said don't talk to me, don't talk to me". You could see he was ready to blow and [staff-member]

just sat and let him calm down . . . . But that's what I see is the adolescents'---

A: That's because [adolescent] **was feeling worthless.** [Adolescent] was feeling useless. Nobody cared enough about him to return his phone calls**. Who is he going to vent it on? Who can he safely go and vent it on?** – the staff person.

****

A: I think the conflict arises **if they try to do that (venting) with the wrong person**, who doesn't quite grasp what's happening. The (staff person) jumps in and starts consequencing them for being abusive or swearing or for whatever and then they get madder and more frustrated. "Wait a minute this is not how it's supposed to work, you wait 'til the end of the thing and then (say your piece)." **And that starts the conflict . . . it just escalates it . . . that's usually what happens**.

The preceding dimensions of **purposeful conflict** were all explained by the child care counsellors as meaningful to their work and responsibilities with the adolescents. However, these dimensions were not recognised or validated in the same way by the adolescents, who often perceived the counsellors as punitively enforcing program or adult standards.

Saving Face

The adolescents reported that often their purpose of engaging in a conflict with the adults was to prove the adult wrong or to catch the adult in a lie.

Y: I can't count on my fingers how many times **I've caught [staff-member]**

lying. Every time that I catch him and I explain to him, he just creates another one.

R: How do you mean creates another one?

Y: Says something else. Manipulates it. "No I actually meant this", and "That's what I said", and **"No you're wrong",** and "Next time you call me a liar you better back it up." I back it up every time. **I tell him that ....You know, he always changes his story**.

****

R->Y: So if you're saying at this point that [adolescent] buys into the argument with the staff-member. What is in it for him? What is he doing in that exchange?

Y: I don't know, **I think standing up for himself** and he doesn't want to --- I don't know, that comes from jail too. **You don't want to back down** so you keep going and one person ends up losing and in this case, it's the resident always because the staff can't lose here.

****

R->Y: So that's where you get your power is by not reacting?

Y: I just say, "okay, whatever. I'm just going to leave it at that and you [staff-member] just drop it". Sometimes [staff-member] carries on and I'm like "look if I've stopped can't you?" **But I like to make him look like an idiot sometimes, so ... I get into an argument**.

Each of these conditions of the social process of **Purposeful Conflict** were

present in the relationship between the adolescent and child care counsellor based on how each perceived the other's need for change. Clearly, the existence of conflict within the system served many purposes previously unarticulated. Conflict, as reported by both adult and adolescent participants was meaningful and relevant to them and is articulated here for the purpose of advancing a theory of how power is experienced in the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents in a juvenile offender facility.

The Supporting Context for Conflict

Clearly there were antecedents to the incidence of conflict. Further, the parties engaging in the conflict believed that there was a purpose to the conflict. It therefore remains to demonstrate how the system maintained and supported this social process. As noted earlier the **need for change** was a concept that served as an antecedent to the incidence of conflict, if only that it established the polarisation that existed between the adolescent and adult cultures and thereby established fertile ground for the incidence of conflict between the two parties. The adolescents' and adults' beliefs about the purpose of conflict were the fuel that kept the conflict going. This section will look at the systemic conditions that relate to how power is experienced in conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents.

Within the supporting context for conflict, two properties related to the exercise of power were identified: **how adults retain and receive power** and **how adults were given power by the adolescents.** Within these properties are conditions that demonstrate how the system and participants exerted power or acquiesced to the other when conflict

occurred between them. As such, these conditions ensured that conflict continued to be a part of the daily milieu of the program and supports the participants' accounts that conflict was purposeful and therefore of value to them.

Within the property **how adults retain and receive power** the conditions identified included: **rule ambiguity, arbitrary decision-making, silencing the adolescents,** and **program isolation.** Within the property **how adults were given power by the adolescents** the conditions identified included: **fairness and respect, personal not conflictual contact,** and **learning.** These conditions are elaborated here for the purpose of expanding the theory of how the organisational system supported the exercise of power that contributed to the incidence of conflict between adolescents and child care counsellors in a juvenile justice facility.

How Adults Receive or Retain Power

The first property identified as relating to the supporting context for conflict was **how adults receive or retain power**. As discussed earlier, the adults perceived their role as the changor and the adolescent's as the changee. This established the authority vested in the adult's role. As such, the adult was supported to carry out this primary mission by his supervisors and colleagues. Key conditions within the system served to promote and protect the child care counsellors' authority and were identified as **rule ambiguity, arbitrary decision-making, silencing of the adolescents' voice in the system** and the **program's isolation.**

Rule ambiguity. While the program rules were paramount to how the day was

structured for both adults and adolescents, nobody could exactly explain who made the rules. In fact, there seemed to be a reticence on the part of the adults to claim them or to acknowledge their significance to the culture of the program. Child care counsellors expressed ambivalence regarding the rules and acknowledged that while the rules were necessary, they did not necessarily know all the rules, or failed to enforce them some of the time.

A: There are times when I think **maybe a certain way would be better to go about a situation than maybe the consequences or the rules**. Where I would like to maybe just take an individual and go for a walk, talk about it, you know that kind of thing and be very focused on the self, but within this program that isn't an option because they are required to be in here unless they are in school or on a pass.

****

R: How does it get determined that something is a rule?

A: Well, I don't know. I guess it depends on how you look at it. I look at it as just **the kids who basically make the rules**. It's their actions and their reactions and what they do that decide what's going to be made a rule or what isn't.

****

A: Well **there's a lot of rules here** and there's **a lot of different kinds of rules**. There's the **rules that are written down** for them to read in their little guideline book that they all get which is their responsibility and we hand it to them. That's

for them to read and their responsibility to know those limits and guidelines. Right? So that's one type of rule and **the other type of rule are just the general rules that apply to all of us**. Sort of **the unwritten rules around conduct and manners** and stuff like that.

****

R: So then, who is teaching you the rules? How have you learned them now?

A: I'm learning them on my own and it's just as things happen as there is more experiences around me I'm seeing how other people, I mean I'm looking at other people and how they do it, but looking at other people I at least can see the situations that are notable, so it's not like [its only] my judgement. I mean, I would use my judgement and I did last week in school and I thought to myself, "Oh, god, I've done too much of a 'consequence'," but my feeling at the time was "No, that was deserved".

This ambivalence was sensed by the adolescents in the program who constantly tested and challenged the adults on the rules. This naturally forced the adults' hand who then invariably fell back on the rules in an effort to maintain some control or social order. This pattern demonstrated that regardless of the staff members' belief in or attachment to the rules, they would impose them in the name of their primary responsibility, which was to maintain the program's structure and change the adolescents.

A: I guess my personal reaction to that situation is that I tend to become more rigid and **stick to the program as closely as possible**, even dogmatically

sometimes um, rather than being flexible. Which isn't probably the best way to handle that, but in a way it is my defense mechanism so as to not getting into or buying into that power-struggle.

The adolescents reported that adhering to the program structure was not the cause of the conflict so much as the fact that the staff members interpreted the program rules differently. The varying interpretations of the rules caused the adolescents to doubt the validity of one staff member imposing expectations that another staff member had failed to. The resultant cry from the adolescents was that some adults were fair while others were too strict. Many of the adolescents stated that they agreed there should be rules for everyone, but they should be consistent. It was the inconsistency that they found challenging;

Y: It's hard when you're new here because it brings on a lot of conflict between residents (and staff) because well, **he let me do this yesterday** and well he wasn't supposed to, like **[staff-member 1] is not consistent**. But because [staff-member 2] follows it like right down to the last little --- takes it to the militant extreme of the rule book, . . . right? Whereas [staff-member 1] is a bit more relaxed about it. Because really in the rule book it says that we're supposed to wake up at 9:00am on weekends. (If) [staff-member 1] tried to wake us up at 9:00am it wouldn't happen you know what I mean. I don't know, stuff like that so that ends up --- (with) a lot of residents that don't know the rules very well [pause] freaking out [pause] thinking it's just the staff trying to be a dink but really **he's just enforcing**

the rules to his degree.

Despite the fact that the child care counsellors acknowledged these inconsistencies, consequences were issued to adolescents who did not abide by the rules that the adult on shift had deemed as necessary. In this manner, the program rules and expectations were upheld over the reasonable protests of the adolescents who had identified that, on certain days, the rules were not considered a priority.

> **A:** I think there are some steadfast rules that should be followed, but you know, if somebody does something, there should be a consequence and there should be a standard consequence for breaking some of the rules. Right? **I don't think that us as a group have really gotten together, at least at this facility, and decided which rules there is a definite, only one consequence for and which rules you have some leeway for.**

Arbitrary decision-making. One aspect of the system that contributed greatly to the frequent incidence of conflict between the adolescents and the child care counsellors was the arbitrary decision-making that the adults had vested in their role. This inherent right, along with the fact that the adolescents felt that they had no recourse to grieve such decisions, created much volatility within the child care counsellors' and adolescents' relationships. In general, the adolescents perceived these decisions as emanating from the individual adult rather than a program consensus and therefore open to challenge.

> **A: Most of the conflict** or . . . sense that decisions are unfair **comes out of** . . . **inconsistency with the staff.** Then once the rule or plan is enforced **it becomes**

personal between the adolescent and the adult, i.e. "You're a bitch . . . . "You don't like me" . . . .This is confusing for everybody who witnesses staff inconsistencies.

****

R->Y: Any situation or scene that comes to mind?

Y: Ah, here we go. [Co-adolescent] comes in sits down beside [staff-member], wasn't touching him, just sitting there and [staff-member] says, "**Move, you're invading my personal space**." Tells him to go sit somewhere else. There was no other seats . . . .he's just like, "Can you go sit somewhere else?" [Co-adolescent] said, **"No, I'm sitting here. I can sit wherever I want. I'm not doing anything to you, I'm not touching you or talking to you, so what's the big problem?"** So [staff-member] says, "Okay, I'll give you a choice, **you either sit on that chair over there or you can sit here and get a fine or a 'consequence'."** So [Co-adolescent] goes --- [Co-adolescent] just stays there, sits there. So, **"Okay there is a $2.00 fine"**. Then I think he gave him another $2.00 fine. So then he goes up and sits on the table and he's nowhere around anybody, he's not saying anything to anybody, not bugging [staff-member] or anything. He's just sitting there watching the TV on the end of the table and just because he didn't sit in the chair that [staff-member] wanted, pointed to and wanted him to sit in, he gave him another fine and told him to go to bed. And I don't know, [co-adolescent] wouldn't go so he got another fine. **It all started just because of [staff-member] not**

wanting [Co-adolescent] **to sit beside him.**

The arbitrary decision-making of child care counsellors is clearly evident in the previous exchange between a counsellor and adolescent at the program. In this example, the adolescent appeared to be testing how far the adult was prepared to proceed with the seeming power-struggle they were engaged in. The dilemma that I perceived as an observer was that another staff member would not have made this an issue with the adolescent. As noted in the previous section on rule ambiguity, there was considerable ambivalence on the part of some adults to enforce rules that were not written down. Consequently, adults who did decide to assert their authority to control the adolescent's behaviour often ran into challenges, as one adolescent was quoted earlier as saying , "I like to make him look like an idiot sometimes, so . . . I get into an argument". The adult's ability to make arbitrary decisions did not relate only to the topics that they chose to address with the adolescents, but it also extended to aspects of the program's daily operation, as described here by one of the adolescents:

> **Y:** One staff he'll write out an activity for every day, pretty much, skating, go to pool, blah, blah, blah. But [staff-member] he never takes an outing. **He doesn't have to, it's up to staff. Right?** So in jail you have rights, like you have, I don't know, a schedule is laid out and it's always going to be that way and you get used to (it). . . . Here it's all up to --- **everything can change (at the) drop of a hat. There's no – It's really – It's frustrating** when there's like an outing and then . . . [staff-member does not take us out].

It is evident from the adolescent's account that he finds the adult's decision to arbitrarily cancel a planned group activity frustrating. This was one of the ways that the adults retained their power in the system and that served to exacerbate the conflicts between counsellors and clients. Another dimension, related to the adults' retention of power in the system is explored in the next section, and relates to how the adolescents were silenced in the system.

Silencing of the adolescents' voices in the system. While it was acknowledged that the adults had the inherent authority in the system, a condition that ensured that they retained their power was **the silencing of the adolescents' voices in the system**. The adolescents reported many grievances with respect to how the adults asserted their authority and interpreted the system rules. Many had tried to air these concerns within the system and became convinced that while the Residents' Manual outlined grievance procedures, these were not effective mechanisms through which to be heard.

> **R -> Y:** Okay. So the Residents' Manual is something you are shown when you arrive and there is a section there that says if you have a concern you can talk to the [staff-member]?
>
> **Y:** Yes, like if you're not – if you think you're having an unfair punishment or something like that, you can always have mediation with him and then you can take it one step further and go to like the Ombudsman or **but – that never happens.**
>
> **R:** So you're saying that . . . doesn't actually happen.

Y: Well, yah. **You can go in and have a mediation but nothing changes**. Like you go in there thinking that you're going to get a change and that maybe you can have a compromise and have a little of both but like, it doesn't happen. **It just stays the same**.

****

Y: They'll say it was the staff's discretion or they'll say "I didn't feel like I could trust you guys taking you out", and that's not right . . . not right at all . . . and there's nothing you can do . . . .**You can go to the [staff-member] . . . sign a form and nothing happens**.

****

Y: It's **not like jail where you can complain and something gets done**. You can complain all you want here, everybody just goes around and does the same thing.

R: So give me an example of what the complaint process would look like in jail?

Y: You talk to the Commanding Officer or something, like the person who is in charge, the one higher up and in charge of all the staff that are working and if nothing happens, then the PO, and then like the Director of the jail or something and then if nothing happens there then you've got the Ombudsman. **But usually you get something done, like always.**

R: So like what kinds of things would it be about?

Y: Unfair punishments.

In addition to feeling that they did not have a voice some of the adolescents actually

spoke of punitive consequences for trying to speak up:

> **Y: No room to question** . . . . **No way. Never** . . . .**They'll just start taking other things away** because **they'll all get together in the meeting room** and they'll all talk about you. Whatever . . . . You should have the right to be there. To say, "No this isn't what happened" . . . .You know . . . . Because they manipulate the situation, because they can say anything that they want to . . . .and **we're not even there to defend ourselves** . . . . So they can say whatever they want.
>
> **R:** And you can't have any input?
>
> **Y:** Nope, not in (this program), **you can't argue, you'll get fined**.
>
> **********
>
> **Y:** We're entitled to go out and have a certain amount of privileges that we're entitled to, and (when we don't get them) that starts to piss you off after a while and it gets to you. **There's nothing you can do about it**, you can scream, you can shout, you can **get as many fines as you want**, you can do whatever, **get work hours, but nothing's going to change** . . . .You'll still have the work hours . . . but you won't get the outing.
>
> **********

Here an adolescent describes his cautionary approach with a staff member whom he perceives as enforcing the rules punitively:

> **Y:** I don't know if he really believes (he's just doing his job) . . . because **we catch him . . . all the time in lies and stuff.** And if you take it far enough, you

get a fine. But, as long as you don't freak out (you are O.K.). **You have to be careful though**.

Adolescents not only reported on attempts they had made to address consequences they perceived as unfair, but also recounted experiences where they felt the staff person had more power in the system, and over them, despite their protests. In this following account, an adolescent recalls receiving permission from a staff-member to have cigarettes sent to him. However, when another staff member found out the adolescent received a punishment for manipulating the rules.

Y: So I told my parents that yes, it's okay with the [staff-member 1] because I thought she was the most powerful here. That's not the case. Anyways I'll go on with the story . . . .a couple of days after [staff-member 2] found out about it, (and) made it his business to make sure that that didn't happen so he goes and talks to the [staff-member 1], "Who said he could do this?" The [staff-member 1] said to him, "I don't know. I didn't do it." . . . That's what I heard from all the staff . . . .**She was downstairs when I asked her, nobody else was around but she and I. And I ended up with a $5.00 fine for manipulation.**

R: What do you think happened there?

Y: I don't know. Well, I guess the [staff-member] **wasn't really following the rules** but she shouldn't have **lied about it to the staff** she should have said, "Yah, I gave him permission and it's my fault for that". And (then I wouldn't) . . . . have had the fine. It should have ended at that. But that wasn't the case.

R: So, in that situation you really believe that the [staff-member] didn't tell the truth . . . . and actually (that) ended up in a negative consequence for you?

Y: Exactly.

R: How do you make sense of that?

Y: That tells me that . . . that she's a liar and that she doesn't have any guts. To own up to the things that she does.

R: So what did you do with that situation?

Y: What can you do? Because everyone thought I was a liar because of the situation. Everybody is going to believe the [staff-member]; **every one is going to believe what she says over what I say**.

Another aspect of denying the adolescents a voice was manifested in the rule that adolescents were not permitted to speak to members of the public when outside of the program. This was questioned by one of the staff members:

A: Like one thing when . . . we were out in public, which is limited time, they go out on weekends and stuff, but the same places . . . . When they are out they are **not to speak to anyone in public**. Now when I heard that I kind of thought, "Whoa, that is pretty heavy", but then I haven't explored it any more, and I just sort of figured that it was just another rule of the program . . . . My opinion would be that I don't think that anyone needs to be **withheld from speaking** in public.

When asked why adolescents should have input and a voice in the system, one of the adolescents shared these thoughts:

R -> Y: Why do you think it's important for adolescents to have input?

Y. Well, **because it makes the thing better** . . . . I think it's important to have input because **I think it could be a lot better**. I think if the rules are made up by a bunch of staff – **they only know half of what goes on here**. Sure they're around all the time but they don't know what goes on. They don't hear everything, they don't know what we're thinking, what we're doing . . . .you know. **I think there's a lot of input from our side that would (provide) a lot of better answers . . . .I think we have different solutions for different problems. We could have better solutions maybe,** if they asked us. "All right guys, there's a problem with you going upstairs at lunch time". Instead of locking it all down, they could ask us for a solution. [pause] Some of us like to brush our teeth after (lunch) so maybe the staff could watch us come up, brush our teeth and then lock it up. Or you know, something like that so you have a bit of an input into it. And it's like, "Oh, they must be grabbing contraband". Because that's what they . . . (think) right away.

The program's isolation. Another aspect of the system that supported the adults' retention of power was the apparent isolation of the program. The program's head office was approximately one hundred miles away and therefore not in a position to monitor the daily events at the program. Due to the nature of the work and confidentiality issues, the inclusion of outsiders in the system was minimal. It therefore operated in isolation and autonomously, and this was acknowledged by one of the adolescents with respect to staff

members,

R. Who's in charge?

Y: In charge? **Just, in this little world, it's the staff**. It's the staff.

Not only was the program isolated in its operation, but the adolescents were completely dependent on the program for all of their needs;

R - > A: So **when you said, when you walk in here, power is a big thing**, it's evidenced – How is it evidenced?

A: Well that's what I mean by having keys. **You have a set of keys you have the power of this house. They** (the adolescents) **don't.** They are not allowed to have a key. They are **not allowed to go anywhere for anything unless they ask** and you know they can't. **If they want toilet paper they've got to get it unlocked**, if they want anything. So it's a big thing and --- that's the power, that's what I mean. The keys ---

****

R -> Y: So the staff are the people here who ---

Y: The only, the only, you can't win. There's no arguing. **I guess you could go to the Ombudsman but I don't think anything happens through that**.

R: So what does that do to your experience of being an adolescent in the program?

Y: I don't have a choice ---

The fact that the program was relatively isolated and the adolescents wholly

dependent and silenced within it, created an imbalance of power that exacerbated the tensions between the child care counsellors and adolescents and contributed to the incidence of conflict. As previously mentioned adolescents attempted to have a voice through proving adults were "liars" or were "wrong". These events simply bore more conflict and consequences for the adolescents and so were relatively ineffective. Attempts by the adolescents to address the power imbalances seemed to be partially resolved through the strategies that are outlined in the **concept how the adolescents gave power to the adults**, such that the adolescents found ways to acquiesce to the adults that were acceptable to them and did not infringe on their rights or need for respect.

How Adults Were Given Power By The Adolescents

The previous section expanded on one of the properties of the concept **the supporting context for conflict** by elaborating on the conditions that were instrumental in ensuring that the **adults receive or retain power within the system**. This section looks at the second property within the concept, **the supporting context for conflict** which is **how adults were given power by the adolescents.** This property contains dimensions identified by both adults and adolescents at the program and summarises how the adolescents came to terms with the system's support of the adults' inherent power, and their desire to change and move through the system.

While the internal and external systems offered support to the adults' inherent power as a changor within the system these mechanisms were not verified by the adolescents as supportive to their efforts to change while in the system. Rather the

adolescents identified aspects of the child care counsellors' personality and work style that they considered supportive to them in their efforts to change. These properties were grouped under the concept **How adults were given power by adolescents** and included: **a personal, not conflictual relationship; fairness and respect; and learning.** Each of these dimensions caused the adolescents to regard the individual they engaged in the conflict with as more credible and the conflict more meaningful. If they believed that they were "off track", they appreciated an adult they considered credible talking to them and helping them adjust their perspective.

A personal not conflictual relationship. Key to the adolescents regarding the adult as credible and able to support them to change was the possibility that there were occasions when the relationship could be more positive, non-conflictual and personal.

> **Y:** Well he came up and he said, "You guys shouldn't be up here because there is an interview going on". We're like, "Whatever", and two minutes we sat around, I don't know, we couldn't hear you guys. So then not more than five minutes later, less than five minutes later he came back and said, "Go, you've got an out of bounds fine".
>
> **R:** And how would that be different with [staff-member] perhaps? What do you think would happen?
>
> **Y:** He would have stayed up here and waited for us all to go downstairs. "Let's go, come on, get out of here, get downstairs!" I don't know, **just deal with it in a more human fashion**. Not a Robocop.

In this example the adolescent states his preference for being treated in a more "human fashion", rather than by a staff person who "went by the book" like a "robocop". While some of the staff had an awareness that personal non conflictual contact with the adolescents was more conducive to relationship building and change promoting, it was acknowledged by both staff members and adolescents at the program, as a rare occurrence due to the program's structure:

> **R:** So if you're required to give fines and consequences to adolescents, what do you think that accomplishes, or what do you think that does?
>
> **A:** I think it, from my experience so far here, it only frustrated the adolescents more. They've been, they get angry, they get upset and I think almost somewhat discouraged because we're consequencing them for something they've done wrong and I'm . . . I mean that's not to say they don't – they do get merits for things they've done well. **But I don't think it gives us a positive way to deal with conflict**.
>
> **********
>
> **A:** I don't know. I'm wondering sometimes if it's that they plain and simply are bored . . . . [When they are challenging us] . . . **or are they reaching out, do they want more of us than to just be their worker?** Do they want --- You know? **We all have relationships with the boys here**. You know, **I think if I was a case manager I would be on more of a personal relationship; there would be more of a connection there.**

****

A: That's kind of a --- I guess that's a touchy subject or a hard area for a facility like this right? . . . Because I mean, as far as I'm concerned, **you're supposed to be doing creative problem solving** and you're supposed to be getting them to participate in the solution and if you're just going to give them a fine **how do they get to participate in finding alternative behaviour,** or make a connection about their behaviour and the consequence, right?

In the above quotations the adults questioned the value of consequencing the adolescents. This was in part due to the belief held by some of the staff that the youth initiated conflict to "get needs met". As the staff member above questions, "Do they want more of us than to just be their worker?" Revealed through this research was the adolescents' desire for "more" from the staff members; more understanding and more personal consideration as they went through their process of change. In these examples, the participants acknowledged the nature of the relationship that was valued by both parties in the resolution of conflicts between them. It was clear that they believed the program's rules and structure had a negative impact on the child care counsellors' mission to change the adolescents and the adolescents desire for change.

Fairness and respect. The adolescents not only noted the type of relationship they valued with the child care counsellors, but were able to articulate components of the relationship that contributed to their giving power to the adult in the program. For example,

Y. Like about personal stuff . . . . especially when I talk to [staff-member] about personal stuff, **she really understands**. She listens and **explains other ideas**, "well maybe you did this because, this and this and this".

****

Y. There's a lot of relief staff that are a lot better (than the full time staff). Like, when we say which staff we like better, they always instantly think it's the least strict ones, which it is a bit true in a sense. But I think also **what you get from them is you have a little bit of respect for them.** They'll like . . . you know, **I don't respect [staff-member] because he's a dick**. If that was what he (is) trying to get. There's a lot of relief staff . . . who actually **you can talk to and you respect what they say** and you think they've gone through it all.

****

R. Okay, what about if you had a disagreement with say, [staff-member], how would that be different? Have you had any disagreements?

Y. Oh sure, lots**. He still disciplines but it's not – You know, when you deserve something, right?** If I go and freak out at a staff and call them a bunch of bad names, I'm expecting I'm going to get something**. But I'm not expecting for the rest of the day every little thing I do wrong he's going to pick on.**

Similarly, some child care counsellors noted their preference to intervene in a manner that they believed was more conducive to a positive outcome:

A: I would stick to the **person centred** . . . I would rather talk, work things

through than to [pause] you know, slap down a fine or whatever. Something that isn't very . . . you know, something that's materialistic.

****

A: But then I realised that things are going to slip by and it's not my job to --- This is where we come to conflict, because working here there are rules to follow and you have to follow the rules and know the rules, in order to be able to be consistent with the boys . . . . **However my belief in child and youth care is it should be very person centred; it should be very focused on the individual, which I find difficult to do around the rules sometimes.**

These examples of interventions that were grounded in relationship were viewed by the adolescents as more respectful and caused them to act more co-operatively with the adults. In this way, the adolescents gave power to the adults to assist them to change and work through problems they were encountering.

A: It was the conversation after the consequence that really hit home for him and that actually . . . .You see, he's willing to talk . . . .I don't know. Just have to talk. It's the one thing afterwards, processing it and **recapping the events in the yard and why it happened were really important, real critical for that solution.**

Learning. The adolescents, as noted under **the need for change,** stated that one of the reasons they were in the program was to learn and to change. They further related that task to their beliefs about the purpose of conflict, which they believed assisted them to

"work things out", learn, and change. Under the concept of how the adolescents gave power to the adults, the adolescents acknowledged the different ways that they related to the adults whom they felt treated them fairly and justly, as they made efforts to change themselves and learn:

> **Y:** I don't know, it's like jail. **You have to have some self control** obviously. And **you get better at following directions, I think**. Certain directions. Plus you **learn how to use a mop. Sweep; wash dishes**. The [staff-member] is a really nice guy. I've probably **learned** more from the [staff-member] than anyone else.
>
> **********
>
> **Y:** Some staff are [pause] pretty good. They can tell when you're lying just like that. Can just sift through the bullshit. They're happier if they hear the truth. I think **if you have a problem and you solve it right away they're pretty good about recognising that.** Like that's what they like to see. They like to see --- they don't so much care if you freak out, because it's human. Which is one good thing too, ... **If you fix it right away, like go apologise whatever**, you know, clean up what you made a mess of, whatever, fix it. **I think that's what they want to see, how you can solve your problems.**
>
> **********

With respect to learning, one adolescent acknowledged how even when he was not sure of the adult's intentions, he thought that the exchange was an opportunity to learn:

Y: He [staff-member] won't necessarily try to calm that person down, he'll **try to get that person to swallow what they are trying to prove,** I think more than anything. He'll be like . . . (if I say) . . . "Don't talk to me", he'll keep talking.

****

R: So you said there that it sort of starts like a game. So what's the game?

A: I don't know, I think he's **just trying to see how you can handle conflict** or something. **Maybe it's a lesson**, maybe he doesn't even know why he was doing it.

****

The adults acknowledged how adolescents processed things with them after a conflict and how they noticed the adolescents changing their perception or attitude and begin to learn from the situation:

R: What do you think happened there?

A: I think because for one reason, he was on his own, he wasn't around any of his peers. **And he was listening to me** and he does, as any of them do **if they are on one on one with me, they listen to me and they'll talk back and forth**. We can talk back and forth to each other . . . . Because it was one on one our talk was pretty solid and **I think it probably hit home, he understood**.

****

A: (Regarding conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents)

It's unavoidable and sometimes necessary in a controlled and useful way. **If**

conflict is used to help people to learn and to have good habits for fighting and **(they) don't get into the negative habits they're used to** --- and probably grown up with.

****

Child care counsellors also used one-on-one counselling sessions to support the adolescents in their efforts to change and learn:

A: In formal counselling **sessions telling them how we feel about conflict situations they may have been involved in and what they think they could, er, have done differently.** Um, **helping them to explore options they may have within themselves, allowing them to bring those out** and, er, **guiding their thinking toward the fact that there are other options** and maybe they can explore those for themselves. And sometimes **you can just put out a list of options for them** like we've had other people who dealt with options like this and list all the ways those things have been handled **so they can learn from other people's experience.**

As demonstrated by these quotations, both the adolescents and the child care counsellors identified that there was a potential for **learning** from conflicts between them. It appears, however, that it was the adolescents primarily that were to learn while the child care counsellors remained the "teachers". This was demonstrated in the staff-members' belief that the adolescents needed to change and that engaging the youth in conflict and "calling them on their stuff" was an important aspect of their job that assisted

the youth to change. The adolescents' accounts confirm that they believed the adults engaged in the conflict in part to "teach them a lesson" or "call them on their b---s---" and as such the adolescents could appreciate the opportunity for learning.

In the final analysis, under the supporting context for conflict, these dimensions related to how the conflict was exacerbated, resolved, or played out. Each of these dimensions was present within the system, and was manifest based on how the parties perceived the other and the need for change; further they captured how each party asserted or experienced power within the conflict situation.

Outcome of Conflict: The Adolescent Finding a Voice in the System

The product of the conflicts between the adolescents and the child care counsellors took many forms and was organised within the concept of **the adolescents finding a voice in the system.** As was discussed earlier, the system was set up to exercise control and authority over the adolescents and had a structure that supported that mandate. Aspects of the system served to ensure that the adults retained and received inherent authority over the adolescents and was supported by systemic conditions that served to silence the adolescents' voices and disempower them within the system. Dimensions of the concept **the adolescents finding a voice in the system** are expanded on here to demonstrate the manner in which adolescents sought to find their voices in a system that often denied them a voice. These dimensions include: **scapegoating, playing the game, escaping,** and **communicating.**

While these dimensions demonstrate how the adolescents sought to have a voice

in the system, they can also be referred to as identified ways that adolescents sought and acquired power in the system. Aside from the previously discussed concept **of how the adults were given power by the adolescents** the adolescents also found ways to manage the pressures in the system that gave them some power or control over their situations.

Scapegoating

Scapegoating or goading of staff members or peers appeared to be a frequent occurrence in the program and was one of the ways the adolescents found a **voice in the system**. Given that the adolescents were largely frustrated at their circumstances and believed that they had little choice within the system, their frustration was often expressed through the scapegoating of others. In the four and one half months that I conducted research at the program, I observed that there was usually one adolescent in the group that was picked on (often a new arrival) and as has been discussed earlier, often one adult: **A:** "One staff member here takes a lot of abuse . . . **that person is a scapegoat**".

When asked about the scapegoating of adolescents and staff members, the adults were familiar with incidents:

> **A:** Yes, and I know that that happens and that happens sometimes when [staff-member] works **. . . they will push him and push him and push him** to see "okay where is he going to go now". That's the real testing ground and it can get really nasty. **I've seen them be really abusive, really abusive to [staff-member].**

****

A: It is as a spin-off from **the jail mentality** . . . .The new kid has to break into the group.

Similarly, one staff member spoke of how she had to "break in" to the group and earn her place as someone that had inherent authority with the adolescents:

A: Well at (an earlier) stage in my job, being just new here, I couldn't do what (other staff members) were doing.

R: Because---

A: There would be too many boys around and **they would be making fun of everything that I would be saying** . . . .they would **not be taking me seriously. If I enforce a rule, they would not go along with it.** . . . So they didn't listen to me or respect me (at first), as they do with the other staff (members).

R: So what is going on there?

A: Well for one . . . no trust . . . . Between us, there's no safety . . . . **It's a new person**, it's a new situation, it's **just all about trying it out and pushing limits and pushing buttons** and all that kind of stuff. (It is) slowly sort of petering out a bit now, but it's definitely still there.

When asked what the scapegoating was all about the adolescents commented that:

Y: I don't know . . . some people think "they're all that" (Researcher's note: A current popular adolescent term for a peer who thinks they are better than other peers)

R: Is it that, or does the system need someone to pick on?

Y. Probably, there's always someone.

The adolescents also spoke of occasions when the peer group scapegoated them:

Y: Maybe. Just always there's going to be – There's (going to be) . . . outbursts. Especially when (there are) eight kids. There's not eight right now, but eight boys living in one house . . . .There's **supposed to be no horse play**. Only at night time--- That's what I don't like.

R: How do you mean the night time?

Y: Well, that's when you get victimised. **I got picked on**.

When I commented on the adolescents' abuse towards a particular adult, a co-worker's explanation was that my presence influenced the adolescents' behaviours and that they were, in fact, putting on a show for me:

A: If there is an audience, [pause] . . . it becomes we're going to trap [the staff person]. We're going to get him to say the wrong thing, or do the wrong thing. **We're going to make him look like a fool** and then you who's the audience, are going to realise that we're smarter and bigger and (that) ours is bigger than dad's . . . . **It's a good performance to keep staff in their place . . . they (the staff) are not the big power figures**.

Each of these examples demonstrates the dynamic of scapegoating that was a daily occurrence at the program. It definitely was perceived by the staff members as a power-play by the adolescents as they ignored newer staff's direction, or attempted to

embarrass others. It was so much a part of the adolescents' daily way of relating to the staff at the program and their peer group, that it was largely unnoticed and seldom addressed by the adults, as was observed on one of my early visits to the program. This is from my field notes:

> I notice that the adolescents appear to **bug one of the staff members incessantly**. It appears that they are trying to incite something:
>
> **"You're fat". "Isn't he fat man?" "We don't care about you . In fact we hate you" ,"Don't you remember we wanted you dead? We told you to drop dead". "I'm going to kill you . I'm going to blow up your car".**
>
> All of these comments were shared amongst the group of five adolescents; bantering, laughing, poking and prodding for a reaction. It is very uncomfortable for me. It's abusive, disrespectful and unfair. Perhaps the adolescents noted my discomfort, because one of them said: "We're not always like this . . . we just hate [staff-member]". For his part the staff member smiled throughout the teasing, appeared unruffled, questioned them on some points, bantered a little, but largely appeared to "take it". This repeats in the adolescents' actions with each other, as noted on an earlier visit when an adolescent who was being bugged by the peer group did not protest the punches and jaunts, rather appeared to tolerate the abuse until the group decided that he had appeared to "take it" with out "wimping-out" (complaining or reporting to the staff).
>
> *End of field notes.*

As a way of finding a voice, **scapegoating** did not appear to be functional in that it did not advance the adolescents' agenda to have a voice in the system, in a meaningful way, and yet, it was a show of power, a way to be heard. For a brief while the adolescents were appearing to "call the shots" and have some power albeit over each other or as a group against a staff-member.

Escaping

While scapegoating of staff members and peers within the program became a way for the adolescents to express themselves within the program, escaping, or creating reasons to leave the system became a way for others to hear the adolescents' voices.

> **A:** I guess . . . the one . . . one that jumps into my mind is from a few years ago actually, in terms of a resident who was pretty much new to the program. (He) hadn't really bought into the program and **decided he was going to do as much as he could to disrupt the program** . . . . In terms of trying to discuss this with him, or engage him to even build a rapport (he was) **unwilling to do any such a thing**. In my mind this person was **not really suited to the group** that was in here at that time . . . . In a **way the conflicts built from that** . . . . And when he was unwilling to even talk about them and continued to be hurtful to other people, or destructive to what the program was doing --- **he was discharged**.

For the reasons that, in most instances, the adolescents were court ordered to reside at the program, their escaping from the system required some form of outside intervention. Adolescents who were aware of this often initiated the outside involvement

through complaints against staff members or co-adolescents:

> **A: This resident made various complaints and whatever** and was going to **phone the RCMP** . . . and only then did anything really happen regarding this resident . . . . **Finally, I guess, this resident was removed from the program** and that was, I guess, in terms of conflict, that was an ultimate conflict situation where I felt unable to deal with it.

Another way that adolescents dealt with their need to have some control over the situation they found themselves in, or to **escape** the pressures of the situation, was to run away from the program or create a situation whereby they were discharged.

> **A:** The fact that the resident wasn't removed at an earlier stage to a place where he would have been able to get what he needed . . . resulted in the fact that he was able to stay here . . . .**In a way (that) precipitated his conflict, because I believe his whole approach was to create as much disturbance as he could in the program so we would kick him out**.

While there was a belief that upon being discharged for non-compliance or complaints the adolescents would find themselves in a more restrictive environment like jail, many of them found that it actually proved to be a way to go home. If their probation officer did not initiate a court action due to their non-compliance and their family did not object, and it was thought that the adolescent had learned his lesson, it was often negotiated that he returned home. Upon my arrival at the program in my fourth week, three boys had been discharged due to their having gone **absent with out leave (AWOL)**.

Of these adolescents, at least one was returned to family members. As my time continued at the program, there were other ways that the boys **escaped** the system.

Upon being admitted to the program there appeared to be a phase during which the adolescents either adapted to the system or sought ways to leave it. One of the adolescents who arrived at the program during my research seemed to have found a way **to have a voice in the system** that assisted in his leaving situations he did not like. He had previously been at a juvenile detention camp and once there began to refuse the food saying that it was not to his liking and that he was a fussy eater. He drew a lot of negative attention to himself and was scapegoated by peers in the program. As a result, his family and probation officer had concerns for his safety that precipitated his move from that program to the one under study for my project. Within a short period of time of this same adolescent being placed at the program, he again began raising his mother's and probation officer's concerns regarding his safety. He adopted the same pattern of not eating and isolating himself from the peer group. When his probation officer and his mother came to visit, he assumed he would be permitted to leave with his mother. He followed her to her car but was told by his probation officer and a staff member at the program that he could not leave. He kicked his mother's car and was arrested on a charge of mischief. He did not return to the program and despite the damage to his mother's vehicle, when his probation officer could not find an immediate placement, he was released to his mother's home. Apparently during his interview with the police he had once again made allegations against peers in the program citing his safety as a concern.

This young man had found a way to have **a voice in the system** that fit with the system's responsibility to provide a safe environment for him. He was listened to and accommodated. In my conversation with his probation officer, the officer questioned whether the adolescent was truly at risk in either of the programs. However, the fact that the adolescent had reported this to be true and followed through, not retracting his story, left the decision-makers little choice but to move him to a safer environment.

Other adolescents who had resided in the program complained of treatment by staff members to try to be removed from the program. These allegations were treated very seriously by the administration at the program and the local police detachment was immediately involved in any complaint. On the occasion that I was aware of, the threat of police involvement was enough to have the adolescent retract his statement of abuse against a staff member. However, the very act of making the allegation raised concerns for the staff group and it was recommended and approved by the administration in discussions with the probation officer that the adolescent be removed. Again, this was a method whereby an adolescent was heard clearly by the system, even when it was doubtful that he was indeed at risk, but the very suspicion of it caused the system to remove the adolescent, thereby facilitating his escape prior to completing the program. In the four months that I conducted my research at the program, of the eleven adolescents that resided at the program, a total of five were discharged for reasons that could be captured under the concept of **escaping.**

Communicating

Other strategies that the adolescents used in order to have a voice in the system were various forms of communication with the adults who might serve to advance their agenda of getting through the program, or having no additional time added to their stay in the program. These included: seeking adults to advocate for them, cajoling and using humour with staff members, challenging staff members, and playing the game.

Seeking adults to advocate for them. One of the ways that the adolescents found to have a voice in the system was to seek adults to advocate on their behalf. This was an effective way to acquire support from an adult who might seem more sympathetic to their needs than perhaps the adult charged with managing their case.

> **A:** I get approached to go to bat for them at the staff meeting and they approach me to . . . to see if they can, you know, if they can have a pass. "We want a pass please, try and get it through". "Go and **say some good things about me**, you've seen the good things I've been doing", and they know, I think they know who to go to and they try to cover all their bases. Right?
>
> **********
>
> **R:** You mentioned before that it was important for you to figure out which rules each staff was going to stick to and which ones were going to be –
>
> **Y:** Because it's different, so, so, different but I know now right. **I'll ask the staff that I know will say yes** and obviously (I) won't try to do something when the other staff is here and (yet on other occasions) I'll try to get away with something

without even thinking about it.

This type of behaviour was viewed by some of the child care counsellors as manipulative, but was genuinely believed by the adolescents to be an effective way **to be heard in the system**. If they could use an adult (in the system) whom they felt they could trust or whom they could relate to, to bypass the barriers that they assumed they would encounter on their own, then they believed they were effectively navigating a system that they experienced as arbitrarily discriminating against them.

Cajoling and using humour with staff members. Another form of having a voice within the system, and using a communication strategy that might advance their agenda, fell into the category of cajoling and using humour with staff members. This type of communication occurred when the adolescents had often run afoul of the adult's or program's expectations and was used by the adolescent in an attempt to diffuse the adult from issuing consequences:

> **A:** I think he has a really lame sense of humour and if you don't learn how to respect that . . . like some stuff, some people don't like being accused of things and sometimes he'll be like, "Did you have a nice smoke upstairs?" And he's just joking but some people who don't like being accused of things will freak out right away . . . . **I'll be, like, "Yah, okay [staff-member] whatever you say", and I'll never get the fine.** But if someone makes it serious: "What are you talking about?" Big fight, they'll probably end up getting the fine for that even though they didn't (smoke upstairs). Whatever. **He just kind of enjoys to . . . he enjoys**

to argue and for people that are less verbal--- **like I can argue fairly decently without using profanity** and like people that have less ability end up resorting to words that get them into trouble.

Challenging staff members. Challenging staff members was another way that the adolescents sought to have a voice in the system and some control over their circumstances, as described here by an adolescent at the program:

R: So if you're saying at this point that [adolescent] buys into the argument with the adult ? What is in it for him? What is he doing in that exchange?

Y: I don't know. **I think standing up for himself** and he doesn't want to (lose face). I don't know, that comes from jail too. **You don't want to back down** so you keep going and one person ends up losing and in this case it's the resident always because the staff can't lose here.

****

R: So this person said **the only way adolescents get power in the system**, here, like at supper or during chores, **is with their words**.

A: And **I agree with that too** because I think **in this program power is a big thing.** And I think it's pretty evident. I think the moment you walk through the doors here you see power. You know things are locked up, they're only allowed to have this and only at certain times . . . . I do think that that's a big thing and, yah, you're right, I believe that that's probably something [power] that they don't have that **they are trying to express in any way [that] they can** [pause] --- **That they**

have [power].

Other ways that the adolescents used their words to challenge the adults and have some power in the system, included the verbal bantering amongst themselves, quite often at the expense of the adult:

> **A: They'll bug their teacher** and **he's quite heavy and they combine racial comments and obese comments** and they'll laugh, and laugh, and laugh. They'll try and get them all (the co-adolescents) to do it and they're all laughing until someone---until staff walks in or something like that.
>
> **********
>
> **A:** I think, I believe **they only have power over what they say**. **That's, to me, their only avenue to take it out . . .** . I don't believe they have power in what they do because they have to go to school or they are 'consequenced'. They have to do their chores or they are consequenced . . . .They have to eat here or they are severely consequenced so **I do believe why (the adolescents) might be commenting on (staff) or calling people this and that would be to have this power, for them, which can only be expressed through their mouth.** And it's not only in some of them, it's in all of them. Once they are comfortable enough to be here. One [adolescent] has only been here for three or four days today. The first day he was here he was an absolute little angel, right. Very quiet, very nice, very...you know. Now he's a rude little kid. You know what I mean? (He's) **trying to see what it takes for us to make him do what he's been asked to do**

when he says **"no"**, or when he says **"take a hike",** or **"kiss my ass",** which he did tonight.

As evidenced in the last quote, the adults' perception was that the adolescents sought and gained power through their words. This type of communication, though initially baffling to myself as an outsider, surfaced through the data collection and analyses as a prevalent occurrence at the program. Not only did it give the adolescents **a voice in the system**, but it appeared that the adults had difficulty addressing it as a behaviour, and thereby issuing consequences. As such, verbal bantering and challenging of child care counsellors, became ways for the adolescents to acquire some power and expression without negative consequences.

Playing the Game

Playing the game was a dimension of finding **a voice in the system** and referred to the tactics the adolescents used to avoid punitive consequences in the program. Many of the adolescents had entered the program with expectations, needs and wants that they felt were not met upon admission. Their initial responses to this discrepancy was to challenge, rebel, and resist. After a while the adolescents realised that nothing was going to change and they either set about making the best of the situation they found themselves in and began **playing the game** or sought a way of **escaping**. Playing the game was the way that they appeared to acquiesce to the program's wishes and expectations and advance their own agenda of graduating from the program:

Y: Yes, well getting through here all depends on how well you can lie. A lot. Not

really, but a lot. Like if you can sit there **and lie about how much you're changing** and stuff, because no one really --- Like, sure you change. You change in a lot of (ways) . . . . **I think a lot of the ways people change is how to bullshit the staff . . . and how to deal with not getting fined from certain staff by doing certain things.** Not so much change all the bad things (about you) **but learn what you have to say.**

R: So learn...?

Y: Learn what you have to do to get out. Like a lot of people when you hear them talk to staff, it's like, "Oh I've been working on my goals and trying to finish up my anger management problems", "Did you see how well I handled that conversation?", and then if you went and talked to them it would be . . . F---, the staff, he's a dink you know. F---ing scrooge trying to f--- us around". You know?

R: Okay, so what's being said in front of the staff is different than what's being said---

Y: 100%. Lots, yes.

****

R: Well, it sounds like there is a lot of feelings that get repressed. A lot of times you've got to kind of . . . bite your tongue?

Y: Oh, all the time, yah. **Once you learn how to do that you've got it made**.

While the adolescents acknowledged that they were playing a game by feigning compliance, they also believed that the staff group were playing a game also. They

summarised that part of the adult's game was to try to get them mad and see how they could handle that. One of the ways the adolescents believed they could have some power or **a voice in the system** was to not buy into the adult's game, as described here by one of the adolescents:

> **Y:** It's because I know him so well now that I . . . when he starts saying something, "Blah, blah, blah", (I say), "Now, now [staff-member] don't start trying to pull that with me. **You know I'm not going to fall for your silly little game**".
>
> **R:** So you kind of use humour?
>
> **Y:** I make fun of him still, but in a humorous, friendly (way) . . . . He takes it as a joke and I don't freak out at him or anything. Like some of the other kids I look back like now, I guess . . . [co-adolescent's] (arguing) seems so dumb. **Because it's totally a game**, follows a pattern. Like the same thing starts off with one thing and I don't know, breaks into a big argument and he [staff-member] will keep calm and just keep getting the person (adolescent) madder and madder.
>
> **********
>
> **Y:** Well **the only way to win is if you don't freak out** and if you don't get a fine. **The only way is to be polite. Because if you're being polite to him, he can't do anything.** He can't fine you. If you do what he says, he can't do anything to you.
>
> **********
>
> **R:** So there's a couple of things that came out of what you said. One is . . . the

"game". Like what is in it for the adolescent that buys into that argument?

Y: I don't know you just **have to learn how to swallow your pride**.

While the adolescents acknowledged that playing the game was largely an act designed to get them out of the situation they were in, it was motivated by tangible incentives that the adolescents could articulate. These were a desire to go home, to not accrue more time in the program, to assume more responsibility for their behaviour and to get out of the system:

> **Y:** I don't have a choice. If I leave they will probably [pause] . . . what will likely happen? Like, . . . now . . . . I don't know what they'd do. Maybe a couple of weeks in jail and my parents would take me home. But, it's not like – **they could put me in jail for a month and tell me I have to start the program from scratch again which is likely . . .** But I'm this far anyways. I kind of – My PO wants me to finish it. **I don't want to start all over again.** Like here's the end, here's the beginning, I'm already 3/4 of the way. If I AWOL, it's bing, right back there in jail, trying to make phone calls to lawyers and parents and arrange everything to see if I can go home and the prosecutor and the f---ing . . . all that bullshit.

****

> **A:** I guess the incentive to buy into the program is I guess, **residents come to the program with the idea that they're here to do something,** or they just sit here for the time that they're here . . . . That **they're open to even exploring**

> **alternatives to the ways they've been doing things** (is) . . . I guess **the motivation . . . to deal with some of the hurts** that they come to the program with. They'll come away with something that enables them . . . **to feel a bit more secure with who they are and how they can deal with things.**

The tactic **playing the game** worked for adolescents who possessed fairly sophisticated verbal skills and who could assess the adult with whom they were communicating. It was less of a choice for younger or less sophisticated adolescents who continued to rebel, resist, and not conform. Most of these adolescents were discharged for non-compliance or went AWOL and were discussed under the concept of escape.

Summary of Findings

This chapter described a grounded theory of how power was experienced in the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and clients in a juvenile justice facility. The data analysis illuminated the social process of purposeful conflict as intrinsic to the relationship between the participants and the manner in which they perceived and related to each other. The intent of the juvenile justice facility, as revealed through the adult participants' accounts, was to maintain social order and change or rehabilitate the adolescent clients. The mechanisms that were employed in these endeavours included components of program structure, staff roles, and staff responsibilities which left little room for the adolescents' self expression. In fact, the adolescents in the system were systematically silenced in the name of maintaining the program structure and social order. Given that the system held the inherent power and vested this power in the role of

the child care counsellors, the adolescents saw few opportunities for self-expression and often resorted to forms of expression that could and were largely considered as dysfunctional and delinquent. These included, but were not limited to: **scapegoating, escape, playing the game**, and **communicating**. Attempts to silence the adolescents appeared to exacerbate the conflict between the child care counsellors and the adolescents as the teens firstly sought to be heard, and secondly sought to reveal the adults as wrong. These polarised agendas and resulting cultures encapsulated the social process of purposeful conflict as each party engaged in it for self determined reasons; reasons that were influenced as much by the system as they were the relationship between the two. In brief, this autocratic system was revealed as a component that contributed greatly to the adolescents' acting-out behaviours as they resisted, rebelled, or challenged the assumptions that they would comply or change within a system that attempted to control and oppress them.

The assertion that the system was autocratic and oppressive may appear to be an unfair indictment of a system that serves high-risk adolescent offenders. However, the reports of staff members and adolescents throughout this research illuminate the nuances of the system's negative influence on the adolescents' acting-out behaviours. Adolescents and staff members were able to articulate how the rigid enforcement of rules only serves to frustrate the adolescents, how the inconsistencies in the staff members' enforcement of rules leads to more conflict and how a child care counsellor, less comfortable with processing feelings (venting), will move too soon to consequences and further conflict

with the adolescents. The adolescents' reports that there were few avenues within the system through which they could have a voice confirmed that it was in the system that the adolescents learned what they had to do to find a voice. The adolescents' choice to find voice through the less functional methods previously detailed was a product of a system that denied them other ways of exercising power or being heard in the system. The study of the social process of purposeful conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents within a juvenile justice facility confirmed that conflict occurred between counsellors and adolescents in a manner that they perceived as largely purposeful. Further, the research revealed that in some way this conflict was related to the social context or organisational system in which the participants were situated.

As was acknowledged in the preliminary literature review, there is little research on the systemic nature of the adolescents' acting-out behaviours; rather the behaviour tends to be attributed to factors either within the adolescents, or to micro variables such as peers, personality, and family processes. Throughout this research, participants, both the adolescents and the counsellors, identified aspects of the system and each other that contributed to the incidence of conflict between them. These included their expectations and lived experiences of each other, an organisational culture that supported conflict and the oppression of clients within the system. The outcome of the purposeful conflict was that adolescents tried to find a voice in the system and if they could not they "escaped" or were found to not "fit" the program. The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to currently published research and theory in the field.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion of the Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the study presented in Chapter 4 are discussed in relation to current literature. The preliminary literature presented in the methodology chapter (Chapter 2) was reviewed for the purposes of locating the work in the literature and disclosing the forestructure for the study. This chapter will provide an exploration of the findings of this research as they relate to relevant research, and for the purposes of expanding the evolving theory of adolescent-counsellor conflict within a juvenile justice facility.

It was not so much the intent of this study to develop a rigorous theory regarding the phenomenon of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents, as to understand the participants' accounts of conflict and their experience of how power was manifest in the incidence of conflict. As was acknowledged in Chapter 2 (Methodology) there is little published work beyond arm-chair theorising about systemic influences on adolescent acting-out. Therefore, my purpose throughout this chapter is to compare the grounded theory generated from these data with what is available in the literature. I believe that the participants' rich accounts of conflict led to a more expansive view of the phenomenon of conflict, such that research on social processes and dynamics in alternate social milieus can serve to inform this research and locate it in current literature.

This literature review illuminates the theory further by reviewing a broad base of research that offers not only a systemic perspective of organisations that serve clients, but

explores the attributes of those systems as they pertain to clients' experiences in various contexts. In particular, I explore the variables that might contribute to and sustain conflict between clients and counsellors as they relate to the individual's exercise of power. As I began my literature review, I found that research on adolescent-counsellor conflict in juvenile justice facilities had not been conducted by other researchers; in part this had led me to conduct this research. As I sought areas of the research literature that would be pertinent to the expansion of the theory, I included conceptual areas such as: juvenile justice paradigms; social climate; conflict; counsellor perceptions; and client perceptions. Theoretical areas explored included: symbolic interactionism; critical theory; and family systems theory. Lastly, I explored areas of research related to relational factors in counsellor-client relationships; these included: treatment versus punishment; client-counsellor relationships; non-programmatic influences on rehabilitation, and, motivational factors in treatment environs. I was led to these areas through rigorous cross-referencing keywords with the concepts that emerged through my data analysis.

The concepts that emerged through the data analysis and the fact that the adolescents had been court ordered to reside at the program caused me to believe initially that **the requirement for compliance** was the over-arching theme. That is, that the referring systems (family, society and the juvenile justice) had ascertained that there were aspects of non-compliance within the adolescents. It was believed, by these referring systems that compliance could be achieved through referral to the program within which this research took place. When describing the adolescents, some staff members noted that

the referral was in fact an adolescent's last chance to "turn it around", indicating an expectation that the adolescents would "toe the line", and "shape-up" while in the program, that is, become compliant. Webster's Dictionary (Soukhanov & Ellis, 1984), offers two definitions of the word compliance: a) "A disposition or tendency to yield to the will of others" and b)" to acquiesce to a wish, request or demand". These definitions appear to address only the system's expectation of the adolescents and do not give voice to the adolescent's lived experience within the system. The chosen theme, **purposeful conflict**, came from perspectives offered by both adults and adolescents who participated in this project and by my observations and analysis and was therefore chosen as reflective of the participants' accounts of the social process they were engaged in.

The Theory Located within Current Literature

The central social process identified through this research was **purposeful conflict.** It was prevalent at the program on a daily basis and viewed by the participants as an event that had meaning and value to them. Of paramount significance to the incidence of conflict were the perceptions and expectations that each party carried with respect to the other. This was captured under the category, **the need for change**, and was identified as the antecedent to conflict. These perceptions and expectations serve as antecedents to the incidence of conflict and will be explored within the literature related to symbolic interactionism and juvenile justice paradigms.

Through the data analysis, a supporting context for conflict was identified within the system. This not only related to the participants' beliefs about the purpose of conflict,

but how those in the system organise in a manner that revolves around the expression and exercise of power. The first dimension identified within this category relates to aspects of the system that primarily ensure the adults receive and retain power in the system, and in this, the findings of this study may be compared with current literature on: social climate in correctional institutions; organisational influences on delinquency; family systems theory; and critical theory. Secondly, the dimension related to the adolescents giving power to the adults will be discussed in relation to current research on client-counsellor relationships, staff-client interactions, and motivational factors of client participation in correctional environs.

The outcome of the conflict in this grounded theory, named **the adolescents finding a voice** in the system, is compared to the current literature on: empowerment and oppression in organisational facilities; family systems theory; critical theory; and motivational factors in correctional environs.

Antecedent to Conflict: The Need For Change

This category encompasses the adolescents' and adults' expectations and perceptions of each other that were demonstrated to be antecedents to the social process of **purposeful conflict**. In and of themselves, attitudes towards another are relatively enduring thoughts and feelings (Simourd,1997) and are often not open to self examination or reflection. While these deeply held thoughts and feelings might be regarded by some as micro-variables within a system, namely the human-being (Simourd, 1997), I would suggest that they are actually located within the organisational system

within which the participants operate. Indeed, the participants' perceptions and expectations are related to their experience of the other in the role the system has attributed to that individual (i.e. correctional counsellor and delinquent adolescents).

Symbolic Interactionism

From the participants' accounts, the roles the system assigned to the individuals proved to be influences in their perceptions and expectations of each other, such that social roles were key to their assessment of other. This is consistent with grounded theory's philosophical foundations in symbolic interactionism that holds that human interactions are understood in their social context (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Further, all behaviour is viewed as symbolic in nature and individuals are believed to act and interact based on symbols that have meanings and value for them. It follows then, that the perceptions and expectations a participant attributes to the other as they relate to each other, determines the quality of their relationship. As this research revealed, different adults attributed different perceptions to an adolescent and accordingly acted differently towards that adolescent based on their perceptions. Similarly, the adolescents attributed qualities and attributes to the staff members and these became entrenched in the adolescents' culture and thus dictated how the adolescents would react to and behave within their relationships with specific adults. In this way, the participants constructed their behaviours as they related to each other, such that meaning about power and conflict was constructed and behaviours modified through an interpretative process of relating within the court mandated juvenile justice facility (Anderson, 1991).

Adult Perceptions of Adolescents

Bazemore and Terry (1997), in their analyses of juvenile justice paradigms, concluded that policy makers in the field have generally assigned adolescents to one of two policy lenses, the adolescent is either a victim or a villain. They note that when applied, "the lens . . . helps professionals see certain characteristics of these young people, but blinds them to others" (p. 669). Of note is the fact that, increasingly, young offenders in the last decade are being regarded more as villains and deserving of punishment (Bazemore & Terry, 1997; Johnson & Bonta, 1985). A victim is someone who through no fault of his own has deficits and needs that the system should respond to in a treatment mode, while the villain is seen as intentionally doing harm to others and society and therefore requiring deterrents to his behaviour. In this research project, it was revealed that staff members who had worked at the program for a longer period generally viewed the adolescents more as villains rather than as victims. This is consistent with Goocher's (1994) description of staff members' perceptions of incarcerated adolescent sexual offenders as "manipulative, conniving, non-compliant, and resistant . . . who deny accountability for their behaviour" (p. 244) and seek ways to have power and control over the treatment milieu with the possibility of further offending against staff members or peers within that facility. This view of the juvenile offender, due in part to Martinson's (1974) finding that "nothing works", has shifted programs serving juvenile offenders away from treatment to punishment (Bonta & Johnson, 1985).

While the adults' impressions of the adolescents in this research may be socially

constructed out of their lived experience of adolescents, it is evident that society also plays a role in shaping these impressions. Sagatun (1991) has noted that perceptions of who ultimately should be considered responsible for the minor's delinquency varies among different social groups. She found that among probation officers, parents, and delinquent minors the attribution of responsibility was usually assigned to the family, friends, or the minor in varying degrees. These perceptions then shaped how the system responded to the adolescents, particularly with respect to sentencing and processing. It was noted that these attributional styles were influential in the probation officer's report to the court and that the attribution style of the probation officer had more of an influence on the judge and ruling than did the actual crime committed. This supports the position that perception is highly influential to the manner in which incarcerated adolescents are treated, an idea that is supported in this research.

Supporting context for conflict

The perceptions and expectations that the participants held with regard to each other contributed significantly to the incidence of conflict between the adults and the adolescents. These perceptions appeared to be incongruent with how each party perceived him/herself thereby contributing to the misunderstandings and tensions in these relationships. To a large degree, the adolescent and adult cultures were polarised in their perceptions of the process in which they were engaged; it therefore followed that the manner in which they reacted to the incidence of conflict varied greatly. The fact that these perceptions were not grounded in the individual's experience of other, but were

based on assumptions, prior experience, and stereotyping, led to the manifest nature of these differences to be acted out as conflict and opposition. It is interesting to note that while the need for change was identified as an antecedent to the incidence of conflict it also became a condition of conflict, in that depending on what the adults or adolescents perceived needed to change in the other so they would initiate contact that evolved into conflict.

Social Climate -Treatment versus Punishment

The application of a filter such as "villain" to a delinquent adolescent has social and political implications for that adolescent. As Goocher (1994) has noted, the acceptance of the view of a juvenile sex offender as "an anti-social, conduct-disordered, manipulative, deviant person" (p. 244) permits the system (charged with managing the juvenile sex offender) to operate from a punitive rather than a therapeutic orientation; where confrontation is more common than accountability. Goocher distinguished between a therapeutic milieu that generally provides varying levels of rewards and privileges for compliance with the program's expectations and the more punitive design of a program structure model. The program structure model she suggested "include(s) intensive and continuous confrontation of the adolescents for any rule infraction, an impressive armamentarium of disciplinary consequences, an assumption of deviant purpose and motivation about almost any behaviour that . . . (is) even slightly disapproved of or suspect by staff and a requirement of strict adherence to innumerable rules" (p. 244). This description of the social climate of a punitive juvenile offender

program fits fairly accurately with the adolescents' accounts and observational data recorded throughout this research. The fact that the staff members characterised the program as therapeutic seems inconsistent with the actual model in place. Indeed, when asked their rationale for interventions it was generally for the purpose of ensuring that the program structure was adhered to, rather than a treatment or client-centred concern. That is, the staff members' priority appeared to be aspects of the program's operation, reflecting Goocher's description of a program structure model, a model designed to exert power and control over residents, consistent with a corrections model. Adopting a model of intervention that includes the staff members' domination over the resident population was observed by Goocher to be counter-productive to the aims of a treatment program. She noted that this type of program design lends itself to the corruption of the staff members as they begin to find themselves engaging in behaviours not too dissimilar from those of the offenders with whom they work. This type of identification with clients, Goocher explained, is a function of a system that demands unquestioned staff group unity, rigid behaviour management, confrontation, and program-wide control, resulting in the defensive identification of the staff members with the response styles of the residents. This could explain why in this research project it was the staff members who had the most longevity and were full-time employees who had more closely adopted behaviours that could be viewed as similar to those of the adolescents in terms of aggression, coercion, secrecy, and abuse of authority.

Goocher (1994) offered some insights into how social climate is influenced by the

organisational goals of the system; if the goal is punishment then a program structure model is indicated; if rehabilitation is the goal, then a therapeutic model is indicated. She noted that the problem of program development and behaviour management of challenging populations is difficult. Operational matters in residential care are not generally reported in the literature. However, Goocher was able to pinpoint some of the pitfalls that can occur when quasi-correctional programs are not assessing the extent to which they are addressing the multiple problems (behavioural, emotional and psychological) of the residents. With respect to the current research site and the behaviours of the staff members, Goocher's work described how a program structure model can and does contribute to the staff-members defensive identification with the clients. This identification contributes to the staff-members behaving in ways not too dissimilar from the clients with whom they are working. Staff members at the research site under study had adopted behaviours that could be viewed as similar to those of the adolescents in terms of aggression, coercion, secrecy, and abuse of authority. I believe from my discussions with the staff members that they truly believe that they are operating in the interests of the adolescents entrusted to their care. I further understand that the work in these types of environments is inherently stressful. It therefore behoves the administrative wing and program managers to ensure that the system is organised in a manner that optimises the functioning of all of its members. The following section on **organisational influences on acting out behaviour** sheds some light on ways that individuals in the system can be supported to function optimally.

Organisational Influences on Acting out Behaviour

System level support for client/counsellor conflict. The theory generated through this research expands our view of conflict within a juvenile justice facility for male offenders. It embeds the social process of purposeful conflict within the system in which the adolescents and adults were located and demonstrated the system's impact on the nature of the conflict. I chose to review the literature on Family Systems Theory in relation to the evolving theory of conflict in this study in part due to the fact that the staff-members in the program referred to the program of study as a "family". Family Systems Theory seeks to broaden our understanding of phenomena that are usually attributed to the individual, but can be systemic in nature. Family Systems Theory evaluates the system in which the individual is residing or acting and in so doing assesses the health of that system (Cashwell & Vacc, 1996; Leone et al., 1990; Pitsch, 1992; Skrtic, 1990; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995).

In Family Systems Theory, health is dimensionalised with respect to the system's ability to meet the divergent needs of its members. The theory expands our view of the individual's behaviour as it is embedded within various systems. Pitsch (1992), in his article on system's theory within residential care environments, noted that in order for a system to remain organised and integrated it must ensure a flow of energy within the system. He stated that, "in social systems, information is the energy which counteracts the tendency towards increased disorganisation and confusion" (p. 99). He therefore recommended that systems ensure a free flow of information both within the system and

across the boundaries of the system with other related individuals (i.e., families of the adolescents). Data gleaned for the participants in this research project indicated that information did not flow smoothly within the program under study. Adults and adolescents alike reported that they were denied or lacked information they believed they needed to operate more effectively in the system. As a result, some of the participants experienced the system as alienating and hostile.

Not only do staff members and adolescents within the system experience a lack of information flow, researchers have found that systems serving adolescents frequently exclude families and other related individuals from contact with clients in the name of the clients' best interest (Bratter, 1990; Goldor Lerner, 1988; Goocher, 1994; Pitsch, 1992). The exclusion of outside parties could, in and of itself, contribute to the needs of one or more members of that system (i.e. contact with family members) being denied. Hence, Family Systems Theory would say that the system was not promoting the health of its members and that it could expect that individuals within that system would be manifesting dysfunctional behaviours.

Dysfunctional behaviour as defined above could be the actions of an adolescent who is denied family contact choosing to leave the resource without permission in an attempt to visit with his family. His actions would be regarded by the system as a breach of the program structure, and therefore dysfunctional in nature. In addition, leaving the program without permission would represent a breach of the adolescent's probation order which has a reside and abide (court order to live at a specified location and adhere to the

directives set out in the probation order) requirement; leading to further documentation on the adolescent's non-compliance. The adolescent may, rather than choose to leave without permission, decide to retreat and become depressed and less able to accomplish his daily responsibilities. Again, failure to participate in the established structure and routines of the program represents non-compliance on the part of the adolescent. In these examples it is demonstrated that the system's failure to meet the adolescent's needs results in a contribution to his acting-out or dysfunctional behaviours. As was revealed through this research, adolescents in the program identified that their needs were not met within the system, and further that this was something they believed needed to change. The adolescents also were able to identify how this caused them to be oppositional and defiant within the system, thereby exhibiting behaviours considered dysfunctional in their attempt to get needs met and to be heard.

Another way that a poor flow of information influenced the well being of members of the system is in the manner in which information is disseminated and shared. Information that should be free flowing within the system should be relative to the system's goals, objectives, and the relationships between its members (Bratter, 1990; Pitsch, 1992). Goffman (1961) noted unfortunately that often information within social service systems is restricted, particularly with respect to decisions the staff members make regarding clients and their fate. This can lead to disorganisation and disintegration within the system which in turn may lead to the members of that system symptomising these stresses (Pitsch, 1992). In the case of incarcerated males this can manifest as more

delinquent, dysfunctional, or oppositional behaviours much as those that were evidenced within their family of origin, and which had precipitated their original removal from their family home.

The flow of information within the juvenile justice system under study appeared to be detrimental to the health of its members. Of concern was that it was entrenched within the organisational structure and therefore less likely to be impacted by one member's concerns or objections. The category **how adults receive or retain power** dimensions included: rule ambiguity, arbitrary decision-making, silencing of the adolescents' voices in the system, and the program's isolation. Systems theorists would view each of these dimensions as contributing to the stunting of the information flow among members of the system and, as such, detrimental to the maintenance of a healthy system. As Family Systems Theory might predict, and as was evidenced within the system where this research occurred, members of that system would begin to act out or symptomise dysfunction because of the "unhealthy" system. This manifested among adolescents as a variety of behaviours that were labelled as delinquent or acting-out. In the adults it manifested as a seeming disregard for team members, in that decisions were made and their rationale was not always shared with all members of the staff group. In addition, there was no exchange of ideas or challenging of decisions even when a staff member disagreed with another staff member's decision; rather, the decision was over ruled. These seemingly counter-productive actions on the part of the staff-members in the system contributed to the disorganisation and poor flow of information and, as such, can

be considered as dysfunctional in nature.

A systems perspective would not view the acting out behaviours of members of the system as pathological in nature, but rather seek to understand how those individuals interface within the system they find themselves in and how that in turn contributes to their anti-social or inappropriate behaviours (Leone et al.1990; Skrtic, 1990). This appears to offer a fresh perspective to the usual assessment of an acting-out individual. It makes sense in that some children will do well with one teacher and others not. When the school year ends and class teachers change, often the child who was not doing so well does better with a new teacher. Parents understand this as they vie to have their child in a certain school, day-care, or in a specific class. It appears that once we approach the adolescent years we lose sight of this possibility and instead attribute the acting-out to the individual (Horan, 1988). In the juvenile justice system, there are many reasons to believe that the adolescent is inherently "bad"; however, as this research revealed, the adolescents were seeking an opportunity to change and learn. What appeared to be impeding them was the system in which they found themselves. This offers a challenge to program managers and staff members who operate such systems to critically evaluate aspects of the system that serve to empower or impede clients in their progress. The following section addresses those aspects of the system that might be worth such an evaluation.

Oppression within systems. Critical theory offers another way of viewing organisational systems. Concerned primarily with the emancipation of individuals,

critical theory looks at how individuals communicate and act towards each other with the intent of explaining social processes and promoting an understanding within social groups that are capable of transforming society (Eastland, 1994). As previously discussed, people in positions of power within the juvenile justice system develop perceptions of incarcerated or delinquent adolescents which then dictate how the system and the service providers will respond to the adolescents. Often, as Palmer (1995) has noted, these perceptions have more to do with personal attributes of the adult than the nature of the adolescents. Staff members at the research site observing an adolescent refusing to get out of bed, characterised the behaviour as non-compliant and accordingly issued consequences that amounted to fines and loss of privileges. If evaluated by a critical theorist, this single incident of communication and action would be explained as an event that serves to establish the social order, adult domination and adolescent oppression within the power structure of the program. Clearly, the adult's perception of the behaviour as non-compliant, and therefore a challenge to the social order, resulted in an intervention that was aimed at extinction of the behaviour. As was noted in the earlier literature review, often staff members in residential service organisations perceive an adolescent's oppositional behaviour as a challenge to the maintenance of social order (Horan, 1988); the resulting tensions can sometimes manifest as adults' abuse of the authority inherent in their professional role (Reitsma-Street, 1988). These types of reactive responses from staff members often exacerbate the adolescent's problem behaviours, as noted in the section on social climate. If the goal of a program is

rehabilitation then a therapeutic model that considers the needs of the resident population would be best employed. However, at the juvenile justice facility the norms included silencing of the adolescents, arbitrary decision-making by adults, maintenance of a social order determined by the adults, and enforcement of the rules by the child care staff.

Power vested in a person's role without accountability to anyone for how that power is enacted can lead to a sense of omnipotence on the part of the individual and ultimately the abuse of power (Bratter, 1990). Bratter noted that this omnipresence can manifest as the belief that "only I know what is right and good. I possess the power to implement my beliefs!" (p. 63). A further extension of this can result in the dehumanising of others by forcing them to become dependent, and also by asserting expectations on their behaviours that the oppressors would not themselves adhere to. The attitude becomes one of "do as I say, not as I do". Bratter's example of the abuse of power rings with familiarity when reading quotations from the adolescents at the program where this research took place. Many of the adolescents spoke of double standards for adults' and adolescents' behaviours; similarly, they acknowledged arbitrary decisions being handed down by staff members depending on that staff member's beliefs. Adolescents also spoke of idiosyncratic directions and wishes of staff members that were followed up with consequences for non-compliance. This is part of the tyranny that Bratter has suggested accompanies the abuse of power. This coupled with the adolescents' reported experiences of no viable recourse for them within the system should they believe that they had been treated unfairly raises further concerns about the power vested in the adults' role.

The adolescents were able to articulate their concerns regarding the seeming lack of accountability in the system and compare this experience with their experiences of juvenile jail. "Whereas the organisational structure of most prisons is hierarchical, the structure of most juvenile institutions is flat" (Smith, Maume, & Reiner, 1997, p. 147). This supports the adolescents' accounts that there was little hierarchical/organisational accountability at the program in which they resided. That is, the director was not regarded as the boss by the child care counsellors; whereas in jail the adolescents reported that there were distinct and effective lines of authority and accountability. They also identified that these lines of accountability and authority in a jail setting offered them some protection from the arbitrary decision-making and abuse of power by child care counsellors that they reported as existing an the program in which they now resided. As Smith, Maume and Reiner (1997) noted, differing organisational structures will affect social climates differently. The adolescents did not experience the same sense of safety at the program as they felt in jail due to the flattened hierarchical structure and the lack of opportunity for their input, or a measure of accountability within the system.

Bratter (1990) acknowledged that "when individuals are excluded from influencing institutional policy, a toxic "I-You" or "We-They" dichotomy is formed. This sense of impotence produces alienation. Alienation becomes galvanized to include acts of sabotage, rebellion, and ultimately, wanton acts of destruction" (p.70). This relates specifically to the adolescents' accounts of the manner in which their voices were silenced within the program and the fact that they saw no opportunities for meaningful

input in the program. Bratter's account that this type of alienation leads to behaviours that would, in the juvenile justice system, be classed as delinquent or acting-out supports the premise that the system itself, in this case, could be contributing to the adolescents' acting-out.

How Adults Were Given Power by the Adolescents

In the grounded theory arising from the study's data, juxtaposed with how adults receive or retain power is the concept of how adults were given power by adolescents. The dimensions of this category were twofold, primarily attributes that the adults possessed that caused the adolescents to give power to them and treat them with some regard; and that the adolescents acquiesced to the adults' inherent authority in order to facilitate their desire to change themselves and move through and out of the system. This aspect of the research is related to client-counsellor relationships, interactions, and motivational factors of client participation in treatment environs.

Client-Counsellor Relationships

Recent studies have begun to look at the nuances of client-counsellor relationships (Towberman, 1992), due in part to the fact that it is now acknowledged that it is within these complex interactions that real change and treatment occur (Strong & Claiborn, 1982). As this research revealed, there were staff at the program who possessed certain characteristics that the adolescents believed were related to their successful graduation through the program. Much of the research on effective programs has focused

on system aspects of cost-effectiveness or rates of recidivism (Bonta & Johnson, 1985; Towberman, 1992). Bonta and Johnson (1985) noted that they were unable to identify any empirical studies that have looked at staff characteristics as they relate to outcomes for clients. However, Andrews and Kiessling's (1980) research on probation officer attributes demonstrated that staff characteristics are linked to intervention styles that are then linked to behavioural outcomes for residents. Probation officers who scored higher than their colleagues in empathy and socialisation were more likely to influence their clients' rate of recidivism positively. This supports Palmer (1995) who found that the matching of client and therapists' characteristics led to outcomes that are more positive for the client. While these studies were predominantly concerned with recidivism rates, they laid the ground work for the possibility that positive engagement of the client, by a person charged with caring and counselling that client, could bring some positive influences to bear on that client's rehabilitative efforts that were neither programmatic nor specified as part of the job but rather generated through the counsellor's personal characteristics. In fact, Johnson and Bonta (1985) went so far as to suggest that program managers might be wise to consider staff members' attitudes and personality traits prior to hiring.

Within the program where this research took place, there existed some reported experiences that did not at first appear to fit with the theory of conflict being developed. Indeed, there were reports from adults on the rewarding nature of their work:

A: you have **a chance here to really build a relationship** with the kids and

really **get to know them** and I think that is really important.

and their dedication to the adolescents:

> **A:** It's [pause] there's never a dull moment**. I really enjoy coming to work** because I know that it's never going to be the same, it's ever-changing depending on the sort of---how the boys are feeling, what's happened to them in their day.

The adolescents also acknowledged there were things that they valued about their time at the program:

> **Y:** I also think **this program is good in a lot of ways too**. When I look back at myself; I wish you would have interviewed me in the first time because when I look back at that, it's been a long time. I've gained like 25 pounds of muscle, been off drugs and everything and it's all like, there's all these negative things, but **I also think there's a lot of positives**.[pause] I think it's hard to have --- they are such solid rules, but they are not – [pause] Like the solid rules are written up, but it's all staff's different interpretations which are enforced. So it's all just a matter of getting used to it.

The evidence of a polarisation between the adolescent and adult cultures identified throughout this research was not the only polarity that existed within the program. As is evidenced in the previous quotation, one of the adolescents is able to talk about the things he values in the program while concurrently identifying the things that he experiences as difficult and which contribute to the incidence of conflict between the adults and adolescents. The following section discusses this apparent dichotomy in

relation to the theory that evolved from this research.

A Challenge to the Theory?

It is noted that the theory offered here regarding the social process of conflict between the child care counsellors and adolescents could appear, from the preceding comments, to have failed to explain some of the aspects of the client-counsellor relationship. This may appear so on face value; however, analyses of these quotes reveals otherwise.

In the first of the two adults' quotes the staff's assertion that "you have a chance here to really **build a relationship** with the kids" is a dimension of the social process of **purposeful conflict** and is explored in the chapter on Findings (Chapter 4). As is revealed in that analysis, the adults' beliefs that conflict was instrumental in **relationship building** with the adolescents represented a polar opposite of the adolescents' reported experiences of conflict with the adults. Indeed, when asked what they thought an adult was trying to do in the conflict situation, most adolescents believed that the adult had a punitive intent. This belief, held by the adolescents, refuted the adults' comments here that conflict was actually instrumental and could be used as a successful relationship building tool. Similarly, the adult's comment that, "there's **never a dull moment**. I really enjoy coming to work ", refers again to the incidence of conflict, which the adult believes assists the relationship with the adolescents and therefore coming to work is purposeful and enjoyable. This was not confirmed by the adolescents' accounts.

While the adolescents did not view conflict as a relationship building tool, they

did, however, report aspects of the system that caused them to relate more positively to the adults. These are addressed under the category, **how the adults were given power by the adolescents**, and pertain to personal non-conflictual elements of the adolescent's relationship with the adult, including fairness, respect and opportunities to learn. Again, this is diametrically opposed to the adult's belief that conflict aides in building a relationship with the adolescents. Lastly, the adolescent's comments in the above quotation; within the confines of the theory proposed here, could be seen as a dimension of the category **how the adults were given power by the adolescents**. The dimension, **learning,** explores how the adolescents accepted the adults' authority in their desire to change and move through the system as expediently as possible. While much of the adolescents reported experience of the system suggested that their experience was not conducive to their being able to change, there were adolescents who accepted that the system was the only option. In this adolescent's comments he was clearly acknowledging both the negative aspects of the system and the fact that despite those negative aspects, he was progressing in his understanding of how the system worked and what he needed to do to graduate. As he says, "it's all just a matter of getting used to it".

The previous section offers an interpretation of the theory as it can be used to address perceived inconsistencies in the participants' reported experiences of their relationships and the system. For the purposes of exploring the phenomenon of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents, the factors that related to and contributed to reported and observed conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents were of

primary interest to the researcher and therefore the focus of the data collection and analysis.

Staff member–Adolescent Interactions

Consistent with published research, this research found that intangible elements of the program, such as staff member-adolescent interactions, were influential in affecting the adolescents' attitude and behaviours in a positive manner when compared to tangible elements, such as program structure, which seemed to contribute more to the incidence of conflict and resistance on the part of the adolescents (Clarke, 1985; Palmer, 1995; Rutter & Giller, 1983). As Towberman (1992) noted, perceived commonality between client and counsellor along dimensions related to personality may assist in the bonding process that enables the client to view the treatment environment as more supportive. This fits with an adolescent's previous account that staff members "who . . . you can talk to and you respect what they say and you think they've gone through it all", were staff members that the adolescents were more likely to speak favourably about, as opposed to staff members who had, as one adolescent reported, "(no) clue what (we) . . . are going through". Adolescents who felt an affiliation with a staff member were less critical of that staff member, the program in general, and the structure the program imposed on their life. Further, Towberman noted that client-counsellor identification over time has been demonstrated to lead to increased therapeutic effectiveness and client change. This is significant information for the participants of this research, since the staff members who participated in this study considered that one of their major responsibilities was to initiate

change. In addition, the adolescents acknowledged their desire to change while in the program. In fact, a key antecedent to the incidence of conflict was the counsellors' and adolescents' perceptions that there was a need for change. Towberman (1992) related the possibility of change directly to attributes residing within the perceptions and personalities of the participants, in particular, those specifically related to their affiliation with each other, and the client's perception of the treatment milieu. If these are seen to be in evidence in affirming ways, they can positively influence the outcomes of treatment and sustainable change for the client. This confirms the findings of this grounded theory that the system and non-programmatic aspects of the system influenced the adolescents' desire to change and move successfully through the program.

Staff members' attitudes and characteristics are not the only non-programmatic aspects of a social system that can influence outcomes for clients. Towberman (1992) noted in her research two variables related to positive outcomes for offenders, their perception of the program and client counsellor similarities. She used the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) to measure client-counsellor similarity and the Correctional Institutions Environmental Scale (CIES) to measure perceptions of the treatment environment in a facility for female juvenile offenders. Her findings demonstrated that the perception the inmates had of the counsellors' degree of similarity to themselves, along the dimension of personality, directly affected their appraisal of the treatment environment. Clients who experienced the counsellor as similar to themselves on dimensions related to sociability, character, responsibility, and intrapersonal values

were more likely to positively appraise the treatment environment. Relative to this research project, Towberman's study may explain, in part, the present study's adolescents' reported sense of alienation from some of the adults within the program. The adolescents believed that some of the staff members had no understanding of what they were going through or what their life had been like, which would speak to a lack of affiliation, empathy or identification. These dimensions of personality could account for the adolescents' negative assessments of the program with respect to the staff, its management and program structure.

Motivational Factors Related to Client Participation in Treatment

Hirschi's (1969) Theory of Control has received considerable empirical support since its development and has become a dominant theory in the explanation of delinquent behaviour (Knight & Tripodi, 1996). Control Theory holds that people with strong bonds to society are less likely to commit acts that are counter to the values of that society. Knight and Tripodi (1996) applied this theory to their research within a juvenile detention centre for 168 incarcerated adolescents. Their findings demonstrated that strong bonding existed amongst adolescents and their families, 70% of whom had themselves been in jail. Goocher (1994) found that the family's own delinquency impacted on the adolescents' behaviour, such that the adolescents protected the family by keeping the secret of criminal behaviour from parties outside of the family and thereby affirmed their affiliation with a criminal sub-culture. Knight and Tripod (1996) concluded that this type of bonding was indicative of the adolescents' identification with parental norms that in

this case sanctioned and tolerated criminal behaviours. This finding led them to expand on Hirschi's (1969) contention that those with strong bonds to society are less likely to deviate from the social norms of that society, and that those who are strongly bonded to a criminal sub-culture are less likely to conform to conventional norms of behaviour. Knight and Tripod therefore argued that services and programs should be focused on early intervention type strategies that include family members. It could therefore follow that programs serving adolescents who are affiliated with a criminal sub-culture, or are identifying with parents who themselves have been criminally active, would seek to promote bonds with a socially sanctioned culture within the treatment milieu. As was evidenced at the research site, the adolescents had very clear standards that they believed the adults should adhere to in their interventions and relationships with them. Violations in this unspoken code of conduct resulted in the adolescents choosing not to relate to the adult as a change agent and rather seek to expose the adult as "wrong" or a "liar". The adolescents had noted that there were staff members whom they liked to learn from and those that they felt respected by. In this way, a program serving adolescents would be wise to incorporate adult role modelling that would enhance the adolescent's affiliation with that adult and possibly influence the adolescent's assimilation of socially sanctioned ways of relating in their world.

It appears that the manner in which the adolescents assessed the staff members had the potential to affect treatment outcomes for themselves. Sagatun's (1991) research raised another aspect of the adolescents' assessments that impacted on their treatment or

rehabilitation in the system, and that was the degree to which the adolescents' family and the adolescent himself, agreed or disagreed with the decisions of the court. Sagatun's (1991) research sought to understand who, and to what degree, different components of the juvenile justice system attributed responsibility for the adolescent's delinquency. The degree of agreement, between the adolescent and the system, on how responsibility was attributed was directly related to how co-operative the adolescent then was within the system. This initial assessment by the system dictated how successful interventions with the adolescent would be. Sagatun proposes that the more agreement between the parties, the more hope for the adolescent's rehabilitation. This can be related to the adolescents at the research site who were subject to various assessments by staff members as to their degree of responsibility for their acts. Unlike a treatment approach where delinquent acts are viewed as indicative of a need or related to systemic aspects of the adolescent's experience, in this system the adolescents frequently heard, "You did the crime - now do the time". This attitude from the staff members seemed to be offensive to some of the adolescents who acknowledged, "Yeh, I made some bad decisions and choices, but they are not trying to help me" and "I am here to be helped and make changes". They experienced the attribution of 100% responsibility to themselves as punitive and, as discussed earlier, this type of attribution is more congruent with a villain-punishment lens than a therapeutic milieu. This attribution from staff served to alienate the adolescents further from the adults as they experienced the adult's assessment of them as incongruent with their life and reality. The degree of agreement between the adolescent's perceptions

of himself in the system and the adult's assessment of him affected the outcome of rehabilitative efforts for the adolescent offender in a negative manner.

Finding a Voice in the System

Scapegoating

Scapegoating is described in Family Systems Theory as a dysfunctional response to system stress that seeks to restore balance and homeostasis to the system (Pitsch, 1992). An organisational system tends to develop "symptom bearers" just as family systems can. As family therapists agree, the behaviours of one individual in the family are often indicative of a systemic problem. For example, the teen that begins to act-out in the community may be trying to alleviate stress or draw attention to dynamics in his family that are adverse to his well-being. In this event, there are questions that the system can ask that may reveal the nature of the stress in the system. Pitsch (1992) suggested that scapegoating of one individual may not be simply indicative of the individual's stress but may be evidence of a dysfunctional system whereby individual needs are not respected and parties are complying within the system in ways that do not promote their own development. The resulting dynamic is that individuals in the system begin to turn on each other. Pitsch (1992) also observed that in the case of an adolescent being removed from a family system another child in the family will then became the scapegoat or symptom bearer. This has implications for programs serving adolescents, and in particular the program studied in this research, since scapegoating was identified by both

adults and adolescents as prevalent within the system. Further, it explains how the use of scapegoating can be viewed as a cry for help, as a way of having a voice in the system, that while it appears to be about the behaviours of the adolescents, it is in fact a manifestation of a dysfunctional system. The adolescents' acting-out then is a way for them to have a voice that can call attention to their plight.

Unfortunately for the adolescent who may be acting-out because the system is counter to meeting his needs, not everyone views acting-out behaviour systemically. The conflicts that often occur between family members, and in the case of the system studied in this research, between child care counsellors and the adolescents, were viewed solely as acting-out behaviour on the part of the adolescents. There was some acknowledgement that these behaviours could be attributable to past hurts and pains, as discussed, but no acknowledgement that there may have been current contributing factors within the system. The adolescents' attempts therefore to find a voice in the system were identified by staff members as: delinquent, rebellious, or anti-social behaviour. Indeed, the strategies the adolescents used to find a voice looked a lot like acting-out; **escaping**, **communicating**, **scapegoating**, and **playing the game** could all be viewed as behaviour that is delinquent. Within the dimension **escaping**, running away could result in a breach of a probation order and more time incarcerated; within the dimension of **scapegoating**, persecuting a peer or provoking an adult could be classed as delinquent or criminal behaviour if taken to an extreme whereby physical assault occurs. In this manner, the system played a role in the naming of such behaviours such that they were deemed as

acting-out; rather than an indictment of a system that denied the adolescents a voice. This further served to reinforce the adults' assessment of the adolescents as delinquent or criminally inclined, a lens that fit with the perceptions of the staff members and was not questioned in the daily operations of the program. In this way, the adolescent himself became a scapegoat of the system to which he was trying to draw attention.

Danforth (1995) suggested that typically persons labelled by people serving systems have not protested the fact that they have been deemed, through a variety of processes, emotionally disturbed. He suggested that this does not represent consensus on the diagnosis so much as the fact that such protests have been selectively ignored or incorporated by the system into familiar ways of interpreting such protests. The behaviours labelled as emotionally disturbed have blinded service providers to the individual's continuous challenges to our view of them. Bratter (1990) also noted that the tendency of the oppressed to bow to the will of others may be attributable to their desire to "prolong parental power beyond the early years of helplessness" (p.67) and that this explains why incarcerated adolescents will in some cases tolerate abuses of power directed against them. Goocher (1994) noted that adolescents who comply with harsh consequences in a behaviourally oriented punitive environment may do so, not because they have internalised any understanding of the wrongfulness of their actions, but because they identify with the ethics of power and control. Recognising that they have little power in the system causes them to acquiesce to those that do. The following section elaborates further on the behaviours that the adolescents adopted in their attempts

to move through a system and have a voice.

Playing the game

Playing the game was identified by the adolescents as a means to expedite their progress through the program by learning what was expected of them in order to be released. Evaluations of correctional facilities have long struggled with what, if any, therapeutic value correctional programs hold, beyond protecting the public from the incarcerated (Muhammad, 1996). Attempts to assess the therapeutic aspects of programs have sought to identify what motivates incarcerated persons to comply with institutional expectations. Recent research by Muhammad (1996) looked at the perceptions of incarcerated adult males on strategies for release. He found that if an inmate thought that a certain behaviour would reflect positively on his release date then the inmate was more likely to engage in that behaviour. Similarly, Sagatun (1991) noted that adolescents who have been in the system for a period of time may come to realise that it is to their advantage to state that they believe that they are responsible for their delinquent acts, rather than blaming another. In this way they are meeting the system's expectation for accountability (Feld, 1990), and in so doing, likely advancing their release date. Noting that the correctional environment tends to disempower those incarcerated, such that they have little control over their lives, attempts to affect their release date may be the prisoner's only avenue through which he can attempt to get some control over his life (Feld, 1990; Muhammed, 1992). As was identified through the current research, part of the stress in the system identified by the adolescents was the fact that, unlike in juvenile

prison, in this program they could arbitrarily be given more time, and further, that what was required of them to be released was not clearly delineated. In Muhammad's study, prisoners expressed a desire to know what was expected of them up front to eliminate the game playing they felt they engaged in to try to ascertain the variables that would favourably influence the decision-makers in their release. This suggests that the strategy of **playing the game** identified through this research is consistent with the research on motivational factors for others who are incarcerated, such that any behaviour that aids detainees in getting some control over their lives will be employed in their efforts to find a "voice" in the system.

Summary of Current Literature

My purpose throughout this chapter has been to compare the grounded theory generated from the research data with current literature related to the phenomenon of conflict between child care counsellors and adolescents at a juvenile justice facility. This chapter illuminates this research further by reviewing a broad base of current literature that offers, not only a systemic perspective of organisations that serve clients, but also an exploration of the attributes of those systems as they pertain to the client's experience of the milieu. In particular, it explores the aspects of systems' and individuals' relationships that might contribute to and sustain conflict between clients and counsellors in a juvenile justice setting.

The data analysis in this study illuminated the social process of **purposeful conflict** as intrinsic to the relationship between child care counsellors and clients at a

juvenile justice facility. The process of engaging in conflict by the adolescents in order to be heard was recognised by some of the adults at the program for what it was, "a desire to be heard, to know that some one recognises me". It is within these complex interactions that real change and treatment can occur. However, as was acknowledged by the adolescents, there were many interactions with staff that did not promote or foster positive change for the adolescent. The literature supports the finding that staff characteristics are linked to intervention styles, which are then linked to behavioural outcomes for residents. Positive child care counsellor-adolescent interactions were influential in affecting the adolescents' attitude and behaviours in a positive manner, compared to tangible elements such as program structure that seemed to contribute more to the incidence of conflict and resistance on the part of the adolescents. This confirms the findings of this grounded theory that the system and non-programmatic aspects of the system influenced the adolescents' desire to change and move successfully through the program.

While child care counsellor-adolescent interactions and relationships were shown to influence treatment outcomes for the client, the research revealed that the nature of these interactions was related to the social context or organisational system in which the participants were situated. As was acknowledged by the child care counsellors at the program, the intent of the facility was to maintain social order and change or rehabilitate the adolescent clients. In fact, the adolescents in the facility were systematically silenced in the name of maintaining the social order.

The review of the current literature on social environs, organisational settings, critical theory, control theory, and family systems theory support the notion that, if given no other viable option, a person will resort to less functional ways of self expression in order to be heard. This was evidenced in the data analysis and supports the grounded theory of purposeful conflict between child care counsellors and clients offered through this research, demonstrating that the adolescents engaged in the conflict in order to be heard.

The fact that the adolescents were systematically silenced within the system, giving them no viable recourse against the injustices they perceived, contributed to the incidence of conflict between the counsellors and the adolescents. Aspects of the system that served to establish the social order, adult domination and adolescent oppression within the power structure of the program, were instrumental in alienating the adolescents. Alienation from a system that has responsibility to care for an individual, whether that be family, society, a counsellor or a treatment environment, was identified through this literature review to further contribute to the clients' acting out behaviours. As such, the literature review bore out a second finding of this research, that failure on the part of the system to address all of the needs of its clients, behavioural, emotional and psychological, contributes to the incidence of conflict between program staff and residents. In turn, this leads to dysfunctional and oppositional behaviour on the part of clients, rather than rehabilitative gains.

Earlier studies have suggested that aspects of systems serving adolescents can

have a negative impact on the adolescents' behaviour and further, that some of the responsibility of failing to rehabilitate adolescents should fall to the systems that serve adolescents (Leone et al., 1990; Skrtic, 1990; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). This research supported that assertion and when compared to current literature was further validated. Delinquency or acting-out were the adolescents' way of finding a voice in a system that offered no viable alternative. This offers a challenge to program managers and staff-members that operate such systems, to critically evaluate the aspects of the system that serve the client and those that serve to impede clients in their efforts at rehabilitation. The following chapter discusses the grounded theory emanating from this research and its implications for practice, policy, and research.

CHAPTER 6

Implications for Practice, Policy and Research

The conceptual lens that focused this study facilitated a critical analysis of how power was manifest in the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and clients in a juvenile justice setting. Revealed through the analysis were: the antecedent to conflict, the environment that sustained its occurrence, and the power structures that influenced the behaviours of persons within the system. In addition, grounded theory methodology sensitised the researcher to the participants' accounts of how they experienced power in their conflicts with each other and in turn how that reflected on their meaning making and sense of self in these exchanges. The methods used in the interpretation of the data guided the analysis and assisted in deriving meanings from the participants' accounts which in turn generated a grounded theory of purposeful conflict within a juvenile justice facility.

Important themes emerged through the data analysis that have implications for practice and policymaking in the field of juvenile justice. They are discussed here with respect to their significance in the field of juvenile justice and the care of adolescent clients. Suggestions for future research and the limitations of this study are discussed at the closing of this chapter.

Implications for Practice

The intent of the juvenile justice facility as revealed through the adult participants'

accounts was to maintain social order and to change or rehabilitate the adolescent clients. The mechanisms that were employed in these endeavours included components of program structure, staff roles and responsibilities, and the staff members' expectations of clients. These components were in and of themselves identified as contributing to the incidence of conflict. The data analysis illuminated the social process of **purposeful conflict** as intrinsic to the relationship between the participants and the manner in which they perceived and related to each other. Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings that have implications for child care counsellor practice.

The staff members who participated in this study considered that one of their major responsibilities was to initiate change in their adolescent clients. In addition, the adolescents acknowledged their desire to change while in the program. Towberman (1992) directly related the possibility of change to attributes residing within the perceptions and personalities of the participants; in particular, those specifically related to their affiliation with each other. As was revealed through this research, affiliation between clients and counsellors at the research site was not in evidence; this contributed to polarised agendas and much conflict. If treatment environs are to meet their mandate to promote change in their clients then it remains for them to seek ways in which they can enhance affiliation between clients and counsellors. This provides a particular challenge when, as will be discussed in relation to policy, the environment is a correctional facility. However, some of the findings of this research indicated there were elements within the program that enhanced the client's perception of affiliation with the staff and program.

As discussed in the findings, the adolescents acknowledged that the personal attributes of staff members could have a positive or negative impact on their behaviours and their affiliation with the program. The clients were able to identify aspects of the staff members' personalities and work styles that positively influenced their affiliation with the program's goals and enhanced their desire to change. In this research, the clients named these aspects as demonstrations of respect and fairness, personal non-conflictual contact with staff, and humanness. As discussed earlier, the literature supported the finding that staff characteristics are linked to intervention styles, which are then linked to behavioural outcomes for residents. Positive child care counsellor-adolescent interactions were influential in affecting the adolescent's attitude and behaviours in a positive manner. The implication for practice therefore is to ensure that these qualities of the treatment relationship are seen to be in evidence in the treatment of adolescent clients. In this way, the outcomes of treatment and the potential for sustainable change are optimised for the client.

The finding that qualities of the treatment relationship can positively affect the outcomes of treatment and sustainable change for the client suggests that attention be given to components of practice that will enhance the treatment relationship. This has been part of the child care worker training curriculum for years at the University of Victoria in British Columbia and institutions offering child care diplomas, such as Douglas College in New Westminster, BC. However, this research suggests that a program serving adolescents would be wise to incorporate aspects of the relationship that

would enhance the adolescents' affiliation with adult counsellors and thereby potentially influence the adolescents' assimilation of socially sanctioned ways of relating in their world. This is of particular interest to juvenile justice systems that are typically concerned with facilitating change with adolescents who are anti-social and oppositional. The fact that affiliation with a positive adult role model has a direct impact on treatment outcomes for clients is a profound affirmation of the importance of the role of the counsellor and the need for ethical practice.

These findings can also be said to offer guidance in assessing the quality of practice within a treatment resource. The findings suggest that conflictual or adversarial relationships between child care counsellors and adolescents, rather than being viewed as a norm of practice, should be considered as an indication that something in fact is not working in a relationship that is contrived for the sole purpose of promoting change in the client. The potential is for conflict to be regarded as a symptom of a system that is neither meeting clients' needs nor its mandate to promote change (discussed under the section on implications for policy below). It remains for administrators and supervisors to assess whether conflict is indeed a valuable component of treatment environs or whether the goals of the system are better served through non-conflictual means.

A second finding of this research related to practice was the adolescent and staff members' impressions that the program structure had adverse effects on the relationship between them. The adherence to a rigid program structure was identified by some staff as directly undermining the aims of a therapeutic relationship with clients. Staff expressed

frustration and bewilderment at the apparent need for program structure to supersede the needs of the clients. Similarly, the clients questioned the relevance of many of the rules, which they denounced as having no value to their learning, growth, development or desire for change. It appeared that enforcement of these rules only served to frustrate the adolescents and contribute to the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and clients. Goocher's (1994) findings demonstrated that a process focus rather than a structure focus in programs is indicated if outcomes are to be enhanced for clients. It therefore remains for programs to decide what they are asking their child care counsellors to value in the organisational setting. The responsibility to meet client needs and to maintain the program's integrity should not be mutually exclusive goals. This dilemma is discussed under policy with respect to the balancing of an organisation's goals with maintaining a treatment milieu. However, for our purposes here, it remains to be noted that the organisational setting, culture and objectives at the research site in this study were seen to have an adverse affect on the potential for a therapeutic relationship between staff and clients.

Thirdly, the attribution of responsibility was revealed through the literature review to be influential to outcomes for clients. Sagatun (1991) proposed that the more agreement between the parties as to who bears the responsibility for the adolescents' acting-out behaviours, the more hope there would be for the adolescents' rehabilitation. In their reports in this study, the adolescents identified how feeling blamed and judged by the counsellors contributed to their feelings of alienation within the system. This

tendency to view the adolescent as a villain rather than a victim is a current trend in the popular media and to some degree is being evidenced in the juvenile justice system with respect to sentencing and calls for legislative reviews of the laws governing young offenders. It is, however, revealed through this research that approaching young offenders as villains is counter-productive to the aims of rehabilitation. It therefore remains as a challenge to child care counsellors in the field to retain the role of advocate for the adolescent in a system that can and does act punitively towards its clients. The role of the child care counsellor has always included aspects of advocacy for marginalised and despondent adolescents. The adolescents in this study while juvenile offenders were no less so. In a system that assumes inherent control over incarcerated adolescents, the role of advocate is even more important if the systems that are designed to serve adolescents are to be held accountable to that mandate.

Implications for Policy

Earlier studies have suggested that aspects of systems serving adolescents can have a negative impact on the adolescents' behaviour and further, that some of the responsibility of failing to rehabilitate adolescents should fall to the systems that serve adolescents (Leone et al., 1990; Skrtic, 1990; Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). This research supports this assertion and, when compared to current literature, was further verified.

In seeking to understand the occurrence of conflict from the participants' accounts, this research developed a rich account of conflict that was broader than just the dynamic between those who participated in it. Of significance to policy makers and

juvenile justice administrators was the findings of this research that there were components of the system that had a direct and negative influence on the clients' and, in some cases, the counsellors' behaviours.

The adolescents and the counsellors identified aspects of the system and each other that contributed to the incidence of conflict between them, including their expectations and lived experiences of each other, an organisational culture that supported conflict, and the oppression of clients within the system. Each party engaged in the conflict for his own reasons; the counsellors in their attempts to change the adolescent and the clients in their attempts to find a voice in a system that denied them one. As discussed under the section on implications for practice it remains for clinicians and administrators to assess whether conflict is indeed a valuable component of treatment environs.

Similarly, administrators need to assess whether the treatment goals of the system are indeed attained through the strict adherence to program structure. Certainly, a number of adults who participated in this research doubted the value of some of the components of program structure that exacerbated and contributed to the incidence of conflict with clients. In addition, the adolescents were able to articulate the fact that they valued other means of attaining change and self-awareness, hence their engagement in the struggle to oppose aspects of the system. If indeed policy makers decide that the system exists to enhance rehabilitative gains for clients, then aspects of the program's structure that contribute to the incidence of conflict need to be addressed.

This research reveals that rehabilitative efforts are better served through non-conflictual means. As was noted through this research, there were frequent incidences of conflict between clients and counsellors. The parties were able to participate, often readily and without question, in the conflicts because they had decided that these incidents of conflict were purposeful and meaningful within the social milieu of the juvenile justice facility. What was found to be lacking in this system was a critical analysis of conflict situations by those parties engaged in them. If systems are to succeed in meeting their mandate to enhance rehabilitative efforts on the part of clients then a critical analysis of the role of conflict within the system is essential. In order that we can critically assess the social process of conflict within treatment environs there is a further requirement that we develop a dialogue through which conflict can be named, understood, and addressed in practical terms. This research made some gains in developing a grounded theory of purposeful conflict as it was experienced by the participants of this research. The Theory also succeeded in naming some of the components of the conflict that contributed to and sustained its occurrence within the system. What is still lacking is a critical analysis by the participants as to the role conflict plays in their relationships with each other and if indeed it accomplishes what they believe it to. This aspect is also addressed under implications for future research.

If a critical assessment of conflict and its role within a treatment milieu is deemed necessary or appropriate by policy makers or administrators it should be supported and promoted by their leadership. Administrators are in the unique position of being able to

provide a more objective assessment of the milieu than those engaged in the daily struggle of maintaining that milieu. This research then has implications for the role of administrators of such programs as described below.

An assessment of the role of administrators related to the research site was not the purpose of this research; however, through the accounts of the participants, both counsellor and client agreed that the role of administration at the time of the research was seen as somewhat benign. This research indicates that there are at least four roles for administrators to play with respect to the monitoring of the treatment environs and program structure. Firstly, there is a need for supervision of staff engaged in the task of trying to implement a program structure that is conducive to the aims of the organisation. Secondly, the need for clinical direction seems paramount when clients are presenting such diverse and challenging behaviours to staff. Thirdly, support and direction is required if staff members are expected to balance the difficult task of maintaining the program's structure and concurrently enhancing the clients' potential for rehabilitation. Lastly, the implementation of in-service training for child care counsellors and regular staff performance evaluations are mechanisms that administrators and program managers would be advised to employ if they wish to enhance the performance of their staff members and outcomes for clients.

The challenge of meeting a dual agenda, that of maintaining the program structure and meeting organisational goals while also trying to provide for the clients' rehabilitation needs, was revealed through this research to be an overwhelming challenge

for some of the staff. It appeared that staff either focused on client care or program maintenance but that these two mandates appeared to be mutually exclusive. This dilemma contributed to further conflicts, between clients and staff members, staff members with each other, staff members with administrators, and further resulted in internal conflict for staff members who tried alone to resolve these competing interests. Support and direction in the form of policy that addresses these dilemmas is needed to assist staff to balance what appear to be competing needs and agendas within a correctional treatment milieu. Often programs provide a policy manual that addresses specific tasks and the how to's of program maintenance. What is lacking and clearly needed is a philosophical or ethical statement related to practice that offers guidelines that support staff to address treatment objectives within an organisational setting.

An additional contributing factor to the incidence of staff stress and internal conflict emerging from this research was the lack of meaningful input for staff. The adolescents' reports that there were few avenues within the system through which to have a voice confirmed that it was in the system that the adolescents learned what they had to do to find a voice. It further appears that this was true for the adults working in the program and supports Goocher's findings (1994) that, in programs focusing on structure rather than process, the tendency is for the adults providing service to become more like the clients they are serving with respect to covert and dysfunctional behaviours. Not only were the adolescent clients systemically silenced, but also many staff members reported feelings of powerlessness with respect to the decisions that were made in the program. If

staff are to feel valued in the system then they too need to have a voice. Of further concern was the fact that certain staff were perceived by clients and counsellors to hold more power than others were. As a result, some staff members considered that their only option to affect the system was in covert ways that undermined their colleagues, the program and themselves. Staff training and team days that focus on process issues and consensus building where everyone has a voice can only serve to model what was identified by the participants as missing in the system for the staff members. Similarly, there needs to be a mechanism through which clients can have meaningful input and be heard in the system. Further, if the administrators take the opportunity to provide such leadership, it can only be advantageous to the establishment of a therapeutic milieu (as discussed in the section on Family Systems Theory).

The review of the current literature on social environs, organisational settings, critical theory, control theory, and Family Systems Theory support the notion that if given no other viable option a person will resort to less functional ways of self expression in order to be heard. This supports the grounded theory of conflict between child care counsellors and clients that emerged through this research which demonstrates that the adolescents engaged in the conflict in order to be heard. It also emerged that the counsellors themselves were engaging in similarly dysfunctional behaviours within the system to assert their authority or to have a voice. The assertion that the system contributed to the negative behaviours of both deliverers and recipients of care challenges administrators and policy makers alike to create and sustain systems that enhance the

functioning of all of its members. To this end a critical assessment of the components of systems that enhance staff member and client functioning could serve to give direction to this endeavour.

Goocher's (1994) work illuminated the pitfalls that can occur when quasi-correctional programs do not assess the extent to which they are addressing the multiple problems (behavioral, emotionally and psychological) of the residents. It therefore behooves the administrative wing and program managers to ensure that the system is organised in a manner that optimises the functioning of all of its members. While we are often quick to judge the family of an acting-out child as dysfunctional, we fail to apply the same maxim to systems serving adolescents. Again, the challenge to program managers and staff-members that operate such systems is to critically evaluate aspects of the system that serve to empower, and those that impede, clients in their progress. In this way, maybe we can cease to view inappropriate behaviours as pathological in nature but rather an indication of a system wide problem with more opportunities for intervention and shared responsibility.

Limitations of this Research

The findings of this research, while limited to the research site, are worthy of consideration in other treatment environs where conflict is a frequent occurrence between clients and care providers. Certainly, the themes emerging and the implications for policy and practice may be relevant to other treatment environs serving adolescents and they are offered here merely as food for thought rather than a symbolic representation of such

environs. Therefore, implications for practice and policy are offered with the proviso that these are specifically emanating from, and applicable to, the research site and further that they are representative of the researcher's perspective on that site.

Suggestions for Future Research

While it was not the intent of this study to assess what works to rehabilitate juvenile offenders, an idea that emerged through this research is that the counsellors in this study considered conflict a valuable component of treatment. This assertion, however, was not borne out by the clients in this study nor indeed in the literature review. Future research on conflict between clients and counsellors is suggested if we are to ascertain if there is indeed any value in the incidence of conflict as suggested by the counsellors in this study or if, as suggested under implications for practice and policy, it is indicative of a failure of the system to be therapeutic or "change promoting".

Many theorists have struggled with what works with respect to treatment relationships and sustainable change for clients. Rather than continue to fall back on the assertion of Martinson (1974), almost a quarter century ago, that nothing works, it remains that, if systems are to continue in their mandate to rehabilitate offenders, administrators, policy makers and practitioners must critically assess what does work. Research in this area has, as discussed earlier, focused on micro-variables. However, this research study suggests that systemic analyses of treatment environs can, and will, inform the field beyond these limitations. A systemic perspective also offers more opportunities for intervention (as demonstrated in the section on implications for policy) beyond the

client-counsellor relationship and for that reason is valuable if the scope of knowledge and expertise is to be broadened in his field.

In support of a systemic approach to research in this area, the adolescent participants in this research articulated aspects of the system that they perceived as contributing positively to their rehabilitation. Similarly, they identified aspects of the system that impeded their graduation from the program. The staff members' stated objective was to facilitate change with the adolescent clients while the clients' objective was to have a voice in the system while they underwent change. This finding indicates that further research with respect to individual counsellor's beliefs about process, therapeutic interventions, role modelling and empowerment of clients could enhance our understanding of conflict and the role that it plays in treatment relationships.

This research project was designed to explore the dynamics that surrounded conflict between clients and counsellors in an all male juvenile justice setting. As was acknowledged through this research, the incidence of conflict was frequent and served a purpose within a system that appeared to promote and maintain conflict as part of its milieu. Of interest to future research would be comparative studies that conduct a critical assessment of alternate models of treatment where conflict is, or is not, a valued component of the milieu. These environs may include juvenile justice settings serving females, residential alcohol and drug treatment programs, and group homes for adolescents in care of the Ministry for Children and Families.

As was noted earlier, current trends in juvenile justice call for harsher sentencing

and a review of the juvenile offender legislation. Before such calls are heeded it would behove the justice system to evaluate whether longer sentences and a review of the juvenile offender legislation would address whatever concerns have been identified, namely an increase in the violence accompanying juvenile crimes. If the findings of this research are in any way transferable, the contribution the system makes to the acting-out behaviours of the adolescent is a factor to be considered. This research further indicates that longer containment in a system that itself abuses power has little to offer an anti-social, oppositional adolescent in the way of rehabilitation. Further research is then indicated that will critically assess the outcomes of containment for adolescents and what, within the system as it currently stands, contributes to their rehabilitation.

Further, it is noted that while the participants in this research project acknowledged that conflict was a meaningful occurrence in their daily lives, it remains for there to be a critical assessment by the participants as to whether engaging in the conflict has the desired outcomes. A researcher supported participatory action research project could assist participants to assess the role of conflict in their lived experience of each other, where they learned their conflict management approaches, and considered options that could be more empowering to them. This opportunity could prove to be a valuable contribution to the field of research as well as benefit those who participate.

Summary and Closing

This grounded theory study revealed that child care counsellors and adolescents who participated in this study considered conflicts between them as meaningful events in

their daily lives. It was further revealed that both parties had vested interests in engaging in conflict based on their beliefs that it could facilitate change either in the other person or the system. Of concern was that neither party had critically assessed the role conflict played in their relationships with each other. This research suggests that engaging in the conflict damaged the relationship potential for child care counsellors and clients which in turn negatively impacted rehabilitative gains for clients.

A finding of interest to policy makers and administrators alike was that the system was found to be a contributing factor in the incidence of conflict between child care counsellors and clients. Components of the organisational system had a direct and negative influence on the clients', and in some cases, the counsellors' behaviours. The possibility that a juvenile justice facility can contribute to the adolescents', and sometimes the child care counsellors', inappropriate behaviours is an important factor to consider in the establishment and maintenance of interventions, policies, and programs serving clients with special needs. The training of counsellors and the orientation of models of treatment that focus on "process" rather than "structure" are identified through this research and the literature review as more conducive to the maintenance of a milieu that optimises rehabilitative gains for clients and morale for staff.

This **purposeful conflict** framework is a work-in-progress. As it has been derived from a limited number of participants in a specific Western Canadian program, it requires testing and comparison. As an initial research project I am optimistic that through qualitative studies such as this one more can be learned about establishing and

maintaining effective juvenile offender programs. Such empirical gains can only serve to benefit the staff-members who work in these systems and the clients who strive for a better way to live and learn.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letters of Consent

To participate in a Research Project entitled:

"Care provider and client conflict: An analysis of the dynamics of power within a service delivery system".

I hereby give consent for my participation in the study entitled: Care Provider and Client conflict: An analyses of the dynamics of power within a service delivery system.

I understand that the persons responsible for this study are Lesley Ann Woodman - Graduate student researcher in the Multi-disciplinary Masters Program in Policy and Practice, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria. BC, and Carol Stuart, Ph.D. - Faculty member and project supervisor, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria, BC

Ms Woodman has explained to me that this study is for her Masters thesis and that participation is entirely voluntary. I understand that Ms Woodman plans to study the relationships between staff and clients at *Program Name*. Her project will look at how arguments between staff and clients are handled and understood by people at *Program Name*. It is hoped that the research will result in some recommendations and guidance for child care workers, in general, regarding their handling of conflicts with clients.

Ms Woodman has explained to me that she will use a tape recorder and take notes during the interviews that she conducts with me. Further, I understand that information

that might reveal my identity will be coded to protect issues of anonymity and assure my confidentiality before being submitted to a paid transcriptionist. I understand that the data compiled will be kept secure and will only be reviewed by the researcher and supervisor as named. After the data analysis, the audio tapes will be destroyed. This letter of consent will be kept secure at Ms Woodman's home. Transcripts of the data will be destroyed after five years. In addition, during the research process Ms Woodman shall use a fictitious name for the purposes of protecting my identity when discussing the project with her thesis supervisor.

I understand that the questions I shall be asked will develop through the process of the research and am aware of the initial topics that will be covered. I therefore understand that I may also decline to answer any question posed to me during the interview. I am aware that at any time I may withdraw from the study without having to state my reasons or jeopardise the care I am entitled to receive. Should I choose to withdraw at anytime I may elect to take the data I have provided with me and not have it included in the study or I may elect to leave my information in the study and simply withdraw from further participation.

If I have any questions now, throughout the study or after I may reach Lesley @ (604) 987 - 4406, or Carol @ (250) 721 - 6279.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in this project and your agreement to participate in this study at this time.

Participant's Name	Participant's Signature	Date
Researcher's Name	Researcher's Signature	Date
Witness Name	Witness Signature	Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. As was discussed with you your legal guardian is required to sign off on your consent, the researcher will explain the nature of the research to the guardian and the anticipated involvement required. The Section B portion of this form should then be completed by yourself.

Letter of Consent from a minor's legal guardian

for their participation in a research project entitled:

"Care provider and client conflict: analyses of the dynamics of power within a service delivery system".

I hereby give consent for my son/daughter to participate in the study entitled : Care Provider and Client conflict: An analyses of the dynamics of power within a service delivery system.

I understand that the persons responsible for this study are Lesley Ann Woodman - Graduate student researcher in the Multi-disciplinary Masters Program in Policy and Practice, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria. BC, and Carol Stuart, Ph.D. - Faculty member and project supervisor, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria, BC

Ms Woodman has explained to me that this study is for her Masters thesis and that participation is entirely voluntary. I understand that Ms Woodman plans to study the relationships between staff and clients at "program name". Her project will look at how arguments between staff and clients are handled and understood by people at "Program name". It is hoped that the research will result in some recommendations and guidance for child care workers, in general, regarding their handling of conflicts with clients.

Ms Woodman has explained to me that she will use a tape recorder and take notes

during the interviews that she conducts with my son. Further, I understand that information that might reveal my son's identity would be coded to protect issues of anonymity and assure his confidentiality. I understand that the data compiled will be kept secure and will only be reviewed by the researcher and supervisor as named. After the data analysis, the audio tapes will be destroyed. This letter of consent will be kept secure at Ms Woodman's home. Transcripts of the data will be destroyed after five years. In addition, during the research process Ms Woodman shall use a fictitious name for the purposes of protecting my son/daughter's identity when discussing the project with her thesis supervisor.

I understand that the questions will develop through the process of the research but that my son/daughter will be aware of the initial topics that will be covered. I therefore understand that he may also decline to answer any question posed to him/her during the interviews. I am aware that at any time my son/daughter may withdraw from the study without having to state his reasons or jeopardise the care that he is entitled to receive. Should he choose to withdraw he may elect to take their data provided to that point with them and not have it included in the study or he may elect to leave the information in the study and simply withdraw from further participation.

If I have any questions now, throughout the study or after I may reach Lesley @ (604) 987- 4406, or Carol @ (250) 721 - 6279.

My signature on this form indicates that I have understood to my satisfaction the

information regarding my son/daughter's participation in this project and have agreed to their participation in this study at this time.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Guardian's Name	Guardian's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's Name	Researcher's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Witness Name	Witness Signature	Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. In the case whereby a legal guardian is required to sign off on a minors consent the researcher will explain the nature of the research to the child and the anticipated involvement required and will seek the child's ongoing co-operation throughout the project.

Section B

Subject's Acceptance of Third Party Authorisation

In order to protect your rights as a minor your legal guardian has been sought to give consent to your participation in this project.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information given to you regarding this project and indicates your wishes at this time regarding your guardian's decision to allow you to participate in this research project. The following options indicate your wishes and willingness to agree to participate as a subject in this study.

____ I do agree with my guardian's decision

____ I do not agree with my guardian's decision

____ I wish to remain in the study

____ I wish to withdraw from the study

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Guardian's Name	Guardian's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's Name	Researcher's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Witness Name	Witness Signature	Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Lesley Ann Woodman

Appendix B

Letter/Poster Inviting Participation

of potential participants and describing the research project entitled:
"Care provider and client conflict: An analyses of the dynamics of power within a service delivery system".

My name is Lesley Ann Woodman and I am a Graduate student researcher in the Multi-disciplinary Masters Program in Policy and Practice, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria. BC In September of this year, I am going to be conducting research on the topic of client and counsellor conflicts (or disagreements).

In order to get enough information on this topic I will need to speak to up to five child and youth care counsellors and five clients over a period of two to three months (September -November). This process will likely involve three separate conversations with each participant, one on one with myself. The times for these discussions are flexible and can be arranged at the convenience of participants. The information given in these conversations will be used for my thesis topic which seeks to understand the meaning conflict or disagreements have in the relationship between clients' and child and youth care counsellors.

Other persons involved in this project:

Carol Stuart, Ph.D. - Faculty Member School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria is the project supervisor. Carol can be reached @ (250) 721-6279.

Confidentiality and anonymity:

Measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality of participants and to ensure they retain their anonymity, information given during the one on one conversations will be coded numerically. In this way, access to the data would not disclose the identity of those who participated. Further, the data compiled will be kept secure and will only be reviewed by the researcher and supervisor as named.

I am available to answer questions, regarding the format of the research and what participants can expect if they volunteer. If you would like more information I can be called collect anytime Mon - Fri @ (604) 987-4406.

Appendix C

General Conversation Guide

Rapport building Questions:

How long have you worked/resided at this program?

One of the things I've noticed in my work in this field is the tendency for frequent arguments between counsellors and clients. What do you think?

Why do you think there are disagreements/arguments/ conflicts between counsellors and clients?

Leading Questions:

Who do you think has control or power in conflicts between clients and child care counsellors in residential settings?

What can you tell me about how you personally have experienced conflict with a client/counsellor in a residential setting?

Supporting Questions:

Please give me an example of a conflict you were involved in with a client/counsellor in a residential setting

How did you feel when you were in the conflict with the client/counsellor?

Can you think about why the conflict occurred?

How did you feel after the conflict?

How would you explain the conflict you were engaged with to a peer?

How would you explain the conflict you were engaged with to a person in authority?

What were your motives in the conflict?

What do you think were the client/counsellor's motives in the conflict?

What was accomplished by/in the conflict for you?

What was "lost" in the conflict for you?

Appendix D

Letter to Program's Executive Director
Regarding permission to conduct research on site

655 East 22nd Avenue,
North Vancouver,
BC
V7L 3E1

Executive Director
"Program Address"

September, 2nd 1998

Dear *"Executive Director's Name"*,

Further to our conversation earlier this week, please find enclosed a brief outline of my research topic. I hope this is sufficient detail for your purpose of proceeding with approval from the Ministry for Children and Families. Should you however, require more detail I would be happy to send you my research proposal which has been approved by my research committee at the University of Victoria.

Also enclosed you will find examples of waiver forms that include the input of the guardians of clients that may wish to participate in this study. Ethics committees in general agree that over the age of 12 years participants can give their own consent, excepting of course in special circumstances. It is, as we discussed appropriate since your clients are "in alternate care" that an adult guardian signs off on their consent form (It should be noted that this does not however, give the guardian rights to access the participants data - which should remain confidential). Here then is an example of the forms now recommended by ethics committees and letters that can be used to include consent from legal guardians of consenting participants.

Before I can proceed to submit my proposal to the University of Victoria's Ethics Committee for their approval I will require something in writing from your organisation indicating the organisation's willingness to permit me to do my research at

"Program Name".

I look forward to hearing from you regarding the approval process at your organisation.

Thank you for your time in this matter,

Sincerely,

Lesley Ann Woodman.(Ms).

c.c. Program Director, *"Program Name"*

VITA

Surname: Woodman Given Names: Lesley Ann

Place of Birth: London, England

Educational Institutions Attended:

Lewes Technical College, West Sussex, England.

University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Certificates/Degrees Awarded:

Residential Child Care Certificate, 1972.

Bachelors of Arts, (with distinction), 1991.

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Title of Thesis:

A Grounded Theory of Conflict Between Child Care Counsellors and Adolescents in a Juvenile Justice Facility.

Author

Lesley Ann Woodman
February, 2000