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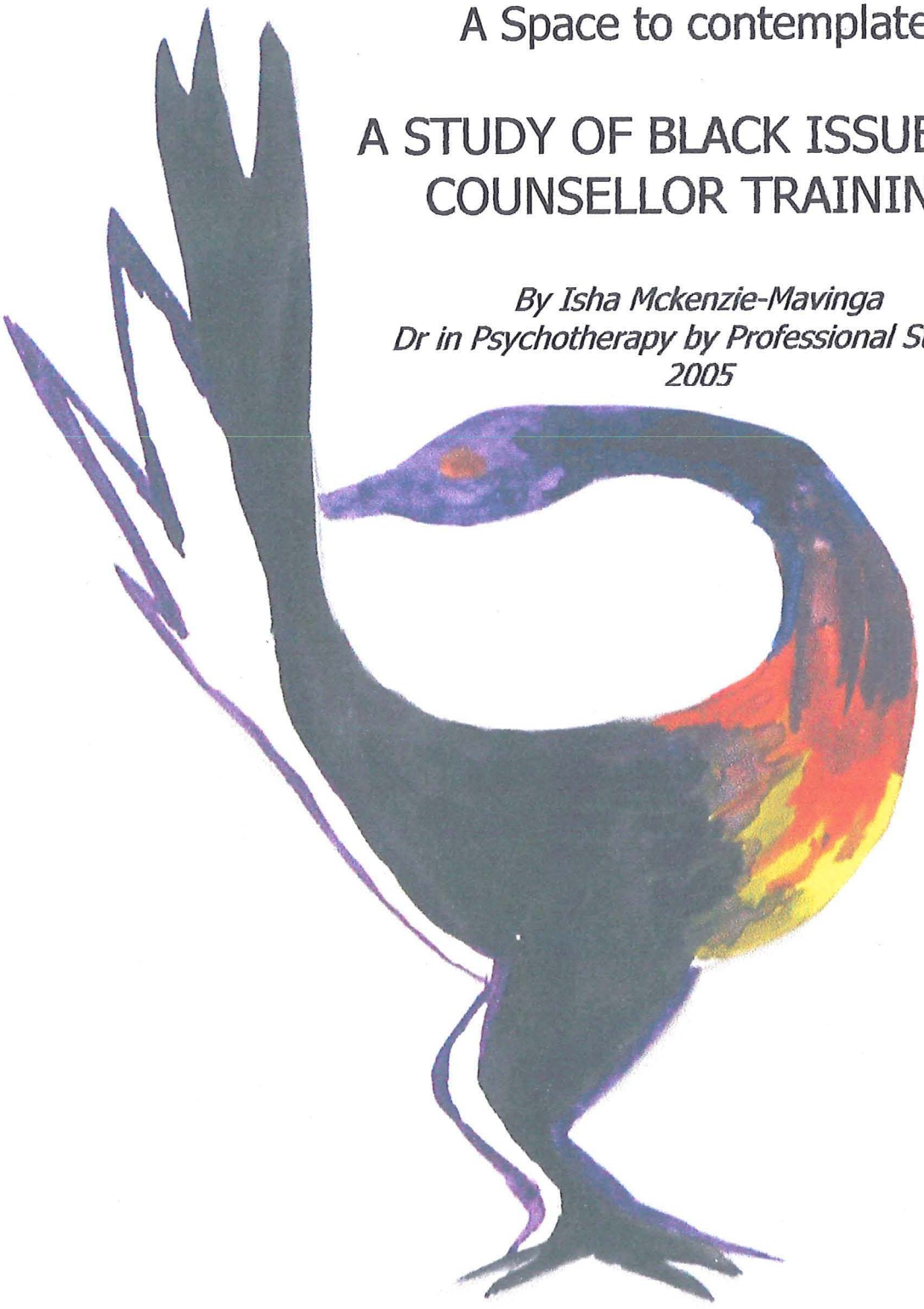
A Space to contemplate

A STUDY OF BLACK ISSUES IN COUNSELLOR TRAINING

By Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga
Dr in Psychotherapy by Professional Studies
2005



West African symbol 'Sankofa' Know where you are coming from to know where you are going

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A Study of Black Issues in Counsellor Training 2002 - 2005

A project submitted to Middlesex University in collaboration with Metanoia Institute in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor in Psychotherapy by professional Studies.

Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga

National Centre for Work based learning Partnerships
Middlesex University

Metanoia Institute

October 2005

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Abstract

Over the last two decades interest in multicultural dimensions of therapeutic practice has increased, reflecting political and social change, so that it is no longer confined to the page. However, the responses of some black counsellors and clients indicate that what has been and continues to be produced in transcultural literature has not sufficiently transferred into practice. This suggests a gap in counsellor training.

At the heart of the gap is the research question. **How do trainee counsellors in Britain understand concerns about black issues, raised by themselves during their training or about clients during the therapeutic process?**

Increasing diversity in student populations has paralleled legislative demands to provide services for the wider multicultural population. This raises a further question of whether training that fails to address the dynamics of racism, and experiences that relate to black peoples' is inadequate.

Developments in social policy are a necessity for creating frameworks to address power structures that maintain marginalised voices. The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amended Act 2000) now gives public authorities including Higher Education, a *'statutory general duty to promote race equality'*. (CRE. 2002). The Act suggests that 'we' as a community of practitioners are responsible for change in the educational process. In view of this responsibility this study shows the challenges of enabling and empowering trainees to discover the voice of change within their training experience.

The study is based on evidence that counsellors training in a variety of settings had not received sufficient input to support the experiences of black people either in training or counselling settings. In addition, today's trainees have been asking

questions about how to actively engage with black issues in the role of counsellor. To address this problem the study places counsellor training in Higher Education under the spotlight. It invites the organisation to be active in equal opportunities and combines qualitative with multicultural action research and practice at the source of counselling. Elements of these research paradigms supported the transformative and emancipatory nature of the study. However, a flexible approach to their use allowed for the diversity issues embroiled within the context of this study. This supported awareness of the ethical implications of 'epistemological power' and 'epistemological racism'.

Drawing on a pluralistic approach, the heuristic process of understanding trainee counsellors' relationship with the phenomenon of black issues was explored during training workshops. The study gave voice to trainee counsellors' concerns. It encouraged dialogue about relationships as black people, or with black peoples, that link to the therapeutic process.

The researcher's role as black facilitator, tutor, researcher and 'insider outsider' played an important part in both the challenging nature of this study and a model for developing safety and compassion to facilitate the process.

Interviews with five established counsellors trained at different points over a twenty year period showed that black issues was a missing element in their training courses. Primary data was collected from the shared concerns of a group of fifty students on three different counsellor training courses. Trainees from one of the courses were followed through into year two of their training. They were offered additional workshops and encouraged to address black issues within assessment criteria of their training. The impact of black issues in their training was shared at verbal evaluation meetings outside of course time. Trainees' narratives made a significant contribution to the primary data collection.

Findings demonstrated that themes such as fear and safety were features of trainees' process of exploring and understanding black issues. Three main concepts evolved. These are called 'shared concerns', 'finding a voice' and 'recognition trauma'. The study showed that sharing concerns assisted trainees to find a voice where previously they felt silenced. Their narrative demonstrated that they were keen to find ways of opening a dialogue about black issues, but needed safety to unravel the sticky and often emotional impact of racism. Themes which emerged from the process were those of racism, guilt, history and trust. Reflexive representation of trainees' voices through the data showed that concerns about racism featured highly in their interactions.

The outcome demonstrated that firstly space for sharing and exploration in training can model greater confidence in dialogue about black issues in client work. Secondly, the different experiences of black and white trainees must be valued. Thirdly, understanding can be supported by modelling the process and dialogue on black issues. Fourthly, to support the emancipatory and transformative process of the training group the trainer's personal development process must include an understanding of racism and knowledge of black issues.

This document reflects creativity in both methodology and presentation. It allows theory to compliment practice and practice to develop counselling and research theory. It may be seen as similar to the reflexive experience of integrative counselling. With this in mind, the reader is invited to share a narrative journey from fear to transformation.

A list of salient points that were considered when developing the methodology are presented on page 5.

Acknowledgements

I give thanks to the Almighty for providing the opportunity, space and resources that made this study possible. I thank my ancestors for guiding me through this challenging and innovative journey.

I offer my sincere gratitude to the individuals and organisations, brothers, sisters, friends, co-counsellors and my therapist who have supported and encouraged me throughout this project.

Particular thanks to the universities, students, colleagues and participants on the counsellor training courses involved, and also to the artists whose images inspired and encouraged me and provided opportunities to include the voices and experiences of black men.

Special thanks to Dr Jennifer Elton Wilson, Dr Agnes Bryn, Dr Harbrinder Dillon-Stevens, Dr Kate Maguire, Dr Duncan Lawrence, Dr Tele Amuludun, Dr Nicky Thomas, Dr Kathy Raffles, Dr Aileen Aleyne, Dr Val Watson, Dr Bisi Kioki, Elsbeth Scwenk, Olivia Lusada, Christine Smith, Hugh Clarke, Paula Collens, Jane Stavert, Alice Cook, Hyacinth Fraser, Wendy Francis, Anita McKenzie, Verna Scarlett, George Kelly, Arike, Ramesh Talwar, Aneela Ferdinand, Val Blomfield. BACP, Caroline Ravello & the Trinidad Guardian, Ozcar & Vicky, Tish Pritchard Debbie Wolfe, Sylvia Green, Jassy Dennison, who shared and supported the journey.

Appreciation for my children especially Andrea and Aaron for their patience, support and loving contributions.

Introduction **Salient Points**

Introduction

A Space to Contemplate

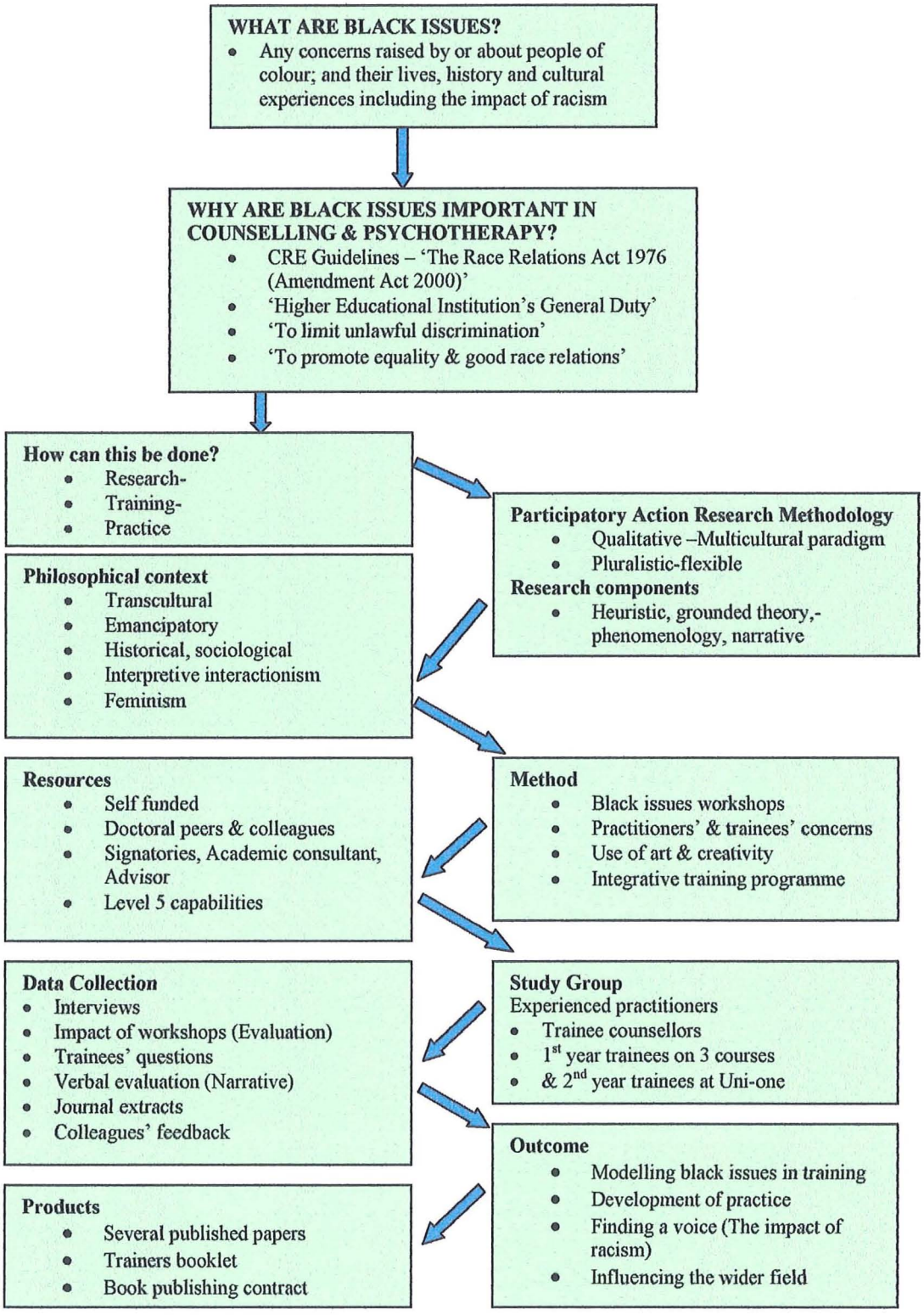
Just so...
In the quiet way that time plays on tiles
Its archaic lace imprisons space
Takes us in
Lets us no further than its eyelids
To wait a little more
To wait, I say,
For horizons at our feet
But wait if you want!
Habit has a history of nursing wounds
Their spears dulled
Displayed
Slaves adapt privilege granted
To caress it long enough
Their own
A freedom
Independence.
But wait if you want
Only light like time
A resolute
Burning with the will of dawn
Must rent the bush
Turn each wing
With aching pace
Softening each boulder
With the patience of snails.

LeRoy Clarke, (1981, P.25)

LeRoy Clarke, author of the above poem, a Trinidadian artist and poet, represents a working through of the impact of slavery and colonisation in gigantic landscaped images combining past and present. His multi-coloured landscape of mind, body and soul invites spectators to observe, listen to their responses and engage with a 'space to contemplate'. The poem depicts the pace, patience and humility that has been required to journey through this doctoral project. In the spirit of 'a space to contemplate', I present my research topic of 'black issues'.

Figure 1 below shows the various stages of the study.

F1 - Overview of Study



This document presents a heuristic journey using a combined qualitative and multicultural research paradigm with a pluralistic, flexible, participatory action approach. The rationale for this approach will be addressed in my methodology. In West Africa there is a symbol of a bird called 'Sankofa' that is looking backwards (Front cover). This symbol reminds Africans to look back at their history to know where they are going in the future. This study begins like the Sankofa, with the narrative of experienced counsellors looking back at their training. They evidence the need for action research and the inclusion of black issues in counsellor training. I then explored trainees' concerns, and with the support of colleagues, developed a workshop programme which introduced the theme of black issues as a phenomenon into the training.

I have named the gesture of listening to practitioners' and trainees' voices the principle of 'shared concerns'. [1]This principle brings together experiences of the phenomenon. Drawing together many voices into one voice, a collective acknowledgement of an action or omission in time and history that impacts the present. Responses to the phenomenon are portrayed through the various modes of gathering data supported by elements of grounded theory in a reflective, reciprocal process.

The document will summarise the outcome of the study and demonstrate how this influenced my practice, the training process, and the wider field. This document also demonstrates how information was gathered for the products of this study, which culminated in several papers, a training booklet and a book contract to influence the wider field. The document will be interspersed with examples of art forms and creativity that supported the training workshops and my personal development process. Evidence of insights gained from specialist seminars are woven into the process of the study and summarised in chapter 5. Due to limitations in the size of

[1] My use of the concept of shared concerns evolved from a previous study, that examined whether there might be a cathartic process in the shared expression of experiences on a similar theme. The study focussed on similar issues that were being shared by black women through their creative writing. Mckenzie-Mavinga, (1997).

this presentation significant supportive material and examples will be placed in the appendices.

Definition of black Issues

The concept of 'black' refers to people of colour of African and Asian heritage. In Britain the term 'black' when used by black peoples is mainly to affirm African heritage peoples and more generally used in an affirming and unifying way to refer to people of colour. However the term 'people of colour' is mainly used in the United States; therefore, for the purpose of this study, I shall use the term black. I am aware that black people are not one homogeneous group just as white people are not one homogeneous group, hence my reason for using the plural 'peoples'. I am also aware that grouping may increase the potential for stereotyping.

In their book on 'The Racism of Psychology', Howitt & Owusu-Bempa (1994) view the term 'black' as a generic politicised description with historical problems. One of the problems was the varied use of the term 'black'. They suggest that in some situations the term may de-contextualise settings by identifying and unifying large groups of people in terms of their shared experiences of social disadvantage in predominantly white settings. They go on to say that:

> *One problem is that the description merely reproduces and fixes in language the disparity in power between the 'haves' and 'have nots' in terms of majorities and minorities. (P.14)*

Hasn't this been the way that history over time has situated the term black, at first in its negative form and more recently as an element of emancipation? The term 'black' is a political and sociological term identifying a group that have been most vulnerable to the oppression of racism in the west. This group as the most visible minority have been least likely to be represented in the field of psychotherapy and

counselling.[2] It is widely acknowledged that African heritage peoples are six times more likely to be sectioned under the Mental Health Act than white peoples. Asian peoples are four times more likely to commit suicide than white peoples. Foundation News, (November 2003). These are important factors that must not be ignored. Psychotherapy and counselling provision that not only takes into account but also works with black issues may increase resources for those at risk of the mental health system. The risk of sectioning and suicide among the above-mentioned groups may therefore be reduced.

What are black Issues?

I have linked the word 'issues' to the term 'black' to enable a phenomenological outlook rather than a focus on black peoples per se. In this sense the term 'black' was placed at the centre of the study and responses to it examined. In taking this approach in training I am proposing that the term 'black' be used in an emancipatory way. My hope for this study was that this might broaden understanding of the experiences of both black and white people in relation to black people. More often than not individuals take for granted that a use of the term 'black' means a focus on the discourse of racism, or that 'black issues' means focussing solely on the experiences of black people. The aim of this study was to explore how understanding developed from the ontological experience of black issues in training; therefore 'issues' in this context refers to any concern, problem, dynamic, feeling or experience raised by or about black people, by themselves or by white people. Whilst this may appear to be a broad definition it allows for the relationships, personal development and theoretical context of experiences to be discussed in a phenomenological sense. The document will present a model of how black issues can be experienced as a phenomenon of counsellor training.

[2] *The term 'black' is a self-ascribed, political term stating allegiance with those who have experienced oppression because of their skin colour. It is important not to assume that trainees from black and minority ethnic backgrounds will be familiar with or agree with, or use, any of the commonly used terms referring to ethnic identity.* Patel, N. et. al., (2000, p.34)

A Model of Integrating black Issues into Counsellor Training

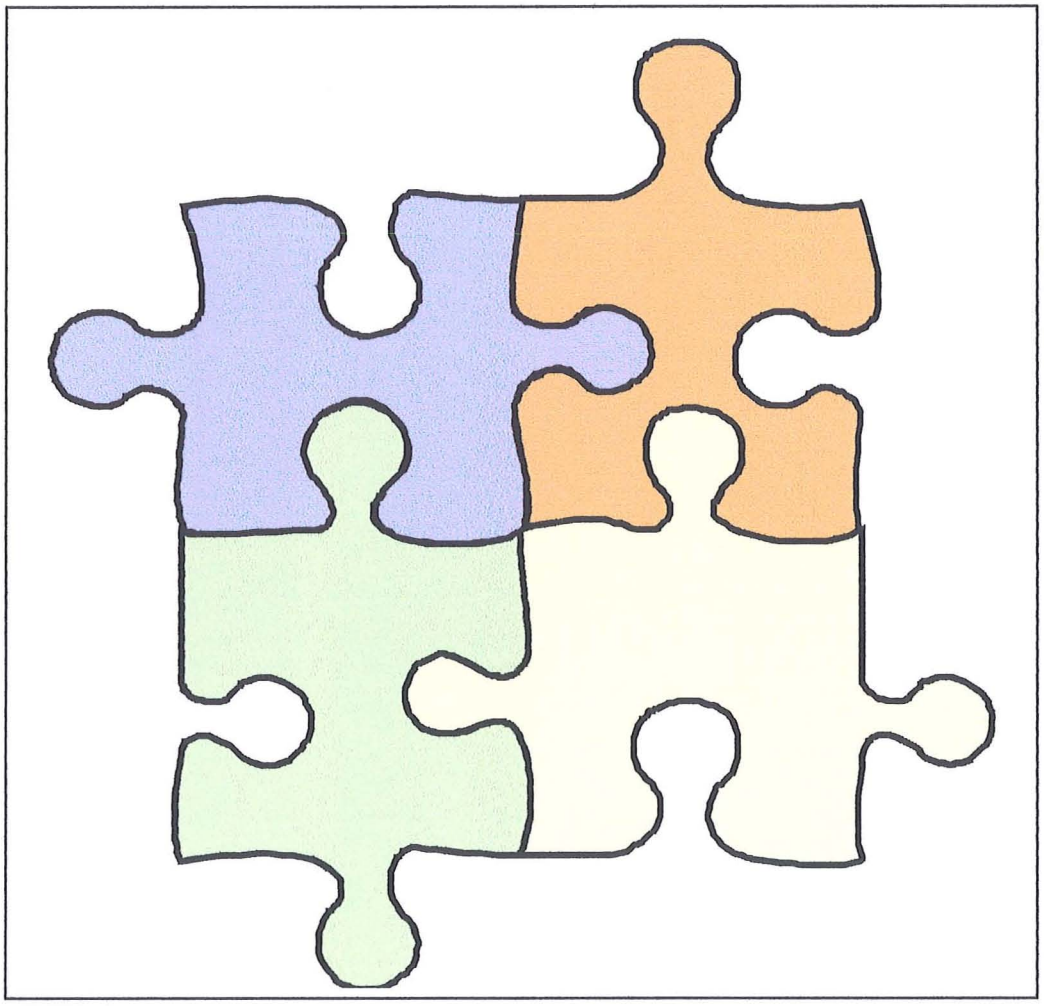
Embarking on a study that asks a question about black issues was an attempt to understand what it is like to be a black person as client or practitioner in psychotherapy and counselling in Britain. It was also an attempt to find out how relationships with and between black people are explored in the therapeutic process by both black and white counsellors. The study will also contribute to the wisdom and knowledge of transcultural counsellor training. This document shows how the study has encouraged both black and white trainee counsellors to use their multicultural experiences of diversity, similarity and ways of being, to explore, engage with and gain greater clarity of their relationships with black peoples. The study is about the process of understanding black issues, and how that process comes about during the course of counsellor training.

Training is a process that influences learning and should assist trainees to find a common understanding of theory and practice. The theme of 'understanding' features highly in the training curriculum, therefore I believe that the concept of understanding has been an important feature in the study. This document shows how participants and colleagues as collaborators give voice to their concerns and understanding about black issues.

The research journey has made me consider my own motivation to 'understand' and consider how understanding comes about. It has challenged me to step back in the role of expert and locate my compassion for learners in a far more meaningful way than in my role as counsellor trainer. Being one step ahead at the beginning of this study and having to adapt my pace has furthered my learning process in relation to the particular theme of black issues. I had expected to introduce elements of black history expressed through art as a means of understanding. However, I found that white participants needed clarity about the meaning of black issues and black participants needed a space to share their experiences. This process led to the re-negotiation of the research theme, which was originally 'linking history to black issues in the therapeutic process'. The changes occurred in order to meet

participants' ethical need to understand what black issues actually meant in the context of their ethnic and cultural background and their training as counsellors. (See D1).

D1 Putting the Pieces Together



Putting The Pieces Together

Blue: Initial approach linking history to explore black issues through workshops.

Green: Renegotiation of research question, realising trainees needed to find a voice.

Beige: A need for black trainees to share experiences and be heard. (Issues of racism).

White: White trainees wanted to understand and explore the meaning of black issues.

The whole picture: Links between compassion, ethical facilitation of dialogue and creating data from shared concerns and the process of understanding.

Background

My personal interest in this topic comes from the lack of input on black issues in my own training as a counsellor and also the lack of dialogue about black issues in the institutions of my life. As a woman of African Caribbean and European heritage, my personal journey began with the experience of being in the minority as a black child in a children's home where I was raised. My black identity was either idealised or discussed in negative terms. I had no input from my African Caribbean father who died soon after I was born, or from my European Jewish mother and I was isolated from the experiences of other black people until I went to a secondary school for girls. There I became familiar with the culture, languages and family issues of school friends who had arrived from the Caribbean, during the 50s and 60s, the post 'Windrush'period[3]. There was very little in the school curriculum to affirm our experiences as girls or black people and we suffered overt racial abuse from teachers and other pupils. These experiences created a cultural bond between us as victims of institutional racism.[4] Although I gathered information about my African Caribbean identity from my peers I left school with no interest in furthering my education.

This attitude changed in my early thirties, when I ended my marriage and enrolled for a degree course. A new phase of learning opened my curiosity about black history and my African heritage. I discovered that the richness of Africa's heritage was being excluded from the Social Science studies that I had embarked on and I was being denied another opportunity to include parts of my ancestral history. Until this point I had been accepting the silencing of my cultural heritage. I became aware of my personal silence and inability to articulate a need to discover and understand my black identity and African Caribbean heritage.

[3] During this period there was an influx of immigrants who travelled to Britain from the Caribbean islands, some travelled on a ship named the 'Empire Windrush', 1948.

[4] Tuckwell. (2002) describes institutional racism as consisting of established laws, customs and practices that unfairly restrict the opportunities of defined groups of people, whether or not the individuals maintaining these practices have racist intentions. (p.17).

The Influence of Literature

The philosophical context of this study is influenced by my ongoing discovery of African American and African Caribbean writing about black issues. The discovery of bell hook's[5]writing helped me to understand key elements in my personal journey to multiculturalism. This curiosity led me to a personal journey into my own heritage.

hooks (1994(c) suggests that:

> *'If we examine critically the traditional role of the university in the pursuit of truth and the sharing of knowledge and information, it is painfully clear that biases that uphold and maintain white supremacy, imperialism, sexism and racism have distorted education so that it is no longer about the practice of freedom'. (P.29)*

In pursuit of both freedom and truth the personal journey mentioned above was my first research project. Accompanied by an older sister we researched our father's background and discovered our previously unknown Trinidadian family. This project culminated in a published book called. 'In Search of Mr McKenzie'. Mckenzie-Mavinga & Perkins (1991a). Finding my black family helped me to feel more whole and develop greater confidence in my identity. The experience filled a gap in my cultural knowledge of the family. I view the family as an institution that constitutes an essential element in the development of most people's lives, whether they have been raised within a family situation or not.

My confidence continued to grow from the experience of visiting my other home and family in Trinidad and becoming a published writer. I gained a sense of community and I became aware that I have a voice. I continued to write poetry and read my work in front of audiences. Creative writing became a great source of expression for my

[5] Please note that hooks uses lower case in her given name as in the use of lower case for the term black.

voice on black issues and identity development. I became influenced by the feminist movement and the writings of African American females such as hooks (1992b), Lorde (1985), Angellou (1986), and Walker (1983). They wrote about their lives as black females. I drew great strength from the sharing of their life stories and their experiences of liberation from institutional and personal oppression. I identified with parts of their stories and our shared stories became one. The experience empowered me and gave me a sense of knowing and identity that previously I had been unable to acknowledge. My books acted very much in the role of a reflective practitioner affirming the unacknowledged parts of my history, heritage and womanhood.

I discovered my skills as a listener during a period as a youth worker, listening to the stories of young black men from behind the coffee bar. Counsellor training offered me theories to support my listening skills and understand the context of a listening relationship, but it did not support the experience of being a black client or counsellor. These experiences led to my decision to create situations that enabled counsellors to discuss black issues and racism in their training and practice.

Knowledge

My literary appetite broadened and I began to explore the works of black British African and Caribbean writers many whom I have been fortunate to meet in person. They have all encouraged me to continue to develop my writing as a form of sharing and healing.

This experience gave voice to my skills as a researcher and facilitator of creative writing as a therapeutic aid. In my frustration with institutional racism I turned to the writing of black sociological and psychological writers such as Gilroy (1990), Fanon (1986), Ackbar (1996), and Wilson (1993). Their work encouraged me to channel my teaching into challenging oppression, and supporting change in attitudes that excluded the experiences of black peoples, particularly black men. Fanon (1986) exemplified this when he wrote,

Ontology-once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside-does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. (P.110)

I have witnessed these missing elements mentioned by Fanon, in counsellor training, in higher education, in the supervision of client work and in a sense in my own limitations as a black tutor. I felt limited by white eurocentric domination of theoretical approaches to psychotherapy and counselling. My isolation as a black tutor kept me drifting voiceless on the margins of training institutions. I remained in that place for fourteen years as a visiting tutor, offering token transcultural workshops before deciding to play an active role in change. I now work as a counsellor trainer in Higher Education and see that I can play an important role in changing the status quo.

Developments in the social policy of race and culture coincided with my maturing psychology, self-understanding as a black woman, and wish for change. In hook's words:

Moving away from the need for immediate affirmation was crucial to my growth as a teacher. I learned to respect that shifting paradigms or sharing knowledge in new ways challenges; it takes time for students to experience that challenge is positive. Students taught me, too, that it is necessary to practice compassion in these new learning settings. hooks, (1994, p.42)

A Practice Based Study

A practice base that I was already familiar with and had easy access to was selected. This was three training courses at three different colleges that I had already been involved with. For the purpose of this study, I have named these courses Uni-one, Uni-two and Uni-three. All three training courses were involved at the beginning of

the study. The study then continued with Uni-one. The students in these groups came from a variety of different backgrounds and cultures, with male and black students in the minority. Recent data collected at the university where Uni-one is housed demonstrates that females and students who do not identify as white are in the majority. (See T1 below). This Higher Education institute, (HEI) is listed as one of the 76% offering staff training on the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, (Equalities and Diversity Initiatives in Higher Education, Coventry University 2004).

T1 General Student Breakdown Uni-one

Uni-one general university student breakdown 2002 *(The identity of this university has been protected)*

Male: Female	*45: 55 %*
White: Non-white	*45: 55 %*
With a disability: Without	*4.5: 95.5 %*
Home/Overseas	*82: 5.5 (EU), 12.5 (overseas) %*
Over 25: Under 25	*49: 51 %*

More than 2,000 students are aged 40 and above, with 7 over the age of 80

The above table shows a breakdown of ethnic groups within Uni-one, the university that provided a participant group for the primary data in 2002. The figures, which show a greater percentage of non-white students, were reflected in a 50% increase of non-white students who enrolled on the Integrative Counsellor training course that year. The ratio of male to female students was not influenced by the university intake. This was reduced to approximately 13% male and 87% female.

Chapter 1

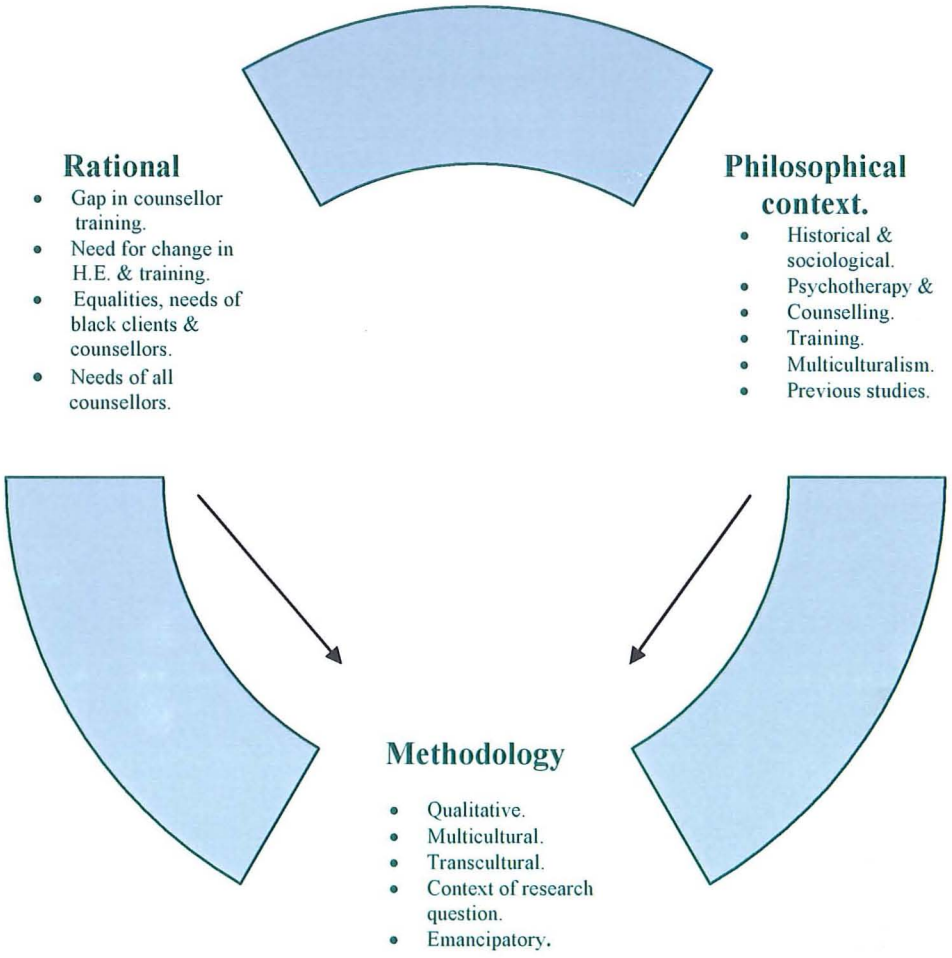
Rationale and Theoretical Context

1.1 Rationale:

During my experience as a clinical manager working with African Caribbean clients, it became clear that the cultural context of counselling was an important factor in therapeutic provision for mental health clients in particular. This knowledge was born out of a small survey that I carried out at the time.

The survey was carried out in the early nineties when experts in the field of mental health such as Burke (1984), Fernando (1989), Kareem (1992), Rack (1982), and Littlewood (1982) were producing literature on the recognition of the various cultural needs of mental health patients in their care. The survey's responses from black counsellors and clients indicated that what was being produced in the literature on black issues was not being transferred into practice. This is true of my recent experience as a counsellor trainer, hence my decision to focus this study specifically on black issues as opposed to the general theme of culture, or the issues of other ethnic groups. Needless to say, the study acts as a model for the exploration of issues pertaining to other minority groups and to both black and white counsellors. (See F 2)

F2 Overview of Rational & Theoretical Context



The Need for Change in Higher Education

The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amended Act 2000) now gives public authorities including higher education, a '*statutory general duty to promote race equality*'. (CRE, 2002). Developments in social policy are a necessity for creating frameworks to address power structures that maintain marginalised voices. The Race Relations Act does not use the term 'black issues' but it applies regulations to race issues (equal rights and access irrelevant of colour or creed) which the study indicates constitute a major area of black issues. The 'Act' suggests that as a community of practitioners 'we' are responsible for change in the educational process. In view of this responsibility this document will show how the study identified a gap in this responsibility and enabled and empowered participants to discover the voice of change within their training experience.

I view this gap in the education of counsellors as a symptom of eurocentricism. Others may not view it the same way. Some view eurocentricism as the gap between individualism and collectivism, whilst others view it within its links to colonialism. Contemporary theoretical frameworks of psychotherapy and counselling are becoming more widely influenced by globalisation and the links or splits between the western world and others. Whereas diversity and culture were previously relegated to the realms of anthropology, in Britain we are becoming more aware of diversity as a phenomenon and collective element of our society. In this study the concept of black issues is proposed as a contradiction to eurocentricism.

> *Psychology as an organised discipline, as taught and practised, ascribes little value to the experiences of black people. They are important only in so much as they reinforce white people's sense of superiority. Out and out eurocentricism permeates assumptions, outlook and instruments of psychology. But it is this psychology that has stormed through the world to be adopted even by black nations, uncritically and wholesale. Howitt & Owusu-Bempa (1994, p.127)*

Yes, I raise my hand in ownership of adopting eurocentricism unquestioningly, until I became clearer about my own identity and what happened during the process of colonisation. I now question this context in my work as a trainer. My role as a trainer has led me to work with person centred, psychodynamic and more recently the integrative approach to counselling. I find the integrative approach allows me the freedom to combine elements of traditional therapy with creativity and transcultural ways. Most of all I realise it is the freedom to evolve and transform a space within training which provides the conditions for a new discourse to evolve. This discourse may be viewed as both 'integrative' and 'transcultural' in nature and can be seen as a black empathic approach.

In turning to a more flexible, creative approach I find that art and creative writing are like a raft at times when I feel that I am sinking. My previous invisibility as a trainer was linked to the exclusion of black issues from the curriculum. Now, visibility as a black trainer has taken on a new meaning with this doctoral work. This meaning is derived from implanting my identity, my experiences and theories about black issues into the centre of the training arena and finding out what evolves.

Context of Research Question

Throughout my years as a trainer, students and trainers alike have raised many questions, concerns and experiences about black issues which require understanding and reflection. Many of these questions remain unsolved due to lack of space in the training programme. This predicament has sometimes been due to an over focus on racism and a lack of understanding of the developmental process of individuals who want to explore black issues. For example I have heard white trainees suggest that living in an area where they rarely see black people, or not having black clients excludes them from the dynamics of race and black peoples' experiences. On the other hand some trainees believe that friendships with black people, or being black British absolves them from the conflicts of stereotyping and prejudice that sometimes impact intercultural relationships. These aspects of trainees' personal development may remain un-addressed if they are not exposed to the context of race and black

issues during their training. Lack of space for these issues constitutes silence. Tuckwell (2002) asserts her understanding of silence in relation to racism:

> *There is a silence generally within our profession concerning racism, but I believe also that a silence can too easily develop in the consulting room. It is a dangerous silence for the therapy because it contains too much background noise for it not to infect all other work we try to do. A frequent response by the black patient is to stop and leave therapy, often silently. Another response is not to enter in the first place, which is the loudest silence of all. (P.138)*

I resonated with the situation of silence reported in some initial interviews with experienced practitioners. (See Chapter 2) My own training was fraught with silence: the silence of oppression, misunderstanding and the misguidance of institutional racism marginalized my black experience as a trainee.

Comments such as the above, posed by Tuckwell, which emanate from transcultural literature, seem to place a greater emphasis on deepening the counsellor's relationship with black issues as opposed to silencing. Although transcultural literature embraces diversity and cultural issues, it tends to focus on race issues as opposed to black issues in a general context. This creates negative exposure to black issues. The question remains, how are students trained to respond to what is needed? The study demonstrates that to respond appropriately we first need to understand. The document will demonstrate how the study facilitated a process of understanding and in itself explored how understanding evolved. It will also describe how the knowledge gained was used to develop the products.

Research Question

How do trainee counsellors In Britain, (from any background) understand their concerns about black issues raised by or about themselves during training or about clients during the therapeutic process?

This document will present the journey and process of my attempt to explore the above questions with trainee counsellors by sharing their concerns. Passages underlined show aspects of the study used in workshops or carried forward into the trainer's booklet. (Product of the study)

> *In order to communicate, we create shared events, practices, roles, values, myths, rules, beliefs, habits, symbols, illusions and realities. Eleftheriadou (1996, p. 2)*

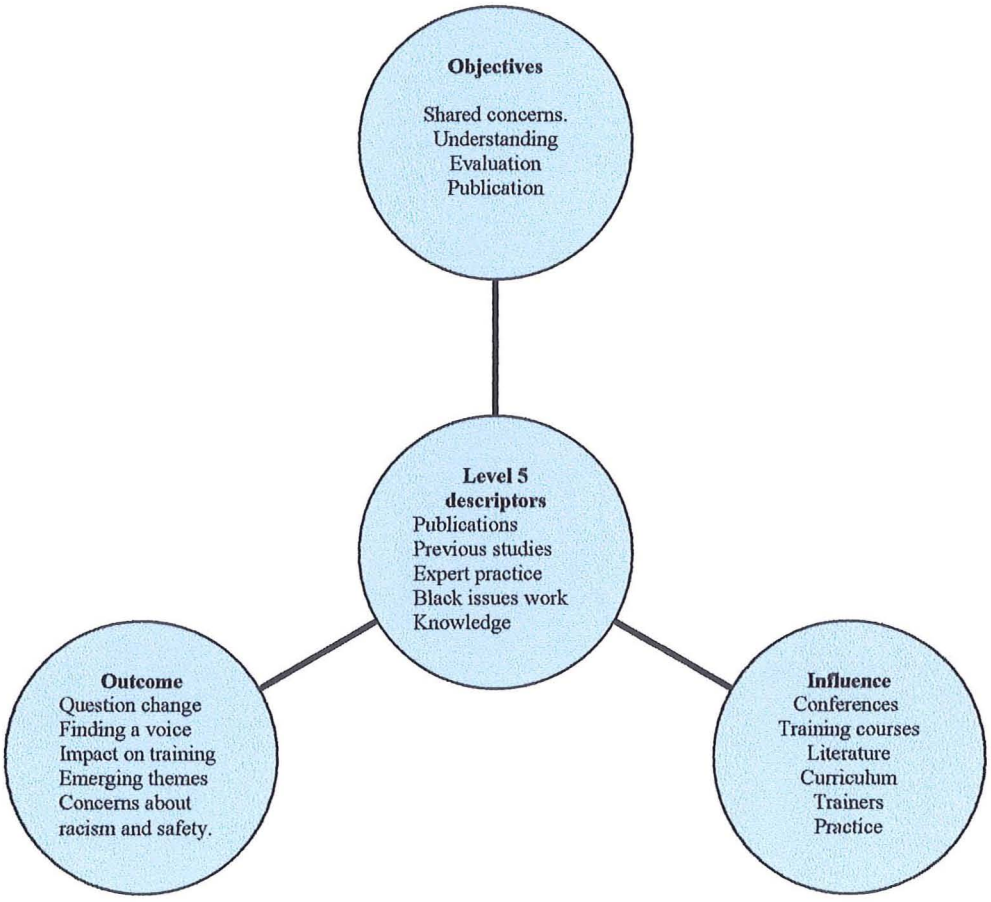
I mentioned earlier about the importance of an emancipatory approach to empower trainees and compliment my ontological position as a transcultural practitioner and as a black woman. In taking hook's stance on this the aim was to integrate a deeper understanding of the experiences of black peoples into counselling practice and theory.

> *The failure to recognise a critical black presence in the culture and in most scholarship writing on postmodernism compels a black reader , particularly a black female reader , to interrogate her interest in the subject where those who discuss and write about it seem not to know black women exist or even to consider the possibility that we might be somewhere writing or saying something that should be listened to, or producing art that should be seen, heard approached with intellectual seriousness. hooks. (1991a, p.24)*

The question of understanding featured highly in the philosophical framework of this study. In my past experience as a counsellor trainer, trainees have proposed many

unanswered questions and frequently express an urgency to gain clarity and guidance on how to work more effectively with black issues. Questions about 'how do we understand, explore, address and overcome powerful feelings linked to black issues?' have been raised like a mantra over and over again. This is why I believe that qualitative research techniques compliment a more active transcultural approach and an opportunity to facilitate and interact with participants on the topic of black issues. (See F3 below for overview of intentions and achievements).

F3 Overview of Intentions and Achievements



1.2 Theoretical Context & Literature Review

> *Such intensive training can sometimes be compared to a kind of colonisation of the mind and I constantly had to battle within myself to keep my head above water, to remind myself at every point who I was and what I was. It was a painful difficult battle not to think what I was told to think, not to be what I had been told to be and not to challenge what I had been told could not be challenged and at the same time not to become alienated from my basic roots. Kareem & Littlewood (1992, p.31)*

The words of Kareem and Littlewood quoted above, echo the self-understanding that informed my approach to this study. I can't help how I was raised, but I can make conscious my intentions about how I will act in the future. I am committed to challenging the impact of eurocentric teaching, so that counsellor training becomes a holistic culturally contextual, anti-oppressive discipline that addresses black issues and other marginalised experiences. Having said this, a specific intention to directly challenge eurocentricity within training, would defeat the purpose of 'engaging' in re-search; therefore I selected an inclusive philosophy drawn from multicultural research and transcultural knowledge to support this study. This section will trace threads of knowledge drawn from literature and experience that underpin my approach. The knowledge consists of four strands: historical and sociological; psychotherapy and counselling; training; previous studies.

Historical and Sociological

I discovered via a website that in the US the concept of 'black issues' is a term used to identify sociological, psychological and political experiences that impact on the personal development and education of African American students. Since the 20th century post war renaissance, African Americans have continued to build on these social constructs to empower their communities.

Reason & Bradbury (2001) refer to African American Edmondson Bell's work as a way of taking up the challenge to open up *'the infusion of race into US discourse'* (P.48). They propose that Edmondson Bell supports the observer, who involves the people in a *'transformative dialogue'*. (P.56) The passage makes reference to *'the involved observer'*. In this approach the research is shaped by and connected to the individuals, groups or community being studied. These concepts support the inclusion of a transformation and emancipation process of the training groups in this study.

One of the reasons that I engaged in doctoral research studies was to break the isolation of writing about challenging issues such as those mentioned above. I have mentioned that I was also keen to discover the link between history, black issues and the therapeutic process. One way of sharing my concerns is by engaging with relevant literature. In doing so I found that Denzin's *'Interpretive Interactionism'*, (1989(a) which embroils components of participatory action research affirmed the important links between history, power, emotion, and knowledge. These are essential elements of research that address equalities issues such as those proposed in the revised *'Race Relations Act'*, (2002).

Denzin (1989) postulates an understanding of four ways in which history enters research: firstly the unfolding of process over time; secondly, locating process events within the bigger cultural and historical framework that includes power relationships; thirdly, the links between social history and personal history; fourthly, the ways in which the researcher's personal and historical relationships shape the interpretive process. Denzin's theory was particularly useful in understanding the power dynamics between participants and myself in the interactive process.

> *Power both creates and destroys. It creates new social forms while it destroys existing social structures. Denzin (1989, p.29)*

In this doctoral study I found that breaking down old, oppressive ways of approaching black issues and creating affirmative dialogue have involved a process that includes the exposure of power dynamics. In the study this process was dependant on trainees' understanding of social history, their levels of familiarity with black issues and the dynamics of racism. Understanding concepts of attachment and loss that impact on personal and social relationships are important constructs in power dynamics. For trainee counsellors, opportunities to understand attachment and loss may be within their course curriculum. This is a complex arrangement because although Freud and Jung, for example, developed their theories against a background of war and migration, traditional theories do not contextualise the separation and loss of African and Asian peoples in terms of culture, community and racism. These theories of loss focus on eurocentric perceptions of childhood or bereavement rather than loss of origin, cultural identity and experiences of migration. Ackbar (1993) suggests:

> *Social history has been projected as irrelevant' when 'history can become a basis for self-criticism, a basis for self-understanding, and more importantly, the basis for understanding the motives and the psychology of others.(P.18)*

Ackbar's approach points towards a reconciliation of social history and psychology, because social history plays an important role in transcultural counselling. In my experience, training that exposes this history, exposes power dynamics. White participants express a fear of losing their assumed power in the unconscious schema of institutional racism. Black participants experience fears associated with their emancipation from the role of the oppressed. These dynamics are linked to the history of racism and colonialism.

> *The process of mental liberation is not unlike many of the requirements of physical liberation. Freedom from captivity must be taken not passively requested. It is never willingly given since the captivity has*

been in some way beneficial to the captor, so the captor gives up his captive only reluctantly. As our great Ancestral Saints, Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, Ida B Wells, Frederick Douglass, Medgar, Evers and many others (now nameless) all found out, the decision to take ones freedom meets with resistance and even mortal danger'. Ackbar (1996, p.39)

Knowledge gained from sociologists, historians and psychologists supported the duality of concerns that needed to be acknowledged and supported during this study.

The precepts of Denzin's approach, 'Interpretive Interactionism' (*Denzin, N.1989, p.25*) as listed below have been useful in the process of finding meaning from ways in which knowledge and understanding happens in relation to black issues. They have also offered a way of listening to the voices within the study.

The aims of Interpretative Interactionism are:

- *A concept free mode of description,* (This study was not intended to be concept free, although interpretation of participants' narratives has been avoided).
- *Understanding the prose of the world,* (I have listened to individual narratives, yet experiences have been shared in a collective sense).
- *Non measured, non controlled, non statistical, non manipulative.*
- *To capture the core of every human situation, which is novel, conflicting and filled with multiple interpretations and meaning.*
- *It is assumed that the language of ordinary people can be used to explicate their experiences.*
- *As in the feminist approach, knowledge should be for emancipatory purpose.*
- *The voices of participants should be heard through their interpretive text.*

Links to these precepts have been made on page 88 of this document.

Psychotherapy and Counselling

Multicultural, intercultural and transcultural psychotherapy and counselling take into account various viewpoints on the way equalities, diversity and oppression in counselling can be approached. I shall present brief examples below.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalists, Vanoy Adams (1996) and Feltham & Horton (2000) suggest attention should be paid to the many cultural reference points that impact on relationships. Ponterrotto, et. al; (2000) argue that:

> *Essential elements of multicultural therapy competence are the therapist's awareness of his or her own cultural heritage, world view and the related values, biases and assumptions about human behaviour, and an understanding of the worldview of the culturally different client.(P.25)*

It is clear that a lot of attention has been given to addressing gaps in multicultural theory. However, exploration of the experiences of black counsellors and black clients are limited. This problem perpetuates eurocentric dominance.

The authors discuss the dominance of white eurocentric approaches to counselling which go some way to addressing black issues as cultural issues. However black issues can neither be confined to cultural issues nor generalised to concerns about racism. The process of dilution caused by these approaches can be related to issues of any ethnic minority group, but for the purpose of this study I have focussed on black issues. Multicultural issues can be gender related and gay friendly and cover a broad spectrum of experiences. Taking all this into account however, we cannot take for granted that a multicultural therapeutic approach means that trainees understand how to address black issues. Multicultural research runs the risk of being addressed through eurocentric positivist eyes. Morrow et al, (2001) cited Scheurich and Young's referral to this phenomena as '*Epistemological racism'*

Intercultural and Transcultural Approaches

Trying to make a distinction between intercultural and transcultural paradigms can be like trying to distinguish between psychotherapy and counselling. They are not mutually exclusive, yet the transcultural approach advocates more explicitly the depth of self exploration required to transcend prejudice and work with the cultural inferences of a therapeutic relationship. The points below assist readers to understand the necessary process of engaging within these paradigms.

Interculturalists Kareem & Littlewood (1994) and Thompson & Lago (1982) attempt to deal with this problem by suggesting that we should pay attention to relationships between cultures and within cultural groups. Kareem & Littlewood (1994) suggest that:

> *Intercultural therapy should never be allowed to become some specialised therapy targeted at black people, but simply therapy that takes into account these issues'. (P.12)*

Transculturalists Eleftheriadou (1994), d'Adenne & Mahtani (1989), and Tuckwell (2002), suggest that we transcend our own cultural reference points whether they are similar or different and experience ourselves empathically within the culture of another person or group. The following quote shows how d'Ardenne & Mahtani (1989) distinguish the transcultural approach.

> *We have chosen the term 'trans' as opposed to 'cross' or 'inter' cultural counselling because we want to emphasise the active and reciprocal process that is involved. (P.5)*

The above authors base their understanding of 'transcultural' on Leininger's reference to 'transcultural caring' Leininger (1985):

A way of using cultural knowledge and skills creatively to help people live and survive satisfactorily in a 'diverse' and changing world. (P.5)

Leininger's approach places an emphasis on intentional and active processes in the therapeutic relationship. Of the three cultural approaches discussed above, the transcultural approach offers greater insights and perspectives to actively support this process.

Ideas and examples of using these contexts do not explicitly support trainee counsellors to understand black issues. Research literature refers mainly to a multicultural approach. Social constructionists might therefore deem this study to be tapping into an unconscious component of multiculturalism, that of black issues. I would suggest therefore that my approach to this study links more closely with transcultural perspectives as presented above by d'Ardenne & Mahtani, an approach grounded in a reciprocal process and actively engaging with self-awareness, oppression, racism and what it means to be a black person in Britain. Since research theory that refers to a transcultural approach could not be found, I used my transcultural knowledge to deepen a multicultural approach to the study.

At a conference presented by The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, (22.5.04) New Zealand counsellors expressed the importance of placing counselling in the cultural context of its Maori communities. South African counsellors considered the impact of the apartheid system and the colour bar on counsellors and clients. US counsellors stated that accreditation of professional counsellors requires evidence of their ability to understand and work with diversity, cultural context and racial oppression. What implications do these global experiences infer for counsellor training in Britain? I would suggest that addressing racism and oppression in ways that develop theory and support therapeutic dialogue on black issues in training is questionable. Feurtes and Gretchen (2001), advocate that the multicultural theories they reviewed indicated:

A need to translate useful concepts into deliverable techniques for ethnic minority clients.(P.530)

However there was a lack of suggestion on how to take action on this proposal in practice. Their findings support my reasons for selecting training courses as a field for this study.

Training

Apart from the psychoanalytic input of my own training my approach to black issues in training has been influenced by European writers such as Fanon (1986), Lago & Thompson (1982), and Kareem & Littlewood (1992). Also by African American writers such as Ackbar (1996), Wilson (1993), and hooks (1994). These writers empathically transcend the developmental process of black therapists and clients. In addition I have listened to the voices of African Caribbean and African American writers through their novels and autobiographical experiences. In my former education that negated black experiences, I did not learn about great black civilisations and educators. I learned further submission to white European thinking that negated part of my heritage. Kareem (1992), suggests that:

Psychotherapists who are analytically trained learn to work with and understand the patient's inner world only, and therefore for some there is resistance in dealing with psychological problems that originate in the real (outer) world. However most black people would admit that the most traumatic feature in their personal lives is to be black in a white society. (P.25)

In my early contact as a trainer in higher education, I engaged with counsellor training that had no references to transcultural or black literature on its book lists. I used my own published autobiography and the work of black poets and writers to enhance trainee counsellors' understanding of black issues. So I see introducing a black issues study into counsellor training courses as a continuation and development of my efforts to transform training institutions.

It follows then that if training of counsellors develops its approach to black issues, then provision for clients will become culturally appropriate, thus affording greater opportunities for counsellors and clients of African and Asian heritage and at the same time assisting white European counsellors to significantly develop their understanding of black issues.

Bell hooks, the African American writer, suggests that we can challenge the way universities can sometimes be set up to hinder the process of emancipation. *'Education as a practice of freedom'* hooks, (1994). In my experience as a university counsellor, I have come to understand that most individuals have been hurt at some point during their formal education and their study skills in higher education are often influenced by these hurts. This is where the process of emancipation within this study has become important.

Previous Studies

Lawrence (2003), surveyed counselling students about race and cultural issues on their training. The survey highlighted that white students felt more comfortable on their training than their black counterparts. Also, they all felt that the race and culture of their tutor would affect their training experience. Respondents were consistently saying that:

> *There was a gap in what could be an opportunity to work through the diversity of race and culture within their counselling training. (P.123)*

It is important to find ways that fill the gap noted above, and expand counsellor training and provision that supports the dynamics of change, rather than assume that eurocentric theory may be applied systematically. The reflective stance in this study is designed to challenge these assumptions by broadening dialogue and addressing concepts, customs and attitudes to black issues. To validate my use of the term 'eurocentric' I turned to literature on research and multi-cultural counselling produced by Morrow et al, (2001).

Although traditional research methods have assembled a wealth of knowledge within the field of counselling, the "compass" used to guide such knowledge has been a eurocentric paradigm that reflects the perspectives of white middle class males. Stanfield, (1994). Sue, (1999). Sue, Kurasaki & Srinivasan (1999). Intuitively, the multicultural researcher questions the effectiveness of such paradigms when applied to marginalized populations. Padilla & Lindholm (1995); Slife, (1998); Sue et al, (1999) "How can the worldviews of people of colour be understood when the researchers "compass" is directed by the polarities of a eurocentric worldview? From the qualitative researcher's view the participants in the study are the researcher's "compass". The participants direct the nature and direction of the researcher's journey, and meanings are made of the data from the ground up, that is from the lived experiences of the individuals and cultures under investigation. (P. 576)

The above authors speak of the compass being directed by white males. One of the biggest challenges was to self direct my methodology as opposed to fitting into a white eurocentric structuralist approach. However, as a way of structuring this study I chose to draw on and extend elements of qualitative theory that have already been tried and tested. Whilst traditional theories that dominate the teaching of psychotherapy and counselling may have been directed by white males, this is not entirely true of the counselling population that appears to be dominated by white females. Experience tells me that training courses may be more challenged by the minority voices of black people and males. (See Appendix 1. for extended literature review).

Summary

I have presented and engaged with an account of my prior knowledge and literature search. Consideration of sociological, historical and psychological discourse on counsellor training and understanding of black issues has been made. I have observed

the gaps in multicultural research and counsellor training, and the challenges posed by venturing into such a volatile area of concern. I have drawn on various themes to outline the context of empowerment necessary for this study, and presented examples of previous work in this area. I have argued that qualitative, multicultural research alone did not provide enough pointers to procure this action study. A further step in being clear, specific and focussed on the theme of black issues, yet flexible in the heuristic process was necessary.

In the next chapter I shall present my methodology which will be supported by aspects of multicultural and qualitative research presented above.

Chapter 2

The Principle of Shared Concerns *(Methodology and Method)*

I have called this chapter 'The Principle of Shared Concerns' because the nature of my research methodology is about making a space to share and carry forward the concept of sharing to develop knowledge. This chapter will be presented in 2 sections. 1. Overview of the methodology and related ethical concerns. 2. Overview of method, data collection, analysis and related ethical concerns.

> *Heuristics is a passionate and discerning personal involvement in problem solving, an effort to know the essence of some aspects of life through the internal pathways of the self. Douglas & Moustakas (1985, p.39)*

The above quote expresses the sentiments with which I have approached the process of this research project. My sentiments are those of being passionately involved in the changing nature of psychotherapy and counsellor training. In being so, I wanted to understand the essence of training counsellors to work with diversity, equality and black issues whenever these issues may be present in the therapeutic process. Given the nature of this study, I knew that my ability to journey in and out of objectivity would be the main challenge. With this in mind, I sought to develop an emancipatory approach to the study, as proposed by Denzin (1989).

> *As in the feminist approach, knowledge should be for emancipatory purpose. Denzin (1989, p.25).*

It was hoped that this approach would assist empowerment and give voice to both black and white participants' shared concerns and training needs. A list of the aims and objectives are presented below:

Aims of the Study

- To facilitate 'shared concerns'. To find out what questions practitioners have about exploring black issues.
- To facilitate trainees to voice their experiences and training needs when exploring and attempting to understand black issues.
- To influence the wider field of psychotherapy and counselling and compliment a transcultural approach to psychotherapy and counselling by producing written publications arising from the data and study process.

Objectives:

- Find out about black issues in the training of experienced practitioners.
- Identify trainees' common concerns.
- Discover what trainee practitioners need to know and understand that can be incorporated into talking therapies when addressing black issues.
- Publish papers, book contract, and present study process at conferences.
- Influence future training programmes.
- Document process and findings

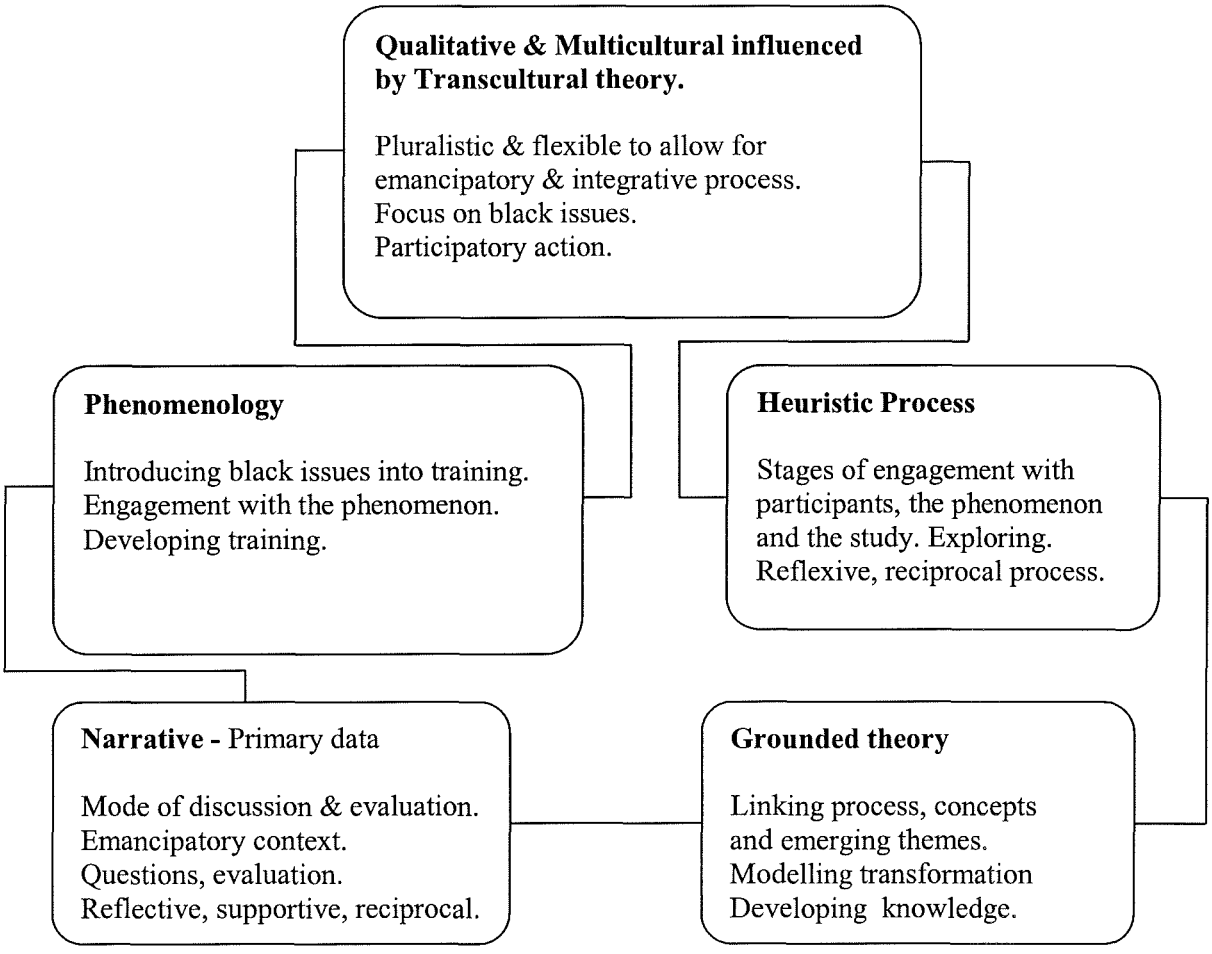
Overview of Methodology

My methodology is placed within the paradigms of both qualitative and multicultural research, which support the transcultural nature of the research question. The rationale for this paradigm has been presented in chapter 1. In this section I will describe my methodology, which has been developed with the above intention. I will describe the use of a combination of research techniques that has supported different phases of the study. A discursive response to diversity and equality in practice that draws together various threads of action research. The impact of using this

methodology will be explained in chapter 3. I have used the term 'flexible' to identify the process of using a variety of research components when and where necessary.

The main components of my methodology which combines multicultural research with components of qualitative research are presented below. (See F4)

F4 Overview of Methodology



I would describe the general process of the study as a heuristic one, drawing on participatory action, elements of narrative research, grounded theory and phenomenology. (See F4) I have also included an element of quantitative research by using evaluative questionnaires to support the aims of the study. This integrative approach was shaped by two causes. Firstly my position as trainer researcher aiming to influence training with a focus on black issues, whilst at the same time studying the outcome of this influence. Secondly my ontological position as a psychotherapist, writer, and black woman facilitating students' experiences. On exploring the usefulness of a methodology, I considered the effects of my own education dominated by eurocentric thinking that may impact the use of established research theory or interpretation of data. (The problem of epistemological racism referred to in chapter 1.) It was important therefore to allow flexibility.

Qualitative Research

Mellor-Clarke & Barkham (2000, p.252), propose that:

> *There is a gap between research and practice, and that therapists are resistant to becoming more involved in an activity that does not appear to produce advantages in respect of work with clients.*

Qualitative research seems an appropriate approach for a work based study which aims to fill this gap in counsellor training, whilst influencing training and the wider field more generally.

In an effort to contradict the above position I selected an approach that allowed me to have direct contact with trainee counsellors and access to their developing practice with clients. This was the closest that I could possibly get to influence work with clients. A quantitative approach proposes formalities that must have an end product and measured outcome. This would not have suited my involvement as a reflexive, reciprocal practitioner, paying attention to the here and now. I wanted participants to be active in, and influence the research throughout the project. Whilst aspiring to the principles of participatory action research, the study has been challenged by the

experience of not being able to elicit data from the observations or interactions of the actual training sessions, or from clients.

McLeod (1999a) supports the use of a 'qualitative' as opposed to a 'quantitative' approach in the context of the therapeutic process. He suggests that:

> *Quantitative process studies do not represent a satisfactory method of capturing both the complexity of the therapeutic process and also the covert nature of much of what happens on a moment-to-moment basis...A new generation of researcher has, therefore attempted to develop techniques that would make it more possible to open the process of counselling in ways that would allow more of this complex experience to be explored. (P.32, 33).*

Attempting to place the theme of 'black issues' in a qualitative framework evoked some concerns about the eurocentricity of qualitative theory. In consideration of these concerns text on multicultural theory was explored.

Multicultural Research in Training

Morrow et al, (2001), in their analysis of 'multicultural Research' suggest that 'ethnic paradigms' must question knowledge gathered by European descent researchers. They propose that ethnic models of qualitative research should be grounded in the context of the experiences of people of colour and as in the quote below:

> *Centralised in non-European notions of time, space, property, ancestors, oral, communication, folklore, spirituality and relationships with nature. Thus, ethnic paradigms or "race-based epistemologies" Scheurich & Young (1997, p.580) begin with the inquiry forms and value systems of the particular culture under question and investigate from indigenous perspectives. Morrow et al, (2001, p.580).*

This recommendation fits nicely with the integrative transcultural [6]approach to counsellor training that my teaching involves.

The writers go on to say that

> *Qualitative counselling research is political and has several characteristics that make it a "natural" approach to conducting multicultural research. (P.580).*

- It includes context as an essential component of the research.
- It addresses the researcher's processes of self-awareness and self-reflection.
- It is uniquely able to capture the meanings made by participants of their experiences.
- It can be used within the paradigms of participants, using the stories, folk wisdom, and common sense of ordinary people.
- Its methods provide the opportunity for voices that were previously silenced to be heard and lives that were marginalized to be at the centre.
- It provides an opportunity to explore previously unexplored or undefined constructs, many of which appear in multicultural counselling.

The above components have been used to compliment an emancipatory process suggested earlier by Denzin. However I must reiterate that these components are proposed to support a multicultural paradigm, but offer no insights as to how black issues can be approached; for example, relationships between black peoples and how experiences of racism are managed within a therapeutic context. By virtue of exclusion this omission can place training at risk of perpetuating institutional racism.

[6] An integrative approach incorporates plurality in theoretical background for example a psychodynamic and humanistic approach, allowing for varied and creative methods of teaching and therapeutic counselling.

Fuertes & Gretchen (2001), who review nine theories of multicultural counselling demonstrate this risk when reference to black issues appear in only two of them. However the authors propose that:

> *There is a need to translate useful concepts into deliverable techniques and services for ethnic minority clients. To varying degrees the practice component is missing from many of these theories, and a lack of clarity about their prescribed use and limitations is evident. (P.530).*

The above suggestion affirms the need for a practice based study whilst proposing a two way challenge in the use of research theory and its application. There is a need to challenge and extend both eurocentric and multicultural approaches by including some of the elements that have been missed in the above review. I was faced therefore with a parallel process of including black issues into both my methodology and the training forum. I believe that a focus on black issues, deliverable techniques and practice components, that run side by side, have been considered as a modelling process in this methodology. Experience tells me that vigilance is required to keep these themes alive within the rapidly developing discourse of diversity training. Some organisations are content with diversity training to address equalities in Higher Education; however diversity training does not necessarily offer practical and supportive ways of addressing the racial components of black issues. The approach to this study is therefore more in line with a transcultural approach to counselling, which requires that we delve deeper into the basic beliefs and values of the client as defined by the client.

> *The first step in transcultural counselling is for therapists to examine their own psychological processes and their relationships to their culture. This awareness includes a close examination of familial and interpersonal relationships and values, religious or political ideas, stereotypes, prejudices and racism, in order to clarify generally ideas on living. Eleftheriadou (1994, p.31).*

I see this approach as giving permission to examine and particularise black issues and deal with issues of omission by both researchers and counsellors in this area.

Ethical Issues Linked to a Multicultural Approach

Initially I engaged an ethical committee which consisted of a colleague from Uni-one, a colleague from Uni-two and a colleague who was completely separate from my work with the training courses, but was involved with diversity issues and BACP concerns. I asked them to help me reflect on non-maleficence and coping with defensiveness, silences and the impact that black issues might have on my own and participant's responses.

Rarefying: Having worked through my own shyness of addressing black issues, I was trying to make something general out of a personal experience. Exploration of black issues was supported with contemporary transcultural theory.

Falsification issues: It doesn't necessarily follow that a focus on black issues in training, supervision and personal development will address the matter of exploring black issues in the therapeutic process, although I hoped the study would influence practise. The challenge was to be aware of ways in which the process was being held and evaluated at an institutional level. These elements of progress were monitored in training assessment criterias, course evaluation and participants' narratives. I will expand on ethical considerations that link to each research component.

Heuristic Research:

> *The heuristic process challenges me to rely on my own resources, and to gather within myself the full scope of my observations, thoughts, feelings, senses and intuitions: to accept as authentic and valid whatever will open new channels for clarifying a topic, question, problem or puzzlement. Moustakas (1990 a, p.3).*

Moustakas echoes my concerns about the contradictions of a heuristic approach. It supports the idea that I am taking the risk to allow elements of trust and transformation to merge into something new. The process of shifting from my personal picture of the situation, to engaging with the group experience and the discovery of many meanings, suits my curiosity about the links between past counsellor training with the missing element of black issues and present experience. In the process of this heuristic study I have relied on my tacit knowledge as a kind of antennae on which to acknowledge the trainee's present time experience of black issues. In addition I have drawn on the knowledge and experience of participants and colleagues as co-researchers. This enabled us to go through the process together rather than as researcher remaining outside, aloof and possibly isolated from the study situation.

Ethical Links

I was aware that a mixed methodology might create fragmentation and lack of focus due to the use of lots of bits and nothing concrete. Viewing the process heuristically offered a framework for holding the bits together.

Participatory Action Research

I have drawn on PAR because it allows for an interactive approach that enabled the experience and voices of participants to be heard. This is because facilitating the voice of others is an essential component of both counselling and emancipation. Writers on participatory action research emphasize the use of knowledge and experience of oppressed groups as a tool in the process of empowerment and emancipation. Reason suggests:

> *One aim is to produce knowledge and the experience of people, often oppressed groups, is directly honoured and valued. Reason (1998, p.269).*

PAR offers the main objectives of producing knowledge directly from the group experience and empowering them through their shared knowledge and experiences, by assisting them to understand constructs of power and powerlessness. This approach compliments the 'principle of shared concerns'.

> *Those agents of change who initiate PAR processes among oppressed peoples must embrace a genuine commitment to work with these democratic values and to honour the wisdom of the people. A key notion here is dialogue, because it is through dialogue that the subject-object relationship of traditional science gives way to a subject-object one, in which the academic knowledge of formally educated people works in a dialectical tension with popular knowledge of the people to produce a more profound understanding of the situation. Fals-Borda & Rahman (1991, p5).*

An emphasis on understanding has become a key feature of this study; however I could not assume that my participants are an oppressed group, but I can assume that oppression is in the midst of the diverse training group; therefore oppression must be an element of black issues. Understanding and dialogue feature highly in the process of counselling and emancipation, and have been key issues in this study. Dialogue has assisted the transference of knowledge and experience fundamental to the importance of 'understanding'.

Ethical Links

One of the main limitations of a PAR approach is when the researcher's own agenda becomes embroiled in the interactive process and needs to be disentangled.

Grounded Theory

Strauss and Corbin propose that the purpose of a grounded theory approach is to influence a developing conceptual model by using the data in a cyclical process. Strauss & Corbin (2001). Whereas a phenomenological approach may run the risk of

focussing mainly on the phenomenon, heuristics utilises grounded theory in retaining the essence of the participants' experience in the description of data. Moustakas(1990). The main intention was to discover and uncover the nature of trainee counsellors' experiences in relation to understanding the phenomenon of black issues. This experience was used in a reflexive process to generate data and influence the next phase of the training programme and study. A grounded theory approach gave meaning to the process of being immersed in the training as a staff member, whilst being in the role of researcher interacting in the participatory process. I recognised the need for an open process, questioning of data and understanding the social processes that influenced data collection. My intention was to utilise this perspective to facilitate participants and co-researchers to generate the data. This provided opportunities for continuous evaluation and feedback for both the training and the study process. Using elements of grounded theory was more supportive than limiting.

Ethical Concerns

I was concerned that focussing on the development of concepts might over influence an open ended process of trainees volunteering data outside of their training.

Narrative

The narrative components of this study served a central purpose in connecting to participants' lived experiences, shared concerns and expression of meaning throughout the life of the project. As previously mentioned, attention on the narrative helps to capture the dialogue necessary for participatory action research. In this study it informed the reflexive process necessary for evaluation and a grounded theory approach. In addition it acts as a parallel to the counselling relationship. Gonzales et al, (2001) suggest that the social constructionist approach offers a mechanism for eliciting racial and cultural experiences from the client's reality, therefore offering opportunities for the counsellor and client to understand and interpret these issues. A narrative approach compliments the equalities aspect of the counselling relationship

and offers modelling within the study field that can benefit trainees. In this study a narrative approach offered mutual respect for the multiple realities that were expressed in training groups. In addition it supported the provision of a space for participants' voices to be expressed and heard, forming the main source of data collection. This will be described in the methods section.

When talking about her methodology, Kim Etherington, in a specialist seminar. (Metanoia Institute, 12.11.01,b), highlighted the usefulness and ethics of a narrative approach to a study with two of her ex-clients. Etherington says that:

> *Narrative enquirers are receptive to learning from participants as the expert on themselves, paying close attention to the power dynamics in the relationship, and attempting to suspend notions of expertise. Etherington (2000 a, p.8).*

As a writer the idea of transcribed verbal evaluation as a means of capturing the participant's truth appealed to me. Participants were engaged in verbal feedback on the impact of the project. The narrative elements of this study gave them an authentic voice in the study and in their training programme.

Ethical Links

Narrative research can have its limitations if an open approach to the cultural and sociological dimensions of dialogue is not taken into account. (Similar to contradictions in feminist research if patriarchal influences are not considered.)

Phenomenological Components

> *Any phenomenon represents a suitable starting point for an investigation' ------, the totality of what lies before us in the light of day'. ------ Phenomenon means to bring to light, to place in brightness, to show itself in itself---that which appears the impetus for experience and for generating new knowledge. Moustakas. (1994 b, p.26).*[7]

In this study the phenomenon of black issues has been used as a concept, a way of naming a theme born out of my consciousness and experience. It has remained a central theme in the study which trainees were encouraged to relate to as an element of their training programme.

> *The researcher will discover that understanding the investigated phenomenon qualifies exquisitely as a criterion for research knowledge, specifically, an understanding that does not set out explicitly and exclusively to master and control, or dominate it. Valle & King (1978, p.5).*

Knowledge gleaned from Valle and King's theory supported the primary aim of this study which was to discover how the phenomenon of black issues may be understood and influence the way trainees learn about practice. In this respect, my heuristic task was to use an interactive process to discover how the phenomenon became understood.

> *Phenomenological understanding is not insulated from action since the agent of phenomenological understanding is not a supermundane mind but a man as bodily-engaged, participating being-in-the-world-with-others. Colaizzi (1973, p.132).*

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[7] For Hegel, phenomenology referred to knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses and knows in ones immediate awareness and experience. Moustakas (1994, p. 26)

In this sense I set out to use the phenomenon of black issues in an interactive heuristic process, as a stepping stone, or according to Moustakas:

> *A building block of human science and basis for all knowledge. Moustakas, (1994, p.26).*

Ethical Links

It would have been limiting to depend solely on a phenomenological approach as this might have subjugated the relationship with black issues that an interactive process has so clearly supported. From the dual position of tutor/researcher, it was my aim to collect data in a non-biased way, with informed consent. I was aware that this duality may particularly affect trainees who were concerned that their work may be assessed differently according to how they respond. This was discussed with the other tutors in the team at Uni-one.

Whereas each element of qualitative research that I have drawn on may have its own limitations, I prefer to think of heuristic process as a means of unlimited potential for this study. From many research elements, one theory that embraces both multicultural and qualitative research may emerge. Next I shall outline my use of these research elements.

Overview of Method, Data collection, Analysis & Ethical Concerns

As opposed to a more objective outsider approach used in participant observation, my established role as a transcultural counsellor and integrative counselling trainer set the tone for the participatory process; therefore it was not difficult to foresee my role as an insider outsider in the ready-made training arena for this study. The skill of moving between two worlds as a trainer and researcher were utilised in this active and reflexive process. At times during the study I was a trainer, whilst at other times I was a researcher. Trainees were also placed in a dual role, because only volunteered information was used as data. Discussions during workshops were not used as data,

however narrative contributions made outside of training sessions were used as data. The pitfalls of this approach will be presented in the paragraph on ethical concerns.

Four methods were used to produce data:

1. Verbal interviews with experienced practitioners and primary data group Uni-one volunteers: These were transcribed and analysed to identify emerging themes, give voice to participant's experiences and evidence the reflexive process. Colleagues were asked for their reflections on transcriptions and on the impact of the theme of black issues on participants' learning, together with their experience of the research process. The purpose of this was to assist the outcome to be less researcher influenced. A detailed account of outcomes and validity is presented in chapter 5.

2. The collection of trainees' shared concerns in the form of written questions handed in by participants from the primary and secondary data groups: The impetus for this came from my experience of the many questions that have been raised during previous facilitation of transcultural workshops. Concerns were clustered, to identify common themes.

3. Evaluation questionnaires were presented to participants in the primary data group at the end of the first year and after final workshop sessions: These were used to check the impact of the phenomenon on the training, the usefulness of the workshops and as a gauge for trainee progress in understanding black issues.

4. Participants in the primary data group were invited to volunteer excerpts from learning journals to evidence their understanding and use of the black issues input. Although a number of trainees agreed to offer these only two were submitted. These have not been included in the analysis.

A Note on Questionnaires

The study includes several questionnaires which were used to create secondary data. These questionnaires were not intended to be used as quantitative data. They were not piloted, but colleagues gave feedback on the design process. They were intended as a means of evaluation. They were used to reciprocate to tutors information about whether or not the workshops sessions had been a useful way of introducing the concept of black issues. The first was a box type questionnaire for the purpose of evaluating the impact of black issues workshops on each training course involved in the study. (Appendix 2.) This questionnaire was designed with closed questions and options on a five-point scale. The options included a range of tick box answers such as yes, no, maybe, not sure, not applicable. The questions were designed to discover levels of awareness of the importance of black issues and participants' confidence and willingness to address black issues in all areas of training and practice. The idea of a box questionnaire of this sort came from a specialist seminar 'From Transmissional to transformational learning', presented by Michael Carroll. In the seminar we were invited to try out the questionnaire as a method of evaluation before and after a discussion. (Carroll, Metanoia Institute 31.1.03)

Carroll used a straightforward approach with closed questions and tick box answers. I had also used a similar type of approach, the 'Rosenberg questionnaire on self-esteem', to evaluate some previous therapeutic work with women in a domestic violence project. This questionnaire gave information about the women's progress from the beginning to the end of theme focussed workshops. I thought this approach might be useful, because in a similar way the black issues study incorporated theme focussed workshops. The pitfalls of using closed questions, such as lack of opportunity to express meaning and qualify answers were contemplated. (Barker et al, 1994) I decided that the closed questionnaire was really more appropriate to use as a thermometer. Firstly it validated the aim of facilitating participants to understand the phenomenon of black issues in their training. Secondly it helped decipher where my approach may not be effective and in the case of Uni-one some idea of how to

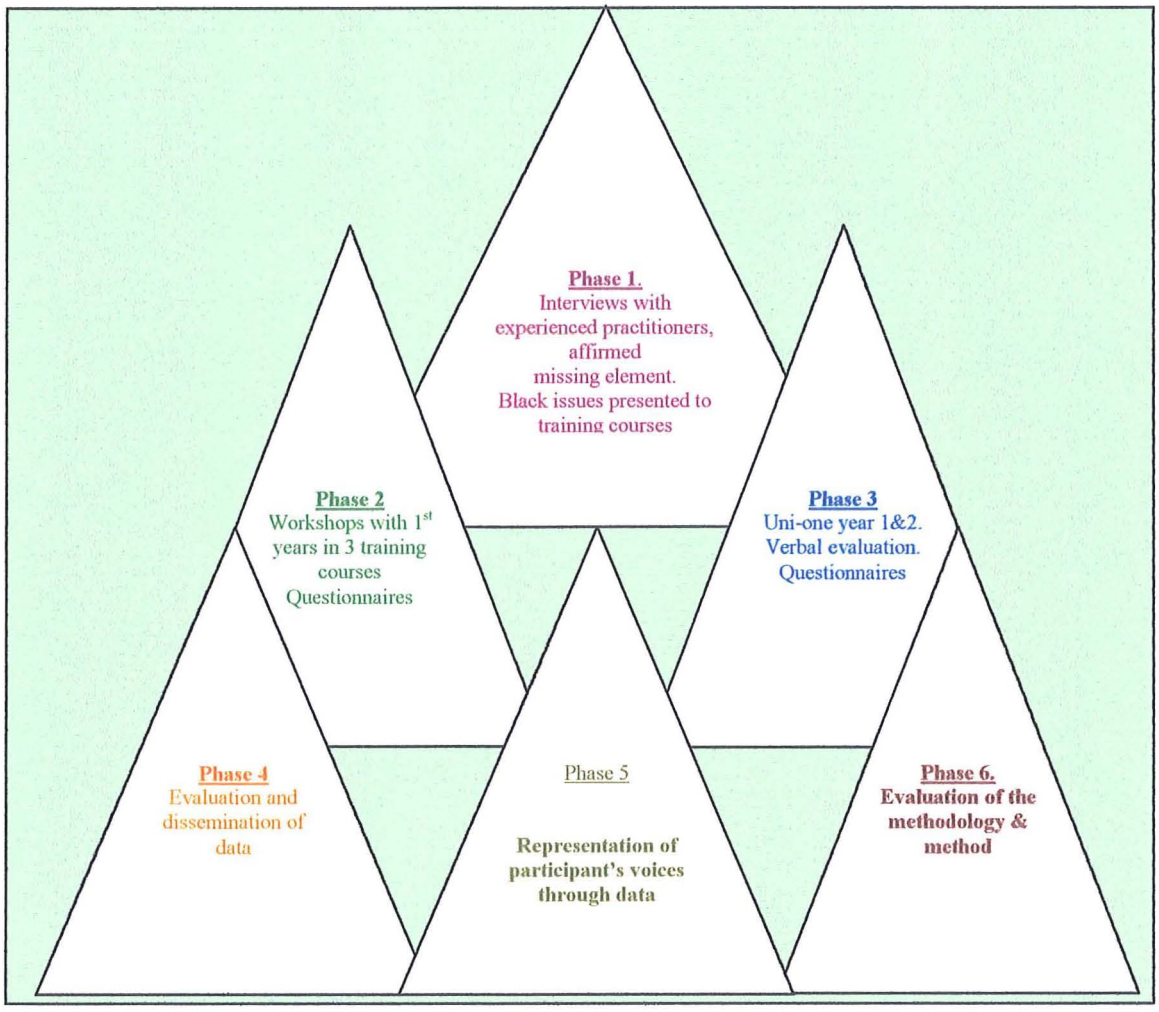
develop the inclusion of black issues in the curriculum. At the end of the questionnaire participants were invited to add their general comments.

The second questionnaire was more qualitative and semi-structured, designed with open-ended questions to ascertain participants' personal views and encourage them to voice their experiences. (Appendix 2a).

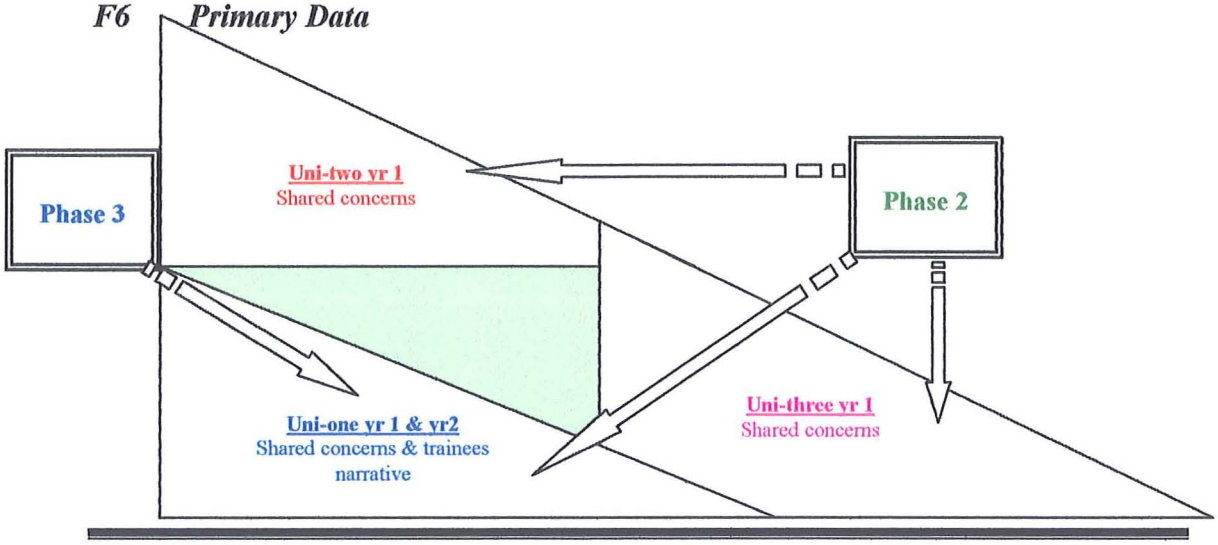
In summary, the first questionnaire served as a means of reflecting back progress to the training staff. The second questionnaire acted as a means of gathering and reflecting back experiences and participants' progress. The analysis of this questionnaire assisted the process of grounded theory. Approximately 90% of the questionnaires were returned.

What I set out to do. (See F5 & F6 below)

F5 Overview of Method



F6 Primary Data



Phase 1

This phase presents the training stories of experienced practitioners who affirm the value of placing existential phenomena such as black issues into the training experience. I chose five independent practitioners. (2 Asian heritage, 1 African heritage 2 white British with Irish & Jewish background). Their stories address the experience of black issues not being included in their training programmes. The concepts of 'black issues' and 'shared concerns', affirmed by practitioners' narratives were carried forward into phase 2, and began the process of grounded theory. The interviews provided themes to reflect back on and link data collected later in the study. One example of this was the role of the 'back expert', which became a transformative element of the study.

Phase 2

This phase involved using the concept of 'black issues' and 'shared concerns' to create data from workshops with year one trainees and develop a continued programme with Uni-one, (phase 3). Building on the knowledge gained from the practitioners' narratives about black issues missing in their training, I then facilitated trainees to raise questions and engage in dialogue about black issues. My task was to transform the training arena into a research field. I was fortunate to have the willing support of colleagues.

The research population started with approximately fifty trainee counsellors attending three different postgraduate counsellor-training courses, in different universities. Trainees are referred to as participants when I am presenting their voluntary contribution to the data collection.

The philosophy of these training courses was identified as 1. Integrative, (I shall refer to this training course as Uni-one). 2. Psychodynamic (I shall refer to this training course as Uni-two). 3. Person Centred (I shall refer to this training course as Uni-three). I decided to use Uni-one as a primary data source since I was more closely involved as a core tutor and had contact with these trainees on a weekly basis. Data

collected from Uni-two and Uni-three was used as secondary data due to having much less contact with these training groups. My contact with Uni-two was once a term and contact with Uni-three once a year, where I was engaged to present transcultural workshops. All three training courses were involved at the beginning of this phase of the study and the secondary data contributed to a triangulation process. The triangulation process acted as a means of evaluating the possible impact of different levels of contact as black tutor presenting black issues, at different training courses. This information was reflected back to training courses and can be used for a further study. This document will mainly focus on primary data collection from Uni-one.

Participants were encouraged to share their concerns about working with the concept of black issues during their training or process with clients. The questions were gathered using a Person Centred approach to avoid data contamination. Rather than work directly from my own speculation these shared concerns formed the basis of the study. Participants gained insights about their concerns as they gained more knowledge through discussions about black issues, like using the outcome to research their questions. Acknowledging the importance of giving priority to participants' concerns was a way of supporting with power issues and ethical problems. I relied on my tacit knowledge and previous experience that black issues can be a volatile topic.

Phase 3

At Uni-one, the primary data group, there were four other staff members involved. The study was carried forward into year two. A series of workshop sessions were arranged throughout the training course and the expectation of participants to address black issues in their course work was taken on by colleagues. Review meetings were held with colleagues who were in the role of collaborators when reflecting on the study process. I had the advantage of starting with a new training group in their first year and seeing them through two years until their graduation. I made it clear that the

training was being studied, not the participants. I will expand on the process of this in chapter 3 and 4.

The workshops were experiential and inter-subjective. Workshop themes were designed to compliment the curriculum. I modelled the process of explicitly addressing black issues as they arise and supported the development of skills to enable blocks and defences to be worked through. Knowledge came from the participants' experiences, established theory, and concepts of transcultural counselling. Experiences of black artists and writers presented in workshops were used to stimulate data about participants' concerns and the process of understanding black issues during training. Data was collected on a voluntary basis, using evaluation questionnaires and verbal evaluation sessions established outside of course time. The only source of data available from Uni-two and Uni-three were the shared concerns written down by participants and the end of year one evaluation questionnaires. Trainees were encouraged to define what training resources were needed to support their further development in understanding black issues.

The integrative nature of Uni-one training course, provided space for creativity, and flexibility in workshops and seminar settings. This created opportunities to challenge assumptions about the established eurocentric theoretical context of the training. I placed myself in an interactive position that would enable me to dip in and out of the researcher role during evaluation sessions, being explicit about my position. This situation will be described in chapter 3. This level of involvement enabled me to build a relationship with participants unknown to me before their training. It also provided an opportunity to liaise with teaching staff about supporting participants and developing the project.

Anticipated Ethical Issues in Collecting Data

The process of inviting trainees to share their experiences was considered in advance. Several ethical concerns were raised. (See Appendix 3) These have been selected in accordance with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, code of

ethics for practicing counsellors. (BACP; 1.4.2002) and are not dissimilar to ethical practice for researchers.

a) *Transference issues:* As a reflexive practitioner I perceived problems such as my own identification with the theme of black issues and the need to negotiate a positive approach to overcome issues related to the process. This was supported by using my own therapy, personal development and support networks.

b) *Negative impact & defences:* My experiences of working with the subject of black issues suggests that it was inevitable that defences might be roused during the process of workshops, because black issues is a highly emotive and often anxiety provoking topic.

c) *An over focus on racism:* Sometimes blocks arise and anxiety about getting it wrong develops when the focus is on racism. Being supportive by modelling the use of counselling skills and developing compassion helped me to manage this.

d) A hierarchy of oppressions: [8]The question of 'why should we focus on black issues?' often arises when individuals fail to realise the parallel with their own oppressions. For example, if we construct a problem linked to racism, whilst engaging in exploration of sexism, we cannot assume that feminist principles of empowerment and assertiveness will resolve the situation. This problem was addressed by introducing knowledge of race dynamics.

e) Model conflict: I was aware of contradictions that may occur between contemporary post modern approaches and more traditional theoretical counselling perspectives. For example person centred training may suggest that black issues should not be addressed if the client does not explicitly acknowledge them. Trainees were encouraged to resolve such contradictions by opening up discussions that explore theory and integrate their learning from the process of black issues. They

[8] The term 'hierarchy of oppressions' refers to the process of competitive interests that arise when oppressions are being discussed. For example: often when black issues are mentioned, trainees may question why can we not focus on women's issues? In this kind of situation participants should be encouraged to make links with their own situations rather than be distracted from the topic.

were encouraged to view the process as complementary rather than an alternative to traditional approaches. This raised an additional question. Can eurocentric westernised approaches contribute to black affirmative therapy? Perhaps a theme for further study.

f) *Staff resistance:* I was aware that tutors may have difficulty adapting teaching methods and integrating workshop sessions into their teaching programme. This was resolved by proposing periodical staff consultation sessions. They did not always transpire and when things got tough I acknowledged that we were in this together.

g) *Defences against anxiety of getting it wrong and bad feelings about racism*: I was aware that this occurrence may prevent some individuals from fully engaging in the process. In my experience, this creates imbalance in learning for black trainees in mixed black and white groups. Exploration of this situation was mainly limited to the black issues workshops and students' personal development group which I was not involved in. The process was also supported by using some time in separate black/white groups during a workshop.

h) *Unconscious inter-subjective dynamics*: Here I am referring to occasions when my buttons get pushed due to my subjective involvement as a reflective practitioner. I needed to be aware that this situation might influence the outcome and be vigilant that my quest for change did not become a priority over a participant focussed outcome. This situation has been described in chapter 3.

Phase 4 Evaluation and Dissemination of Data

A reflective mirroring process was used throughout the study. Data was used to feedback to training courses, collaborators and participants, so that they could use the responses for training development and personal development purposes. This was akin to the counselling process, where clients offer information and it is reflected back to them to support their self-understanding, in relation to their concerns. A number of concepts were developed. Trainees' 'shared concerns' were collected and examined for common themes. Data from transcripts represented participants'

voices. From this the concept of 'finding a voice' evolved. From the content and emotional process of trainees' voices the concept of 'recognition trauma' was born. The Concept of the 'black expert', (drawn from the interviews with established practitioners) was ever present and contributed to a process of transformation.

Data from questionnaires was relayed to collaborators and verbal transcripts were returned to interviewees and volunteer trainee participants. In the grounded theory process concepts that emerged from this data were considered in the evolving structure of the workshop programme. The evaluation process was used to influence each step of the programme. Colleagues assisted in a reflective process, which created a balance between the experiences and learning needs of trainees and the collection of data in a reciprocal process.

Summary

Whilst designing the methodology I became aware that the concept of 'understanding' has been expressed throughout the supporting qualitative and multicultural theory. Several other concepts have evolved that validate my use of the concept of 'understanding' linked to black issues within the research question. For example, 'shared concerns' chapter 2. and 'recognition trauma' chapter 4. I needed to ensure as much as possible that my methodology supported my quest for integrating and exploring black issues in the process of counsellor training.

I have considered the methodology and method in the context of action research and a plan to act, review and continue to engage in the research process, demonstrating reflexivity in action. On exploring the selection and usefulness of this methodology, I was concerned that the effects of my own eurocentrically dominated education may impact on the ways in which I use established research theory, or represent data. I have therefore addressed qualitative research methods in the context of multicultural theory, using a more focussed transcultural approach.

Morrow et al, (2001) validate the importance of selecting an appropriate research paradigm when carrying out qualitative research as opposed to a quantitative, positivistic approach, where such intimacy with participants is not essential to the outcome. The key elements of intimacy and subjectivity, an 'emic' approach and reflexivity that distinguish qualitative research have been taken into account in my choice of paradigm for this research study.

'Emic' (derived from the linguistic word phonemic, meaning sounds which are culturally unique)

> *An emic viewpoint is when a person or group looks at culture from within that culture'. In transcultural practice the emic viewpoint is used in conjunction with an 'etic' viewpoint (derived from the linguistic word phonetic meaning universal utterances) distinct from emic due to her or his experience outside of the other persons unique culture. Eleftheriadou (1994, p.34).*

I have discussed how my own and participants' subjectivity may link to the research theme. An 'emic' approach has been considered in carrying forward the expressed subjective needs of black and white trainees, black clients and experienced practitioners, by particularising black issues within a multicultural context.

The ethical considerations and ethos of the research approach have been linked to previous research experience and knowledge as an 'expert practitioner'. The reflexive elements of self challenge that impact on the research method have been considered in understanding the personal challenges, sensitivity and ethical concerns of working with the concept of black issues. In particular the impact of institutional racism on the field of study.

I have explained the purpose of my methodology and its application and outlined the preconceived ethical concerns. Emphasis on the phenomenological aspect of this approach is limited to the introduction of black issues into the training programme, the impact of which is observed. Whilst not in effect studying the phenomenon of

black issues, I was studying how the concept of black issues may be understood. The concept of black issues obviously plays a major role throughout the development of the study. I have presented a selection of theoretical material to support and validate the methodology. I have described my intimate relationship with the study, which has influenced the choices that have been made. This methodology and method are linked to my hopes and expectations identified in the aims of the study and the products of the study cited in chapter 6. The next chapter will present the process and journey through this study.

Chapter 3

A CAN OF WORMS (Process)

Goodbye and Reunited

We were good together
Eyes wave dewlit stars
Towards fond memories
Tales, interconnections
We part in learning
Hope reunites

No hours of weeping
Goodbye a blessed relief
Separation untrue
Touched hands brush hearts
So long, Akwaaba, Adios
Is this beginning or end?

Creativity is breathing
Neither nor one thing
Both flexible or rigid
Artistic, compromising
Anxious with the past
Lucid with present time

by Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga Oct 2002

This chapter describes the heuristic process of the research journey. (Phases 1-4). The reader may be wondering what the title 'A Can of Worms' has to do with the study. The metaphor 'A can of worms' denotes the abundance of concerns and emotions linked to the sharing of black issues, which have come out of bringing creativity together with theory to support the methodology.

In chapter 1. I described the process of relinquishing power and oppression as a feature of learning about black issues. The above poem was delivered in a moment of letting go and embracing the present. An acknowledgement of how I needed to be as I embarked on this research journey. It was initiated during a specialist seminar led by Millar Mair & David Heart. (Metanoia Institute, 25.10.02)

> *Perhaps calling it 'poetry' is misleading; let's say it's the language not only of the emotions but of intuition, of memory, of daydreams, of the imagination, and of speculation, of trying things out, of testing ourselves in a way that is otherwise neglected. Hart (2002).*

I had been facing an inner struggle about how to integrate or relinquish my creativity for the more intense academic world of research and psychotherapy. I was experiencing the two on either sides of an internal split, which I felt meant that I had to decide to give up one so that I could develop the other. The seminar inspired me to unite the split by using my writing as a tool for self-expression and healing when I am impacted by or stuck on my research journey. Using a practised based study field has allowed me this flexibility, which compliments multiculturalism.

> *Multiculturalism requires that educators and counsellors be aware of the systematic dimensions of racism and alienation and thereby attempt to understand the experiences, lifestyles, and values of students and clients. Sue & Pederson (1998, p.517).*

Invisible

They talk over my head
They lean across my desk
They stand beside me
They ask someone else

They ignore my request
They take it off the agenda
They try to convince me
They say it's my problem

They arrive after me
They stand in front
They cue behind me
They get served first

They turn their backs
They want to shake hands
They gave children guns
They stole my lands

They wounded my heart
They tortured my body
They blinded my heritage
They made the trail bloody

They show their tears
They want compassion
They carve their smiles

They follow fashion

They misinterpret my words
They don't want my opinion
They wear their guilt
They cant see I am broken

They fail to hear me
They want me silenced
They shrink away
They call my power violence

They invite challenge
They leave me on the frontline
They include me when
They want a token

They say show me how
They have their problems
They want it written
They don't want it spoken

They come for my soul
They have already taken
They want me the same
They make me different

They want to be conscious
They want to do it right
They want me visible
They want me out of sight

They misinterpret my words
They don't want my opinion
They wear their guilt
They cant see I am broken

They fail to hear me
They want me silenced
They shrink away
They call my power violence

They invite challenge
They leave me on the frontline
They include me when
They want a token

They say show me how
They have their problems
They want it written
They don't want it spoken

They come for my soul
They have already taken
They want me the same
They make me different

They want to be conscious
They want to do it right
They want me visible
They want me out of sight

By Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga Oct 2002

'Initial Engagement' (Connection and ownership of a burning issue)

> *The task of the initial engagement is to discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher. One that holds an important social meaning and personal compelling implications. Moustakas (1990, p.27).*

Phase 1. Support Data and the Use of Tacit Knowledge

Interviewing several experienced practitioners confirmed our shared concerns of not having black issues addressed in our training. (See Appendix 4 for full transcript and reflections). The practitioners involved in the interviews have all been colleagues at various stages of my journey as a counsellor. Most of them are now counsellor trainers. None of them had previously discussed their training with me.

Excerpts from Interviews with Established Practitioners. (Phase 1)

(Names have been changed to provide anonymity)

Paulette: White, Jewish, female. Person centred counselling. Trained 1978: Private practice, Counsellor training external moderator.

Ragina: Indian, Hindu, Female: Person centred counselling. Trained 1992: Private practice, Integrative counselling course co-ordinator.

Anton: African Caribbean male. Person centred counselling. Trained 1989: Private practice, Group therapist with black men in high security care.

Philip: White, Irish, male. Integrative & Adlerian counselling. Trained 1990: Counsellor Trainer.

Bibi: British, Asian, Pakistani, Muslim, female. Combined Psychodynamic and Person centred counselling in. Trained 2001.

Paulette

People were not aware of black issues or areas like disability at the time I trained. There was not much inclusion in those days.

Ragina

I don't feel that I learnt a lot of theory regarding black issues when I was training.

Phillip

The issues of race did not get addressed in any formal sense. It only came up in the context of our client work. In my Adlerian training course we had one session on race and racism. So across the whole of that there has not really been a focus on black issues.

Anton

If we had not brought those issues up as black people, they would not have come up.

Bibi

I experienced the tutors as not being able to handle it, they seemed to change energetically, in their facial language, it seemed they were less confident and maybe even cautious. I think they were frightened at the prospect of having to hold many different levels of student expression. Expressions of anger and anguish, annoyance that they could become misrepresented.

Summary of Interviews

Key themes were summarised and considered as pointers for data collected later.

- My intense interest allayed isolation and became a shared concern.
- Interviews broke silences which inhibit dialogue about black issues.
- No experience of explicit discussion about black issues in their training.
- Black issues a missing element in counsellor training over 23 years.
- Individuals used other forums for developing knowledge of black issues.
- Black issues have been considered external to the training curriculum
- Black issues have been considered as belonging to the black trainees.
- Confirmed need to bring black issues into the training curriculum.

Ways of coping with the missing element of black issues

- Paulette identifies her initial understanding of racism from a black colleague and her white awareness support outside of training.
- Ragina goes outside of training to black student peers
- Phillip wonders if a black therapist may bring elements missing with his white therapist and supervisor.
- Bibi and Anton had to challenge the racism on their training to have their experience valued.

Role of black expert

Accounts suggest that learning about black issues were mainly influenced by the input of black trainees and staff who are few and far between.

The black student bearing the role of educator on training courses (the black expert role) may be forced to experience what Straker viewed as 'continuous trauma' of their often-disempowered position in a white dominated society. (Concept proposed by Straker, J. Specialist seminar, 2004). (See Appendix 4, p.3)

Intercultural therapy should never be allowed to become some specialised psychotherapy, to be targeted at black people, but simply therapy which takes into account these issues. Kareem & Littlewood (1994, p.12).

Conclusions from the interviews would contradict the above statement. I decided to approach this study in the role of the black expert since this appeared to be inevitable. My decision to study how trainees understand black issues has provided a model to enhance equalities in training and contradict institutional racism that may impact on how black issues are processed. It will support the unheard voices and experiences of black practitioners and black clients that must be understood on an equal level to the needs of white practitioners and clients. Not solely in relation to racism or as issues for black counsellors. The voices of experienced practitioners presented below echo this proposition.

Bibi

We have opened the door, but we have not been able to enter.

Paulette

It felt dangerous and difficult.

It is the process by which all societies reproduce themselves through inculcating shared values and behaviour. We need, not simply 'therapy', but a self-reflexive practice which examines its own prejudices, ideologies and will to power. Littlewood, & Littlewood (1994, p.13).

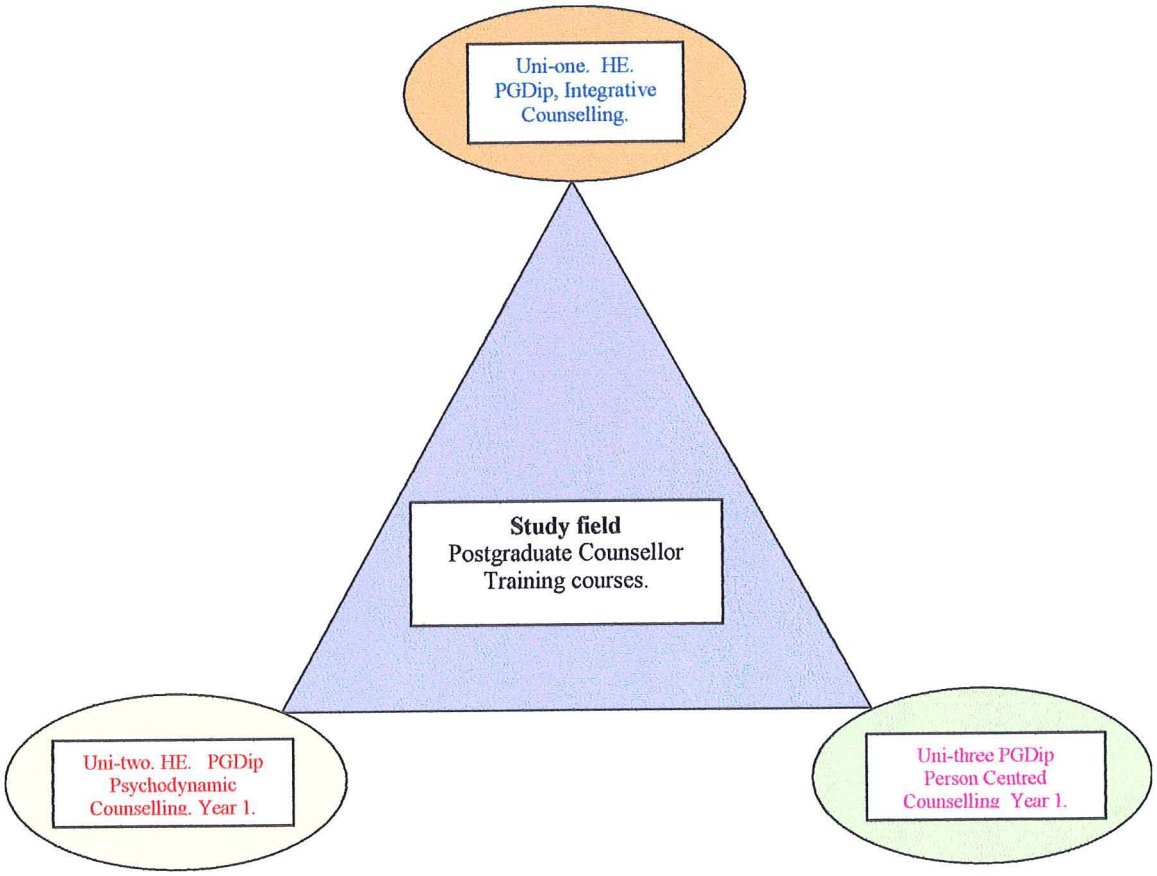
No matter how much I have tried to introduce black issues in the wider context, discussions have become focussed on black people and racism. Issues of white practitioners in their relationships with black people and with each other in this context have been contentious. We have had to wade through a great mire of transferred feelings of guilt, fear, anger and denial. In my experience of training situations trainees have voiced the question, 'how do we do it'? I understand this question to mean that trainees require more than the information provided in literature. It needs to be answered through a process of exploration and understanding.

> *Torbert suggests that, in a sense action inquiry is a discipline relevant to those most committed to participative approaches to enquiry, persons who wish to play leadership roles in cultivating this process with others and who wish to inquire about their actual effects as they do so. (In Personal Communication, 1992. Denzin, et al, (b), (Eds) (1998), p.286.*

A Practice Based Situation- (See Appendix 5 for in depth report).

The practice base for the next phase of the study started in three counsellor training courses in two universities and one College of Further Education. Approximately 50 trainees in total were involved. I then continued with only one of the training courses, that I have named Uni-one. This training course started with 22 trainees from a variety of backgrounds. (See F7 below)

Figure 7 ***Participant Groups***



Key Themes Considered for Next Phase of Study

- A need for opportunities to voice experiences and concerns about working with black issues.
- The different experiences of black and white trainees.
- The different experiences of African and Asian trainees.
- Powerful feelings, and blocks attached to the exploration of black issues.
- Valuing the input of black trainees and trainers.
- Fixed eurocentric models and the need for new perspectives.
- Lack of professional input on black issues.
- Expectations of white trainees to learn from black trainees and trainers (Role of 'black expert', trainee facilitator role).
- The impact of racism.
- Lack of input on black issues from white trainers.
- Concerns about not having black issues supported in supervision and further personal development.

Reflections

- Opportunities provided by visiting tutors to explore black issues may not be integrated into the main system of training and may not be followed up by core tutors.
- It is clear that numbers of black trainees on counsellor training courses are growing and their training needs must be considered in the light of their cultural experiences and experiences of racism and minority oppression in Britain.
- Concerns about black issues may not be fully addressed, but dispersed into issues of humanity, multiculturalism and diversity.

Immersion - Being one with the topic and question as it is explored (Phase 2)

> *Everything in his or her life becomes crystallized around the question. The immersion process enables the researcher to come to be on intimate terms with the question-to live it and grow in knowledge and understand it. Moustakas (1990, p.29).*

The above quote summarises my experience of this phase of the study, that created an intense involvement with participants and their experience of the phenomenon of black issues. Here the context of understanding became an important feature.

This phase was rather like the early stages of the therapeutic relationship, where the therapist finds out the concerns of a client and attempts to create a focussed dialogue. Some of the themes that emerged during this process helped to inform the ethical considerations of the study. In the therapeutic relationship, it is usually the contents of the clients presenting problem and their history that shapes the relationship.

Likewise, what came out of the 'can of worms' helped to shape the context of this study[9]and a product of the study, a training booklet.

> *The heuristic process challenges me to rely on my own resources, and to gather within myself the full scope of my observations, thoughts, feelings, senses and intuitions; to accept as authentic and valid whatever will open new channels for clarifying a topic, question, problem, or puzzlement. Moustakas (1990, p.13).*

Summary of phase 2

- Introduction of the phenomenon of black issues into training.
- Development of intimacy & dialogue with black issues.
- Beginnings of a triangulation process.
- Modification of research question and further consideration of ethical concerns.
- Understanding that the dynamics of racism were to play a significant role in the study.

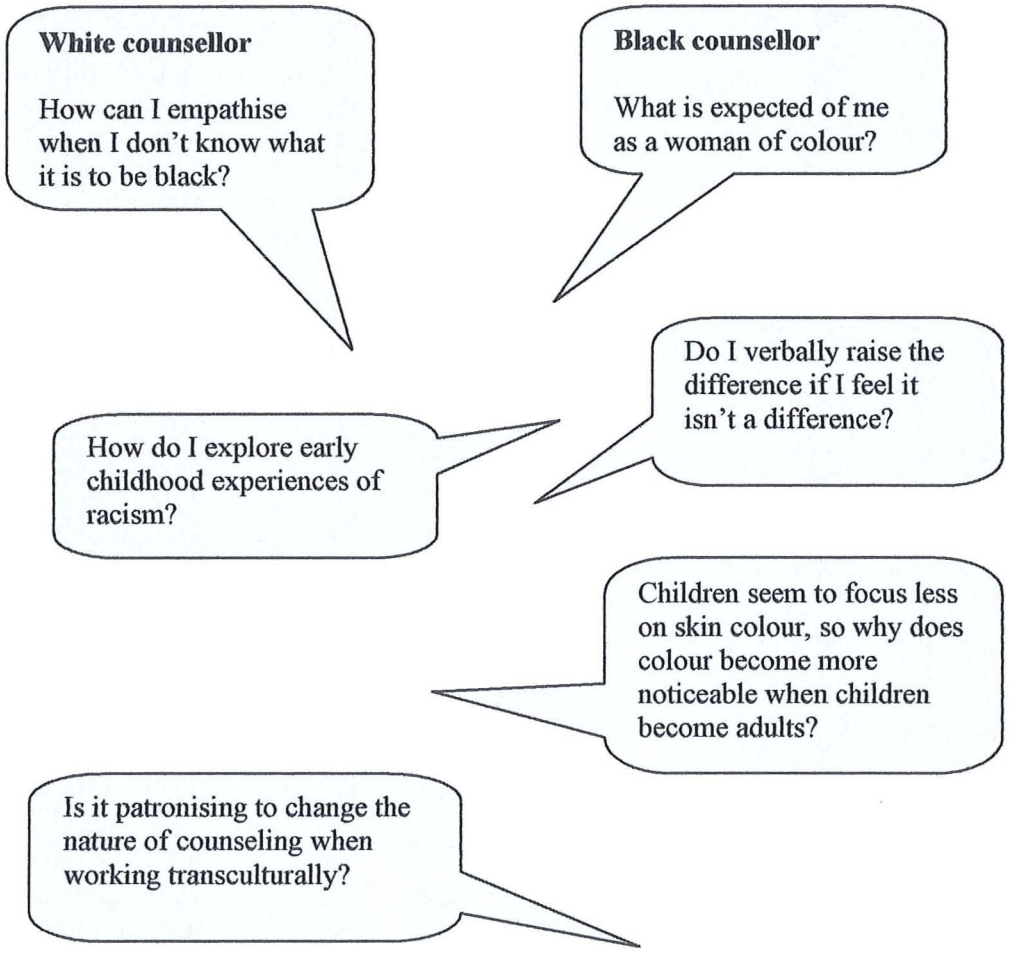
Modification of research question

My original intention was to make links between social history and black issues, using art and creativity to assist discussion. I assumed that both trainees and collaborators would easily understand and adapt to the concept of black issues, and be willing and ready to openly discuss historical links to their personal and clinical experience. Discovery of a lack of understanding and consensus of what black issues was about led to modification of the question. This enabled a mutual learning situation. In a sense this was the initiation of the grounded theory process, where a

[9] Sharing experiences and concerns in the initial stages was an approach used in a former study on black women's poetry .Mckenzie-Mavinga (1997) and in a programme of therapeutic group work with women affected by domestic violence. In the latter project I focussed on the experiences and concerns of the women participants and linked their themes and experiences into a workshop programme, to enable exploration and understanding. The black issues study differed in that trainees had not initially joined the training to focus on black issues; it was introduced or made conscious during the onset of the study.

concept might be explored and developed to assist understanding and the generation of data.

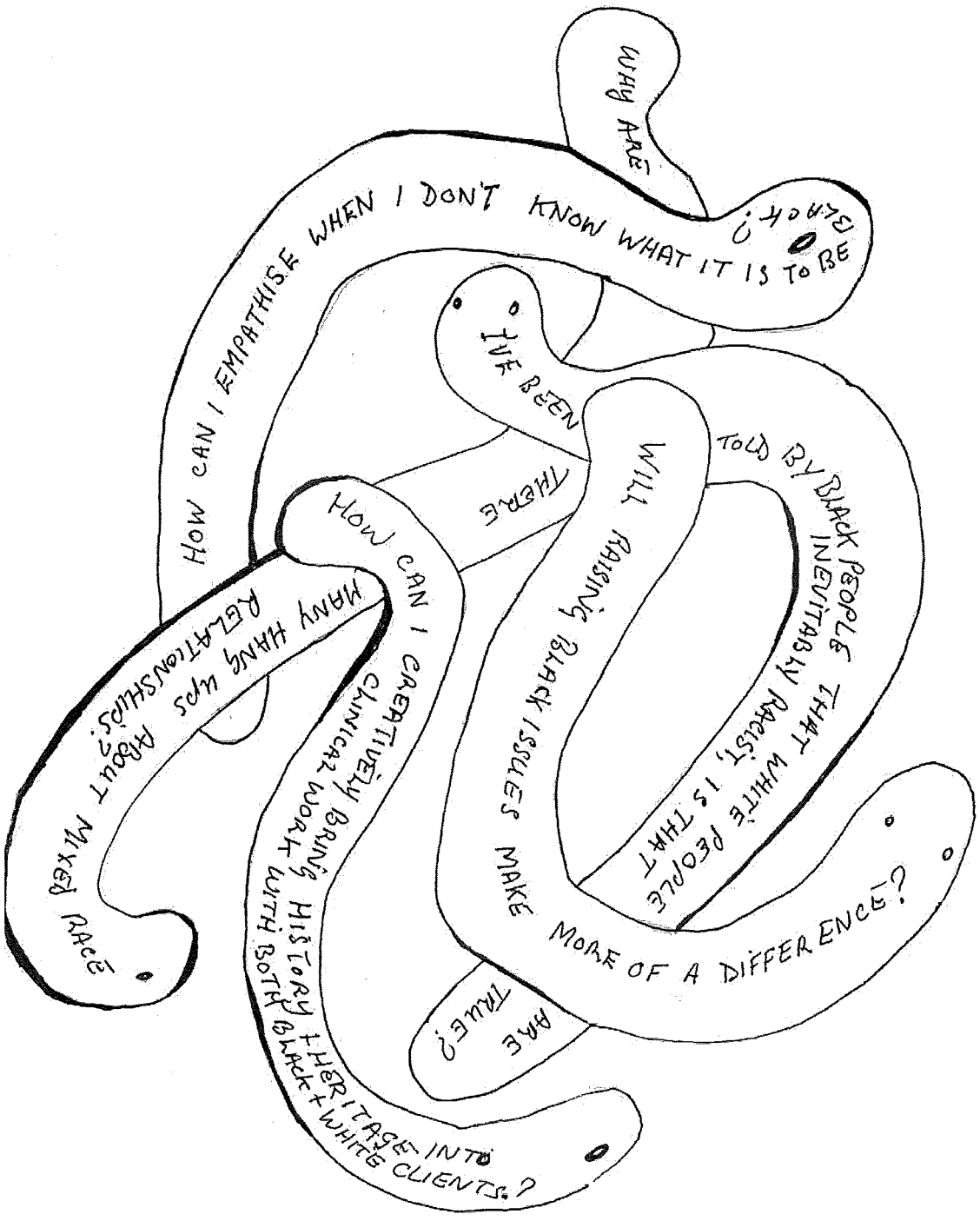
Examples of participant's concerns are presented below.



Reason, P. (1998), suggests that the Participatory Action approach requires dialogue to produce enlightenment and understanding. This approach must begin with concern for common people and involve them in the production of knowledge; therefore creating empowerment. In keeping with Reasons approach which supports the multicultural and emancipatory dimensions of this study, full use of creativity and participant's experiences has been made.

In a similar way to the therapeutic process trainees' primary concerns appeared to be existential and very much in the present, I therefore considered that a process of clarification, focus and exploration might be helpful. It was clear that they needed to voice and explore some of the emotions attached to the questions that they had shared about understanding black issues, so I had to be flexible and adapt the initial workshops to focus on their expressed concerns. I decided not to completely eliminate the idea of historical links, but to use these links as a kind of transitional object within the workshops to help introduce the idea of working with the concept of black issues. The main thrust of the project then turned into an attempt to understand the concept of black issues as a phenomenon and how this concept may or may not be addressed in the therapeutic process. This was approached by using 'the principle of shared concerns'. The metaphor 'A Can of Worms' in the title of this section seemed to aptly fit what followed. So the metamorphosis of my research question began. (See D2)

D 2 A Can of Worms



Revised Question: (Phase 3)

How do trainee counsellors in Britain, (from any background), understand their concerns about black issues raised by or about themselves during training or about clients during the therapeutic process?

Incubation and personal learning - Periods of reflection away from the intensity of the study

The incubation period is a time of withdrawal from active participation and a time for gaining new insights and heightened awareness of new possibilities. (Moustakas 1990) The incubation periods of this study mainly occurred between termly workshops, term breaks, at the end of year one and with Uni-one at the end of year two.

Illumination - Moments of refined knowledge and heightened awareness

> *Illumination opens the door to a new awareness, a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge, or an altogether new discovery of something that has been present for sometime yet beyond immediate awareness. Moustakas. (1990, p.30).*

In keeping with Moustakas' version of illumination I shall describe how my personal learning and insights about black issues within the study were used to facilitate the process of data collection.

A significant understanding that evolved from periods of incubation came from my engagement with Valerie Bhatts during a specialist seminar (Metanoia Institute, 17.7.02). (See Appendix 5a) We were invited to engage in an exercise where we tried on another culture. The exercise helped me to recognise the emotional patterns of internalised oppression in myself. I decided to use my own therapy to discharge my deep feelings of rejection and humiliation as a black woman. Feelings about my loss

of faith in the ability of people in the dominant oppressor groups to change their attitudes towards black women were illuminated.

I had not been working on this loss of faith in my co-counselling sessions with white counsellors. I had been abandoning them as my white mother had abandoned me. Someone had to take the lead and get started on this part of our relationship. I realised that someone was me. The theory and training that supports my co-counselling promotes a high expectation of counsellors to contradict oppression and internalised oppression in the counsellor and client and their relationship. Being open to this process with my white counsellors, not just my black counsellors somehow transformed me into a more empathic and open listener. It was a two way process that I believe assisted my white co-counsellors to shift their stuckness on black issues and get on with the business of counselling on their white guilt and shame, so that we could experience equality and understand our learning process. (See Appendix 5b, p. 4) I do believe that you cannot go all the way with a client to an emotional place that you have not worked on your self. I had begun to experience more fully a new place inside of me that would reach out therapeutically rather than reject those who denied black issues.

Summary

In this chapter I have introduced the early phases of the study which included an emphasis on building co-operation with collaborators and participants. I have shown reflexivity in describing my attempts to engage colleagues as collaborators and by attending to colleagues and participants process linked to the research question. Consideration of emerging ethical concerns led to modification of the research question. Description of the constructive use of incubation integral to the study has been presented. In being true to the ethical components of this study, I have shown how my personal development has informed the role of tutor researcher. I have demonstrated critical subjectivity by using supportive theory and presenting my personal process and personal development issues raised by the process of this study.

This has included evidence of learning from specialist Doctoral seminars. Reflective action has been linked to level 5 descriptors and prior learning.

The narratives of established practitioners were explored to affirm the research phenomenon of black issues in training. From this I gained a broader understanding of their concerns and a framework for grounding the theory and creating further data. I have summarised the outcome of the interviews and presented another method of creating data using workshops and a process of written concerns. These workshops and concerns were also presented to groups in the wider field. I have summarised emerging themes from this period of immersion. Illumination and reflection on the impact of black issues in training were presented to the wider field by engaging in conferences and publications.

Responses to the phenomenon demonstrated that racism needed to be explored as part of the process of understanding black issues. The information presented above reflects the intensity of becoming engaged in the process of a study that symbolically represents 'a can of worms'.

Examples of issues that emerged from trainees' concerns are listed below.

- My tutor researcher role.
- The role of the black expert.
- Issues of fear, safety and finding a voice.
- Participants knowing and 'not knowing' about racism.
- Differing levels of awareness and understanding of the meaning of 'black issues'.

The following chapter will present the next phase of data collection and the explication process. (Phase 3).

Transcription

I face the blank page/yawn, feel hysterical
Laughter and tears beneath the surface
With a prod my chest may exude this mass
Afraid, my pen will cease to flow

I stop to itch my nose/aware of stopping
Stopping may distract attention
My thinking once curbed, I wonder
Can this narrative transform knowledge?

Holding this pause/this moment in history
A space to unravel, to mind and observe
A Cathartic matrix of writhing worms
Each ventricular journey a precious growth

Illumination of new born concepts/routes
Past to future unfolding wisdom and notion
A tapestry of experiences embrace tentatively
Ignite the passion of learning new other ways
by Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga 2002/5

Chapter 4

Finding a Voice (Data presentation - Emerging themes)

> *If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrels heartbeat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. (George Elliot, (Middlemarch). 1986, p.13).*

This quote from Field Belenky's study exemplifies the process of trainees finding a voice to express the previously unspoken.

In this chapter I have used the concept of 'Finding a Voice' to portray the process evolving from the silence of not having had dialogue about black issues within training programmes. This was expressed in the initial interviews and led to the development of training workshops on black issues to provide space for the expression of concerns and feelings. The language of understanding is expressed throughout the process of compiling data from trainees' narratives which spread over a period of about two years with Uni-one. (Phase3). In this chapter illumination continues alongside Moustakas (1990), heuristic stage five, a process of explication. '*Process is the analyst's way of accounting for change'*. Strauss & Corbin (2001 p.143).

> *The entire process of explication requires that researchers attend to their own awareness, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and judgements as a prelude to the understanding that has derived from conversations and dialogues with others. Moustakas, (1990, p.30).*

The process of collecting and representing data generated from the workshops (phase 3&4) will be presented in 4 sections: 1.Overview of approach to analysis. 2. Finding

meaning through coding shared concerns. 3. Ethical concerns and the process of understanding. 4. Narrative data from continuation of workshops with Uni-one.

4.1 Overview of Approach to Analysis

Primary data was produced in three ways:

- Interviews with experienced practitioners
- A collection of written shared concerns from individual trainees in 3 colleges.
- Participants' narratives about the workshop process recorded in group discussions with Uni-one trainees outside of training sessions.

Links with Research Question

Data in phase 1 and 2 does not show trainees' learning and deeper experience of understanding black issues in their training and in the therapeutic process with clients. It presents a reflection of their experiences that is explored in phase 3 with the narratives of Uni-one trainees.

Secondary Data

1. Evaluation questionnaires used as secondary data were presented to participants after final workshop sessions and at the end of the first year for the primary data group. These were used to check the usefulness of the workshops and reciprocate information to tutors about the process of integrating black issues into the training courses. It is hoped that the response may influence the future of counsellor training in these organisations.

2. Responses from conference delegates and responses to publications. These were a means of sharing the study with the wider field.

I have so far presented data collected from the narrative of interviewees and the written shared concerns of individual trainees. The shared concerns were collected in a person centred way using core conditions of counselling such as, unconditional

positive regard and being non-judgemental. Having received the concerns that were shared, I have listened to them and accepted them for what they are. I have tried not to make assumptions about them and accepted them as a genuine representation of participants' training concerns in relation to black issues. I have taken care of my own thoughts, agenda and emotional responses that might contaminate their existence and meaning. I have related to the concerns as if I was a receptacle and mirror and I have been empathic by drawing on my own experiences.

In an attempt to discover the nuances of this understanding, this chapter presents the narrative journey from silence to finding a voice, drawing on phase 3; discussions with groups of trainees. It will show an analysis of shared concerns and the use of evolving concepts and themes in the development, process and evaluation of black issues workshops. I shall present data that speaks for itself, using trainees' dialogue to find ways of understanding what these concerns mean in the context of their attempts to understand black issues. I shall present data generated from participants' experiences of black issues workshops discussed in group evaluations. The chapter highlights emerging themes and learning curves experienced during this process. It also develops concepts from emerging themes using them reflexively to support the grounded theory process.

The main philosophical contexts supporting this chapter are drawn from the work of Field Belenky, (a model of colonizing women's voices), Denzin, (Interpretive Interactionism proposing an emancipatory process) and Moustakas, (process of explication).

Field Belenky (1986), used a feminist approach to compare the powerlessness and voicelessness of women on the margins of society with women who had been challenged and stimulated by more elaborate education systems. The first phase of their analysis was designed to find out about the women's assumptions about the nature of truth, knowledge and authority. They attempted to use Perry's scheme of organising data.

In Perry's scheme there is a clear sequential ordering of positions and, although he does not claim they represent an invariant developmental sequence since individuals can retreat or temporize, he does believe that each point is an advance over the last and that the ultimate end point is relativism. Field Belenky (1986, p.15).

The researchers found the responses difficult to classify within Perry's scheme using their chosen method of analysis. This was because the responses were full of contradictions about the way society expected women to think and the way they chose to think, based on their personal experiences and upbringing. A similar type of limitation has been considered in the context of representing data from this study within a multicultural context. Collection of data was firstly influenced by the impact of personal racism on individuals and secondly due to the silencing nature of institutional racism. There may also have been other inferences, such as a majority female cohort and the nature of my role as both researcher and tutor.

As mentioned earlier, multicultural research per se does not require a specific focus on black issues, but indicates that race issues may be evident. The risk of 'epistemological racism' Morrow et al, (2001) which stems from institutional racism, is great and could have placed limitations on my approach due to my own eurocentric training and upbringing. To limit these risks I have represented data as excerpts of participants' original words and seek not to interpret but use what I will call empathic reflection.

Explication - Emerging new themes and understanding.

I return to the research question. **How do trainee counsellors in Britain, (from any background) understand their concerns about black issues raised by or about themselves during training or about clients during the therapeutic process?**

I am aware that this question cannot be measured or confined to one answer or assumption. This question begs for meaning and empathic responses. It is

transcultural in that it evokes profound realisation as part of the emancipation process. In transcultural counselling, the counsellor is required to examine their own prejudices and assumptions and personal responses to the client's cultural experiences. Themes that evolved from this process of examination during the study evoked a range of emotions from fear to transformation with guilt, racism, history and trust issues sitting as sub-categories in between. The idea of pulling out a range of emotional categories was drawn from Field Belenky's model. (1986).

Field Belenky's team created five categories ranging from silence to realisation, to help them contextualise women's 'ways of knowing' that they too were creators of knowledge. The researchers located figures of speech within the women's metaphors and explanations. I have drawn on Field Belenky's method of contextualising and her approach to 'connected knowing' to support elucidation of the concept 'shared concerns'.

> *Connected knowing builds on the subjectivists' conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities. Field Belenky (1986, p.113).*

The 'Connected knower' develops procedures built on the capacity to empathise, for gaining access to other peoples knowledge. Since knowledge comes from experience, she says, the only way they can hope to understand another person's ideas is to try to share the experience that has led the person to form the idea.

In agreement with Field Belenky my approach to understanding data in this study is based on empathic connection linked to shared concerns. Prior to my second attempt to compose this chapter I was again consumed with fear. A silencing fear that did not want me to share or expose this journey and dialogue about the products that have emerged as a result of it. It has felt very much as though the data is red hot and will burn me. This process has forced me into periods of incubation where I revisit my fears of attack, rejection and humiliation relived from past experience. In the face of

this my black peers encouraged me to remain visible, because there have been many great inventors, people of colour who have become invisible. This shared knowledge spurs me into 'the other side of silence' as Field Belenky puts it.

Field Belenky explores the link between 'the other side of silence', and the nature of truth, knowledge and authority. Her work encouraged me to recognise the link between my own fears, understanding, participants' ways of articulating their concerns about black issues, and the construction of empathy within the training group. Prior workshops with groups of women on the impact of domestic violence clearly showed that sharing their experiences in the group created mutual empathy and a wish to gain further knowledge and empowerment. The difference was that they had all experienced a similar kind of violence. An interesting likeness in this study is that the trainees are predominantly women. My observation of the two male trainees at the beginning of the training course at Uni-one was that they were silent. (Another inference for further exploration).

As in Field Belenky's study, there may be cause for enquiry into the gender dynamics due to the minority experience of men in this study. Looking back, the emotional climate which influenced participants' dialogue and the ways in which men's voices were being heard seems important to me. Linking this variant to the inferences in Field Belenky's study helped me remain open to the emotional and social context of how participants may or may not express their understanding or experience of black issues. This in turn may be influenced by personal and cultural background and affected by differences and similarities within the training group. However the significance of these variants may be themes for further investigation.

Using the context of trainees as participants and the support of colleagues as collaborators, I will explain the experience of participants finding a voice. I will refer to trainees as participants at times when their voluntary involvement in generating data is being cited. The collection of data raised several ethical concerns that became embedded in the process of the study. Trainees participated in the process, whilst

colleagues both engaged in the process and supported the development of the study wherever possible. The analysis, will take you through the heuristic process of attempting to understand the data.

Using myself as a resource at the centre of the research I faced the contradiction of sharing my knowledge and experience as a black person and course tutor whilst at the same time being involved as researcher. Using an insider outsider approach as the main feature, I wanted participants to be active in, and influencing the data throughout the study. I wanted to know their concerns and be reflexive and active in the outcome. I found the precepts of Denzin's 'Interpretive Interactionism' listed on page 28. Denzin (1989, p.25) a useful framework for supporting the presentation of these experiences. Denzin proposes explication which allows participants' unique voices to be heard.

Keeping in mind the challenges of epistemological racism, the precepts of 'interpretive Interactionism' supported my attempts to model the Emic approach proposed by transcultural theory.

> *Emic investigations are particularising. Denzin (1989, p.21)*

It was not possible to stand outside of the situation and objectively observe it due to my close relationship with participants and the research theme.

> *The researcher will discover that understanding the investigated phenomenon qualifies exquisitely as a criterion for research knowledge, specifically, an understanding that does not set out to control, or dominate it-though never disqualifying his results should they turn out to have technological relevance. Valle & King (1978, p.56).*

What does this mean for my approach? Having introduced black issues into the training, I sought to discover how participants understand, using their own voices, and presentations of their relationship with the phenomenon. Solely pursuing a

phenomenological approach would have restricted the study and subjugate the interactive process necessary for the emancipatory purpose of this study. When listening to participants' narratives my personal responses and observations became secondary and I have acted as a facilitator for sharing of their experience of the phenomenon. This approach required full attention to participants' experience of the phenomenon presented in their own languages, descriptions and interpretations, without blame or misinterpretation. Using my power and prior knowledge base to create new forms rather than destroy existing ones, introducing the concept of black issues was an attempt to create a new form in counsellor training.

4.2 Finding Meaning Through Shared Concerns

The shared concerns were important for three reasons. Firstly as a method of retrieval, secondly to offer familiarisation with the theme of black issues, thirdly to prompt insights for reflexive data linking the experience of black issues to the training.

> *Emotionality and shared experience provide the conditions for deep, authentic understanding. Denzin (1989, p.33).*

It is difficult to present data in isolation of the process that we have experienced during the study. The shared concerns appeared to act as a means of cathartic process. The term cathartic process rather than catharsis was used in a previous MA study to identify the expression and relief of experience within an autobiographical context rather than in a clinical context.

In Freudian therapy, Breuer related the term 'cathartic' to the act of speaking out whatever events were happening at the time when a symptom occurred. The symptom then disappeared. Freud encouraged his trauma patients to use this method and linked it with the discharge of repressed emotion. *Bullock, Stallybrass & Trombley (1997).*

In the context of this study a cathartic process denotes the sharing, going public and expression of pent up response and emotion not previously attended to. A means of relieving silence and tension, an opportunity to begin a dialogue, a means of understanding the concept of black issues in relation to the action and process of counselling. In Freud and Breuer's terms an expression that can lead to change.

18.1.03 Researcher's Journal Extract

> *It is the fear that creeps up on you when you know you are going to expose something and be exposed. Sometimes it is about my confidence, questioning my ability to act as an authority.*

In considering the meaning of my own 'cathartic process' expressed through journal writing, the above excerpt shows concerns about facing the data and my ability to truly reflect participants' authentic voices; however, when reflecting on participants' expressed concerns in the data I can see a parallel process.

In the search for ways of holding this data and making sense of it, I made use of a specialist seminar conducted by Glynis Parry. (Metanoia Institute, 19.4.02a) Parry discussed the pros and cons of evidence based research. Although evidence based research is mainly reliant on quantitative data, she emphasized that:

> *Finding meaning in qualitative data can contribute to linking process and outcome. Parry (2003b).*

I was encouraged to find the meaning that would bridge the gap between participants' shared concerns and what could be viewed as their process of understanding black issues. (See Appendix 6. for further use of Parry's work)

I learned from Parry about generalising themes that arise in the early phase of the research. From Field Belenky's work I learned that underlying variants drawn from the coding can impact on this meaning. It is therefore important to make explicit

possible variants that may impact on the meaning. Moustakas (1990) suggests that, explication occurs when we are able to identify key themes arising out of our illumination process.

> *We must open up the text and apply thoughts, ideas and meanings contained therein, Strauss. & Corbin (on open coding1998, p.102).*

Coding Shared Concerns

The collected concerns were gathered into six main categories that became apparent in the way they have been presented. I looked for common themes that reflected ways in which participants had identified themselves and their concerns. For example some black and white participants identified explicitly that they were black or white when writing their questions. The categories were chosen as a means of 'interpretive and reflexive' data Mason (2002, p.134). Interpretive in the sense of coding which imposes a method of generalising so that we at least see more clearly the types of themes implicit within the data. Reflexive because these generalising categories imply characteristics that can impact on how participants understand the core theme of black issues. At the same time they give some idea of the concerns that arise when participants are attempting to understand black issues. I was curious about whether links could be made with any of the previous interviewees' experiences. A means of kicking off the grounded theory elements of this study.

> *Grounded theory researchers continually question gaps in the data-omissions and inconsistencies, and incomplete understandings. They continually recognise the need for obtaining information on what influences and directs the situations and people being studied. Addison, (1989, p.9).*

In order to find the gaps I first needed to examine what had become apparent. A synopsis of the coding and most poignant themes that arose from the shared concerns, have been represented in (T2) below.

Non measured, non controlled, non statistical and non manipulative. Denzin (1989).

Whilst in agreement with the above precept and although tempted to interpret these concerns, I see that no real benefit will be gained from trying to compare, measure or even generalise them. They are what they are, the raw concerns of trainee counsellors. I want to capture the highly emotional experience implicit within this data and allow it to speak for itself. However, I have noticed that the theme of racism has been expressed in four out of six categories and also covertly across the data. So I cannot ignore what catches my eye in this respect and I am drawn into using this as a category and generalisation. In a sense my action precludes Denzin's precept and I question myself; for if I am creating categories am I not manipulating the data to a certain extent.

Emerging Themes

At this early stage of data collection it became clear that the focus on racism was important. It must be noted that black participants did not ask questions explicitly about the racism of white peers or clients, they addressed their concerns in terms of the impact of racism on themselves. Their concerns veered more towards being accepted and dealing with white peoples feelings about racism. Feelings such as 'guilt' were alluded to by white participants.

Examples of these feelings are presented in the categories below.

T 2 Synopsis of Shared Concerns

IMM 04	UNI-ONE	UNI-TWO	UNI-THREE	OTHERS	COMMON CONCERNS
Black participants	**Not being as good as white counterparts.** **Client rejection** Euro centric models	**Internalised oppression.** **Defensiveness & guilt of white counterparts.** **Anger of black & white participants**	Black on black comfort. Black on black concerns. **Maintaining identity and acceptance**		Focus on black on black & white history. Acceptance, defensiveness, anger, euro centric theory. Internalised oppression. Acknowledgement of history.
White participants	The effect of whiteness & effectiveness with black clients. How to empathise with the other.	**What if I am racist?** **Effect of guilt.** **My prejudice**	**Black clients distrust of me.** Am I good enough? How to respond to Black issues	(Yr 2) Competency with black clients. Limitations, trust, a healthy alliance. **My prejudice. Racism, power**	Being effective with black clients. Levels of empathy. Competency, guilt, racism to black clients. Isolation, trust, power.
Political	Why black issues? **What about other oppressions.** Why focus on black people? What is black? Other groups excluded?	Does it matter? What about other differences? Political correctness.	**Anti-racism.** Too much focus to the exclusion of others. Learn black issues without politics. **White liberal guilt.**	(YR 2) Political correctness. **Bad feelings**	Why black issues? Negative feelings. Other groups, oppression, political correctness, guilt
Self reflective	**White racism.** **Will I understand?** **Negative stereotypes.** Intellect verses emotions. Where do I start? Different identities. Black on black, white on white.	Inadequacies, difficulties, How to address black issues or not. **Power issues.**	**Nervous about the term black**	(Yr 2) Empathy. **Covert racism. Historical view of inadequate black person.** **Power. Pressure of getting it wrong.** **Blame, guilt, isolation.** **Feeling intimidated.**	Impact of my white racism, stereotypes. How will I Understand? Empathy levels. Black on black, white on white. Inadequacies. How do I address black issues? Overt & covert racism. Power. Pressure of getting it wrong. Blame guilt, isolation, intimidation.
Theoretical	Will black remain a central issue? Is it always present? Is it possible to go beyond this? **Do black men have power or not?**			(Yr 2) Breaking down hate defences.	Is black a central issue or not? Going beyond. Gender issues (black men) Hate defences.
Clients	**Overt racism. My own prejudice.**	**What if I am racist or prejudice?**	**Difficulty discussing black issues.** **Responding to victims of racism. Identity issues.**	(Yr2) Differences in black peoples experiences. **Oppression in the transference.** Is the colour of the therapist relevant? Historical impact on black & white people. The link between black issues and trust. Learning from black clients.	Differences between black peoples. Racism & prejudice in practice. Oppression in the transference. Historical impact on black and white. Learning from the black client.

Examples from Categories

White participant

What if I am racist to a black client?

Black participant

How can the historical view of a black person not being suitable to support a white person be addressed?"

Self reflective

Why do I feel nervous when I hear the term black issues?

Political

Why do I feel really resentful towards being politically correct?

Clients

How do I raise issues of race and culture and difference with a client who doesn't raise it, but as a counsellor I feel it is an issue?

Theoretical

Are black people always victims? If men hold the power how can black men be victims and perpetrators?

Ways of addressing a hierarchy of oppressions were placed in a political column which may indicate concerns that other minority groups are not getting enough attention on their issues.

For example: *What about other differences, & similarities*?

What does this voice express? Is there an avoidance of black issues? Does this mean that the transference of envy is operative, or could it mean that if particular attention is placed on one aspect of culture, ethnic group or oppression, there needs to be equal space given to others? If this is the case, then trainers need to consider why gender and sexuality are programmed more frequently into training courses, when black issues are often missed out, apportioned to race issues or diluted into multiculturalism. A further question that links to the hierarchy of oppression is, how will the proposals of The Race Relations Amended Act 2000, (CRE) be met without specific attention on ways of addressing this gap in training? This question has often been raised in relation to specialist counselling organisations that offer pink therapy, women's health organisations and black led organisations, where specific skills and empathy levels in these areas are provided.

The dynamic of the black expert was also apparent in the experienced practitioner interviews and some of the workshops described in chapter 3. This dynamic was significant in the study because reference to black on black concerns[2]were barely identified by white participants in their shared concerns. White participants did not voice concerns about rejection from white clients or white peers whereas black participants showed concerns about working with both their black and white peers. For example:

> *"I'm curious how some people react in a defensive way when black issues are mentioned. Are whites feeling attacked by the guilt of our history?"*

[2] Black people's developmental process and their relationships with each other.

"How can a black counsellor help some of our lost confused teenagers find their own identity?"

These questions clearly raise issues about the training of black counsellors working with black clients. How can training courses address these concerns when white trainees' defensiveness prevents them from engaging with these black on black issues? This question was referred to in the implicit context of institutionalised racism in the interviews with practitioners.

The interviews with experienced practitioners focussed on their training and relationships with tutors, whereas participants in the training workshops focussed mainly on the development of their work with clients. This demonstrates a probability that client work may be influenced by the workshops.

Looking back like the Sankofa, several links were made. These links helped to narrow down the data and connect themes that were most apparent in both phases one and two. For example: there were fewer concerns expressed about theory and more self reflection and concerns about clients. However participants continued to self-define as black or white. These racialized identifications show the importance of understanding their different training needs. These findings were pointers for further explication and provided themes for exploration in the verbal evaluation meetings. This approach to the data assisted the process of grounded theory. Below I shall reflect on other themes drawn from participants' shared concerns within the above categories.

1. The different experiences of black and white trainees. Both interviewees and trainees identified themselves as 'black' or 'white' when sharing their concerns. Examples of other categories are presented below.

About clients:

"Why do I feel more comfortable as a black counsellor when presented with a black client?"

"Would I ever be seen as good enough, as a white counsellor, to deal with black issues by a black client?"

2. Powerful feelings, defences and blocks attached to the exploration of black issues and concerns about racism were evident in some interviewee's and participant's statements.

Self reflective:

"Why do I find this difficult?"

"Why do I feel nervous when I hear the term black issues?"

3. Expectations of white trainees to learn about black issues from black trainee and trainers (the black expert role), as opposed to learning from white peers, trainers and other sources. This was also evident in the black interviewee's experiences.

Self reflective & about clients:

"I wonder why I have experienced difficulties asking my black, Asian clients about their experience of being black, Asian and how it might relate to the issues they are bringing?"

4. The impact of institutional and personal racism.

Self reflective:

> *"How can I hold on to my sense of being black in a white counselling world?"*

The lists referred to above speak volumes about trainee's attempts to make sense of black issues and most importantly what may be needed in the transcultural elements of counsellor training. Responses appear both self reflective and about clients. A need for participants to experience safety to explore black issues, find their voices and develop equality in theoretical models seems apparent. Trainers can facilitate these challenges and support feelings that arise out of this process. I wonder, does this reflection describe a dynamic that may be transferred to client work? Do these initial findings indicate attempts to understand by being reflective and aware of institutional racism and client issues from within African, Asian and European perspectives?

Addison (1990, p.9) proposed that we should 'question the gaps in data'. The question that I set out to explore therefore needs to be considered in the context of whether this data evidences participants' ways of understanding black issues.

The examples presented above suggest two areas of primary concern. However, this data cannot be taken for granted. Firstly, no specific client material was presented. Secondly, my interpretations were speculative, because at this point in the study participants had not yet availed themselves of discussion forums to dialogue about the meaning of their concerns. Further explanations of trainees' process of understanding can be found in the re-coding process and narrative data.

Re-coding and Further reflections:

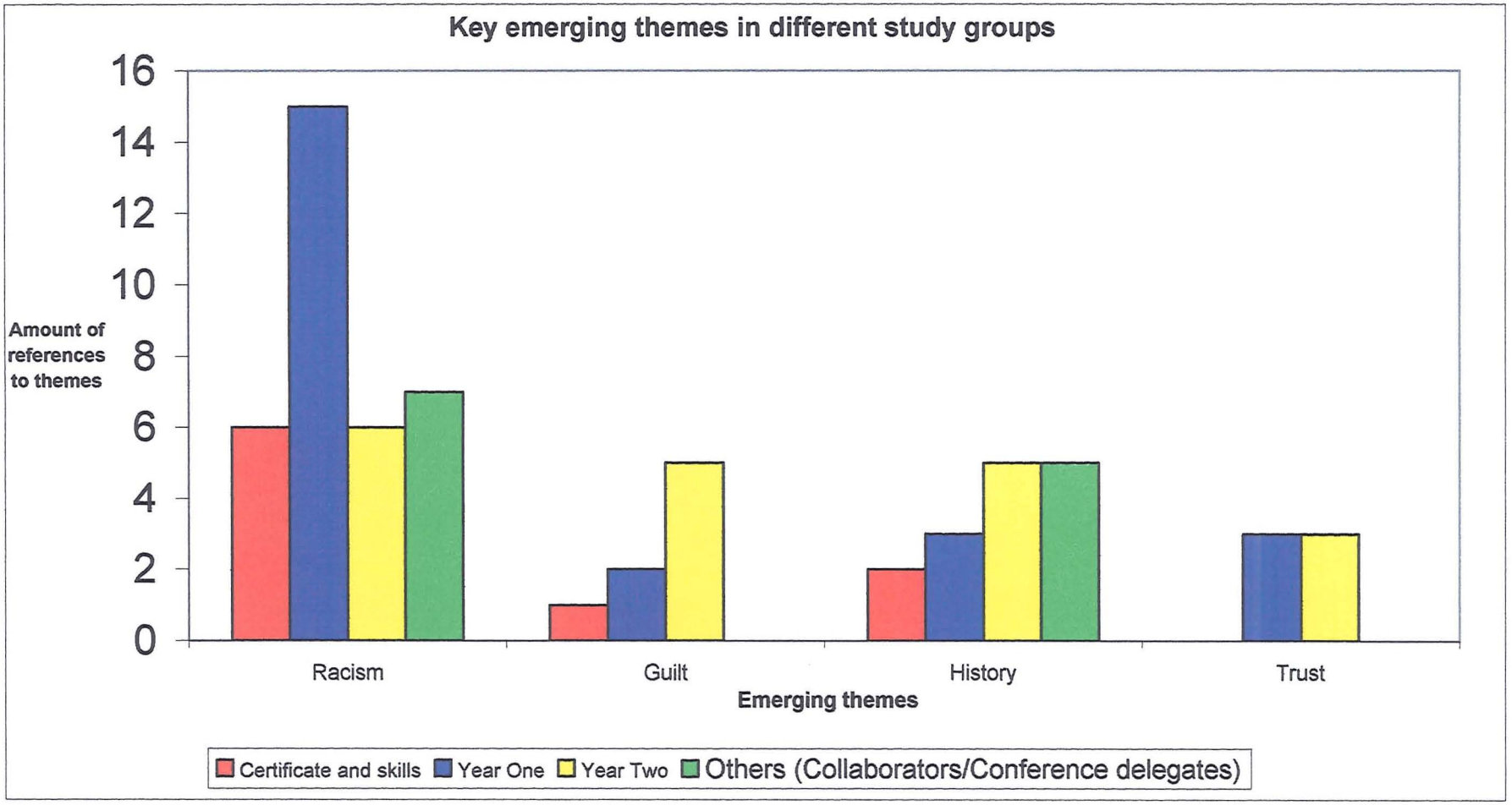
Strauss & Corbin (1998), call this stage of theory building, 'conceptualising'.

An abstract representation of an event identified as significant in the data. (P103).

Conceptualising can provide themes that give meaning to the situation or experience of participants' ways of understanding the phenomenon of black issues.

I revisited the collection of shared concerns paying particular attention to my discovery that within the shared concerns the theme of racism was referred to many times. I decided to look for other terms that appeared repetitive. These were identified as guilt, history and trust. I divided the questions into four categories based on participants' level of training. The categories were headed 'first years', 'second years', 'skills' and, 'others' such as colleagues and conference delegates. I have listed the terms used to identify these themes. (See T2 & T3) Having completed this coding it became clear that the issue of 'Racism' was referred to the most. The category of 'History' was considerably shorter, yet it was the second most common theme. On recognising this I felt as though I was back to square one and that my original concern about linking history with black issues had been vindicated. However it seems that in this situation the process of racism was layered on top of history, guilt and trust issues, and demanded more immediate attention. I had thought that taking a look at black issues in the wider context would deal with racism and equality issues, without them becoming a major part of the process. These speculations were untrue, but somehow both were true. (See T3 & T4 below)

T3 Key Emerging Themes



T4 ***Repetitive Themes***

Racism	Guilt	History	Trust

Certificate & skills trainees

Racism	Guilt	History	Trust
None	Guilt	Historical Existing from slavery	None

Year One Trainees

Racism	Guilt	History	Trust
Be accepted Rejection from client Oppression Discrimination Black labelled as bad Stigma Focus on skin colour Prejudice Internal racism Racist x3 Power imbalance Power Superior/inferior	Guilt Blaming	Historical Through generations Painful history	Not as good as white Distrustful Trust

Year Two Trainees

Racism	Guilt	History	Trust
Racist society Racist belief Racist Prejudice Oppression Enslave	Guilt x3 Guilty x2	History x3 Historical Generations	Trust x2 Distrust

Collaborators/Conference Delegates

Racism	Guilt	History	Trust
Power differences Inequality Black is bad Racist remarks Racism x2 Racist	None	Slavery Denial of heritage History x2 Colonisation	None

It was now clearer that concerns about racism and its link with history had become central to this study. Is this because I have raised the concept of black issues, or could it be that racism has been lying dormant awaiting an invitation to be explored? What do we mean by racism in this context? What does it mean when individual concerns about racism are expressed?

> *Individual racism as consisting of personal attitudes of racial superiority, leading to behaviour that is discriminatory in nature. Tuckwell (2002, p.17).*

Howitt & Owusu-Bempah. (1994), discuss *'old racism'* and *'new racism'* in the context of evolving discourse. For example myths including a belief that black people are inferior (old racism) and the inclusion of cultural racism. (New racism).

> *Because racism's cloths have changed, because it is now expressed in terms of culture rather than biology, many believe, that it is now little more than an embarrassing appendage to psychology. Howitt & Owusu-Bempah (1994, p.9)*

Taking into account trainees' concerns, it is fair to suggest that the racism being addressed by them may consist of both types proposed. Reflections on another specialist seminar assisted consideration of these questions.

Marvin Goldfried for example, discussed the concept of 'Verstehen' (Metanoia Institute, 24.10.03). He discussed the potential of bringing together the understanding of both clinician and the researcher and how language can cause barriers to this potential. Goldfried also stressed the importance of understanding the place of tacit knowledge in filling the gaps that literature cannot fill. I was encouraged to think about how to best transmit research findings to the trainees as budding clinicians and use this information to develop the training.

It is of particular interest that many of the coding systems used by psychotherapy process can be used as training guidelines for practising therapists. Goldfried (1996, p.4).

Goldfried's seminar was another opportunity that challenged me to find a common language in my dialogue with him in ways that I had not previously felt able to do. We managed to transcend this process and found a way to understand each other. A parallel to the process of my study which aptly fits the title of Goldfried's paper 'Psychotherapy Practice and Research: repairing a strained alliance'. It was important at this stage to find a way to work with the concerns about racism that were emerging in the training group.

4.3 Ethical Concerns and the Process of Understanding

I sit here in tears
In fear of abandonment
Patiently waiting
Tuning this scenario
For the voice that fears
to come to me
For this healing complete
that we may be free
But for this life
this world, this family,
This, the voice
I wait patiently

By Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga 2003

As expressed in the above poem, tears and fears were features of the next stage of the workshops. This stage was most painful and challenging, much like when deeper feelings begin to surface in the second phase of a therapeutic alliance. I became

concerned about the strength of feelings expressed about engaging with the topic of black issues. The first workshops had been carried out and in Uni-one first year programme we had planned two more workshops for that year. There appeared to be a block which led to consideration of non-maleficence and the ways in which involvement in the study might be seen as a fearful or disempowering situation. Placing their coursework in tutors' hands after expressing fears and feelings about racism may have been perceived as potentially harmful for trainees.

I was working on my ability to facilitate empowerment and be empathic in the face of oppression and potential harm. In my own counselling sessions I used images from the film 'Beloved' Winfrey (1986) and through further self reflection I broke new ground. Suspended in infancy, Beloved made repeated attempts to reflect her need to be re-connected with her lost family as part of their healing process. She articulated her experience through bouts of rage, until her trauma subsided and there was room for increasing tenderness and compassion.

At the same time my white counsellor made a deeper commitment to counsel on her own experiences of racism. We had crossed bridges together even though the bridges felt insecure. As my own rage about abandonment and racism became more manageable I became more able to reach out to trainees and offer opportunities for empowerment. However I was mindful that there was still uneasiness in the black issues workshops. (See Appendix 7. supportive text)

> *To capture the core of every human situation, which is novel, conflicting and filled with multiple interpretations and meaning. Denzin (1989).*

This was the main purpose of the workshops and I used an assortment of theory and creativity to facilitate the process. It seemed that less formal settings brought out less inhibited dialogue, but less formal situations are limited in university settings.

The intention of the workshops to facilitate trainees to voice their experiences was achieved. Responses indicted that there had been some shifts in communication and understanding. These experiences left me with another question. What are the implications of 'recognition trauma' in the training process? (See Appendix 8. How this question came about)

Knowledge should be for emancipatory purpose. Denzin (1989).

What does Denzin mean by 'emancipation'? ('Free from moral, political & social constraints') Oxford Dictionary, (1986.) and is this possible on a counsellor training course where stringent learning conditions are required to evidence competency in the therapeutic relationship? Research knowledge must therefore be knowledge that can assist the trainee counsellor's personal and clinical development.

Finding a balance between the development and emancipation of the counsellor and how the counsellor's understanding may be conveyed to clients might appear to be a contradiction in this approach, however I believe that in many ways the counsellor's emancipation supports the client's emancipation. Another question is therefore raised. Would the application of knowledge gained from the research change the role of the counsellor to educator?

Understanding and Accepting the Concept of black Issues

By spring 2003 I had been running black issues workshops for over a year. In total 6 workshops with training courses, two with conference delegates and one with Uni-one staff group. By that time I was sure about the necessity to be very clear about the definition of black issues: i.e. why the study was addressing black issues and not specifically black people, cultures, race issues or racism? I was feeling that we had reached a very crucial impasse because although there were no limits to themes for discussion within the paradigm of black issues, responses to the concept were showing that black issues had been taken over by concerns about racism.

Based on my experience with Uni-one, I would estimate that trainees and colleagues took at least a year to develop a shared understanding and acceptance of the concept of black issues. On reflection, over a twenty year period in the field of counselling and psychotherapy, I have found that varying levels of awareness and understanding about black issues are displayed. These varying levels create a tension within training groups that need to be worked through on a personal and professional level. The working through can act as a model for understanding and facilitating therapeutic relationships.

These varying levels that affect trainees' and tutors' capacity to understand black issues are listed below:

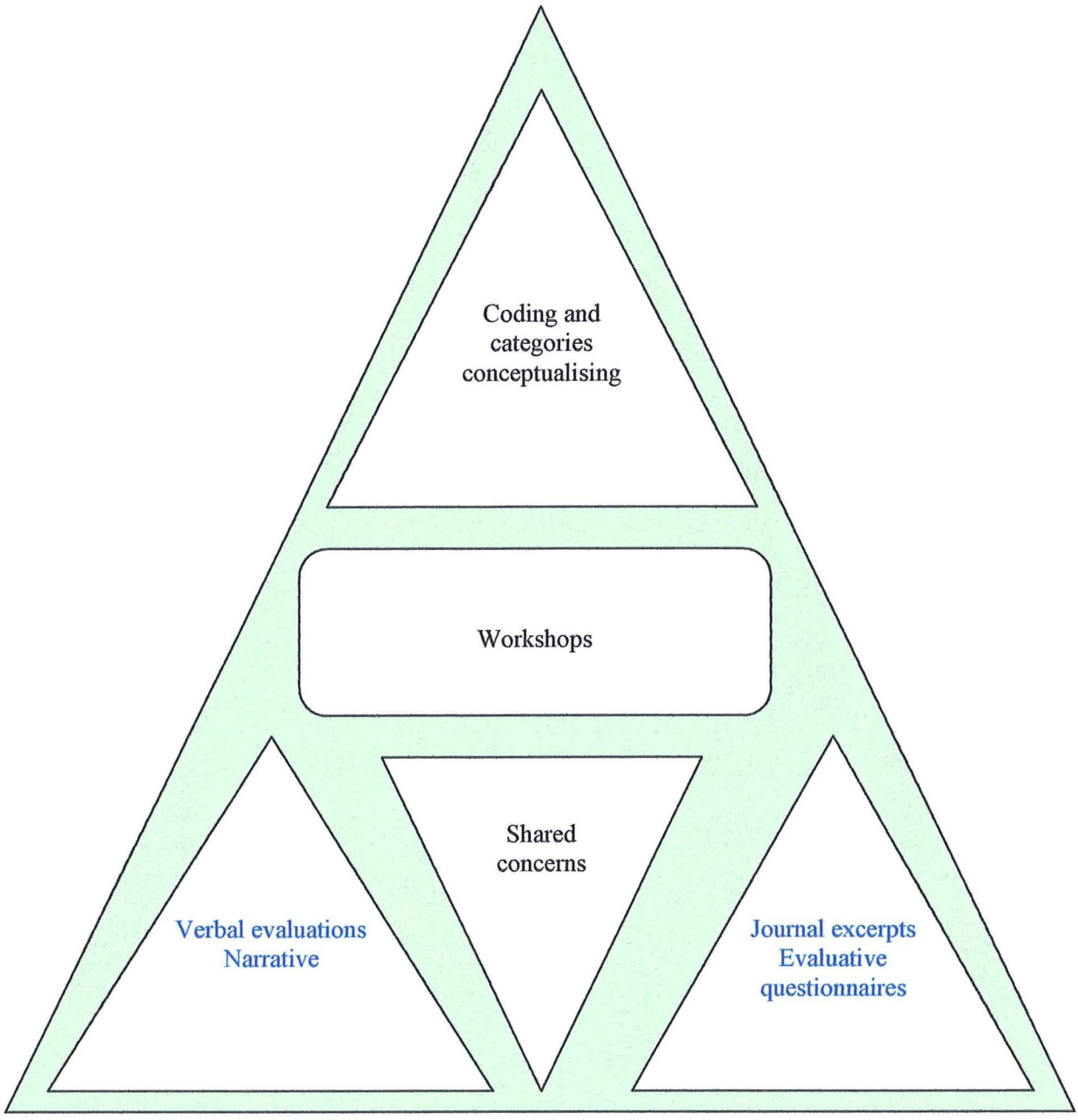
a) Hierarchy of oppressions that can dominate discussions about black issues.
b) Those who share knowledge of historical contexts.
c) Experience located in the impact of racism and colonialism.

4.4 Narrative Data (from continuation of workshops with Uni-one, Phase 3)

The process of finding a voice within the data extracted from Uni-one was organic and guided by each phase of the study. Primary data was strategically generated through the process of workshops and verbal evaluation sessions. A limited amount of data emerged from participants' journal excerpts. Secondary data emerged from collaborators reflecting on transcriptions of trainees' recorded dialogue, evaluation forms and from conference workshops. Interviews and verbal evaluation sessions have been re-presented to give voice to participants' experiences and evidence the reflective process through their narrative.

This phase completed a process of triangulation. (See F8.below)

F8 Triangulation



Three more workshops were presented during Uni-one trainees' final year. Themes for the workshops were based on needs expressed by trainees and ideas from colleagues about carrying forward the theoretical structure for understanding and

working with black issues. No agreement to report observations of the dynamics in training workshops were made with trainees or colleagues, therefore observations are reported in a general sense to support representation of the process. Primary data generated in this phase of the study was mainly collected in verbal evaluation meetings provided outside of course time.

At the beginning of the first term of the second year trainees were presented with a preliminary evaluation questionnaire as a kind of refresher after the long summer break. This also helped to gain a more in depth feedback about where trainees were at in relation to understanding black issues and what their further learning needs might be. Taking into account that as tutor, facilitator and researcher my observations may be biased, I hoped that this method of evaluation would offer trainees and tutors an opportunity to voice their experiences. I must again reiterate that participation based on handing in questionnaires was voluntary although questionnaires were filled in during workshop time. I shall now present some reflection on these evaluation questionnaires.

I chose this quantitative tool as a way to explore the deeper meaning and implications of the black issues input to the training. I believe that the influence of black issues on training is equally important to the participants' understanding of the phenomenon. The questions were semi-structured and based on observations of some key areas of concern in the previous year's workshops and from the observations of the other tutors. The questions were reviewed by colleagues and peers and revised for their appropriateness and presentation qualities.

Presenting a summary of these responses in their natural form is a way of involving the reader in the reflexive process.

> *Unless ordinary people speak, their experiences cannot be interpreted. Denzin (1989, p.63).*

I have scanned the responses for what appears to be pertinent and repetitive themes. (See Appendix 9, for in depth review).

All eleven trainees participated.

Examples of these themes are listed below

Repetitive themes

1. The importance of sharing concerns including the tutors concerns and commitment to addressing black issues.

2. Self understanding, awareness and exploration of own and others cultures.

3. Racism, prejudice and power issues. All participants reported that the workshops had contributed to their understanding of the impact of racism and oppression.

4. An interest in whiteness, blackness and the impact of one on the other.

5. The facilitation style was thought of as helpful by 9 participants. 10 participants thought that both black and white tutors were helpful.

6. Points made about what was unhelpful relate to friction between black and white students, divisions and needing more time on black issues and other cultural issues.

7. Some important points were made about issues of supervision support for understanding black issues. All participants experienced support in their training supervision. Only 5 out of 11 trainees reported support in their placement supervision. This may suggest a potential gap for further research.

8. My attention was drawn to responses to question 13 which appear that some white trainee's responses continue to rely on the role of the 'black expert'.

9. There were plenty of suggestions for the training booklet which affirms that the content and ethos of the booklet needed to be influenced by trainee's feedback.

10. Responses from colleagues reflecting on this summary validate the positive impact of the workshops and point to issues of safety, finding a voice and further exploration of oppressions and other cultural issues.

Re-cap During Final black Issues Workshop at the End of Year 2.

During the process of preparing for the final workshop colleagues agreed that firstly we would return to participant's original shared concerns. We asked participants to meet in groups and discuss the list of concerns that they had shared in their first year to find out where they thought they were at in relation to black issues at this final stage of their training. They were asked whether they felt that they had been able to find any solutions to their original concerns. The second part of the exercise was for them to decide on and write down any concerns they were currently aware of and if so what they were. The purpose of this was to get an overview of any developments and give a voice to concerns in the present time. The summary below shows that second year trainees focussed less on political concerns and at that stage of the training there was greater concern about clients.

Uni-one shared concerns at beginning and end of workshops.

Shared concerns at beginning of year 1.

Black counsellors
What if a client rejects me when I am a counsellor, because of my African/Caribbean heritage?.....Why is it that I don't feel as good as white contemporaries?.....Most of the theory and models are from non-black backgrounds, this has an impact on black culture. It does not fit into the way we think. How can we work with this?

White counsellors
Do I have to have had personal experience of oppression to be an effective counsellor to a black person? How can I imaginatively extend my own experience?.....As a white woman how can I be effective in counselling black clients?.....How will being white affect my relationship when counselling black clients, and how able will I be?

Political
Why does there have to be a separate area of 'black issues', where has it come from?
Shouldn't black issues be about celebrating diversity?
Why do I feel discriminated against when we discuss black issues?
Why are blacks labelled badly most of the time?
Why is there stigma around trans-racial relationships?
Do we focus too much on the colour of each other's skin and consequently generate unnecessary barriers?
How are black gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people treated in their own community?
As an African/Asian gay person, how do you perceive you are accepted or not within the gay community?

Reflective
Will I be fully open to and understand black issues?
Does client identify me as his her counsellor? Do I know his/her culture?
Do I compensate in my behaviour when I deal with black issues, to hide my prejudice?
Why do I feel more comfortable with non-white or non-western cultured people?
When there are two people with the same first name in a group and one is white and one black, and we don't know each other very well, is it ok to refer to them as white Kathy and black Kathy?

Theoretical - None
About clients - None

Shared concerns at beginning of year 2:

Black participants.
I am wondering why, as a black woman, up to now, I have not thought of bringing black issues into my relationships with white clients?

White participants
How not to step into a socially conditioned posture of white racism, overtly or covertly in the therapeutic dyad, or avoid the socio-political implications of race by focussing solely on psychological processes. (Useful framework-Tuckwell)

My beliefs in the last year have changed drastically. I feel that to be empathic with a client who has had bereavement my own experience of loss plays a major part. Without personal experience of loss I feel quite inept. How can I therefore be a substitute for a black counsellor who may understand and have experienced oppression personally? I ask this questions from the viewpoint of a black client, who is looking for a counsellor who truly empathises with the issue of oppression.

Sometimes, I as a white person want to hear a black person's perspective, but I often feel that this is perceived as not ok. Why is that and how come wanting to listen and understand can make me feel uncomfortable and confused?

As a white counsellor, am I over identifying with black issues?

Political – None

Theoretical
I have learnt a lot about black issues, but still I find it difficult to put these as theories.

Reflective
Learning about black issue gave me knowledge and understanding of dynamics and feelings of black people. The history and psychological impact on individuals, but I am concerned about how this learning would be positive in relationships between black and other ethnic minorities. Will I patronise my black friends because of their history and see them as weak and need my protection and not identify with white supremacy and try to unconditionally validate blacks and dismiss the reality?.....
As a counsellor, how can I remain empathic when I am being attacked by the other?

About clients
What if this is an issue with racism in the counselling process, and every time I reflect on it the client changes the subject, then I address that and the client says that is not what I am trying to say but you still feel something is not right? Resistance on the client's behalf.....Should I address my fear, uncertainty of dealing with black issues with my client?
Is my fear of black issues a transference?

Re-cap on Axial Coding

During periods of incubation and illumination, I have contemplated my relationship with the data. Each intense moment has brought fear and concern for my own survival in continuing to re-present experiences linked to the research phenomenon of black issues; however I am here with this material, I have arrived, at last, to present the final dialogue and essence of what it has been like for us to face this challenging topic. In the initial interviews with established practitioners the themes of racism, a hierarchy of oppression, black expert and the experience of powerful emotions were prevalent.

From a plethora of shared concerns I have maintained the coding approach of identifying where black and white participants have contributed. It seems that trainees' significant epistemologies are relevant to the theme and these inferences need to be acknowledged in the wider field of psychotherapy and counsellor training. The reader will notice that the narrative is self reflective and from time to time participants refer to their relationships with clients. Theoretical and political categories also identified from coding the shared concerns hardly feature in these discussions. The role of the black expert features to a lesser degree, but remains implicit within the narrative content; however towards the latter part of this study, black trainees found their voices in challenging this dynamic. This appears to have enabled white trainees to take more ownership of their whiteness; a painful yet empowering experience for both groups. In the second coding of previous shared concerns, further categories of racism, guilt, history and trust emerged as concepts within participants' language, in their attempts to understand and share their concerns.

Discovering the theme of history in the data affirmed an important link embedded within the original research question. I have therefore carried the above four concepts forward to assist the process of finding meaning in the narrative. It is also important to note that the theme of 'clients' has been referred to and self reflection has been

evident throughout the study. Strauss & Corbin (2002), describe this method of focussed categories and linking data as an axial coding.

Collecting Data from Trainees' Dialogue

Four narrative transcriptions were produced. At the end of year one and at the end of each term in year two, trainees at Uni-one were offered an opportunity to engage in a verbal evaluation of their learning and experiences from the workshops. After each evaluation meeting which lasted an hour and a half, recordings were transcribed and as part of the reflexive process involved participants and staff were given copies of transcriptions. This also served the purpose of mirroring for participants and as a form of sharing and transparency for the trainers. Participants and trainers were then invited to offer their feedback on the transcriptions. Feedback on transcriptions was not forthcoming. I did not receive any from participants, therefore I assumed this meant that they accepted them as a genuine reflection of the discussions and that they had no further comments to contribute at that stage; however I am left wondering about the silence. (For further reflections on the process, see Appendix 11).

On the action of narrative, Moustakas (1990), refers to the first of Patton's basic interview methods, *'the informal interview'* as consistent with heuristic search for meaning.

> *Dialogue is the preferred approach in that it aims towards encouraging expression, elucidation and disclosure of the experience being investigated.....The persons in the heuristic interview must be willing to say freely what they think and feel relevant to the research question, and what emerges in their awareness when the phenomenon becomes the focus of their attention and concentration.* Moustakas (1990, P.47).

It was my understanding that trainees who volunteered to attend verbal evaluation meetings were prepared to talk freely in a safe confidential space. Elements of the

informal interview such as encouraging expression, which I call 'facilitating participants' voices', meet the empowerment and unmeasured components of Denzin's 'Interpretive Interactionism', that I have tried to maintain throughout the process of data collection.

Below I will reflect on the transcripts that evidence the transformation process of the study. The discussions highlighted participants' willingness to acknowledge the issue of fear and safety to address racism, linked to the powerful feelings and blocks experienced earlier in the study. (Full transcripts which show how these meetings were facilitated and portray participants' voices are presented in Appendix 10, 10a, 10b).

Analysing Transcripts

The first verbal evaluation meeting was attended by 8 trainees of the 27 year one and year two trainees at Uni-one. The second was attended by 6 out of 13 trainees who transferred to year two the following year.

In the first meeting, (see Appendix10) participants are clearly evidencing their ways of understanding. A black trainee articulates her experiences of racism and understanding of pride and the impact of internalised racism. She applies her understanding to the skill of empathy with black and white clients and herself in the role of black client with a white counsellor. White trainees discuss their ethnicity and experiences of learning from having a black tutor, black peers and black clients (The black expert role). The themes of history, guilt, the impact of racism and blocks are mentioned with clarity and reflexivity. A collection of learning, awareness, increased listening, understanding and links with cultural issues have also been presented. In addition, issues of safety and fear and powerful feelings attached to discussing racism. I get a real sense of transformation. The narrative also validates the impact of the workshops. I would say about fifty percent of the narrative linked participants' understanding to issues of racism.

Black female trainee:

> It is that black issues is not just about racism, it is to do with the way black people relate to other black people as well as how they relate to white people. For me in counselling situations as a black woman what is going through my head, is my client thinking I am not good enough? I am wondering what she is thinking about me and how I can be there with her. In relation to how it affects my relationship with other black people. At times it is helpful. When a young black man comes to me and he is telling me about his respect, having young black people that look up to him, I find it easier to understand where he is coming from, because within my culture as the older child we have to set examples that young people follow. So it makes it easier for me to enter into their frame of reference. But there are times, because of history, because of racism and because of the way I have the experience of being black, I am wondering you know when I am with another black person, because I don't see black people in key posts very much, one of the questions is how did they come to be where they are?

In the second meeting, (see Appendix 10a), I was careful to supportively facilitate participants to share their experiences. Black trainees felt able to talk explicitly about racism and question white tutors about their ability to empathise with them. White trainees take ownership of their own cultural links with each other and the impact this has on their understanding of black issues. Again fear is addressed many times. Power and fear in relation to racism is addressed. A white participant shares her experiences of not feeling understood 'as a white woman' and feeling 'intimidated' by me the black tutor. Concerns about clinical work and placement support for black issues are shared. Issues of power and history come to the surface and a black issues workshop is validated.

Turkish Asian female trainee

It applies to me as well. What we are learning here is enormous, it is major learning. Before this course I thought I had learned enough reading studying about history and black people. But when I started the course I realised that I really did not know anything. Just knowing the history and having black friends or being in a black community, it doesn't mean that we know the culture of black people. Because black people have their own culture, women have their own culture. How we develop this culture and how this culture can intervene between us as a counsellor and our clients and in this society. So I learned a lot about myself and my own issues and my inner world. I try with this learning to bring my inner world to its reality. Sometimes I feel the same as you. So this culture of learning, of oppression is so concrete, it makes it very difficult to forget or loose it. It can easily come to the counselling setting or whatever setting. So in my work place, I can easily be destroyed in a minute by somebody who I have experienced a history of being oppressed by. I don't really know, this is what I really need to learn more of. How to build confidence and how to acknowledge and recognise my own self in an appropriate way. How to present my self as I am and not to be oppressed when it comes from my history. I said that I learned a lot, but how does the learning support me? There is more to learn.

The third meeting, (see Appendix 10b), was attended by both white male trainees who had previously not attended any of these meetings. The narrative shows participants challenging each other and getting to grips with their learning and understanding of black issues in their lives, their training and in their clinical work. Understanding comes from participants' own cultural reference points. The meaning of safety rather more in an emotional sense, possibly linked to recognition trauma than an ethical sense is being explored. Safety and fear is referred to in relation to racism by both black and white participants. Both groups have different experiences of racism and different needs. In addition issues of empowerment and ideas drawn from the workshop experiences that may assist trainees' learning are addressed. The workshops were validated by the sharing of participants' developing awareness, empowerment and their ability to apply their learning to practice. The most

interesting revelation was a discussion about the power of black people sharing their experiences expressed by a white male participant. This was likened to a kind of burning bush experience. A personal epiphany about recognising the power of the impact of racism and secondly, the power of black women's expressed feelings about their experiences. I wonder, was it the impact and recognition of that power that evoked white participants' expressed feelings of fear? Differentiation between the fear of the white male and the fear of the black female was also expressed. The white male expresses fear of being called a racist. The black female expresses fear of being rejected.

White male trainee

When I started on the training my knowledge of black issues and any other cultural issues was quite poor. Coming down to London from Bury St Edmunds, a white middle class area was a learning curve for me. Being on the course has helped me to increase my learning and my understanding of black issues. The real difficultly is that it has made me look at my own prejudices. I don't believe when people say they don't have prejudices, we all have prejudices. It's coming to terms with that and trying to understand what these prejudices are and where they come from that is important. The black issues workshops have created a lot of uncomfortable feelings for me. At times I have felt quite unsafe, much challenged and quite criticised being a white male. I have had to work through that. At times I have come away from the workshops feeling angry and quite defensive. Over the two years I have tried to work through that and really asked myself why am I getting angry? Are there some prejudices I have got to face. I still don't really know the answers. It has really made me look at it in a very honest way. The black issues workshops make you look at it in the face. To me as well it is about safety and being safe to feel able to say what you really think and work through what you really think. Sometimes I have not felt particularly safe to be really free and say how I really felt.

We can conclude then, that verbal evaluation meetings enabled participants' narrative, and something to happen outside of the training that did not happen in the

black issues workshops. For example, a safe, non-judgemental, empathic environment that facilitates discussion of racism and fears about racism; a place for cathartic process where feelings of guilt, and the impact of history can be explored, and where trust can be built; a focussed discussion about power and blocks that hinder the process of discussion. Most of all, a place where power and fear can be explored, in particular the fear of rejection linked to the impact of racism.

The fourth and final verbal evaluation meeting was attended by one black participant and all four course tutors. This transcript will be referred to in chapter 5. as a contribution to the validation. It seems that by this time trainees were overwhelmed with final course assignments and they had had enough of participating as their course was about to end; maybe a natural way of closing the study and termination of the heuristic process. A 'creative synthesis' as Moustakas (1990, p.31) might put it. As a means of validation narrative contributions from this meeting will be referred to in the next chapter.

Summary and Emerging Themes

I started by using the concept of 'shared concerns', which allowed trainees to express their levels of understanding of the concept of black issues being introduced into the training field. Out of this experience came some identification of categories within which trainees appeared to express their concerns. For example 'black participants', 'white participants'.

Out of the silences came the need for trainees to find their voices. The concept of 'recognition trauma' gave meaning to the fear experienced by both black and white participants when they realise the impact and context of racism on their lives. In addition the theme of power was recognised in the context of white participants witnessing the feelings of black participants sharing their experiences of racism.

Participants' narratives show that an understanding of black issues comes about through shared concerns regarding trainees' practice and their shared experiences of

the impact and dynamics of racism. Allowing a cathartic process and discussion about racism to take place in a safe confidential space seems an important parallel to the counselling relationship. The main emerging themes from the data collection and process are listed below.

- The separate experiences of black and white participants
- Finding a voice to share experiences
- Experiences and impact of racism
- Fear, guilt, history, trust
- Recognition trauma

The ability to recognise feelings such as fear, hurt, rejection and anger that connect with the process of recognition trauma seem to be key to the process of understanding black issues. Links between workshop experience and other aspects of training such as clinical supervision may be another area for further exploration. (See Appendix 11)

> *None measured, non controlled, non statistical, non manipulative. Denzin (1998).*

What does this mean in the context of finding meaning in the data? Denzin supports this precept by suggesting that we can find understanding of a particular subject within a historical moment. Moving forward, yet moving backwards in time to the cultural and experiential situations that influence the response to the theme of the study. Rather like the concept of the Sankofa. It is difficult not to think in measures or comparisons because what other ways can we use to understand the usefulness of the study and participants' progress. Even in narrative form there needs to be interpretive strategies for the purpose of finding meaning, but I like the idea of using a historical context, which in essence I have used both to stimulate data and track the evolution of the study.

Taking a look at the results of the first evaluation questionnaire, we can see that although confidence and greater awareness has been gained in some areas of training, participants' understanding of their original concerns was limited at that stage of the study. Trainees were asked to reflect on how they fared at the beginning of their first year and at the end of their first year. However they were asked to look back and they had not actually been asked the first set of questions at the beginning of the year. Had they filled in the questionnaire at the beginning of the year, results may have been different. I have summarised key questions raised by this data below.

- The role of black tutor as black expert: does this re-presentation of responses to the black issues workshops indicate that the greater the contact with the researcher as black tutor/ facilitator the more likely there is to be progress in understanding black issues? It was certainly a validation of my input during the first year of the study and this gave me the impetus to deepen my relationship with Uni-one in this respect.
- What are the important inferences with regards to training models and the integration of black issues?
- How do black issues in a workshop programme filter through into other aspects of postgraduate training, such as supervision, placement and personal development forums?

I have acknowledged the limitations of qualitative research theory and multicultural research in exploring black issues. I have outlined the four main ways that participants contracted to submit data. A feminist emancipatory approach, (Field Belenky's work), was used to support the contradictions of analysing data about participants' finding a voice.

Denzin's precepts of Interpretive Interactionism gave context to transparent representation and description of themes within the data. I have described the process of explication. A creative synthesis has been recognised in arriving at the saturation stage of data collection and in the emergence of key themes that signify responses to

the research question. I will expand on this phase in the next chapter which summarises the outcome and validity of the study. In addition I have evidenced the use of information drawn from specialist seminars, findings from the study and concepts and influences from my previous work.

I have evidenced the evolving process of data collection and the experience of being an involved participatory action researcher in a practice based setting. I have discussed the coding of participants' shared concerns and made links with practitioner interviews. I have also represented participants' narrative transcribed from verbal evaluation meetings and linked emerging themes from these narratives to the research question.

I have been transparent about my own learning process and the use of tacit knowledge in the reflexive process. The research question has been explored in the implicit process and themes that have emerged from the data. Key themes emerging from the data have been identified and some falsification issues have been raised.

A second outcome that seems to signify a falsification issue is that workshops presented at Uni-one have arrived at a point where two white colleagues facilitated a black issues workshop without me being present. It is important not to underestimate the personal development and awareness necessary to arrive at this point. Using Parry's metaphor for falsification (*'All swans are white until we see a black one'*) (Parry, Specialist seminar 2002), we can assume that a black issues process arrives at a point where white tutors feel more confident to facilitate. This offers hope. Some of my colleagues by this stage had emerged from their silence and contradicted their fears expressed earlier in the study. *'How will we do this without Isha?'*

An important outcome of the research influence is the knowledge that experiences of racism need to be addressed in order to create a deeper understanding of black issues in counsellor training. This has been re-confirmed in the process of data collection

and analysis. Enabling trainees to express the above concerns is a contribution to their emancipation; the emancipation process of finding a voice.

In Field Belenky's study, referred to earlier, the voices of women were difficult to measure due to their experiences of oppression that silenced them. In addition their ways of expressing were coded due to the silencing. Bearing this in mind it is important to notice that what was expressed in this part of the study was limited to the language and social conditions of trainees' life experiences. Obviously this may be an additional topic for further study.

Chapter 5

Feeling it in My Bones (Outcome and validity)

'Creative synthesis' - Consolidation and presentation of meaning and knowledge that has emerged

> *Creative synthesis is the peak moment when the researcher recognises the universal nature of what something is and means, and at the same time grows in self-understanding and as self.* Moustakas (1990, p.90)

This chapter can be likened to stage six of Moustakas heuristic process, a 'creative synthesis'. The articulation of 'understanding' becomes clear through its emerging themes. (Phase 6 of the method). There is a way that you just know something exists because you have been there; hence the reason I have given this chapter the title 'Feeling it in my Bones'. Sometimes that feeling comes more from experience than words but in order to share it we have to find a way to describe it then communicate it in ways that can be understood and at the very least acknowledged.

I shall describe this outcome and understanding in 8 sections. 1. General outcomes. 2. Critique of methodology. 3. Critique of method. 4. Ethical considerations. 5. Unanticipated ethical concerns. 6. Links to literature search and original question. 7. Use of level 5 descriptors. 8. Summary of specialist seminars. Below I have presented an overview of the general outcomes.

5.1 General Outcomes

Methodology
Use of qualitative research methods using a qualitative, multicultural framework.
Flexible use of qualitative elements such as heuristic process, phenomenology, grounded theory and narrative.
Use of level 5 descriptors to support method, data collection and evaluation.
Use of theory to support philosophy, heuristic process and data presentation.
Use of strategies to reduce threats to validity, i.e. triangulation, collaborator feedback,

Influence on Study Groups
Increased transcultural and black issues workshops as a part of counsellor training curriculum.
Understanding expressed through sharing concerns, finding a voice. Emerging themes. (Shared concerns, recognition trauma, finding a voice). (History-guilt-trust-racism)
Significant impact of black issues workshops on trainees' experiences of training, placement practice, supervision, personal therapy and clinical supervision.

The Wider Field
Colleague recognition of the importance and impact of black issues as part of equalities and competencies in the training curriculum.
Recognition and support of race relations and equality in H.E.
Conference presentations.
Publications.

Products
Several publications in counselling and university journals sharing different stages of the study and emerging themes. (Readership of 2700 members in the field of counselling and psychotherapy).
Publishing contract for a post-Doctoral book (Palgrave Publishers).
A trainers' booklet – To be distributed nationally in Health and Social care training. Followed by electronic copies.

Responses to Products
Emails from individuals and a published article as a response from a reader in the AUCC Journal.
Papers placed on a web site for black and Asian therapists.
Radio phone-in interview
Invitation to publish in H.E. teaching journal 'Investigations'
Interview in the Trinidad Guardian.
Offer to support distribution of the booklet via London Metropolitan University.

Further Opportunities
Uni-one---A new job as Senior Lecturer which includes the development of an MA in Integrative transcultural Counselling and further research opportunities.
Uni-two---Increased transcultural teaching sessions.
Uni-three---Invitation to facilitate staff supervision.
Contract to re-publish personal research journey. 'In Search of Mr Mckenzie'. Mango Publishers 2006

5.2 Critique of Methodology

The main purpose was to use a work-based study to fill a gap in counsellor training. My intention was to discover and uncover the nature of trainee counsellors' experiences in relation to understanding the phenomenon of black issues and use these experiences in a reflexive process to further influence training.

A combination of qualitative and multicultural research components were used to facilitate the diverse study population. The integrative nature of the methodology provided a flexible approach supported by both heuristic and multicultural research methods.

Combining these methods in a flexible approach has been most challenging. In one sense it appears that I have dipped into several components of qualitative research in an ambiguous and tentative way. On the other hand I have used these components as a combined framework in which to develop a multicultural approach. This mixed methodology has indeed allowed me the flexibility to try out ways of bringing the deeper aspects of transcultural meaning into the research relationship as one might do in a counselling setting. It was necessary to approach the study in this way so as to remain alert about the dominant influence of eurocentric theory and therefore deter marginalisation of black issues in an active way. There is no patent for a multicultural approach; however studies that propose inclusion and an emancipatory approach were helpful.

Heuristic Engagement

My heuristic engagement with the research process was validated in the phases described throughout the study. Using a heuristic framework helped to contain and understand the unfolding process of the study. The 'immersion' process was validated by the interviews and workshop process referred to earlier. Relevant literature supported my understanding of these narratives, validating the grounded theory aspect of the methodology. The concept of 'shared concerns' was used

throughout the study. 'A space to contemplate', allowed the confirmed missing element of black issues to be presented in counsellor training. Phase two further validated the immersion process which determined the necessary exploration of establishing a relationship with the study groups. During this phase paying attention to the impact of introducing the phenomenon of black issues into the training experience became important.

The incubation and illumination process was validated by periods of personal reflection, personal development and further knowledge gained through specialist seminars. In addition these periods were used to develop my own understanding of black issues and recover from my counter-transference responses. This was supported by reading and reflective feedback during conference presentations and from colleagues. The outcome of this process has been presented in chapter 3. Risks were taken to allow issues of trust and transformation to merge into something new. In the heuristic process of this study I have relied on my tacit knowledge as a kind of antennae by which to acknowledge trainees' present time experience of black issues and the process of their understanding.

Grounded Theory

My approach was not typical of grounded theory in following through each evolving concept with exploration and further action. This was due to limited access to the study group. The grounded theory approach was used in a flexible way and drawn on when and where appropriate in relation to trainees' needs and the workshop process. For example: colleagues' suggestion of using a theoretical framework and the adaptation of a workshop to include a process discussion, when trainees' powerful feelings about black issues became apparent. The main body of data was collected outside of allocated workshop and training space. These limitations were managed by taking a more reflective approach and acknowledging emerging data, as opposed to opening further exploration. My tacit knowledge therefore led me to the theory and personal development that supported trainees' developing needs as the workshops progressed.

Narrative

I have drawn on participatory action research to enable the experience and voices of participants to be heard. Facilitating the voices of others is an essential component of both counselling and the emancipatory research process. The narrative components of this study were central in connecting to participants' lived experiences, shared concerns and expression of meaning throughout the life of the study. Knowledge gained from Denzin's theory (1989) and Valle & King's approach (1978), supported the primary aim of this research project, which was to discover how the phenomena of black issues is understood.

Narrative research data was restricted to personal information that was volunteered outside of training course time in group meetings. No data was collected from placement practice, supervision meetings or personal development group meetings. Trainees signed declarations that they were aware of how transcriptions from their narratives may be used for publications.

Phenomenology

As mentioned previously an element of the phenomenological approach was utilised in presenting black issues as a phenomenon in the training. However, it was not possible to stand outside of the situation and observe objectively as might happen in a strictly phenomenological approach. I had intended to approach this in a more objective way; however, it was difficult to bracket personal feelings about black issues due to my closeness to this phenomenon and the duality of my role as tutor/researcher. The illumination process and my own personal development process supported me to develop compassion and a more flexible approach. My own process of emancipation from the role of oppressed victim is ongoing. I have acknowledged this to colleagues and trainees as a way of modelling our mutual learning and supporting their emancipatory process.

5.3 Critique of Method

In a critique of flexible research, Robson (2002), proposes that meaning is not imposed, it arises from process. He also suggests that evidence of validity is not solely derived from the fact that others find the research credible or trustworthy, particularly if these responses come from a place of need for a particular research theme. In this study for example, many people have valued the contribution of a black tutor initiating dialogue about black issues. Whilst this may be true, it does not confirm that I have kept my methodological promise as a Doctoral student. Neither does it demonstrate the usefulness of the study.

Mason (2002), emphasizes the importance of 'reliability' whether the researcher can claim to measure what their data represents or not.

> *Judgements of validity are in effect, judgements about whether you are 'measuring', or explaining what you claim to be measuring or explaining. They therefore concern your conceptual and ontological clarity, and the success with which you have translated these into meaningful and relevant epistemology. Mason,(2002, p.189.)*

Mason proposes that finding a raw truth within the data which links to the purpose and journey of the study and its conclusions, helps to establish validity. This approach fits closely with the flexible and emancipatory way that data has been collected for the study.

Modification and appropriateness

I set out to examine whether history shared through art and creative activities can be useful in understanding black issues in training and the therapeutic process. However, as often happens in therapeutic relationships, early workshops demonstrated that the approach to the study needed to be adapted to trainees' immediate needs, rather than expect them to comply with my own starting point.

Trainees had their own questions. A popular one was, 'how do you explore black issues in the therapeutic relationship?' Out of this experience of listening to trainee's needs came a new study question. **How do trainee counsellors in Britain, (from any background) understand their concerns about black issues raised by or about themselves during training or about clients during the therapeutic process?**

The revised question was then pitched at an appropriate level to the study group. The question itself raises several problems. Firstly, how do you measure or qualify 'understanding'? Secondly, what constitutes a 'concern'? Thirdly, issues of confidentiality are paramount in the process of self report and information about trainees and their relationships with clients. Given these concerns it was important to discover the most suitable ways of generating this data. The problem of what constitutes a 'concern' was resolved by suggesting to participants that they could present their questions about black issues during the early stages of the study. These questions were then used as a representation of participants' concerns. Their concerns implied the need for participant action which was a challenging prospect in view of the participants being a diverse group of trainee counsellors in a structured learning situation.

Placing myself in the listener role as mentioned above supported a flexible more impartial approach appropriate to the ethics of counsellor training. For example, to validate the phenomenon of black issues as a worthy cause for the study and a shared concern, I listened to the narratives of experienced practitioners. The response validated an outcome of black issues as a missing element in counsellor training during a twenty year period. This also demonstrated that interviewees shared the experience of finding and creating forums to assist their understanding of black issues during their counselling training. (See Chapter 3) This outcome initiated the process of shifting from my personal picture of the situation to engaging with the group experience. These findings were developed by creating forums to explore black issues within training as opposed to using experienced practitioners or clients.

My curiosity about the links between past counsellor training and present experience of black issues in counsellor training was satisfied.

Data Collection

Colleagues were invited to comment on their impressions of the workshop process, data collection and ethical concerns. This supported the grounded theory process of the study and assisted the outcome to be less researcher influenced. This part of the process was sometimes blocked in that responses were not forthcoming. In view of the multicultural, emancipatory and heuristic nature of the study, it was then my responsibility as researcher to acknowledge the process rather than make demands for responses.

Periodical discussions with colleagues were intended to support and empower colleagues as collaborators. One such discussion was about trainees' concerns and their powerful feelings linked to racism and other oppressions. This was supported by using a workshop to model with a white colleague a discussion about our own feelings and fears when addressing black issues in the training. This helped to create some safety for trainees to discuss their concerns. Another discussion explored how we could evidence the impact of black issues on trainees' learning. (See Appendix 13)

Validation of data collection and representation of emerging themes was also evidenced by various other methods, for example returning interview transcripts to contributors for their validation of accuracy. Evaluation questionnaires were also a means of feedback.

Triangulation

A natural process of triangulation occurred between the three training establishments that were involved in the initial workshop programme. Data collected at the end of the first year from these groups was coded into common themes. The outcome of this data showed more discrepancy between the concerns of first and second year trainees

than between the same year groups in different institutions. (Chapter 4. T2-T4). An example of this was demonstrated, when across the board first years showed greater concern about racism than other participants; however their concern about trust was equal to the other groups.

Another inference was that data collected from collaborators and conference delegates indicated similar concerns to the interviewees' experiences, that black issues were not included in their training. These concerns are clear indications of the importance of the study. In addition they indicate that some trainers were no more aware or adequately prepared to help trainees resolve their concerns. At the end of the first year of the study a questionnaire was sent to the three training courses to find out the impact of the initial workshop programme. The outcome of this evaluation showed a greater response from Uni-one. This could mean that a greater level of contact as a permanent black tutor might be an advantage. Another topic for further study.

My promise to influence training by addressing this gap was fulfilled in continuing workshops with Uni-one. Due to the various methods of data collection offered at Uni-one, another triangulation process took place. For example, the collection of participants' concerns, transcriptions from verbal evaluation meetings, participants' journal extracts and evaluation questionnaires, therefore participants were given a variety of opportunities to show their process of understanding black issues. Some of these opportunities were well used and some were under used. An example of under-use was the lack of response to journal submission. Opportunities were validated by their varied use which depended on participants' availability and confidence in responding. Verbal evaluation meetings, the most utilised method of data collection, were attended by different students. A small contingent of trainees were present at all of them. These meetings provided the main source of primary data.

Offering questionnaires during workshop sessions was another well used method. I believe this worked because this method was not imposing on personal time outside

of course meetings, as with the verbal evaluation meetings. However the narrative data produced in meetings outside of the training revealed more of participants' feelings and experiences than the questionnaires. The questionnaires were used as a means of checking the impact of the phenomenon of black issues on the training. Although a rich source of data, these were not discussed with trainees, so as not to impose on the training curriculum. On the other hand, I speculate that although contributions were voluntary, participants offering feedback in the trainee role may have experienced a pressure to conform. Although a handful of students had signed an agreement to volunteer journal excerpts, only a couple were handed in. Finding out about the impact of the black issues input on the training was just as important as information gained through the process of trainees' understanding, because this information can contribute to the development of future training.

In response to the research question, the meaning of 'understanding' has been qualified and validated by examining participants' shared concerns and narratives. It became clear that participants' experiences of understanding were expressed through concepts linked to their personal history and cultural roots. These experiences were linked to emotions raised by their engagement with the phenomenon of black issues. Acknowledging this helped me to understand the volatile nature of this study. This was viewed as an ethical concern and a parallel to the counsellor client relationship. Validation of this process can be seen in examples of emerging themes such as trust, guilt, history and racism which became evident in trainees' narratives. (See Chapter 4)

5.4 Ethical Considerations

Developing relationships with participants at Uni-one over a two year period was the mainstay of support and trust building during the study. This also acted as a guard against negative validity. To validate prior consideration of ethical concerns, issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, trust between trainees as participants and their relationship with the researcher as a tutor were explored. Gaining the trust of trainees to be involved as participants was overcome by being explicit to them about how data would be used and by providing an opportunity for them to voice their ethical concerns. Trainees did not respond immediately to this opportunity, but evidence of their ethical concerns was conveyed in the narrative process.

Various methods of confidentiality and informed consent were employed. For example, interviewees were given the opportunity to edit their transcripts and create their own pseudonyms. Trainees agreed that the gesture of handing in their questions during the workshop indicated their consent. This was supported with an acknowledgement of trainees' concerns about power issues between tutors and themselves. Explanation was given and written consent for involvement and publication of transcripts was obtained.

Issues of confidentiality were pertinent to the continuing black issues workshops with Uni-one training programme where the phenomenon of black issues was evoked through a series of workshops. These workshops were difficult to manage due to the inside outside nature of the trainees' role as occasional volunteer participants at Uni-one. The difficulties were compounded by my role as researcher/tutor, with colleagues as collaborators. This contradiction was discussed during conversation and feedback sessions with colleagues. We needed to be mindful of interpreting or influencing the process of data collection and examination. The validity of how these issues were addressed was born out in the management of ethical concerns.

I have done my best to question and challenge my approach and how the process evolved. Reflecting on Mason's work helped me remember that although I had

repeatedly asked for feedback from participants on their transcripts, this was not forthcoming. The transcripts have not been interpreted and present participants' exact words and frames of reference. I wonder what receiving their voices on paper meant for them. A participant made mention of this meaning in the final verbal evaluation meeting. I can therefore only conclude that participants trusted and agreed with what had been transcribed. (See excerpt below).

Black Female Trainee

> *"My interest in coming to this evaluation is the motivation of getting feedback through a transcript. I have learnt a lot about black issues that I did not know in the beginning and I have gained insight of black issues that happen every day, everywhere, every time. I have also gained insight and learning from other colleagues and tutors concerning black issues. In the beginning I was so afraid to talk about black issues. I felt that I would hurt other people's feelings, those who are not black. But seeing the example set by the tutors in one of the workshops, as they talked openly and transparently about black issues, I felt well I can express myself and learn from others as they learn from me as well. I thought that if black issues were brought into the course it has widened my understanding". (See Appendix10c, for full transcription)*

5.5 Unanticipated Ethical Concerns

The influence of Epistemological Racism and Epistemological Privilege

In chapter 4. I explained how I wanted to avoid the imbalance of epistemological power in the presentation of data, by presenting participants' actual words as opposed to interpreting their voices. This approach has played an important role in staying in the present with whatever experience, levels of awareness and knowledge about black issues and the emerging theme of racism participants have presented. I have also been made aware of my own levels of acceptance when addressing black issues with trainee counsellors from a range of diverse backgrounds. This was

demonstrated in the challenge to develop compassion as a means of coping with difficult responses and defensiveness from white colleagues and trainees.

Mason (2002, p193), suggests that transparency in presentation of data can help to counteract epistemological privilege. Epistemological privilege can be exacerbated by the notion of the expert witness, such as in my experience of being the black researcher/tutor/facilitator. Mason mentions two areas of caution: Firstly, the position of being in the oppressed group and secondly, using others who claim to be in a position of epistemological power to reflect on data. The validity of these positions have been both challenged and affirmed within the realms of qualitative research, particularly in relation to feminist research.

Mason's second point proposes a challenge to the role of colleagues as collaborators in this study. It became clear at times that not only were colleagues unconfident about discussing black issues, they were also not confident about facilitating and giving feedback on the data. This became apparent in my repeated efforts to reinstate the topic of black issues onto the agenda and into the training programme each time it was left out. This type of no-response could be viewed as a symptom of institutional racism. Tuckwell, (2002) suggests that:

> *There is a silence generally within our profession concerning racism.* (P.138).

Nevertheless I reiterated to colleagues my understanding that they were where were are in the schema of understanding black issues and the context of racism. The development of my compassion enabled me to value their attempts to support by reflecting on transcripts and questionnaires to the best of their ability. They were transparent about not feeling skilled enough to give more in depth responses. In a way this experience contradicts the possibility of colleagues' epistemological privilege; however, it may be argued that loss of feedback due to lack of knowledge

could invalidate the data. This understanding helped me gain clarity about the necessity on both sides of the coin for my role as a black expert.

Validation of the Heuristic Process

To validate the reciprocal process that heuristic research can procure, transcripts of participants' narrative were returned to them. Engaging them in the process of checking the accuracy of data offered a means of reflecting back their voices and a contribution to their personal development process. Colleagues became involved in reading and reflecting on data, emerging themes and outcome. Ethical considerations were also validated by careful attention to privacy, respect for emotions, power issues and powerful feelings during discussions. These issues were also supported by being transparent in the role of researcher/tutor, and creating safe opportunities for participants to voice their experiences. Accompanied by a colleague I took the stance of the listener and facilitated trainees' voices during these meetings.

5.6 Links to Literature Search and Original Question

Multicultural and transcultural theory has been considered in conjunction with elements of multicultural research to support various aspects of the study. The position of the 'involved observer', Reason & Bradbury (2001) and the development of a 'transformative dialogue' about black issues has been the mainstay of this study. This was supported by my developing compassion and awareness of participants' different levels of association with black issues. Denzin's Interpretive Interactionism, (1989), has been used as a framework for describing the transformative process and understanding power issues. A feminist context, Field Belenky (1986), has assisted an understanding of the emancipatory process within the data, as opposed to a way of understanding black issues. By opening a dialogue and supporting exploration of black issues this study has taken multicultural research, training and transcultural counselling on to a transformative level. This was supported by exploring fears and experiences of racism as a component of black issues and a model for the client counsellor relationship.

Multicultural and transcultural literature usually stresses the importance of acknowledging racism. This has again been elevated by the study.

Some studies suggest that eurocentricism has silenced the voices of black students. In a different way this study has highlighted silence in white students' voices too. I sought to listen to the voices of both black and white trainees, so that the onus was not solely focussed on black trainees, (the black expert role) and that the context of whiteness can be owned as part of the silencing. An attempt to expose these dynamics within counsellor training acts as an attempt to contradict racism within counsellor training institutions and Higher Education.

Increasing the numbers of black trainees and trainers, or providing support forums for black students does not deal with the impact of racism. Neither does it break down eurocentricism because these problems have been deeply embedded within institutions and educational structures. Recent studies refer to the importance of listening to the voices of black participants and including their experiences in the learning process. Jobanputra (2003), 'A study of black psychology students', confirmed the necessity for more black staff and black students to break down isolation and enhance modelling. Watson (2004) paid attention to the training experiences of black counsellors. There was a particular focus on the impact of race and culture in counsellor training programmes and its significant implications for clients. Both studies are significant in that they enabled black students' voices to be heard in terms of their experiences of racism and their relationship with course material and the dynamics with tutors.

This study has been reflexive and self reflective and attempted to bridge 'the gap' Lawrence (2003), in opportunities to engage with the process of black issues. It presents an additional dimension in that it has enabled the voices of both black and white students to be heard within the dynamic of learning, understanding and their developing practice. It has evidenced that an active, explicit and educational

approach which challenges racism and supports the learning of all individuals can bring about significant change in both attitude and practice.

5.7 Use of Level 5 Descriptors

- Previous research strategies utilised throughout to elicit data: i.e. Focussed theme based workshops and questionnaire style evaluation.
- Experience as a published writer was used to publish papers and a trainer's booklet to influence the wider field.
- Expert practitioner: Use of psychotherapy skills to facilitate trainees and support development of understanding, emotions and ethical concerns linked to the process. Also used to reflect on parallels with client/counsellor relationship and trainees' deepening relationship with the phenomenon. Reflective personal development of compassion.
- Workshop facilitation skills and creativity: Use of artist's work and interviews to present aspects of the study at conferences and workshops in the wider field.

5.8 Summary of Specialist Seminars

I have referred to the influence of specialist seminars as they arise throughout the document. They were experienced as both challenging and helpful in a variety of ways. In a general sense they offered ways of sharing and exchanging support with peers. In a personal sense they gave me an opportunity to experience my own voice in a microcosm of the wider field. This has been explained in the challenge of creating a dialogue with white presenters about ways of understanding the language of research and transcending cultural barriers. I particularly experienced this with Parry and Jacob's presentations. In Parry's seminar I gained insights into coding data, but experienced the presenter's lack of willingness to explore concerns connected to this study. This challenge was also present in Jacobs's seminar, but was explored in the context of the seminar theme, with the support of other group members. While Jacob's seminar encouraged my writing it did not convey

information about research. Seminars presented by Mair & Heart, Bhatts, Goldfried and Straker were supportive in that I was able to connect them with both my artistic flare and the multicultural elements of the study. The seminar presented by Carrol was useful in understanding and re-connecting to the process of learning and ways to evaluate learning, which I utilised in evaluating the method. Etherington's seminar modelled a naturalistic way of gathering and presenting participants' stories. I enjoyed her style of presentation and was encouraged by her approach to narrative. Specialist seminars have been expanded on in the relevant Appendix as indicated in the text.

Summary

Self challenge, equalities issues and the needs of both black and white trainees, and clients have played a key role in this study. A reconciliation of social history and transferring knowledge into deliverable techniques has been considered. The study has played a role in creating new social forms and opening up theory. Eurocentricism has been challenged in the process and application of the method, particularly in not leaving the responsibility to black trainees, or expecting trainees to find out about black issues in counselling outside of the training. The question of how black issues are addressed has been explored through the process of understanding trainees' relationship with the phenomenon.

I have presented an account of the outcome and validity of the study, (Phase 6) and explained my use of the methodology and method. No single aspect of the methodology has been fully utilised, but many aspects have been drawn from. In this sense I have tried to avoid a dominant eurocentric influence which could run the risk of epistemological racism or misinterpretation of the process and data.

A cyclical reflexive process created a means of checking with participants and collaborators and acted as a way of mirroring for participants. This in turn supported the development of the training.

The ethos of the research approach has been linked to previous research experience and knowledge. The reflexive elements of self challenge that impact on the research method have been considered in my understanding of the personal challenges and sensitivity of working with the concept of black issues. In particular the impact of personal and institutional racism raised during the study.

I have shown that the initial interviews played a significant role in confirming the need for black issues to be introduced into training. This was carried forward into a workshop programme where trainees shared their concerns. Participants' narratives demonstrated the usefulness of shared concerns and the process of finding a voice, confirming the emancipatory process of multicultural research.

Earlier in this document the concept of 'recognition trauma' was used to identify emotional responses to the emerging theme of racism in the process of understanding. The impact of racism was identified in the narrative and in the evaluation. Significant attention to this process may be needed in future training that addresses black issues. Emerging themes of guilt, history, trust and racism that became apparent in the final evaluation may be the substance that needs to be processed for a shared understanding of black issues to evolve in counsellor training. I have come to the conclusion that these themes may well be the fuel of 'recognition trauma'. Exploration of this may be taken up in a further study.

The explication process has been supported by using knowledge and examples gained from specialist seminars such as those presented by Parry, Etherington and Goldfried. In chapter 4. I have demonstrated how the study process arrived at a 'creative synthesis' which validated an outcome linked to emerging themes, primarily that of racism.

Using the context of multicultural research proposed in the methodology, I have made explicit and transparent aspects of my personal process during the phases of

data collection. I have also used creative workshop exercises, artwork and stories of black artists to assist the facilitation of participants' voices.

Since 'understanding' has been central to this study I feel it is important to acknowledge my own understanding of what has come about during this journey of developing knowledge and experience about black issues. I understand that it has been a challenging and sometimes painful journey. I understand that a great deal of fear was generated when black issues were on the agenda; also that guilt and trust issues arise and that personal and social history may be a key to a deeper understanding of these emotions. In addition, it is clear that racism needs to be explored if black issues are to be given a place in counsellor training and practice.

On a personal level I understand that compassion is an important response in black issues discussions. I also understand that my own experience as a victim of racism and oppression may be evoked during discussions about racism. As a trainer and facilitator I need to model challenge and support and show compassion for the oppressor group if I am to assist the development of trainees' skills and understanding. Most of all I understand that working through these issues can create the necessary conditions to voice black issues that may not necessarily be contextualised in racism. All this can be used as a model for the therapeutic process.

The outcome is demonstrated in the impact of the study and its process and in achieving what I set out to do in allowing the study to take its course. The product outcomes, the influence on the wider field, and further opportunities will be presented in chapter 6.

Chapter 6

Painting is my Psychiatrist (A creative outcome and future)

The title of this chapter is a quote from an interview with W.J. one of the artists whose painting and narrative of his black issues I have used in the workshops. W.J. uses his paintings to express the experiences that he believes those close to him cannot bear to hear. (See Appendix 16, booklet) It is only when listening to W.J.'s narrative that the true meaning of his journey to understanding becomes clear. In this chapter, the meaning of the journey of this study becomes clear in the products and recognising the impact of the study on the trainees, the researcher and the wider field. These aspects of the study are presented in three sections. 1. The products. 2. Impact on self, practice and the wider field. 3. Summary of findings, critique, recommendations and the future.

6.1 The Products

At the beginning of the study I was concerned about how I could use my love of art and writing as a means of sharing knowledge and experience. Like W.J. I use my creative skills to express the voice that sometimes others find difficult to listen to. This is the motivation behind the products of this study. The products that I will describe in this chapter have been partly influenced by the process of the study and partly influenced by my connections with the artists, writers, and participants and their collective journeys towards understanding.

Major Outcomes Proposed and Achieved

1. Counselling and Psychotherapy Training Institutions

I have implanted greater awareness and understanding of black issues in counsellor training and practise.

I have integrated the outcome into future training at the university where I am based as a counsellor trainer.

I have contributed to the development of a model for training that includes black issues awareness.

2. Publishing:

2a. I have published a booklet that includes shared concerns and common themes emerging from the study, presented as ideas for facilitating black issues in the development of counsellor training.

2b. I have published several papers in counselling & psychotherapy journals, to influence the wider field.

2c. I have presented a book synopsis and now have a publishing contract.

2d. I have made presentations of the study and process at counselling and psychotherapy and black issues related conferences, to influence the wider field.

Summary of Products

1. **Published papers** Appendix 14.

Mckenzie-Mavinga I. *Linking Social History and the Therapeutic Process, in Research and practice on Black Issues.* Counselling & Psychotherapy Research. 3(2) (June 2003), 103-106, British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy.

Mckenzie-Mavinga I. *Creative Writing as Healing in Black Women's Groups, in Counselling in Intercultural Settings* Ch 1. Ed; Dupont-Joshua, A. (2003) Routledge

Mckenzie-Mavinga I. *Finding a Voice –Understanding Black Issues in the Therapeutic Process.* Association for University and College Counselling. (May 2004) British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

Mckenzie-Mavinga I. *Addressing Black Issues in Counsellor Training* (July 2004) *CPJ* British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

Mckenzie-Mavinga I. *Understanding Black Issues in Postgraduate Counsellor Training.* Counselling & Psychotherapy Research January (2006) British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy.

Mckenzie-Mavinga. *Understanding Black Issues in the Counselling Relationship.* The Metropolitan. (Issue 21) October 2004

2. Trainers booklet: Mckenzie-Mavinga I. (2005) A Space to Contemplate). Appendix 16.

3. Post Doctoral book contract: Palgrave Publishers: Appendix 12.

Published papers (Appendix 14)

My encounter with Michael Jacobs, renowned writer and editor of counselling literature, at a specialist seminar (Metanoia Institute, 1.5.03(b), assisted my writing process. During the seminar we discussed the history of Michael's writing and the development of ideas that he has drawn from traditional psychotherapy and psychoanalytical literature. A dialogue about how we influence theory and how theory influences our lives gave me insights about the reflexive process of publication and practice. In addition we discussed how research can make an impact on training. I have been encouraged to use my own publications to support teaching as opposed to just leaving them on the paper. I was struck by my boredom during the reading of sections of the chapter we had been offered prior to the seminar and this

helped me to understand about developing clarity and ways to really connect with readers. The following quote, by Jacobs, which resonates with the aims of this study, awakened me from my boredom.

> *Psychoanalysis has its fair share of cloned practitioners who are afraid to question what they have been taught, and what their personal therapist has modelled them in the way of practice. It also has others (and I came across many of these) who wait for permission to express their doubts and uncertainties, not having learned that it is safe to do so in their training. Jacobs (2001a, p.5).*

It is clear that the safety issues that Jacobs refers to have been a problem for both the experienced practitioners and trainees in this study. In an attempt to create safety, the reflexive use of transcriptions and the publication of papers have acted as a way of sharing the process with trainees and the wider field. In this sense they have also been a way of opening a dialogue with readers as external participants and encouraging their mutual participation.

Four papers and a previously written chapter were published. I had never before published my thoughts and experience about counselling or psychotherapy. I was keen to break the isolation experienced in a study of this kind. I also wanted to influence the wider field of psychotherapy and counselling by sharing the knowledge and experience that I had gained. The first invitation to present a paper for publishing came during a presentation of the study at a counselling and psychotherapy research conference. BACP (2002). This was encouraging. There is something to be said for planting seeds in the mind and within a methodology, because as soon as I voiced my interest in the theme of black issues, doors started to open. Articles emanated from the incubation process of the study and emerged like regurgitation in between activity. Needless to say it was not always plain sailing. There were times when I had to justify a focus on black issues as opposed to a general focus on diversity. I saw this as a parallel process to my experience with trainees at the start of the project.

The papers that have been published are examples of the process of the study and emerging themes, for example, 'Finding a Voice'. This title was drawn from the participants' experiences of the emancipatory process expressed in their narratives.

Responses to Publications

Responses to published papers continue to trickle in. They have come from inspired professionals and from trainees, who feel connected to the issues and want information about support forums to break the isolation and share their issues and concerns. Many feel their voices were not heard on their training.

James Barrott, head of counselling services at Thames Valley University was so inspired that he wrote and published an article of acknowledgement and response in the following edition of the AUCC (Association of University and College Counselling) journal, BACP (2004). I see this as a validation of the article and the study and evidence that the papers have created a dialogue on black issues in the wider field. (For examples of email responses from trainees and other professionals see Appendix 15)

Trainers Booklet (A space to contemplate. Appendix 13)

The booklet is an offshoot from the Doctoral project, acting as a synopsis of the study, a means of transparency and sharing and further engagement with the wider field. Its purpose is to support counselling trainers to incorporate a space for understanding black issues into their curriculum. Whilst I had not set out to produce a booklet, it naturally evolved during phases of incubation in a similar way to the published papers. The booklet is intended to support the emancipation process of training. Advice on what should be included came from colleagues and participants. Colleagues who were involved with the study offered editing and presentation tips, and I thank them for this.

The booklet consists of approximately sixty pages which include excerpts of interviews, data, emerging themes and tacit experience from the study. A reading list

and an interview with an African Caribbean artist have also been included for use with training groups.

Support for printing and distribution of the booklet has been negotiated with the London Metropolitan University. The University has therefore agreed to act as a link with the project for national distribution and as a model for influencing counsellor training in Higher Education and race equalities issues. The support that I have received to present the booklet has validated the importance of using the study to influence the wider field.

The booklet is for the use of counselling trainers, supervisors, training groups and developing equalities issues in Higher Education, health care and in the caring professions. It is for individuals and groups who wish to open dialogue about black issues and explore their understanding and practice in this context. It can be used to introduce black issues as a competency in training in addition to other equalities, diversity and cultural competencies. The data included has primarily evolved from postgraduate trainees; however exercises can be adapted for other training groups. The booklet can provide a reference for knowledge and action to complement transcultural skills and participation. Attention should be paid to the emerging theme of racism which will need to be given space and time for supportive exploration. Most importantly the booklet can be used to challenge institutional racism by using it to support training programmes where black issues has been excluded or not made explicit.

Book Contract. (See Appendix 12)

Prior to my engagement with this Doctoral programme I had made several attempts to gather the experiences of practitioners working with black issues. These attempts were thwarted by their lethargy and in some situations concern about repercussions, expressed as, 'washing dirty linen in public'. I believe that these concerns have also delayed the experiences of black trainers and clients from being shared. These

concerns, with which I empathise, previously stood in the way of challenging institutional racism and systems of oppression towards minority groups.

In 2002 I was fortunate to interview Patricia a seventy year old Grenadian woman who had been in and out of psychiatric care for 30 years of her life and never been offered counselling or any form of therapy other than medication. She felt that the psychiatrists and psychologists did not know how to listen to her story as a black woman. I noticed that she was unable to express this without my prompting her and asking her specifically what it had been like for her as a black woman in the mental health system. This is why I believe that the black issues study has become important in training. Not only to enable the shared experiences of institutional racism, but for others in Patricia's situation, to create a platform for listening to bits of their lives that may not have been considered. A transcription of this interview was included in the synopsis, presented to Palgrave Publishers, which resulted in a contract for a book.

After a period of negotiation and dialogue with Palgrave about external reviews of the book synopsis, I finally received an offer. A challenging aspect of this was convincing the editor that I want the book to educate both black and white people. This concern has been a feature of the study both on training courses and while attempting to publish papers. There is something about the use of the term black that creates confusion in the white listener about whether the knowledge will be accessible to them.

The book will provide a text for trainers, trainees, practitioners, and interested lay persons in the field of counselling and psychotherapy and the caring professions. The book will develop the knowledge and experience presented in my first published chapter on counselling work and black issues Mckenzie-Mavinga (2003b).

The book will be an important contribution to transcultural literature. It will permit the voices of black individuals to be heard and to contribute to the development of

therapeutic practice. The book will explain what some of the black issues are. It will maintain a space that has been prised open to provide information in response to trainees' and established practitioners' concerns. It will be a book that will open a dialogue about black issues and help to explore questions, such as, how do we do it? When is it appropriate to address these issues? The study provided an opportunity to explore trainees' understanding of the topic. However the space for sharing black issues was limited by the difficulties of trainees in grasping how to listen to and understand black issues. This was because the pain of history, guilt and mistrust linked to the impact of racism was at the forefront for them. The book will help us all to move on from this place.

Production of literature on black issues has mainly focused on racism and racialization and this may be the reason for the defences that arise when black issues are mentioned. The book that I intend to publish will not focus mainly on racism. The purpose will be to challenge racism by including the experiences of black peoples. In this way I hope to share elements of history and black people's narratives that the study was unable to facilitate.

6.2 Impact on Self, Practice and the Wider Field

Most of what I want to say about the bridge from fear to transformation has been said in chapters four and six. In summary, I want to emphasize the challenging nature of placing black issues into the training curriculum. Initially I expected a little too much from trainees and had to tailor my approach to suit them. What then transpired within a plethora of concerns was the need to understand black issues in the context of the students' training relationships and their developing practice. Having decided to accommodate this need, the ethical components became a key to finding ways to engage with a process which supported emancipation through dialogue, as opposed to silence. Trainees were then able to express their fears about the impingement of racism on the subject of black issues. This was the bridge from fear to transformation.

In addition this study has transformed my own practice as a psychotherapist and trainer. Firstly by maintaining an inclusive approach to minority issues and gathering knowledge and theory to support this approach. Secondly by explicitly addressing my availability to explore the deeper meaning of oppression, racism and black issues in training and the therapeutic relationship. Thirdly by using ongoing support to remain aware of my counter-transference responses and of the compassion I have developed to model the support process. Fourthly I have developed less fear of starting at the beginning, learning from my mistakes and asking for and expecting relevant help.

The impact on my own wellbeing and self development has been expressed through creative writing, in the form of poetry, reference to Beloved's story, Morrison (1988), and my daily experiences during the process of the study. In Beloved's story the community were silenced because they had found it difficult to support her mother who not only abandoned, but attempted to destroy her children, but this community later pulled together because of their new understanding. Healing took place through a shared history of slavery, oppression, mistrust, guilt and racism. These elements of human nature were emerging themes in the study process.

Beloved returned in her broken state and created a bridge between fear and transformation. On the one hand she resurrected memories of her traumatic beginning and the history of white patriarchal domination, and on the other hand she achieved reconciliation with her mother and the community. Beloved's mother, in her desperation to save her children from the enslavers, was driven to insanity as she recalled the terror.

I cannot begin to empathise with anyone born into slavery, but somewhere in Beloved's story there is something with which I resonate. Having no history of my father's side of the family who were freed slaves, I made my journey to search for his heritage. This has given me great insight into the missing bits in my education and counsellor training. In addition I have allowed myself to transgress the pain of discovering these missing bits.

The experience of this study has given me greater insight into my practice and my approach as a counsellor trainer. Most importantly I have learnt how I overcome silence and how I use my voice. In addition I have become a lot more aware of the tone and context of my voice when exploring black issues. I have also become attentive to the context and hue of my emotions when discussing racism and the rough edges I encounter within myself when I am experiencing oppression. Exploring Beloved's story through my therapy and as a support to this study has enabled me to transcend my own recognition trauma and locate compassion unknown to me. This compassion has assisted me to develop the way I listen and respond to the dilemma of the damaged, hurt and silenced oppressor. My capacity to listen to the history and silence of my white peers without whom this study would not have been possible, has been tested. There have been moments of joy and pain and great moments of inspiration, challenge and learning.

My greatest learning has been the challenge to begin from where the participants are and trust the process that evolves from that place, neither pushing nor pulling it. After all, this is the main challenge of psychotherapy and counselling, to be in the

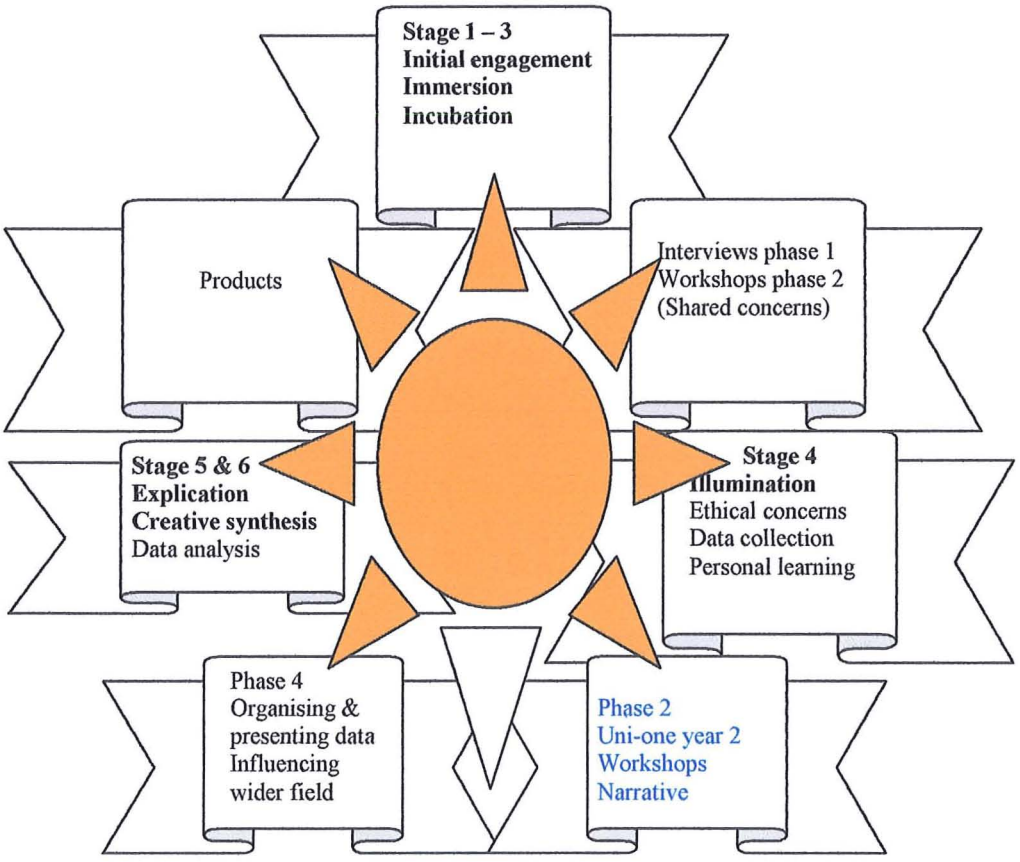
present when the past and the future may be knocking loudly on the door. On a more practical level, engaging in the wider field has been fruitful. Invitations to present at conferences were forthcoming. (See Appendix 13) Feedback from the wider field has trickled back through the grapevine in various ways. Being invited to present at the BACP Research Conference several times assisted continuity in a similar way to that of presenting a number of publications. A series of publications, a training booklet and a chapter in an anthology have engaged participants in the wider field and created a pathway for the forthcoming book.

Although my immediate contacts and the training courses that I am involved in continue to benefit, I believe that the main impact on the wider field is yet to come.

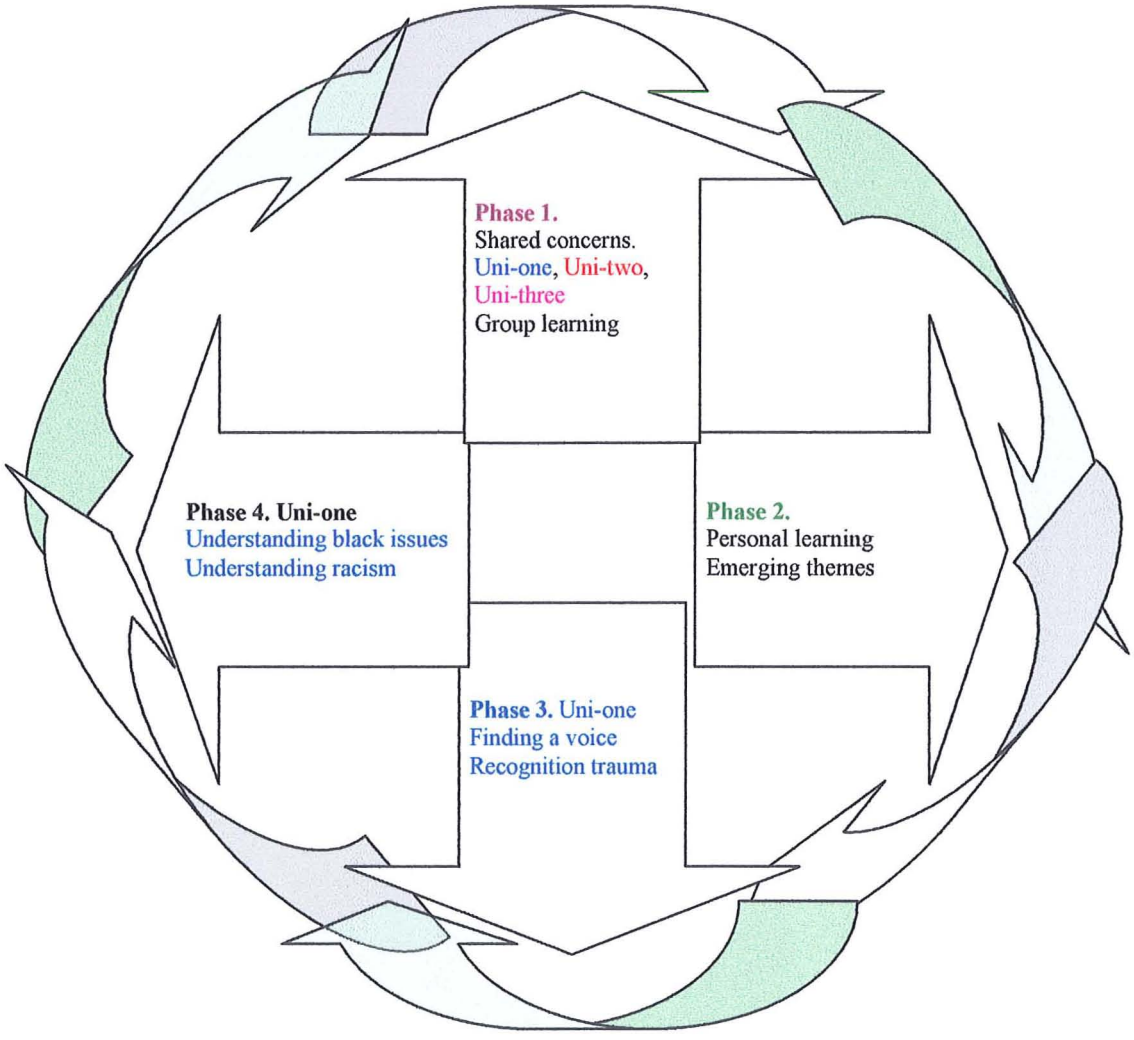
6.3 Summary of Findings, Critique and Recommendations.

The title of this section is drawn from the work of another African Caribbean artist, Makemba Kunle. I pay homage to the black men who have encouraged my work by sharing their support and creativity. Makemba used this title for one of his paintings that represents transformation and the emancipation process. This section summarises the findings of the study and presents recommendations for transforming the future. A new beginning. The rest is in our hands. See F9 & F10 for summaries of the heuristic process and cycle of change.

F9 Cycle of heuristic process



F10 Cycle of change



Summary of findings

1.	Interviews with experienced practitioners_____Black issues a missing element.
2.	Participants' shared concerns____How to understand and work with black issues.
3.	Emerging themes_____History, guilt, trust, racism.
4.	Emerging concepts_____Shared concerns. Finding a Voice. Recognition trauma.
5.	Other inferences_____Impact of workshops and black trainer on training programme.
6.	Colleagues_____Similar level of understanding to trainees.
7.	Impact on areas of training_____Less support on placement than other areas.
8.	Narrative discussions _____Produced more comprehensive data.
9.	Most poignant theme_____Concerns about racism.
10.	Lack of opportunity_____To discuss other black issues.
11.	General impact_____Challenges the silence of institutional racism, supports equality and race issues by making them explicit. Creates space for dialogue on black issues.

I have presented a summary of the study phases, the cycle of change and the outcome of the study. Below I will present a brief evaluation of the study.

Critique

What went well?

- Modelling the process of black issues within counsellor training.
- Studying the impact and meaning of black issues for trainees.
- Activating and making explicit what has been written in transcultural literature as a component of counsellor training.
- The development of a combined qualitative and multicultural, approach.
- The use of a variety of methods to gather data.

- The emergence of several concepts and training ideas that can be applied in the wider field.
- Contributing to and drawing from the wider field at every stage i.e. conferences and publications.
- The use of art and creativity to integrate the theme of black issues into workshops.
- The use of workshops as a means of discovery and empowerment for all concerned.
- It appears that trainees have been able to further enhance their understanding of black issues and implement this understanding into their lives and their counselling practice.
- Black trainees challenged the role of the black expert to make space for their own training needs to be met.
- White trainees expressed their fears and concerns about discussing racism.
- Elevating the impact of racism as an institutional concern.
- Developing compassion to enhance my listening to the powerful emotions of oppression.

What could have been done differently?

- Time to extract data could have been increased to allow more discussion within training groups.
- A more objective arrangement, using training courses that I was not previously involved with.
- A firmer agreement with colleagues to encourage more efficient use of time and support and reporting back on data.
- A series of preparation meetings with collaborators to support the role of black expert and lesson the burden.
- Allocating time to the different needs of black and white students and other minority individuals who wish to share their experiences and concerns about racism.
- More attention could have been given to power and safety issues.
- Try a less complex methodology for such a complex and challenging theme.

- Simplify method of organising and analysing data.
- A more limited project for 120 credits.
- Analyse data more rigorously and put to better use.
- More efficient and stable support from consultants and advisors in the early stages.

Next I will present some important points that may be considered for the inclusion of black issues in future training.

Recommendations

1. Psychotherapy and counsellor training should include a black issues and equalities module early in the curriculum. Within the module black issues should be made explicit in addition to the issues of other minority groups.

2. Creative methods for learning such as the use of art, music and movement, storytelling, poetry and folklore can be used to develop exploration. Space should be created for trainees to explore concerns.

3. Black issues module should include an exploration of historical context, guilt, trust and issues of racism. This can be extended or adapted for use with other minority issues.

4. Opportunities to explore internalised racism and whiteness should be provided in the context of the black/black dyad and white/white dyad. Acknowledgement of 'recognition trauma' should be made using multicultural and transcultural theory. I.e. Tuckwell, (2002), Dalal, (2002) Helms, (1990).

5. Acknowledgement that black issues is not just about racism or race issues should be made to provide opportunity for the wider context of black issues to be explored.

6. Addressing black issues and racism as equalities must be included and supportively encouraged as a competency throughout training.

7. Training organisations should provide greater opportunities for people of colour to become trainers and facilitators and include their skills and experiences.

8. Parallels between the process of exploring black issues and the client/ counsellor relationship should be made explicit.

9. Exploration and support for black issues and minority issues should be embedded in all areas of counsellor training, including placements.

Topics for future researchse

The study has opened a 'can of worms' which can be fed by the topics suggested below. The list is in-exhaustive.

a. Understanding racism in the therapeutic process.

b. The presence of recognition trauma.

c. The influence of a majority culture of women on training courses.

d. White male concerns.

e. Black male presence or absence.

f. The needs of Africans and Asians.

g. Models of theory in the context of black issues.

h. Links between workshop experience of black issues and other aspects of training such as Supervision and placements.

i. Can eurocentric, westernised approaches contribute to black affirmative therapy?

j. Can different levels of contact by a black tutor or different levels of input on black issues and different levels of training, i.e. 1st year, 2nd year, impact levels of response to black issues?

k. Data influenced by the impact of personal racism on individuals and the silencing nature of institutional racism.

l. Personal and cultural background, differences and similarities within the training groups that impact on their responses to black issues.

The Future

The future appears to be challenging with respect to the inclusion of black issues, however the study has demonstrated that it is possible to integrate black issues into counsellor training.

Taking up the above recommendations may be a big challenge to Higher Education and mainstream counsellor training courses. It may appear to be disruptive to current models and the ethos of established training courses. I see this disruption as a necessary occurrence in the emancipation process. It is the process of breaking down that assists us to break through to new ways of being. It is a necessary development in meeting the requirements of race and equality in higher education and the future of psychotherapy and counsellor training.

There is no easy way to make these changes because we are talking about deconstructing institutional racism and creating new models within the caring professions. We are challenged to actively and explicitly include what has been missing and make ourselves and counsellor training accountable for this action.

We will find, as we make ourselves vulnerable and accessible to these changes that they will contribute to an innovative, integrative and rewarding development in the field of transcultural care and support. Ultimately this will provide for a broader group of clients, both black and white, from a range of diverse backgrounds.

Higher Education Institutes are adopting and actively trying to engage in equalities policies. They are subject to quality assurance audits and training course re-validation. I wonder if the inclusion of black issues can be taken as a quality measure or a means of updating courses. Having said this it is encouraging that there are individuals developing knowledge about black issues who can make consultancy, facilitation and support available to training teams wishing to carry out these recommendations. The question is can their skills be put to use?

As a primary product of this Doctoral study, I have provided a booklet (Appendix 16), that may be used as a support for training teams who want to be involved in implementing some of these changes. I am willing to provide facilitation or supervision to support individuals and groups to implement them.

Conclusion

The purpose of this document was to present a process report of 'a study of black issues in Counsellor training'. I set out to address black issues in the context of history, using a flexible means of action research which combined and adapted a qualitative approach and multicultural research theory. To support this I used knowledge drawn from transcultural literature, and authors from the US, Europe and Britain whose work addresses the theme.

As pointed out my approach was modified to allow for the pace of the study group. This observation brought forth the question and process of how understanding of black issues came about.

The methodology chosen to approach this question was multi-dimensional to allow for the sharing of concerns and emotions of the theme to be explored as a process of emancipation. The document demonstrates the use of level five descriptors such as prior knowledge, research techniques, literature, personal experience, the expert practitioner role, and the use of writing and publication skills. I have described the process of the study, its outcome and impact on the wider field.

I have followed through an 'emic' approach proposed in transcultural theory. This was linked to the process of understanding and trainees' expressed concerns and needs. I have detailed and reflected on the ethical concerns within my approach and the complexities of a mixed methodology, mixed student group and the role of the black expert as a lone black tutor. I have shown consideration for trainees' confidentiality and confidence. This has been presented in the method of interviewing experienced practitioners and in facilitating trainees, which culminated in a space for their voices to be heard. I have inter-weaved the knowledge and experience that I have gained from specialist seminars. I have presented insights gained that supported the application and presentation of the methodology. In addition the specialist seminars have presented opportunities to voice my concerns

and experience the challenge and response to black issues with other professionals in the field.

I have presented themes and concepts that emerged from the process of data collection and participants' narratives. For example 'shared concerns', 'finding a voice' and 'recognition trauma'. Development of the study and its impact on the training has been gathered as secondary data in the form of questionnaires. I have described ways in which I have remained aware of and attempted to counteract eurocentricism and epistemological racism. However these efforts have been limited by the strength of eurocentric influence, the constraints of my established role as tutor and lack of direction in multicultural research theory.

The dual engagement of tutor researcher and its outcome has been presented, giving examples of participants' narratives. Validity has been supported in a separate chapter, followed by a summary of the products of the study and information on the transformative aspects of the study. An important outcome of this study is my attempts to avoid epistemological racism and power by not using one set methodological approach to interpret or lead the study. I hope this approach can act as a model for challenging eurocentricsm, institutional racism and supporting a transformative period for psychotherapy and counselling.

I have modelled my creative skills in both the workshop process and the process report. The theme of black issues has been re-presented in my reflexive process and personal development. I have demonstrated an ability to bring together research and practice and move training on to a place of action and application through understanding. I have shown how action research and multicultural and transcultural theory and concepts have supported the study. I have described the opening of a dialogue which includes the voices of trainees and their needs in understanding black issues. My wish is that black issues may not be solely contextualised in racism and its dynamics, but viewed as an inclusive dynamic that provides space for the stories and experiences of black peoples and those supporting them.

It is clear that the process of dialogue about racism is experienced as a dominant feature in this study and in the exploration of black issues. This concern was expressed by both trainers and trainees during the evaluation process; therefore I want to emphasize the importance of providing 'a space to contemplate' these concerns and for both trainers and trainees to find a voice.

The question remains, **how do trainee counsellors in Britain, (from any background) understand their concerns about black issues raised by or about themselves during training or about clients during the therapeutic process?**

What are the modes through which understanding of black issues comes about in counsellor training? Does the understanding of black issues arise from opening dialogue and the creation of a space to contemplate, or through the concerns and emerging themes that are part of the process? Does it arise from a combination of both and where will counsellor training courses find a place for this component, that arises from trainees' concerns?

This document has presented a study which shows that understanding black issues comes about through being explicit and including black issues in training. This requires an open dialogue to enable sharing of concerns. In addition trainees can be facilitated to voice their experiences and the impact of racism linked to the emerging themes of guilt, trust and the impact of history. Ultimately a space for both black and white counsellors to explore their personal and cultural experiences and their awareness of oppressions should be provided.

Finally I have presented several proposals for this work to continue to influence the field of psychotherapy and counsellor training. These proposals will be supported by a post Doctoral book. I hope that this document will find its place as a contribution to the eradication of institutional racism and the development of equalities in psychotherapy and counsellor training and practice. I also hope that those who have

journeyed with me through this document find it as innovative and stimulating as the study itself.

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As Marx and Engels long observed, art is a form of social consciousness-a special form of social consciousness that can potentially awaken an urge to creatively transform their oppressive environments. Art can function as a sensitizer and a catalyst. Propelling people towards involvement in organized movements seeking to effect radical change. Art is special because of it's ability to influence feelings as well as knowledge. Christopher Cauldwell, the British Communist who wrote extensively on aesthetics, once defined the function of art as the socializing of the human instincts and the educating of human emotions.

Progressive art can assist people to learn not only about the objective forces at work in the society in which they live, but also about the intensely social character of their interior lives. Ultimately it can propel people toward social emancipation.

Because the history of Afro-American culture reveals strong bonds between art and the struggle for black liberation, it holds important lessons for those who are interested in strengthening the bridges between art and people's movements today.

(Women Culture and Politics, The Women's Press P199 - 201)

A Study of Black Issues in Counsellor Training 2002 - 2005

APPENDICES

Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga

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Module No DPS 5121

Credits 120

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Appendix 1,1a

Appendix 1. Specialist seminars attended:

- Narrative Method Research-Kim Etherington 12.11.01
- Research for Practitioners-Glenys Parry 19.4.02
- Poetic Writing as Search and Research Millar Mair & David Heart 25.10.02
- Effective Multi-cultural Systems-Valerie Batts 12.7.02
- From Transmissional to Transformational Learning. Michael Carroll 31.1.03
- Illusion and Disillusion Writing Michael Jacobs 1.5 03
- A new Future for Psychological Therapies? Marvin Goldfried 24.10.03
- Trauma and Attachment Jill Straker 15.3.04.

A Study of Black Issues in Counsellor Training. ***Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga***

Appendix 1a, Extended literature search.

Universities and education systems in the US and Britain have been challenged for decades about the importance of 'equality of opportunity': in particular the underachievement of black students. In Britain this problem mainly focussed on schools, due to concerns about the underachievement and exclusion of black children in the education system.

Both in the US and Britain, black civil rights leaders challenged education by supporting the inclusion and positive use of the term 'black' evolving from the shared experiences of people of colour. Postcolonial renaissance and the emergence of Black Power in the 60s helped to highlight the way negative terminology had previously been used to identify 'black' people and mis-educate society about our communities. Mis-education was linked to lack of interest in our greatness. For example, African American female leaders such as Angela Davis spoke out about the exclusion of black women's experiences from feminist politics. Feminist politics played a significant role in developing the field of psychotherapy, yet these challenges about the black voice were not fully taken on board.

'In international forums, women from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean were challenging the domination of the scene by white women. Challenging such domination as imperialistic, and articulating their own concerns in no uncertain terms' (Mama 1995 p.12).

I ask myself why is the above statement important. In contextualising the situation of women and feminism, there is a parallel with the way that women outnumber men in the counselling profession. Challenges to heterosexism have been carried out through women finding their voice. In a similar vein, I believe the position of women in patriarchal society to be an additional facet of the apparent tardiness in challenging the institutional racism that constrains shifts in the development of counsellor training. As mentioned before I have called the phenomenon that speaks radically to the missing bits, and expresses them, 'the principle of shared concerns' so what does this mean for my research project. The discovered voice speaking for the missing bits forms the basis of my approach to this project. I have considered the historical and sociological links that inform where we are in the development of black affirmative training. It is a slow and laborious process, because we are where we are and we are still dominated by Eurocentricism and inactivity towards these matters in counsellor training and higher education.

As mentioned in my introduction, recent studies investigating the situation of black people in Britain have become more direct in influencing legislation and policy about changes needed in higher education. However reports suggest that in-between 1984 and 1992 there has been little change in the racism, economic and educational injustice that black people experience. (Howitt & Owusu-Bempa 1994 p.162, 16.3)

"It was reported that in 1992 there were 7,780 racial assaults, including 9 known racially motivated murders. Worse still, it is believed that the true figures for racial violence exceed ten times those reported by the police.(Runnymede Trust,1993 p.164)"

This raises the question of how counsellor-training courses prepare future counsellors to respond and support individuals impacted by these situations. These kinds of figures show that equalities issues need to be much more than a paper exercise and that race equality in particular must become more than just a concern for those involved in systems of higher education. It must be addressed purposefully and with intention. The reconciliation ceremonies in South Africa demonstrate that healing from racism can be affected by the provision of a cathartic space to share. Whilst racism and oppression are key elements of black issues, I am concerned that discussions about racism do not overwhelm therapeutic attention to personal histories and the developmental experiences of black peoples which have hardly been explored in counsellor training. In psychotherapy terms this may be viewed as a sort of collective transference.[1] Therefore it may be difficult to

[1] Transference: '*The process by which a patient displaces onto his analyst feelings, ideas etc; which derive from previous figures in his life'*. (Rycroft, 1968. p.168)

avoid being drawn into a counter transference [2]of acting in response to a counter-transference within the context of racism rather than being with a situation of black issues. Perhaps this is one of my personal concerns as a therapist. I am taking the time to explain this because in my experience of training groups, it is often the case that inadvertently the impact of colonialism and racism are given more power when 'black' is mentioned. Hence my reasoning for a broader context of black issues that transcends Multiculturalism.

In consideration of multiculturalism, significant developments in gatekeeper organisations such as The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy show that the field of Psychotherapy and counselling is moving towards more holistic approaches to diversity in practice. The BACP recently held its 10th Annual Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Conference, an International conference on the theme of 'Research and Diversity' I was fortunate to present a paper on this study and participate in discussions about US and UK ethical requirements in relation to culture and oppression. This shows that the wider field is liberating itself from the past rigidities of Eurocentric dominance.

On the theme of liberation and healing, I produced an MA study (Mckenzie-Mavinga, 1997. Level 5 descriptor) The study explored the poetry of black women to find out whether there might be a cathartic process in the way that common experiences were shared. The study concluded that. The subtext of many of these poems was viewed as containing an abreaction where confusion and grief have remained a silent coping mechanism.

'The text that in many cases expresses a 'plea for deliverance from restriction' (p57) becomes the carrier of a life of unexpressed experience. The expression of grief and trauma through repetition of vocabulary may signify a cathartic process'.

Poetry appeared to be a liberating force for the women involved, and the study was a liberating experience for me: Firstly, because I was able to bring together my love of poetry with my passion for transcultural therapy: Secondly because I researched the shared experiences and also shared the researched experiences of other black women. I shared their modes of expression and identifying with some of their metaphors for identity, loss and liberation. The context of shared concerns and emancipation from silence in this former research has become part of the framework for this study. (Level 5 descriptor)

Writers such as hooks share similar concerns about shared experiences of oppression. Her writing is informed by the work of liberationists such as Freire, Malcolm X and Fanon. hooks (1994 p.39) was not far from the truth when she claimed that:

"The unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes race, sex, and class is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained"

Hooks surveyed colleagues as reluctant participants, when they tried to respect cultural diversity. She found that they had to face limitations in their training and knowledge and possible loss of authority. The mixed emotions and threat to 'safety' often created confusion in the classroom. She experienced their responses as 'panicky' rather than welcoming to a new melting pot of experience. It was useful to use hooks writing as a model, because I resonate with the discomfort, avoidance, and threat of change, that my colleagues and some trainees have expressed when faced with black issues input to their training courses. In a collective sense, this type of response can contribute to institutional racism. As a result of her experience hooks developed her approach to teaching by acknowledging her awareness of the pain that these 'shifting paradigms' cause, challenging her need for immediate gratification and developing compassion. It is clear from her experience that she developed a greater capacity to understand the dynamics of focussing on diversity and black issues. This in turn created a model for her colleagues, their participants and their systems of training. In chapter 3

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[2] In Psychotherapy, *'the formation of a transference relationship thus facilitates the overcoming of resistances to the recall of painful experiences from the past'.* (Gregory,1987.p781)

which explains the process of this study, it becomes clear that hooks ability to develop compassion in her work presents a supportive model for me in the challenges of this study.

On the topic of challenge, I agree with Reason (ed. 1994 p.13) when he says that

I believe that Most of us in the West have little idea how separated and defended our civilisation and our consciousness actually is. At the very worst, this separation continues to express the European imperialist and genocidal adventure of colonising the rest of the planet, a colonisation which has oppressed other peoples and the planet itself. A participatory worldview would be pluralist, honouring the teachings of different traditions, and finding ways of learning from indigenous perspectives on learning and enquiry.

Paying attention to a pluralistic approach in this sense means that research needs to be shaped by and connected to the individuals, groups or community being studied. The community involved in this study include a good proportion of black trainees. (I shall refer to the study population as trainees.) Consideration of a pluralistic approach supported my decision to include myself and tailor my approach to the training community, rather than just extract data from observations and theorise. This approach enabled a space for 'transformative dialogue'. The transformation process of the training curriculum and the development of participant's understanding of black issues in practice have been key elements of my praxis in this study.

In their chapter on research, Lago and Thompson (1982) reiterate that models which deal explicitly with race and ethnicity are mostly carried out in the US. Two decades later in Britain, attempts are being made to address the dilemmas of practice and training within the context of race issues and cultural experience. Much contemporary literature appears to focus on ways of understanding a theoretical and contextual process of racism in therapeutic work. Lago and Thompson proposed some questions that might be raised by the case vignettes that they presented. The questions were born out of the writer's praxis and did not carry this process any further in a context that may support readers to understand how to apply their knowledge. My methodology was intended to extend this process and explore the needs of trainee counsellors in relation to some of these issues, by finding out their concerns and providing space within their training to address them.

Kareem and Littlewood (1992) focus mainly on concerns about racism and mental health and use case study exercises to outline the transferential process of counsellor/client relating to black issues. They highlight the therapist's issues with regard to racism and explain the process of this in the psychodynamic relationship. The problem with this approach is that too much focus on racism can distract attention from the wider context of black issues. For example, the developmental process of an African heritage person, or black family relationships. I have chosen to approach this study taking for granted that 'racism' as Kareem suggests, 'exists in the ego'[3] and may present as a culture within cultures, therefore it is only one aspect of black issues and may attract more attention to the therapist than the client. I had hoped that black issues might be discussed more broadly than within what might be construed as the negative transference of racism. Here it may be helpful to consider another kind of transference. I shall call this transference a reparative transference. I believe that a reparative transference can be achieved through the ability of the therapist and client to work through any negative transference of racism. (Kareem 1992 p.23) supports this approach,

"From the point of view of the intercultural therapist, I believe that it is the responsibility of the therapist, from the very outset, to facilitate the expression of any negative transference which is based on a historical context, and not leave the onus on the patient".

Franz Fanon an African Psychiatrist of the sixties explicitly challenges the negative transference of racism, yet his work has been marginalized, as though an unheard voice. In 'Black Skin, White Masks, he addressed the outcome of the isolation of the black man and the issue of attention to the 'being' of the black man.

[3] A given society is either racist or it is not. But once racist, none of its members-most of all its representatives-remain unaffected. Indeed every citizen of a racist society is responsible for the crimes committed in the name of his nation (Fanon 1967 p.85, in Howitt & Owusu-Bempah 1994 p.16)

(1986) It is this element of 'being' that I had hoped this study would address. At the same time I expected some exploration of behaviours and attitudes that may prevent this 'being' being explored. I believe that if Fanon's work had been fully embraced in psychotherapy and counsellor training, an earlier shift in learning about black issues in training institutions would have taken place. Fanon's work was mainly deemed to be sociological. It was the black power leaders of the sixties who recognised the importance of Fanon's contributions to the personal political and psychological development of Africans and Europeans. Fanon's work is now being revived in the context of race and psychotherapy.

For example Dalal, (2002) explores psychoanalytical theory in the context of 'Race Colour and the process of Racialization'. He views racialization as a process of discovery through identifying with the terms 'black' and 'white'. I have used these terms in describing participants in this study. Previously I have felt shut down and confined to refer to Fanons work in my own black circles. Now writers such as Dalal have opened doors for my own voice to be heard. Being able to share this dilemma and reflect on it I am compelled to remember that by being shut down I too have conformed to my assigned role as a tutor representing ideas and concepts that get trainees through the curriculum, but not furthering their understanding of black issues in ways that they can utilise in their practice.

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Appendix 2,2a

Appendix 2 **Participant response to Black Issues Workshops 2002/03**

Your status as a practitioner	**Trainee L1 [ ] Yr 1[ ]**	**Trainee L2 [ ] Yr2[ ]**		
Your Ethnic/Cultural background	**Black** Asian/ African/Caribbean British/European/US/ person of colour Mixed heritage	**White**/British/ European/US Mixedheritage/ other	Other	
Gender	**Male**	**Female**	Other	

Tick the column that applies most to you.	Yes	Maybe A little	Not sure Not much	No
Before the workshops				
1. I was aware of the importance of learning about black issues				
2. I was confident addressing black issues in counselling relationships or when using counselling skills.				
3. I was confident exploring black issues in personal therapy. (If applicable)				
4. I was confident exploring black issues in personal development forums.				
5. I was confident exploring black issues in my supervision. (if applicable)				
6. I wanted to learn more about exploring black issues in counselling relationships.				

P2. **After the workshops**				
Tick the column that applies most to you.	Yes	Maybe A little	Not sure Not much	No
1. I am more aware of the importance of learning about black issues				
2. I am confident exploring black issues in counselling relationships and when using counselling skills.				
3. I am confident exploring black issues in personal therapy. (If applicable)				
4. I am confident exploring black issues in personal development forums.				
5.I am confident exploring black issues in supervision.				
6. I have learned more about exploring black issues in counselling relationships.				
7. In the first workshop you presented a question about black issues in the process of counselling. As a result of further workshops, do you have more information that can help you answer this question?				

Please use this space to make any further comments about the black issues workshops and to tell us about your further learning needs on black issues.I.MM/03

Appendix 2a: Y2 Black Issues Evaluation Questionnaire & evaluation Unione. T3 (November 2003)

This paper is confidential **please tick boxes indicated [ ]**

1. Please say how the workshops have assisted your understanding of black issues?

2.Have the workshops assisted you to understand the impact of difference and similarities in the therapeutic relationship:

a. between black people? Yes [ ] No [ ]
b. Between white people? Yes [ ] No [ ]
c. Between black and white people? Yes [ ] No [ ]

3. How have the workshops assisted your awareness of cultural experiences?

4. What was helpful? I.e. Workshop exercises [ ] Theory, [ ] Literature [ ] Facilitation style [ ] black tutor input [ ] white tutor input [ ] Other (please explain)

5. What was unhelpful?

6. Are you able to use your understanding of black issues in your client work?
Yes [ ] No [ ] sometimes [ ]

7. How is your understanding of black issues received in relationships at your placement? Supportive [ ] Accepted [ ]
Discouraged [ ] Dismissed [ ]
Other (please explain)

Can you say how black issues are considered generally on your placement?

P2 student evaluation Black Issues

8. How is your understanding of black issues supported and developed in your clinical supervision?

a) On the training
b) On your placement

9. Have the workshops contributed to your understanding of the impact of racism and oppression on counselling relationships? Yes [ ] No [ ]

10. What do you see as your next step in developing your understanding of black issues in client work?

11. What safety/support issues are important for your exploration and learning about black issues in training and client work?

12. To what extent do you feel that you can be explicit about black issues in your case study assignment (where appropriate)?

13. What additional support do you need to assist your understanding of black issues in the therapeutic process ?

14. What would you like to see in a booklet of training ideas on the type of facilitation that may help students understand black issues.

P3. Student evaluation black issues

Further requests for evaluation. Black Issues workshops
Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga Nov 03

For the purpose of research, can we approach you for permission to use a small extract about black issues from 1) your journal Yes [ ] No [ ] 2) your practise log. Yes [ ] No [ ] (This information will be used to evidence the impact of black issues work on students personal and clinical development. You will not be named)

If yes please complete this slip and hand it to the tutor.

Name.
.....

Can you be available to give verbal feedback on the impact of the black issues workshops.

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes please complete the slip below as giving your consent to be included in a taped feedback session and return to the tutor.

Name.

I will be able to attend a recorded verbal evaluation on black issues workshops on Thursday 11th December Yes [ ] No [ ]

I have been informed about anonymity at the evaluation meeting and I understand that I will not be named in any transcription of the recording.

Signature

Appendix 3

Ethical Considerations

I initially engaged an ethical committee. I invited a colleague from Uni-one, a colleague from Uni-two and a colleague completely separate from my work with the training courses, but involved with diversity issues and BACP concerns. I was also thinking more methodologically and I asked them to give me reflective feedback on some issues of non-maleficence, which might help me cope with defensiveness, silences and the impact that participant responses might have on me.

It was my aim to collect data in a non-biased way and with informed consent.
I was attempting to approach this from the position of my dual role of Tutor/researcher. I was aware that this duality may, particularly affect trainees who might be concerned that their work may be assessed differently according to how they respond. My manager at Uni-one had expressed commitment to integrating black issues into the programme as a means of supporting the study. Below I will present the ethical considerations that were taken into account.

1. Intention.
It was my intention to address some of these concerns in a letter to trainees that would accompany any questionnaires or verbal evaluation sessions. I briefed interviewees and trainees on issues of confidentiality and consent verbally before accepting their contributions.

2. Confidentiality and informed consent.
Every individual was offered the opportunity to remain anonymous. Interviewees were given an opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms. Strict confidentiality was maintained.

a. To ensure anonymity and permission for use of transcripts in publications, written consent was requested for those involved in recorded evaluations.

b. Completion of questionnaires and handing in written material such as journals was taken as informed consent to participate in the study as anonymous contributors.

c. I was aware that participants may be concerned about being recognised in documented representation of the research, or in the case of trainees known to me, that their academic work may be judged differently due to comments they make in the black issues workshops.

3. Non-maleficence (Commitment to avoiding harm)
I wanted to be mindful of the power dynamics involved in research relationships and also in the relationships between tutors and trainees. I needed to be aware not to attempt to influence participants with my knowledge and prior experience. It was my intention to supportively facilitate student's varying levels of black issues awareness. The recognition that trainees were not quite ready for my approach and the need to change the focus of the study came out of this awareness.

4. **Autonomy**
Participation in data collection was voluntary, and trainees were given an opportunity to opt out, or refuse to answer questions, without risk of repercussion in course assessment process or bias to their relationship with the training programme. (See 2c, above)

5. Benefice (Commitment to the clients well being)

Trainee/participants were expected to consider their learning in view of their understanding of course requirements to become competent counsellors, understanding, practising and supporting counsellor/client relationships for the benefit of the client. (In accordance with the BACP code of ethics). (BACP,1.4.2002)

6. Justice
Trainees/participants were offered opportunities to integrate their learning into the theoretical and philosophical aspects of the training and practice seminars. They were also encouraged to develop their Wisdom, knowledge and self-awareness of the phenomenon of black issues as it links to their own life experience, cultural experience and oppressions.

7. Self Respect
Trainees/participants were offered opportunities to process and exchange support about their learning and self development that arose from their experiences of the phenomenon of black issues. They were also expected to address personal issues that arise from this work, in their therapy and personal development forums, including clinical supervision.

Research feedback, confidentiality and publication agreement. 1.4.04.

I understand that the purpose of this discussion is to review and feedback on the impact of integrating black issues into workshops and into course work with student practitioners and their clients.

The discussions are confidential and individual's names will not be published.
Information gathered during discussions will be used for development and a research report written by Ms Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga for the purpose of her doctorial project.

I the undersigned agree to participate in the review and feedback of the above project

I agree to my voice being recorded during this feedback discussion. 10.6.04

I give my consent to the information that I share being used for the purpose of Counselling course develop and Doctorial research report.

Please tick the box if you would like a transcript to be send to you.

Name: [ ]

Signature

Name [ ]

Signature

Name [ ]

Signature

Name [ ]

Signature

Evaluation of black issues project. 03/04 Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga

Dear student
First I want to thank you for contributing to the black issues research project, and being open to this element of your studies.
I am aware that for some of you this aspect of your training has been quite challenging and also informative. I hope that the journey we have travelled over these two years has inspired and supported your personal and professional development as a counsellor.

As the project draws to a close, in addition to offering extracts of your journal and one final opportunity to give verbal feedback on the 10th June, I would like to invite you to contribute some written information. Care has been taken not to impose on your course time for evaluation. So again this would be purely on a voluntary basis. The research process has been a reflective process, which provides opportunity for you to voice your feedback and in turn receive a transcript and course developments that support your learning needs.

Details of publications about the research can be found on page 3.
Thank you once again for your contribution.
Yours sincerely
.....

If you could find about 30 minutes of your busy schedule and you feel able to respond, can you please answer the following questions as briefly as possible.

To assist your reflection on the process, below are some of themes that have emerged from your feedback sessions.

Emerging themes

Black counsellors-addressing black issues with white clients, the impact of eurocentric theory, feeling inadequate, fear of rejection by white clients.

White counsellors-being effective with black clients, concerns about the impact of racism, ability to empathise with oppression.

Political- Racism, internalised racism, prejudice, links to other cultural concerns.

Theoretical –Difficult to put into theory, transference issues.

Self-reflective Discomfort, defensiveness, Acceptance-Safety to address concerns, need open discussions.

About clients –How do I empathise? Competency-effectiveness with black clients/black issues, more practice

Questions: **Evaluation of black issue project. 03/04 Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga**

Ethical concerns.:

Were you given enough information about the research project? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Were you given enough choice to contribute to the feedback or opt out? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Was confidentiality and anonymity of your feedback maintained Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do want to say anything else about this part of the research project?

Impact of workshops:

Did you find the questionnaires easy to use? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Did the questionnaires assist your learning? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please say how?

Did you find the verbal feedback sessions useful? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Did they assist your learning? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please say why?

Do you want to tell us anything about staff conduct in facilitating and teaching the theme of black issues?

Can you tell us anything about your experience of power issues between the researcher as a course tutor and yourself?

Finding a voice

Please tell us your experience of the mirroring process during the training course which:

a) offered transcriptions of recorded feedback sessions.

b) verbal and written feedback from tutors on assignments and during theory & practice sessions?

Are there other comments that you would like to make about the research process?

Appendix 4

Interviews with experienced Practitioners.

Paulette: White Jewish female Counsellor:

Trained in Person Centred Counselling 1978: Now working in private practice and Counsellor training as an external moderator.

How appropriate and when is it appropriate to ask questions related to race and ethnicity? People were not aware of black issues or areas like disability at the time I trained. There was not much inclusion in those days. There were no black students and the issues addressed, due to the make-up of the group, were class and sexuality. I think people were less conscious. When I worked as a trainer, the course aimed to be inclusive, but it was hard to deal with issues of racism in a way that was not divisive. There was ill feeling and groups got polarised. It felt dangerous and difficult at times. My later experience of having a black colleague helped me to see that racist attitudes can cling to us from early conditioning in a society that has not yet learnt to be inclusive and so have a lot of those racist ideas. I realised that this could be true even for me as a Jew who had fought racism from my earliest days. I attended a white awareness group that was very valuable and where I learned that with compassion it is possible to explore the hurts, which lie behind racist feelings. I have been able to use what I learned, especially with white people, dealing with their own racism. I put attention on their own heritage being accepted and heard was important to me. I became more open to exploring the effects of racism with black trainees and clients, but I am still timid about explicitly addressing these issues.

Paulette's pertinent question seems to reflect her wish to understand how and when to use her voice in addressing black issues in the therapeutic setting. I have heard this question asked many times during training and supervision sessions. Listening to her questioning voice makes me wonder if there has been a time lag in the development of counsellor training. Current transcultural and multicultural literature and concepts used as theoretical frameworks in most mainstream training has focused on transcultural and intercultural therapeutic relationships, and more recently on race, racialisation and racism in therapeutic work. Whilst in many situations this has provided an important development in counselling and psychotherapy training, trainees need for support to feel confident about addressing black issues may have been neglected. The wider developmental experiences of black peoples and awareness of how white people relate to these experiences using their own cultural reference points, appear to need further understanding and exploration. Literature produced during the last decade has been useful in presenting examination of case material on counsellor and client responses to black issues. The literature focuses mainly on race issues in philosophical reflective ways, or describes this process in the psychotherapy.

However, readers do not get much in the way of ideas and challenge to integrate their understanding of black issues into the development of their practice. I believe that using a transcultural approach to assist reflection on the process of relating to black issues in this project may be useful.

D'Ardenne and Mahtani, (1989), in their important documentation of transcultural counselling, emphasise 'the active and reciprocal process' involved with their approach, as opposed to 'inter cultural or cross cultural' approaches. They suggest that 'counsellors in the transcultural setting are responsible for working across, through and beyond their cultural difference'. I have found this approach useful in my own understanding of black issues. Within the context of transcultural counselling the writers use a variety of client situations to explore how cultural issues can be worked with in the therapeutic relationship. In the section on attitudes and expectations, they state that counsellors are no different from others in not wishing to acknowledge their own racism or cultural prejudices. They also suggest that white counsellors may be less culturally skilled than their clients due to their different learning experience of coping with a hostile and alien environment. This helps to explain the 'dangerous and difficult' times expressed by Paulette. It may also throw some light on the insecurities that seems to arise between trainees during this process. D'ardenne and Mahtani reinforce the importance of personal choice,

'You can choose to increase your experiences, develop your skills. You can choose to use personal and institutional resources, choose to change your attitudes and expectations. You can examine your status with clients, and you can choose to help increase your colleagues knowledge of cultural and transcultural matters'.

Paulette's knowledge was increased by the challenges of a black colleague, she says she is 'more open', but she remains 'timid' in addressing the issues. These choices reflect the context in which my quest for shared concerns and further understanding of black issues rests. The apparent gap between knowledge and attending to black issues is a shared concern.

Ragina: Indian Hindu Female:
Trained in Person Centred counselling in 1992. Now working as an Integrative Counselling course co-ordinator.

I don't feel that I learned a lot of theory regarding black issues when I was training. It was a self-directed course. I felt that there was no didactic
teaching of any theories to address the issue of diversity and difference in counselling. We did not actually look at whether any of the prevailing theoretical approaches lend themselves to working with people from a non-European culture. I was aware that our training was not readily
applicable to people from my culture and therefore, my work with Asian people would have to be carefully considered keeping the appropriate values in focus. We did some workshops and I was part of a group that decided to work on equal opportunities. Then we had a black support group, which was very helpful. We took our insights back to the main group. Our training group started at about 60 and dwindled down to 34. About a 3rd of trainees were from minority groups. I don't remember any didactic teaching as such. I was chair of a race committee in Greenwich and I had done some work at Greenwich MIND and I also went to NAFSIYAT to inform myself about these issues in terms of our training that was mainly Eurocentric. My training is different from my culture; I wanted to know how to adapt it. I found my self mainly working cross culturally. I was researching mental health needs of Asian women in Greenwich. I realised that there were not many counsellors of Asian heritage. This meant that Asian women who went to get help from mental health services were given drug treatment. The interviews were heavily biased because if they did not speak English, they were not offered professional interpreters; they were using members of the family like the husband or the children. I met Jaffer Kareem at NAFSIYAT and I met Phillip Rack and Maurice Lipsedge. I had to do a lot of work on my self outside of the course, as it wasn't really available. My tutors were trying to create an awareness of the Person Centred Approach; they were willing, but not aware of culture.

In the above interviews, Ragina shares that the black participants on her training programme have mainly supported her experiences of working with black issues.
Jafar Kareem draws on an important parallel to this dilemma. In his discussion on racism in therapy and societal transference he say

Most psychotherapists who are analytically trained learn to work with and understand the patient's inner world, and therefore for some there is resistance in dealing with psychological problems that originate in the real (outer) world. However, most black people would admit that the, most traumatic feature in their personal lives is to be black in a white society'. (Kareem & Littlewood, p.12) He goes on to say that *'from the point of view of the intercultural therapist, I believe that it is the responsibility of the therapist, from the very outset, to facilitate the expression of any negative transference which is based on historical context, and not leave the onus on the patient.*

I wonder if this principle can be applied to not leaving the onus on the black students, as in Ragina's experience. The black student bearing the role of educator on training courses may be forced to experience 'continuous trauma' (Straker 2004) of their often-disempowered position in a white dominated society.

Recent discussions on trauma and attachment with Jill Straker at a specialist seminar were extremely useful in assisting my understanding of how the 'self-structure' becomes imposed on by traumatic situations. Straker described two main types of trauma: 'developmental and environmental'. Straker explained the concept of 'continuous trauma' as the experience of environmental situations that continue to impact on the individual and stir feelings related to the original frightening or hurtful experience. These experiences of painful feelings or symptoms interrupt the normal self-building process that Straker referred to as 'going on being of self'. Ragina's attempt to compliment her 'going on being of self' with attendance at the black support group and external projects may be seen as a way of 'soothing' the 'experience of environmental trauma', produced by the dominant Eurocentric nature of her training experience. "It is important to have another who will perceive affect accurately and sooth it" (Straker 2004) It is my belief that if staff on training courses are sufficiently aware and confident about black issues, they can be the 'another' that Straker talks about. The 'continuous trauma' attached to institutional racism is a shared concern and a vital component of black issues work. Straker used the term 'empathic attunement' to describe the important role of the therapist entering the world of the traumatised individual. Trauma and institutional racism will not be the main tenets of this study although I may refer to recognition trauma occasionally. However experiences such as Ragina's show me that it may be important if not necessary to enter the cultural and historical frameworks of individuals to assist their participation in the study. First looking back, as the Sankofa, at how the past has impacted on their present understanding of black issues and from this creating a model for future understanding and training development in this area.

Kareem also believed that few training organisations are prepared to take up the intercultural challenge and that individuals feel inhibited about raising issues of racism in their training. He believes that they may experience a great pressure to keep quiet so as to complete their training. This has certainly been an important ethical issue during transcultural training sessions. Kareem shares his own experience of training not dissimilar to my own,

My own internal ego and superego had become replaced with the external institutional superegos of my training models.....I constantly had to battle with myself to keep my head above water, to remind myself at every point who I was and what I was. It was a painful and difficult battle not to think what I had been told to think, not what I had been told to be and not challenge what I had been told could not be challenged and at the same time not become alienated from my basic roots and my basic self. (Kareem & Littlewood, 1994 p.31)

Much of what Kareem is expressing here is similar to what I felt during my own training. Nearly twenty years ago. Sadly very little seems to have changed. Many trainees both black and white share these experiences, yet I believe they are experienced in a very different sense by black practitioners. They have also become my concerns as a trainer and researcher of this project. Regina's decision to actively inform herself about black issues outside of her training and within her black peer group on the training is familiar. We both now share the conflict of being lone black trainers (often assigned the role of black expert), with white colleagues who feel that they do not know enough about black issues to confidently facilitate students understanding of them.

Anton: Black African Caribbean male.
Training: Diploma in Counselling and supervision in 1989. Recently working as a group therapist with black men in Broadmoor Hospital

My training was a kind of a self- directed training, you never new what was going on from one week to the next. There were three black students out of twelve on the course. If we had not brought those issues up as black people, they would not have come up. They came up in as much as it was relevant for us to deal with what was going on between us as students on the course. About what goes on generally on training between white people and black people. There is a lack of awareness of what was important for the black people. It looked to me like the tutor would just let whatever happened, happen. I think he did hold it. There was a very loose structure. I remember I had to write an essay. I was writing about issues to do with race, it was pretty raw. The external examiner was saying. "It is very subjective, but who can blame him". I was angry because I was making a particular point about how racism affects me and he seemed to be saying that I was on a rant, but who could blame me sort of thing. I initiated time together as black students and we processed for ourselves and taught each other. Then we went back into the main body of students. There was no relevant reading material. I had already trained as a co-counsellor and that developed my understanding of racism and internalised oppression.

As a trainer, in the early nineties, it was good because I was not on my own. There was another black trainer. We started together. The reason I left after five years is that I did not feel that I could be myself. There is something about being black and being in a leading position, people have a lot of expectation of you and they get disappointed if you don't match their expectations. What is tough is that I would like to be there for me, but as you know, as a black person, rarely can you be there as yourself, you have to represent. As a black man there was an inner struggle about being there as a facilitator of people and being there as a black person among majority of white people. Both the black and the white people would have expectations of me and where is my space to be. So I would find that I was very measured in how I engaged in a formal setting. I don't think that people really got to see me. I don't think the course was set up to deal with the distress that was happening.

If one person is sick the whole community is sick.
As practitioner if you haven't pulled yourself out side of western training, you are faced with a massive shift to be sensitive and open to different ways. For example, in indigenous communities hearing voices is accepted and we would have to change our concepts. They would be irrational.White people define the parameters and they define black people as having an identity crisis. They don't know that they have an identity crisis. There is a crisis and it has to do with who I am. What is my place in the scheme of things? Where do I come from and what is my purpose? If we have not been born into a community that helps us with those questions life is very hard to manage. So what you see manifesting is people who are wrestling with those issues.

Because of what has happened, having our land, languages and particular ways of being taken from us, we have to claw at whatever we can cling to. This is the result of being torn away from our original communities and forced to take on the culture and the language and particular ways of being. So our frame of reference is gone. We adapt, but it is a maladaption. And inside there is a great gaping hole that is there as a result of what has happened. To show that we are in pain often meant that we were exterminated by the dominant ones. So we had to ensure that generations who came after did not show this either. We have become a group of people who had to over time suppress something that needs to be healed. We had to push our feelings down. In the present day we are seeing the signs of this coming out. The signs have been there but people could not recognise it. A lot more black people are conscious of this now and there is an enormous piece of grieving to do. So yes there is a crisis, but not 'our' identity crisis. The meaning is put into the word black and it is hard for us to resist. So it becomes hard for us to value ourselves. So it is about the value that is put on whiteness. It's not in the books, it's unchartered territory. It has not been put down in a form that we can share, which is the way that we have learned. So even in our black supervision group, what are our reference points?

Anton's epistemology enquires about the authenticity of Eurocentric frameworks for training and learning in psychotherapy and counselling. He shares concerns about how we reinvent ourselves and find a voice within this context. To understand this I have chosen to use the voice of bell hooks (in Read, A.1996) as she uses feminism to critique theory, in a section on 'Reuniting that Which Has Been

Broken'. hooks says that she learned to think critically about colonialism from men. *"In rooms, which it seemed no women were allowed to enter, they gave me ways to invent and make myself".*

She refers to a psychotherapy session where she spoke about what stands in the way of love. She concludes, that 'to face love you have to face fear' through her rediscovery of Fanon's much neglected writing she recreates her feminist self. She quotes Fanon, *"Today, I believe in the possibility of love, that is why I endeavour to trace its imperfections, its perversions".* (hooks says that) *'dialogue makes love possible'.*

This is the standpoint of my research question. The dialogue about black issues in training needs to be understood through love, within a profession that claims to give 'unconditional' love'. The possibility of developing love rather than fear has been the biggest motivator for my Doctoral project. It has therefore been my intention to keep open the dialogue on black issues. I share Anton's concern about the loss and mis-understanding of black cultural identities. Other black men who have encountered dissonance in the institutions of counselling and psychotherapy may also share this concern. The words of hooks give hope to the search for benign love that was there before we became afraid to love and accept each other.

According to Read, hooks was not disturbed by what she calls Fanon's patriarchal standpoint. She says, *I knew how to move through the body of the father to discover myself. As a girl it had not been possible to imagine oneself as a thinker/writer/interrogator without projecting oneself into the phallic imaginary, into the body of the father. Only by journeying through the body of the father could I connect with the mind. ..... Fascinated by the body of the father, I forgot about mothers. The feminist movement returned me to the body of the mother.*

Hooks talks of being born again in the body of the mother. Being liberated beyond patriarchy. *'An act of finding, listening to the female voice'.* (p.81) Using hooks analogy; it is this act of finding and listening to my black self that I am being born into through attempting to discover how we understand black issues within the Eurocentric body of psychotherapy and counselling. Other black trainees share Anton's experience of shut-down-ness and exclusion as a black man in training. Like Ragina he has had to rely on personal development sources external to the training, for his cultural development, rather than receive from the training what he needed.

Philip: White Irish male.
Trained in Integrative & Adlerian counselling. 1990 Currently working as a counsellor trainer.
The only thing that we were offered close to black issues was three lectures in Social context. These were sessions carried out by a sociologist, who was trying to provide information on the social context, which might affect counsellor client relationships. They didn't look at any particular groups, such as black issues or Gay and Lesbian issues. Nothing got named or was specifically mentioned, we were supposed to take something of the wider context and apply it ourselves. The issue of race did not get addressed in any formal sense. It only came up in the context of our client work. In my Adlerian training course we had one session on race and racism. So across the whole of that there has not really been a focus on black issues.

My current understanding has not come from my training. Previous to that I did a one-year module with the Open University on ethnic minorities and community relations. The roots of my understanding came from that. Nothing was ever picked up in my counsellor training that I feel I could plant in black issue work. On my Open University course there was a lot about black people but the focus of the training was on immigration issues from the 19th century. There was a part of the course that focused on the semiotics of race. It was quite difficult to understand. My interest was in looking at Anti racist education, as I was teaching in secondary school. It felt like it was following a fairly contained approach to these issues.

Now I find that it is much more useful to look at things from poetry, literature, the stories people tell about themselves. Although to be fair coming from Northern Ireland, a place where issues of race don't get talked about at all. What informs things in Northern Ireland is a) A pre- occupation with their own problem and b) Why do we have to think about something which don't exist here? Within my first couple of years in London and I needed to think about all of that because it was the first time I was teaching black kids for example. In Northern Island there were no black kids in the school where I taught. So for

me personally that was quite a challenge of how best to respond to this. I used theoretical material to help me with that.

Later as a counsellor, supervision did not really help me work with black issues. I would say my own thinking on those issues was in advance of my supervisor who is white middle class, living in an area that probably is less exposed to a variety of people like I am. So it is not part of her day-to-day living. She is very locked in to a specific theoretical model and that is why I go to her. She is very sound in this. I would say there is a difference in being supported and being advanced further in my thinking. I don't feel that particularly happens. I am now being stretched with a second supervisor. My supervisors are not presenting a political perspective though I would appreciate it if they did. The political must be a part of the picture because change is global. So I think I am doing a lot of that myself. For example I have read recently about three different tribal societies that are becoming wiped out. It feels like that is all part of the same problem. With globalisation goes a lack of respect for difference to people who do not see the world in terms of western capitalism.

My therapist is also a white man and I sometimes wonder what it would be like working with a black therapist. I think that could change something energetically for me. I think I can explore aspects of my own being with a black therapist that I cannot explore with a white therapist. However just as there are gay therapists who have not thought through what it means to be gay, there may be black therapists who have not thought through what it might be like to be black. There may be an element that I need to shake me out of some fixed patterned way of thinking about things. I am doing most of that myself and through my dialogue with you as a black woman. It's hard racing ahead on my own, so I need someone to race ahead with me. In my first training there was no PD group. In my second training we had a forty-five minute group each evening. We had one black guy who left about six weeks after the start of the course. At the time I did not think he might have left for race related reasons. No one in the group was behaving in an overtly racist way, but his experience may not have been reflected. It is often problematic for men let alone one black guy on a training course. I was the only gay man and we had one Saturday session on sexuality. This named something, but glossed over it. but did not really look at the core fundamentals of these things. The same applies to black issues, it can be addressed, but nobody feels like anyone goes away changed or with a new perspective. That's what I mean by the political dimension. Something needs to be shaken up in people's political perspective and to experience a period of discomfort for this to work.

Philip's concerns as a white practitioner are not dissimilar from my own concerns and the concerns of some of my black colleagues. Rigid models may exclude the impact of external oppression and intercultural perspectives. We share the experience of isolation and the wish for change. In addition we have inherited the historical impact of the exclusion of contributions from our black grandfathers, fathers, brothers, uncles, nephews and sons. Philip identifies the loss of the black man, in the process of finding a voice. He addresses the collective impact of covert racism within an almost exclusively Eurocentric framework of training. It appears that he is also sharing something of his own loss of self in the process of training, devoid of the experience of the black man and the gay man. Fanon exemplifies this experience.

On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? But I did not want this revision, this thematization. All I wanted was to be a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help build it together. (Fanon 1986, p.112)

I cannot help but notice the exclusion of the black man, which is far more than the exclusion of men in the world of psychotherapy and counselling. I remember my own training where I reciprocated support with a white gay man when we experienced exclusion from our peers who only discussed homosexuality and black clients in relation to borderline cases. But I did not fit into my ally's peer group outside of the training, for he was then white and middle class. Listening to Philip has reinforced in me the need to empower the profession of psychotherapy and counselling so that those who want to develop their understanding of black issues are not isolated.

Bibi. British /Asian/Pakistani/Muslim: woman

Trained in combined Psychodynamic and Person Centred counselling in 2001

Fifty percent of trainees were of African Caribbean descent. I was the only Asian student and the rest were white. There were 22 students in all. A very isolating experience, but there was plenty of opportunity for exploration of black issues presented by visiting tutors. It felt as though there was some resistance when the topic of race came up. I did not know precisely why but wanted to pinpoint it exactly, if possible. Could it be partly due to there being even numbers racially that tension was equally distributed?

We would always get to the door and not be able to open it. I experienced the tutors as not being able to handle it, they seemed to change energetically, in their facial language, it seemed they were less confident and maybe even cautious. I think they were frightened at the prospect of having to hold many different levels of student expression. Expressions of anger and anguish, annoyance that they could become misrepresented. The issue of difference and diversity as it was named became such a no go area that it may as well have been called 'dilemma and disruption' as practically all including myself felt uneasy, almost confronted about something, some hidden thing to do with difference. It is clearly very potent.

Race and culture was one of the syllabuses. There was lack of trust and it was mostly about British history. Most of the students aged 25-50 were raised in Britain and have lived through the 70s period of uprisings when the National Front were around. I was very aware of this at the time. I was quietly aware. That is one of the things I resented, because stereotypes of Asian women are quiet, shy submissive. Whereas if a black woman is quiet she is just a gentle black lady. I want to challenge this distortion. It is not because I am an Asian woman that I am quiet, that is a feature of my individual personality. Interestingly I felt there was more hostility from black students, maybe about why I am so quiet why I don't speak up? From white people it was somewhat more of a feeling sympathy, like we understand. It was more patronising and even humiliating. All the staff were white. A male Kleinian tutor and a female Rogerian.

At the end of the training I felt full up with my own need to be creative and offer something. I would really like a channel to feed into because I believe that I have a lot to offer. A fountain of cultural knowledge. I have just started an academic training. An MA based on Jungian principles. I am the only Asian person in a group of twenty-one and race is not stressed here. I feel there is a space for exploration at this level, which feels like a relief. It seems to be addressed in local colleges where there are people who don't have funding for private tuition and who need grants. Whereas perhaps it is my responsibility as it is an MA. The theories we are discussing are very European Freudian and Jungian. But I believe they can be applied universally too and should be tested against black and Asian studies and given its own differentiated place. I feel there is a space for exploration at this level, which feels like a relief. There is such a gap with people getting together and seeing where we fit. That is why I am continuing with it, but it is a struggle. I'm very lonely in it. Even my family do not know what I am doing.

I'm being supervised for my private work. I value my supervision. When I have presented issues of difference in supervision the dialogue has often seemed to merge into a general discussion about humanity. It is as if we cover the cracks up instead of risking discomfort and maybe talking about the awkwardness in the room. There is something avoiding in it, but also something comforting because it is saying there is a higher good. But I feel the higher good can only be fulfilling if we include all the difficult bits too and stop trying to 'skip that bit'. As a child I witnessed my parent's experience of racism and thinking back, they would have been the same age that I am now. These were bleak and nasty experiences. Having eggs thrown at your front door and dogs set on you because it is known that you do not have dogs inside the home, being verbally abused, called Pakis and stuff like that. There is going to be residues of that happening now in different forms and at varying levels, whether conscious or subconscious. If I feel safe to bring up something like that I will. I did once bring up something about my own experience in supervision. Ok, it was a caring response, but it was dismissive. I was told, "You are being too hard on yourself" My response was, "That sounds very dismissive because I am saying something about my experience here". My supervisor said to me, actually I take that back, if I am saying

you are being too hard on yourself, I am judging you for your experience. I really felt as though I had more self worth after that. It really changed our relationship after that.

There is always that something hidden looking down on. I often need to ask myself; is it just me projecting an inferiority complex relating to race issues here with this person or is there actually something to be worked on. As an associate, doing volunteer counselling here, I have felt on my own with black issues and I have had to work on my own with black clients here. It would have been lovely to have some support with this in supervision. As an associate I felt I taught in supervision and this is a very interesting concept to me. It is not just about me breaking new ground. Lets all break new ground.

Isolation for the black practitioner is one of many disempowering experiences as is the issue of relationships between African and Asian heritage peoples, yet it appears that even at MA level there is great difficulty understanding these issues in training situations. It is my belief, that while the type of inner and outer struggle expressed by Bibi is going on, without adequate facilitation, training in how to actively address these issues in therapeutic settings is being placed on the back burner. I believe that the time has arrived for psychotherapy and counselling to consider more of the external social and political elements in addition to the internal experiences portrayed within psychoanalytical and humanistic theory. Perhaps these elements can be considered in a trans-theoretical context, with empathy for client groups historical, cultural and class issues as a meaningful starting point. In this sense, what has been passed on from the giants of psychological theory may have become sterile and insular, due to not been nurtured within multi-racial multi cultural settings. They try whole-heartedly to fit theory to racial and cultural issues, devoid of the personalities and historical context behind the experience. Lago and Thompson in ''Race and Culture in Counselling' (1996), comment on 'neglect of history' (p.81).

Some counselling approaches focus on the present even when some of the client data is based on their past,

Counsellors, Pederson suggests, are much less likely to attend to clients who talk about the history of their own people. (Examples of this would include client's stories of forebears, ancestors, religious, ethnic and tribal history and so on.) In many cultures the connection between past and present history makes it necessary for counsellors to understand clearly the client's historical context as a way of understanding their present behaviour.

(in Lago and Thompson,1996. p.81)

These are shared concerns of a similar context to those, which have spurred me into this project. Bibi's epistemology clearly identifies what I would call the black on black issues that all counsellors and psychotherapists need to have a dialogue about if they are to understand and actively engage with black issues in the therapeutic process. This also shows us that understanding and having a voice on black issues is more than understanding the dynamics of racism. My decision to study black issues in training is also about supporting the needs of unheard voices behind similar experiences to those above.

In the interviews Paulette identifies her initial understanding of racism from a black colleague and her white awareness support outside of her training. Ragina goes outside of her training and to black student peers for her cultural knowledge. Phillip wonders what it would be like working with a black therapist bringing in the elements missing from the experience with his white therapist and supervisor. Bibi and Anton have to challenge the racism on their training to have their experience valued. These accounts suggest training content that addresses black issues may have mainly been influenced by the input of black students and staff who are few and far between. (role of black expert)Littlewood proposes that, *"Intercultural therapy should never be allowed to become some specialised psychotherapy, to be targeted at black people, but simply therapy which takes into account these issues".* (Kareem &littlewood, 1994 p.12.)

The above would contradict this statement. My decision to study how trainees understand black issues will enhance equalities in training and contradict institutional racism that may impact on how black

issues are processed. It will support the unheard voices and experiences of black practitioners and black clients that must be understood on an equal level to the needs of white practitioners and clients. Not just in relation to racism.

In the book 'Intercultural Therapy' Littlewood quotes authors (Sedgewick 1982 & Baron 1988, Cocks, 1985, Maranhao 1986) who in their discussion on the reproduction of society through culture, suggest that psychotherapy is less free of social and political ideologies and that it is an agent of social control. (p.13) Littlewood goes on to say, *"It is the process by which all societies reproduce themselves through inculcating shared values and behaviour. We need, not simply 'therapy', but a self-reflexive practice which examines its own prejudices, ideologies and will to power".*

In starting this project using the principle of 'shared concerns', I am drawing together through shared experiences and values that have been inculcated through systems of psychotherapy and counsellor training in Britain. It is not enough to parrot on about the above theories, it is time to actively integrate them as conscious and active elements of training.

The theory that I have referred to in my response to the transcripts is examples of my literature search for useful and supportive text. They are examples of texts that students have found useful during transcultural workshops. I have used the literature to try and understand the narrative of the interviewees and also to role model this approach which can be used in training settings.

However much I have tried to introduce black issues in the wider context, discussions have become focussed on black people and racism. The issues of white practitioners in their relationships with black people and with each other in this context have been contentious. We have had to wade through the great mire of transferred feelings of guilt, fear and anger and denial. As Bibi suggested we have "opened the door, but we have not been able to enter". "It felt dangerous and difficult," says Paulette. We were barely able to touch on the wider understanding of black issues needed so that knowledge and experience can be transferred into knowledge and practise. In most cases students have left me with the question, how do we do it? I believe this question really requires more than the information provided in literature. It needs to be answered through further exploration and understanding. In section 2, we will find out how trainees 'understand'.

Summary

As the Sankofa, we have been looking back in an attempt to discover what needs to be developed. I have presented excerpts, which explain the level of input and understanding of black issues that interviewees experienced during and since their training. The purpose of these interviews was to establish whether others shared my own concerns and validate my hunch that some research may be useful in this area. Below are listed some of the shared concerns expressed by two or more of the interviewees.

- A need for opportunities to voice experiences and concerns about working with black issues
- The different experiences of black and white trainees
- The different experiences of African and Asian trainees
- Powerful feelings and blocks attached to the exploration of black issues
- Valuing the input of black trainees and trainers
- Fixed Eurocentric models and the need for new perspectives
- Lack of professional input on black issues
- Expectations of white trainees to learn from black trainees and trainers (Burden of black trainee facilitator role)
- The impact of racism
- Lack of input on black issues from white trainers
- Concerns about not having black issues supported in supervision and further personal development

Other key issues that came up in the interview are listed below:

- Opportunities provided by visiting tutors to explore black issues may not be integrated into the main system of training and may not be followed up by core tutors.

- It is clear that numbers of black students on counsellor training courses are growing. Their training needs must be considered in the light of their cultural experiences and experiences of racism and minority oppression in Britain.

- Concerns about black issues may not be fully addressed but dispersed into issues of humanity, multiculturalism and diversity.

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Specialist Seminars

Miller, Mair. & David Heart. Specialist Seminar 'Writing as Search and Research 25th October 2002

Professor G. Straker Specialist Seminar 'Trauma and Attachment'Metanoia Institute15th March 2004

Appendix 5,5a,5b

Appendix 5. Early workshops

The questions and concerns aired at this stage came tumbling out like a can of hungry worms, all over the place and seemingly out of control waiting to be fed. A kind of catharsis of ideas, needs and curiosity mingled with powerful feelings. I may have been caught in a defensive counter- transference and was drawn into a process where receiving the questions had a profound impact on me. After collecting them I kept them closeted in my filing cabinet, as though canned, for a long period of time, unable to face them. This situation might be viewed within Moustakas (1990 p.28) concept of 'incubation'.

Having collected the questions, I organised some rough clusters of them and sent copies to the course tutors as a means of reflecting back and for their comments. Then a process of fear and denial took place and the data became difficult for me to face. On reflection I was perhaps overwhelmed at this responsibility of holding them and really did not know what to do with them. My fear of repercussion had been ignited. Even as I reflect on this process I am afraid that I have opened up something that may cause harm to me and my loved ones. Great leaders and facilitators of black issues such as Claudia Jones and Martin Luther King have been incarcerated and assassinated.

I wanted to use an integrative approach to influence the training curriculum and focus the research on links, between social history and black issues, using art and creativity to assist discussion about elements of black history. I soon discovered that trainees were not ready for a level of enquiry that demanded as in this case, a social and political context. I assumed that they would easily understand and adapt to the concept of black issues, and be willing and ready to openly discuss historical links to their personal and clinical experience. Instead I discovered a lack of understanding and consensus of what black issues was all about. In a sense this was the initiation of the grounded theory process, where a concept might be explored and developed to assist understanding and the generation of data.

In a similar way to the therapeutic process trainees' primary concerns appeared to be existential and very much in the present. Therefore I considered that a process of clarification, focus and exploration might be helpful. It was clear that they needed to voice and explore some of the emotions attached to the questions that they had shared about understanding black issues. So I had to be flexible and adapt the initial workshops to focus on the expressed needs about these concerns. I decided not to completely eliminate the idea of historical links, but to use these links as a kind of transitional object within the workshops to help introduce the idea of working with the concept of black issues. The main thrust of the project then turned into an attempt to understand the concept of black issues as a phenomenon and how this concept may or may not be addressed in the therapeutic process. This was approached by using 'the principle of shared concerns' addressed in the introduction. The metaphor 'A Can of Worms' in the title of this section seemed to aptly fit what followed. So the metamorphous of my research question began.

Uni-one. Establishing the commitment of colleagues.

I had only recently joined the training institute Uni-one where I work as a part time counsellor trainer and student counsellor. Soon after we agreed that I could use the Postgraduate training group as a source of primary data, a long-standing member of the team decided to leave and my manager went off sick for about six months. These early days of establishing the trust and commitment of staff and trainees in becoming participants faced me with the challenge of isolation and rejection. Although we were short staffed, my three remaining colleagues expressed their support for the project and encouraged me to get started. I set up a plan to present black issues workshops with Uni-one trainees and staff. I shall discuss the first workshops in this section because at this point both trainees and staff concerns were put forward.

I believe that these concerns expressed the importance of producing trainees and trainers that have enough awareness and self knowledge to address black issues and work through some of their blocks. In the early

phases of the study white colleagues at Uni-one expressed some dismay and asked this question of themselves: How would we do this if our black colleague were not here?

Uni-one colleagues agreed to have black issues inserted into the general training programme and support the study when and where they could. I took this as an agreement that they would be in a collaborator role. It was important not to turn the whole training into a black issues training, so 'black issues' was made explicit within the equalities criteria of the course modules. Three workshops per year specifically focussing on black issues were scheduled into the programme. These workshops would not replace the cultural issues seminar. It was hoped they would compliment it. Trainees were expected to evidence some understanding of black issues in their development as practitioners.

It turned out that the interest reflected in the trainee's concerns displayed a need for this general learning. I had suggested to my colleagues at Uni-one that it was important to be consistent with the black issues input so that participants were receiving information and support throughout their training. So in reality the trainees were expected to learn about the process of attending to black issues as part of their curriculum and in turn, I hoped that they might volunteer information that could be contributed to the study. I decided to ask for consent at every stage that data was collected in written or verbal form.

At the end of the first year I asked for written feed back from staff as to their perceptions of trainees progress on the process of understanding black issues. This was based on data offered by trainees. Voluntary verbal evaluations were transcribed and copies of the transcripts given to those trainees involved. This offered a two way mirroring process of reflecting the narrative and an opportunity to enhance trainees' learning and personal development. In this way participation would be reciprocated. A sample of the workshop experience and mirroring approach was offered to staff and they were given copies of transcribed evaluations to reflect on.

It's worth noting several significant areas of consideration during the process of immersion with this study group. These areas will be listed below.

- ***Staff resistance:***
- **Informed Consent**
- **Non-malficience**

Continuing workshops with Uni-one

With Uni-one. I had to consider how I would maintain participant consent and support them over the remaining period of the research project, as this training group was to be a source of primary data. Trainees were encouraged to process issues within their personal development forums and in their personal counselling.

The first of these workshops began with an introduction to sameness and difference. The group who were fifty per cent white and fifty percent black identified and were very participative. Some trainees struggled with the definition of black issues and some responses were not very focussed, meaning that they went off into political debates mainly about why we should focus on black issues. On the whole there was a lot of learning and acknowledgement of their need to examine this theme in the context of practice. I noticed that there were three black trainees and one white trainee missing. Although a colleague was with me I felt that I more or less carried the workshop on my own because she remained silent most of the time. I became more aware of a need to be observant of the 'expert' role that I seemed to place myself in.

I had also been concerned about an over focus on racism and the dynamics of an oppression hierarchy: [4]The question of why should we focus on black issues, had been frequently been echoed by white participants.

[4] The term 'hierarchy of oppressions' refers to the process of competitive interests that arise when oppressions are being discussed. This process should be discouraged because it adds to oppression rather than support emancipation.

Failure to realise the parallel with their own oppressions and the oppressions of target groups, [5] could be a blind spot. This cry for meaning can further suppress the needs of black trainees. I will answer this question by agreeing that addressing other oppressions is important, however we cannot assume that feminist principles of empowerment and assertiveness will resolve a situation of racism.

Appendix 5a Specialist Seminar Valerie Bhatts

A situation of racism can be addressed by introducing some knowledge of race dynamics. A space to contemplate race dynamics was offered by Valerie Bhatts. (Specialist seminar, Metanoia Institute 17.2.02). Both the seminar session and the workshop session proved to be very supportive and validating of the above issues. What I gained from the workshop was an opportunity to experience the race dynamics of black issues, as a participant in a mixed group, being facilitated by a black woman. I experienced the dynamics of silence, stuckness and hostility from white participants. On the other hand I witnessed black participants feeling safe enough to share their pain. Sitting with silence and catharsis is a core counselling skill, yet this was not easy. There was an element of safety that enabled a dialogue for issues and concerns of both black and white participants to be expressed and explored. In a sense Bhatts modelled the compassion that was needed for the work that I was embarking on.

Appendix 5b. Personal Development

Coping with negative impact & defences:

Reason, (Denzin et al. 1998) proposes that the key skills in the process are based on engaging with others and oneself in a reflective way and learning to side step defences that arise from this process. It was during a period of incubation that the experience of locating my compassion and working on my own defences was initiated. I watched the movie of the story 'Beloved' (Morrison 1987) with my teenage son. Beloved was a child traumatised by slavery and racism. Beloved didn't die, but she remained damaged from her black mother's attempts to kill her so the white enslavers could not steal her away. A close friend had gifted me a copy of, 'Journey to Beloved', (Winfrey1998) a book that portrayed images from the film and the story of how Oprah Winfrey experienced herself in the leading role. In the role of beloved's mother, she maintained compassion throughout the story, but she lost her children and her sense of herself.
In placing myself in the role of black expert within the study: coming out of my comfort zone, out from behind my defences I was afraid of loosing my sense of 'self'. In the film, Winfrey took the risk to immerse herself in a character that represented the shared emotions of oppression in black history. I experienced something extremely powerful linked to those images of the hurt and disconnection suffered between black people as a result of de-humanisation and consequently loss of sense of self. I call this internalised oppression, a figment of the unconscious defences against the trauma of dehumanisation by the other. These periods of 'incubation' and 'indwelling' as Moustakas puts it were revealing my own process of disconnection whilst at the same time I was gaining new insights about how I could be a role model for facilitating mixed groups on black issues. In addition I was exploring creative ways to present the workshops.

On a tour of Elmina & Cape coast castle in Ghana, where slaves were held and marketed before they were shipped of to the Americas. I realised that my emotions about this aspect of history would be different to the white tourists. There I saw a sculpture of a group of people in a circle holding hands. The sculpture is carved out of one piece of wood. It has no beginning and no end. The characters are almost featureless, but they project the experience of a variety of people, thinking together. Both the story of 'Beloved' and the sculpture reminded me of the learning process of history, art and different people thinking together in the circle of life and on the counsellor training courses. This further illumination helped me become clearer about the importance of including colleagues and trainees in the development of the study. Thinking together assisted the reciprocal process supported by their learning. This also supported the participatory action elements of the

[5] Target groups are those groups prone to oppression from those who assume to be more powerful. Black, gay, disabled. (2) (Bhatts, Capitman & Landrum-Brown. Visions Inc 91

study in a workshop situation. I asked trainees to bring artefacts that link to their cultural history, to a workshop. In addition I inquired whether questionnaires used to find out about their progress assisted their learning. The above exercise will be presented as a useful workshop tip in the trainer's booklet.

At an innovative seminar presented by Michael Carroll I enjoyed being amongst peers who were interested in my work. Sharing is so important to life. I learned a lot about reflexivity and the question of how do we learn? We were asked to consider how we learn. My thoughts turned inwards.

How do I learn? I learn by being able to talk, explain and receiving attentive listening. It is important that I am challenged and not colluded with especially when I appear to be sussed out and articulate. Don't allow my defences to intimidate you and respect and admire my contributions. Be transparent and congruent with me and give me supportive feedback. Integrate your awareness and understanding of cultural issues and oppressions. Be honest about where you are with these issues. Don't give up on me when I seem angry, confused, and difficult. These are my life patterns and I strive to discover the crossover from concrete to abstract in this context. The crossover from personal to professional to organisational or group learning is a complex one, influenced by the history of my cultural and educational experience.

The reflexive process of this seminar helped me to realise the importance of asking trainees the same questions about what will help them learn? How do they learn? What creates blocks about black issues work?

One area of concern that created a block was being an equal staff member at the same time as being tutor researcher. I was not the staff team facilitator in this situation, yet our interracial issues needed to be facilitated. There were obvious power issues, which needed to be explored. These power issues had also been highlighted in feedback during a conference workshop where I had presented the study. So we spent a good part of the first year working through this process. I discovered that my team were expressing concerns similar to those shared by white colleagues, in the interviews. They said similar things like, "black issues were not in our training". Periods of illumination helped me to understand that I needed to develop empathy with my white peers and also participants who like me had previously experienced a lack of discussion about black issues in their education.

Links with equalities and institutional racism.

During these defining moments I realised that there was an important self-development task ahead for me. I needed to resolve my feelings about the way institutional racism had impacted on our working relationships. Progress was happening but perhaps the focus was leaning more towards racism. We were not feeling equal in this endeavour. I became acutely aware of the behaviour and attitudes of other staff in the department. (A department that provided counselling and support for students) We share an open plan office where I am one of two black African heritage staff members in a majority of about thirty white staff. I had been in the department for about two years and was aware of excluding behaviour and began to draw my colleague's attention to it. The more I drew attention to it, the worse it seemed. In team meetings I let my colleagues see my tears and they supported me to share my hurt about some of these experiences. They listened but remained mostly silent. The spin off was that together we became more aware of how vulnerable I was feeling at times when I was excluded. On one occasion a colleague from another team stretched over my desk and addressed my white colleagues on issues that they could have consulted me on. This period of feeling open to the hurt of racism culminated in sick leave. I lost my balance and I was vomiting. In the past I have run away from experiences of oppression, by abandoning the situation or trying to draw attention to it with my angry outbursts and defensiveness. This time I was not running away or leaving my job, but I needed a period of recuperation.

Long supportive discussions with a black colleague outside of my workplace, sustained me through this period. We discussed the impact of institutional racism [2.] on black employees. This resonated with my experiences. I knew I had allies, yet I had to face this situation within myself. Like some of the interviewees I had to go outside of my work situation to get support on black issues. My previous

[2.] Institutional racism can be described as operating oppression in covert ways that exclude, undermine and hinder the potential of black people, within an inherited power system. This process can silence both oppressor and victim and make the oppressor experience the victim's challenges as hostile.

supervisor had reminded me about developing compassion, if I wanted to resolve my issues with oppressor groups. During my sick leave I lay on my back in the garden and painted my dreams and nightmares using watercolours. I had not painted since I was a child and the experience was healing. The poem 'Invisible' in the text was also written at that time. It portrays my experience of institutional racism in the department where I sit with my colleagues. I was having my own cathartic experience.

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Appendix 6

Parry

When listing other important generic models, Parry (2003) cites Shaw and Dobsen (1988) who suggest that studies of therapist's competence may be included as evidence. This got me thinking about training competences and black issues and how evidence of equalities awareness needs to be in counsellor training as a key element of therapist's competence. Although this aspect of competence has not yet been fully taken on board, I believe that the BACP are exploring implications of equalities issues for practitioner training and accreditation. This action should go some way to supporting the CRE proposal for equalities and positive race relations in higher education. In a recent BACP Research conference that I was involved in, therapists from the US shared that these competences are integral to the qualifications and accreditation of psychotherapists and counsellors, otherwise they are deemed not competent for practice. When proposing this study to my managers we arrived at an agreement which affirmed that the counsellor training course should explicitly address black issues along with other equalities criteria. Training criteria are similar to coding. They group together elements of learning into modules which evidence competencies. Along with my colleagues, we reviewed the training criteria for the Postgraduate course involved in the study, so that black issues could be a component of training competencies.

Parry demonstrates the strategy of coding as a method of summarising lots of small bits of data. In order to develop my understanding of this concept, I needed to make a connection with Parry, because I was unfamiliar with the language of coding and we seemed to misunderstand each other in our attempts to create a dialogue. In the process of psychotherapy this inter-subjective response to each other and the theme of discussion might be seen as counter transference. Parry, (Specialist seminar 10.4.02), was presenting her knowledge and experience and I had trouble trying to connect with her. I struggled to find the language because at first it felt like my voice was not being heard and my concerns were not shared. I see this as similar to the process of developing empathy. Our personal and sociological narratives were not connecting. I think this may have been due to different levels of experience and our different cultural and life experiences. This experience could also be viewed as a parallel process to my experiences with trainees, during the process of collecting questions from participants, in the black issues workshops. Black and white participants and collaborators were striving to make their own cultural connection with the theme of black issues and with me as facilitator. They were striving to relate the concept of black issues within the context of counselling and their own cultural experiences. So I was also finding ways to understand how participants learn and how to listen to their learning process. I was finding the meaning that as Parry suggests, helps to link the process of this study to the outcome.

Discovering a meeting point through dialogue with presenters in specialist seminars has been an important aspect of my process in this study. A way of finding my own voice and putting aside my old feelings of inferiority towards what I have experienced as jargonised,

theoretical scripts presented by white middle class professionals. The above experience, difficult though it was, assisted me to gain knowledge of a framework for understanding, which suited my linguistic and cultural reference points. Our differences meant that we struggled to connect and we strived to find a common language, as is often the case during the early process of counselling. [6]

In addition to some ideas on categorising, Parry spoke about falsification and outcome. I was impressed by her statement 'all swans are white until you see a black one' which helped explain Field Belenky's experience of falsification in their classification of women's narrative. (Field Belenky1986) Bearing this in mind I began to wonder if there could be a gender variable to the dynamics of collecting data and generally in the field of counselling, where trainee's are encouraged to voice their experiences. At the point of collecting the data I was not aware of this possibility, so this variable may be a useful guide for further study. However I became aware that the men who were in the minority as trainees became more vocal about their concerns towards the end of the study and in evaluation meetings.

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[6] 'The early phase of a therapeutic alliance is perhaps the most important phase in formation of rapport and working together. It is here that the racial and cultural factors become vital. Psychotherapists working with clients of different ethnic background need to be aware of their clients' feelings about racial and cultural differences in order to facilitate effective treatment and to understand potential transference actions.'(Bhugra, D. & Bhui, K. 1998)

Appendix 7

Personal learning

According to Reason (1992) critical subjectivity needs mindfulness, and we must work on psychological distress to cultivate and expand the experience of mindfulness. Reason develops the notion of counter transference in relating these aspects of mindfulness.

'*Just as effective research stirs up individual resistance, so it may often bring about comparable disturbance in the institutions in which it is set. --- This means that co-operative researchers need to learn not only to manage their own process, but to manage the distress of their institutions'.* (Reason, P.1992, p. 143).

Reason's work helps me to understand that the difficulties experienced by participants are to be expected. Aspects of personal and political process are paramount in a study that evokes deep emotions linked to difference and oppressions. Sensitivity was needed as this particular participant group would most likely be experiencing their own deeper feelings and vulnerability, aroused during personal therapy and self development forums, another significant part of their training.

Glenys Parry, in the seminar previously referred to, mentioned falsification as a method of giving *"yourself an honest chance to get it wrong"*. Participants had volunteered their concerns during the first workshop, but the workshops were not optional, they were part of the training programme. This could be confusing and perhaps evoke lack of trust. I am aware of my own mistrust in research. This gave me a minimum level of empathy, but I have never been involved as a student participant. I therefore may not fully understand what it meant for the participants involved in this study, although I have tried to be as close as possible to their experience. Individuals shared some concerns that the structure of the workshop had not allowed enough time for process. So looking back I am wondering if this was where my role as tutor and also as a researcher was impacting on the training group. I became more fully aware of this during a further period of 'incubation' reflecting on the situation from outside of the training. The booklet will stress the importance of allowing time for process within the training forum where black issues and concerns about racism can be discussed.

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Appendix 8

Recognition trauma

I was feeling creative, yet very sensitive to episodes of covert racism and some other oppression that I had been subjected to over the preceding months. It had been twenty years ago that I became aware of my black history. The grief and loss associated with this recognition seems to lay dormant in my subconscious, yet in many ways informs me of my connections with everyday experiences of racism and oppression. At times the feelings of hurt and rage are strong, but I am now consciously aware of the compassion that I have generated towards others who have been impacted by the pervading nature of racism.

I had to question whether being so deeply immersed in the workshop experience and embedded racism had made me paranoid. I needed to question whether it was really happening or if I was becoming sensitised to racism because of the project I was working on. The layer of racism on top of the black issues that I was investigating was biting back at me. I question, had I begun re-experiencing my own recognition trauma? The feelings are nothing new, except this time round I am stronger and more conscious and developing my compassion for the individuals in the oppressor group.

One of the hardest things was to face my need for help and take the risk to ask my white colleagues to look out for me and give me more support. I run the risk of being labelled and experiencing further racism or worse still them not knowing how to listen to and support me, as a victim of the oppressor group, that they belong to. Yet trust building is a primary element of counselling. I had been working on my fears and feelings about racism with my white counsellors. That was a breakthrough in my life and work. I was able to do this in a private therapeutic space, yet I found it incredibly difficult to ask my colleagues to be involved and go all the way. However, on several occasions during the project I have just let them see my despair. I have had to make them aware of my frustration at their stuckness and inability to initiate discussions about black issues in meetings, because we had agreed to address the issues together. Had we not? It was difficult for my white colleagues to keep black issues current on the agenda. I experienced this as a form of exclusion linked to personal and institutional racism. I had insights due to my own repeated experiences of exclusion, and I am also aware that that none of us had black issues included in out training as psychotherapists. The term 'oppression burn out' was mentioned by one of my colleagues. This was a new concept for me which I believe deserves recognition. For me this concept gives some meaning to the impact of recognition trauma.

Appendix 9

Black issues evaluation questionnaire/Uni-oneTerm/4 November 2003						
Q1. Please say how the workshops have assisted your understanding of black issues.						
	Understanding	Oppression	Developmental	Greater awareness	Culture	Difference
1.	That black issues affect everyone.	Power, discrimination, power imbalances & oppression	Challenging &encouraging reading on black issues	My whiteness and trying to get it right. Broader view.	Awareness of race, colour, culture. My own culture.	How black people see themselves and the impact of white issues on black issues.
Q2. Have the workshops assisted you to understand the impact of difference and similarities?						
2a) Between black people? Yes 10 out of 11 b) Between white people? Yes 10 out of 11 c) Between black and white people? Yes 11 out of 11						
Q3. How have the workshops assisted your awareness of cultural experience?						
	Very aware	Facilitate exploration of my own prejudice	To some extent Definitely A great deal. Understanding my own process. Exercises helped.	Made me think more Greater awareness leading to fuller relationships.	Need more on other cultural differences. Become aware of other cultural aspects.	Assisted work in diverse settings. More aware of assumptions.
Q4.What was helpful? I.e. workshop exercises, theory, literature, facilitation style, black tutor input, white tutor input, other (please explain)						
4	5 participants ticked literature. 6 participants ticked theory 9 participants ticked facilitation style, 10 participants ticked both black tutor, white tutor. 1participant ticked black tutor only.	**Other** Tutors openness and sharing about black issues. Gill Tuckwell Theory. Hearing how black tutor/black people feel. **Other continued** Role-play discussions. Spectrum exercise on colour. Student input				
Q5.what was unhelpful?						

5	Relationships with group members became divided due to friction in workshops. Not allowed enough time to discuss other cultural issues. Not enough time devoted to black issues.					
Q6. Are you able to use your understanding of black issues in your client work? Yes, No, Sometimes?						
6	Yes x 8	Sometimes x3				
Q7. How is your understanding of black issues received in relationships at your placement? Supportive, accepted, discouraged, dismissed? Other, please explain.						
7	Accepted x4 Supportive x 6 Dismissed x 1			**Other** Important, supported, encouraged, integrated, integral, not very aware, challenging, supportive when made aware due to training, never, not sure, equal opportunities, not discussed unless I raise it. Vulnerable in relation to white clients.		
Q 8. How is your understanding of black issues supported and developed in your clinical supervision? A) In the training b) on your placement?						
8.	Training x 11 Placement x 5	PD group, supervision, role plays, I end up teaching in supervision group. Not discussed enough in supervision group, Accepting my fallibilities. Supervisor knows I am not comfortable so asks me about theses issues.				
Q9. Have the workshops contributed to your understanding of the impact of racism and oppression in counselling relationships? Yes, No?						
9.	All 11 said yes					
Q 10. What do you see as your next step in developing your understanding of black issues in client work?						
10.	Further reading and exploration. Being more congruent Admit and accept difference. To name it and work with it more. More practice, power relationships. Ability to address in counselling relationships. More reading, more black clients, learn more about black culture (women, gays, etc) Be more aware and bolder about raising issues of difference and similarities with clients when appropriate. Awareness of transference & counter-transference associated with black issues. Finding out about how white clients feel working with me, a black woman.					
Q 11. What safety, support issues are important for your exploration and learning about black issues in training and client work?						
11.	To feel that my experiences are accepted and not explained away. Support from colleagues and tutors. Good support when misunderstandings happen & oppression flares up. Tutor and peer support. I feel white people are criticised & it's unsafe to speak. Not to be judged, confidentiality. accessible reading material, good supervision, being able to be honest about feelings. Recognition that I may make mistakes and not to feel attacked when that happens. Understanding, adequate supervision, more discussion. Respect for what black issues means to me. Workshops on practical ways of being with black issues. Role-plays .PD group, personal therapy.					

Q 12. To what extent do you feel that you can be explicit about black issues in your case study assignment? (Where appropriate)						
12.	Yes I can x 10. Feeling more comfortable. Nor sure x2 A matter of care and sensitivity. Trust my tutors to take it seriously					
Q 13. What additional support do you need to assist your understanding of black issues in the therapeutic process?						
13.	Reading. I will answer more easily when I have a black client. Learn more about black peoples experiences. Practice. Live demonstrations. More workshops, tutorials, supervision. Supervision with black supervisor. More contact with black communities.					
Q14. What would you like to see in a booklet of training ideas on the type of facilitation that may help students understand black issues?						
14	Black and white people to openly discuss and feel that comments made about black issues are accepted.	How similarities, differences, power & oppression can impact the therapeutic relationship.	Acknowledgement that white group members can feel oppressed. Open discussions where people can speak freely without fear of being judged or labelled.	Experiential learning. Reading, resource material. Black support groups. Examples of counselling sessions where black issues are addressed. Black issue for different age groups. Drama, role-play. Establishing good group contact at the beginning of training, which empowers members to respect and accept other group members and cultures.		
Staff reflection on responses to questionnaire.						
	Themes of safety. Feeling attacked. Is feeling attacked, silenced inevitable in the dynamic, experience of teaching in this area? Is it really possible to make it safe? Need for other oppressions and cultural issue to be explored. Almost exclusively positive feedback in terms of learning from workshops.					

Appendix 10
10a,10b,10c

Black Issues Verbal Evaluation (1)19th.6.03

Transcribed by Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga

Words written in italics were spoken by the researcher
8 females of 27 Year 1 & year 2 trainees.

Researcher *"Do you have any first thoughts or you may ask me questions if that helps?"*

Black female
"I can remember a question that came up. "Why is it that black people are picked on or have such a bad image most of the time?" This happens in America too. I mentioned something about imperialism, the history and slavery ".

Researcher *"Was this useful?"*

Black female
"Oh yes it was very useful. It enabled me. I realise that its not just white people that carry images of racism, who are racist. black people also take it on".

Researcher *"Are you talking about internal racism"?*

"Yes"

White female
"This can be the daily experience of black people. I am thinking about a client who tells me that when she went into a store in London, she was followed immediately by a security guard. She says people don't believe her when she tells them off this kind of experience. So I do try to be aware of what black people tell me about their experiences".

Black female
"I was reminded that it is an experience that we live with every day of our lives. Recently achievement certificates were handed out at my daughter's school and she did not get one. I am wondering how come she hasn't received one. Is it because she is not performing well or is this lady racist"?

"*Um*"

Researcher
"I want to get you to see that when I introduced the definition of black issues I said that it is much more than racism. So I want to encourage you to open it up. Today, what you say is more important than what I say. I don't want to lead you, but I want to facilitate you to share what you have learned through the experience of the black issues workshops on the training and how this has assisted you to work with your clients".

Black female

"One thing I have noticed is that white people are too scared to speak their mind because they are scared of being classed as racist. I get the feeling that it affects them to an extreme where they almost disinherit their whiteness. I don't know if I am explaining myself properly".

Researcher *"Please carry on with that thread".*

Black female
"They don't want to be part of racism and because they are white they automatically assume they have prejudice feelings. They conjure up this person who does not accept their culture and colour for who they are because they don't want to be associated with racist people. It's almost as though an element of people's whiteness can be lost through blackness. I don't know if this makes sense, but I have seen it".

Researcher *"You have seen it on the training?"*

White female
"I have seen it on the training and through colleagues. I can remember my initial reaction at the beginning was ok here we go again, black issues. Why do we have to make such a major issue about everything. It is the issues that cause problems. Why can't we just get on with life? I think about things quite differently now, but I also look at how I and others were affected".

Researcher
"These feelings that you have shared are quite general. I wonder what you have learnt about yourself."

"Loads. I thought I was quite aware about black issues and cultural issues. It has helped me to be aware of multi-cultural issues. I realise that I was one of those people who at points have denied myself. Thinking that I don't have any prejudices, I don't feel, I don't automatically assume, I don't think, in actual fact, that is a lie. The fact that I think it is not possible means that I deny the truth and the fact that I don't like the idea means that I deny myself a possible truth, So I am aware of myself and I am aware of my feelings more as a person. More aware of my thoughts and not lying to myself. Not necessarily in black issues, but in cultural difference generally where I get offended because another culture is not attuned to mine. There are cultures that I find difficult to relate to because they are so different to mine. But I have learned to be aware of my differences and be more patient and understanding. It has given me a desire to understand people who I would not have understood before."

Black female
"To add to that, during the workshop, I became aware and learned that black issues do not only affect black people. Black issues bring racism. I learned that there was racism between the English and the Irish. Far back, they were treated like blacks being discriminated. Also that this affects gender issues and sexual orientation. I learned a lot, that there are other issues with black issues".

White female
"I always thought that I understood black issues, and the culture, and coming from Ireland and our own oppression of history and colonialism. But I don't understand. Someone in the workshop said "You don't know what it is like to be black unless you are black" That is one thing that I have really learned. Also someone said, "Every day I wake up I am aware that I am black and the colour of my skin". This really had a great impact on me. It was such a powerful statement and I wanted to cry. That was something that I was not aware of, that people feel that way.

For me in the counselling relationship, I have learned that if I have a black client, how they might feel. They would look at me as white, being in power, not Irish, they may not be aware of my oppressions. They could see me as being in authority. All the things that black people may have bad experiences about. I would need to be very aware of these as a counsellor. And how this could influence our relationship. I never thought about it before. I was aware of cultures, but I know very little about other cultures. I would admit I don't

know and have to ask the client for help to explain a bit about their culture. I think it is absolutely imperative to have black issues workshops and cultural workshops on the training. My self awareness has improved dramatically".

White female
"Similarities and differences in my experience. I came in thinking I have been working in a diverse society for thirty years. I have been teaching black issues to a diverse group of females and learning from the females as well. You know you don't need to raise my consciousness, its already raised sort of thing. I became aware that I tend to retreat into knowing the statistics and not to be taking into account my process with this client. Also I too am from an ethnic minority, I am Jewish and I have always felt that doesn't count these days in the hierarchy of oppressions. Who am I to complain when I can get on to a bus and know I am not being beaten up? But I have had experiences of oppression and I have had to come to terms with that and not sort of hide it away, and think it doesn't count. It does count, it is part of me and one of the things that I have to be aware off, that I do have an experience and it is different from the experiences that black people are aware of".

White female
"I feel like I should say something specific about the black issues workshops, because I know it will be really helpful but I don't think I am going to be able to. I intended to look at my notes and go back to the place I was then. But actually I can't really remember specifics I can only be in the present. I have been spending the morning talking to my therapist about coming here and talking and trying to work out what is going on for me. I think there is a lot going on. We had the first year which I done here and we had similarities And difference, but it was sort of touched upon. It made such a difference having you running the workshops and being so involved and kind of It wasn't that you didn't let us forget it, because sometimes and this may be my own personal agenda, but it kind of dipped of the agenda and I thought oooh that's to difficult, and kind of subconsciously thought I don't want to go there. That's much too hard and I really don't want to look at that. But generally black issues have been very present and I think that has been really important.

For me it has got me onto the next step. It has been a slow process for me and I am just getting to a place where I am prepared to acknowledge and admit that I have got to. I think, for me it is about making judgements about people and it could be about all sorts of things, but for me I do focus quite a lot on my racism. And I know black issues are about lots of different things, but this is important that's what I look at. What I have realised that the pre-judgements that I made about people every day I didn't noticed them. Whereas before they just went really fast across my brain, now they kind of sit there and I really don't want to think about them. But what I have managed to do this year is not just dismiss them; it has given me the courage to confront that in me. Sometimes I have felt very alone in this and this may be part of the process of looking at something so personal and deep. What I have realised is that we are all at different stages of this journey. It's weird, I feel cant look at anybody, I don't know why. So in a way there has been something about the safety of looking at this in the group that has been going on. It was said earlier, that we have seen that sometimes when black issues is put on the agenda and we have to think about it, fear has shut me down completely. I have seen that happen with my peers. Not only is it really difficult to get to a point where I can face myself like this, that more care needs to be taken to support each other. This is about everything we are learning, but specifically about something that for me is so raw, so personal, that if I am going to face it, I don't want to do this alone. So for next year I would like to look at how to make it an even safer place. Because the fear paralyses people. It almost needs to be like, it's ok to have these feelings, let's just get on and talk about it rather than it's not ok".

White female
"On the last black issues workshop, it took us, the whole group a long time to get into the courage to really get into the nitty gritty and really start combing through what we wanted to say, and just when we were starting to get fired up we had to go on a break. I know for myself and others we were deflated because the energy was high then we had to calm down while on our break and it was really difficult to keep that fire going. So continuing black issues workshops without breaks or refreshments while continuing discussion is important".

White female
"Yes that would have helped me. There is never enough time".

Researcher
"Yes that is something we have noticed that when the issues are intense including black issues, we need more than a day. If you think of this in the context of relationships with clients, they have to break, often when they are very intense".

White female
"Yes they often get very intense before the end".

Asian female
"I learned a lot during the workshops. Before going to the workshop I thought my knowledge about, not issues but about blacks were adequate.
I learned that many black issue s apply to my issues and myself as an Asian person living in white society. I learned a lot about colonising and the history of blacks and how that can affect the personality of an individual. How that personality can carry on through history. How we can loose our own identity and confidence and the blockage that we cannot go on, because I myself always looked at white people as superior to myself without consideration. I just accepted what they were saying because they had white skin and Blue eyes. I learned that was not correct. At the same time I came across the reality of my own responsibility to get my place in white society, this means to learn more to see why I can't go on. to integrate, to regain my confidence and move on. Also I learned that this is a mutual effect on blacks and whites, because I have many white friends who feel really guilty and they hesitate to say anything and support. In conjunction with my work place and these workshops I learned a lot. The other thing about black issues that I learned here is oppression though history and that black people suppress other minorities; maybe they are just repeating what happened to them in the wider society".

Researcher
"I wonder if you can you link your responses to areas of the your development on the course and whether you have evidence of what you have learned that links to your work with clients".

Asian female

"Trying to make sense of things you are not supposed to do, for example I might have a white client who may resent for example lets say a black person because there is fear that they wont get the job because you wont get the job because of your qualifications, but we need to represent the whites, black Indian and Chinese in the community".

Researcher "How do you transfer this into a counselling situation*?"*

Black female
"I might get rubbed up, resentment, be annoyed if someone is very racist, or may be I might understand".

Researcher

"Any of these could happen and the feelings might be transference or counter transference, so what would you do with them and how would you take care of yourself?"

"Take it to my supervisor. I have to understand that my thoughts and feelings I am aware of and I have to be careful about not switching off. I am there for my client. So I have to work through it".

Researcher
"This question is open to anyone. Do you feel that the work you have done on the course has impacted the way you use supervision and the way your supervisors are with you?"

White female
"Definitely we have discussed cultural and black issues and the possibilities of not understanding someone because the culture is different. But I am looking at areas where people are too scared to voice these things. I know that I might find it difficult to talk to black people unless I know them very well or I am in a supervised group".

Researcher *"Why is this"?*

White female
"It's a safe environment the element is this group. If I challenge my thoughts, it is safe to also receive other people's thoughts to what I say. In another environment it could be quite threatening".

Researcher *"What is the fear?"*

White female
"The possibility of offending someone or receiving an aggressive response to offence when offence is not what is meant. So at least this is a place to resolve situations before you have clients".

Black female
"I am not going to reply to that, but I am going to add a bit about what I have learnt from the black issues workshops. It is that black issues is not just about racism, it is to do with the way black people relate to other black people as well as how they relate to white people. For me in counselling situations as a black woman what is going through my head, is my client thinking I am not good enough? I am wondering what she is thinking about me and how I can be there with her. In relation to how it affects my relationship with other black people, at times it is helpful. When a young black man comes to me and he is telling me about his respect, having young black people that look up to him, I find it easier to understand where he is coming from, because within my culture as the older child we have to set examples that young people follow. So it makes it easier for me to enter into their frame of reference. But there are times because of history, because of racism, and because of the way I have the experience of being black, I am wondering you know when I am with another black person, because I don't see black people in key posts very much, one of the questions is how did they come to be where they are, what qualifications? I know in my head that they have struggled. It has been difficult for me at forty-seven not to have reached a stage in life that I ought to have reached. I feel that my white contemporaries would have probably reached that stage. I am not talking about you Isha. I don't think I am stupid, although my education would have put me down and make me feel stupid. So over history that makes me wonder whether, when I am talking to my white counsellor, was I to be open enough to accept this is really how? I am experiencing this, and not to feel threatened by this, and to assume I am accusing her of racism, or for her to feel defensive about it".

Researcher
"Can I just come back to what you said in the beginning were you also suggesting that a client may question how you got to be a counsellor?"

Black female
"In fact, a recent client wanted to know about me, and I did not want to get into that with her. I told her I was married and a few things and I said she is open to fantasise about whatever. One of the things she said to me was, "as a Nigerian, I must have mentioned to her I was Nigerian, you have gone through a lot and you have reached maturity". I did not add or dismiss what she said; I just thought, she could keep what ever fantasies that was hers. But sometimes I am left thinking did that mean she may have thought I was not good enough to be her counsellor"?

Researcher "Did anything that occurred in the black issues workshops assist to manage this situation?"

Black female
"To manage this I can help her to understand that she is not the only person who has these thoughts, just like in 'Loves executioner', where the fat woman shares a sense of revulsion about being fat herself, it is here there and everywhere. I can stay with her and let her know this is a real feeling and allow her to voice what is going on for her and how she is experiencing me. If it were to annoy me I would then take it to my counsellor or supervisor because at times I have been hurt by black issues and my therapist and supervisor have been really helpful. My supervisor is white and she says she experiences me as anxious and I don't feel that I am anxious in her presence, so I was wondering where that was coming from. So immediately, as a black person the thought of my race came into it".

Researcher
"Just a point of clarification as I am not sure if you answered my question is there anything you learned from the black issues workshop that helped you with these situations?"

Black female
"Definitely. The images around, the media images, the projections that we receive affect white people and black people".

Researcher *"Is there anything specifically from the workshops that you can remember that assisted you?"*

Black female
"Um the fact that we are in a group together and we were able to share. In my group there were three black women and one white, and we were able to discuss these issues in a reasonable way".

Researcher *"So there was an impact?"*

"Definitely".

White female
"I think it is a very good idea to have the workshops. Because the first one back in October at the beginning of the year, it helped us to think about it. We brought a lot of the stuff into supervision and our supervisor is very big time into culture and issues and when we were talking about clients, she always brought it in. Because we were in a small group it was easier. She allowed us to even discuss the black issues workshop. But what I have done, it is very naughty is phone up one of my black peers and ask what it is like to be a black person as if I was the white counsellor. I really wanted to learn, and even though I have read the books, I felt safe to call her and that has helped me enormously. This is outside of the course and something I would not have done before the black issues workshops".

White female
"I am going to go with here because I am feeling it very strongly. I felt that actually we talked but we didn't really go there. I feel that I have got experience of the PD group where I lost my voice. So I have the discomfort because we didn't and I was certainly holding back. I cannot put my hand up and say that I am not racist. I want to fight with that and I cant. So for me, impact, I teach as well, and I was feeling very comfortable within the classroom .I have been prompted to re-visit what I do in the classroom. I have been restricted by multiculturalism where they change Mrs Smith to Mrs Sing. This does not address the issues. I am challenging the curriculum where I am writing to exam boards and saying this is atrocious, whatever. I don't know how to go there and I would like it to stay as a major element of training. The impact of the first session was amazing and I agree that the second session tapered off. I feel that I have a long way to go. I am certainly glad of being reminded of my position, my language and how I am working with people".

"We have about twenty minutes and I would like to know if there was anything that happened in the workshops that you were really unhappy with and anything that I suggested or done that you would like me to do differently in future. This might be difficult for you or me, but I still want you to do it".

Black female
"For me, in the creativity session when we were asked to make a mask, I did not think I could make anything, but somehow I made a mask. This had a strong impact on me emotionally. The colours reminded me of my history, the vibrancy of orange burning tigree, I was put in touch with my African-ness. The very last workshop discussion when you Isha presented your slide, and the interview with the black artist summed it up. He touched on everything. To sum it up, I would say he was talking about; he was the sum of his history. "This is the I that I am" I think was the phrase that he used. To me it related to the sun god, the water, the history of slavery, everything made this person, from his ancestry and history to experiencing life in the present made him the person that he is. It sounded as if he wouldn't change that person for anything. I found that quite useful".

Black female
"Something you could have done differently. Something that I thought, oh this is restricting. When the group presented their masks and the group applauded by clapping and you said what are you clapping for? When we did our reviews during the last session, well you were clapping too, we even hugged. I thought, you are doing it differently now. It takes a lot of courage to change from a stand in which I will be to be there with the other person, or client and support and contain her or be there for him, which I thought in the last review you did".

Black female
"I would like to go back to the experiences shared about supervision. Because I find it very interesting that her supervisor perceived her as anxious. I have had the experience of taking a black client to a white supervisor, who is clearly on one level aware of black issues, but I feel that because this person comes from a psychodynamic background she was a bit too ready to see what the client is presenting as a defence. I feel that the workshops have given me the confidence to go on thinking even if I cant always challenge this person verbally, that actually this is about racism its not a defence or anything else. I really have been given the confidence to hold on to my own thoughts and feelings about it, through the workshops and through some of the case studies that you have given us.

At the beginning I sometimes thought you were a little bit defensive, and I was well aware that this is a reaction that you often get in workshops as a black facilitator. But I thought I saw you get less and less defensive as the year went by, so I don't know whether you felt more comfortable with us or what, but I thought I saw that happening".

Researcher "Yes it did happen and I had to work on myself to get there".

Asian female
"It's a long time ago I really cannot recall what you did and what you could do differently, but the feeling stayed with me from the first workshop, and each time the subject of black issues comes up, I feel excluded because they are divided into white and black, and when you are at risk you find your shelter, sometimes you find your mothering part and you find your shelter, and I could not find that shelter, not with black or white. I always felt that I was excluded. So in the first workshop my feeling was that you were a bit defensive and hard to approach, and I had questions and I wish that I could just come to you and hug you and ask you, but I couldn't do it. In the second workshop, it was quite different I felt so comfortable to come to you, even if you were defensive I could came to you. And there was another point that I learned from these workshops; it's about inferiority and how we see ourselves as inferior, as counsellor, teacher, or whatever. I think that and learn this. The history suppressed/oppressed blacks, Jews, migrants and the history shows that people are changing their attitudes, we are developing. In the United States the blacks twenty-five years ago, they didn't have rights but they fight for that right and public opinion is changing. I myself learned to acknowledge myself as a counsellor. To be good enough as a counsellor. If I am Asian I am Asian, if someone doesn't trust me because I am Asian that is their problem. I can't solve their problem; they have to do something to solve their problem. It was so fruitful Isha thank you so much".

White female
"The second workshop was very useful. It was interesting to see how people fitted into the two groups that were set. If you identified white, go into that group, if you identify as black, go into that group. It was interesting to see the number of what we wouldn't really consider as 'black' in quotes in the same group that I belong. If I were to explain that I would say that all the people that came into my group saw themselves as members of the oppressed non- white group".

Researcher
"We have just five minutes left, is there anything really pressing that anyone feels they would like to say".

White female
"There was just one thing, it's not massive, but sometimes I have felt that perhaps sometimes what we are asked to do it is almost not simple enough. Its not that I want to be treated like a child. It is difficult because I am talking about everyone, and me but I want to own it at the same time. Part of the lack of response is not feeling safe, which we have discussed already. Also sometimes for me it is so complicated what is going on, to be able to simplify and say its ok. This is a hard one because I would not want it to be taken away from me and I need to go through the process. Also I really don't know exactly what I am saying, but like the guy who is the artist, it took me a while to understand what you wanted us to look at. You know in terms of how would our assumptions be if we had a black client. I also felt oh I am not sure if I want to say because of who is in the group, the size of the group, safety and everything. I also felt it could have also been missed by some people, missed by me. Sometimes it's like a bit of confusion, what are we being asked to think about here. It's like you have to think abut the client relationship, but for me it was like I have to think about what I am thinking about this guy while I am listening to him. He is my client, he is on this tape recorder, he is a young black man, and he is a young black male artist. You know get in there and really think about it and your safe and no one here is gonna think you are shit. But you have got to feel safe to say it. I feel sometimes this opportunity was missed. But maybe we /I got to that point later".

"It sound to me like you are saying that this needed to be held more and acknowledged, that I was aware that people were afraid and that there was different levels of understanding and learning. And that if the tutors had been farther along in our process to do that, it would have re-assured you".

Researcher *"Yes you have articulated it much better than me, that's exactly what I mean".*

White female
"I came into this course thinking that I knew a fair bit about black issues. I realise that I knew sweet F. all, but I have come out understanding things better. I don't know what it is like to be black because I am not black but I can try to understand how people feel. From this I realise that I have been walking in the street not listening to what people in the street are saying and there are some really nasty people around, especially in my work environment. I never heard the racism to wards black people towards Asian people and I am really disgusted, but I am glad that I have this new sense and I more interested in understanding now".

Researcher *"A wonderful note to end on".*

Appendix 10a
Uni-one. Year 2 transcript (2) Verbal evaluation.December 03
5 participants and two tutors
Words in italics were spoken by the researcher.

White Irish female
"I am an Irish white female, living in England for about ten years and obviously coming from a white culture, and not actually seeing black people before, it had a great impact ten years ago on me. Never really new much about where black people came from and how their lives have impacted on them. So the training has had a greater understanding of how black people see themselves and how white issues impact on black people. I work as a nurse in a multi cultural setting. This has obviously made me more aware of how I feel about black people and more respecting of their culture and cultural needs. On my placement, black issues are not really discussed, which I am shocked about. I actually discuss black issue on my placement and the reaction is surprise. The fact that mentioning black I feel should not be mentioned, but I always mention black issues because my clients are black. I have a client from Ghana and one from the West Indies. Obviously although my clients are black, they have different cultural issues. I have learnt quite a lot from my clients and I have taught my supervisor on my placement and other trainee counsellors on my placement about black issues. But it has not really discussed on my placement and I am a bit disgusted with that. As far as my college supervision, black issues are discussed, but not in great detail. I don't know if this is because my colleagues are white. Some of us have black clients. I think I want to discuss my feelings on black issues more this year. I have found the black issues workshops useful. Both black and white tutors have helped me to understand a little bit more. At times I have felt a bit intimidated by the black tutor, I felt maybe Isha has not understood me as a white female and may be I don't understand her as a black female. It may be similarities and differences. I don't know, but otherwise I have found it useful".

Black female:
"I have learned a lot about black issues. I have always felt done into and never really looked at how I could impact on white people. Since doing this course, I have gained a greater understanding of how both black and white people impact on each other. The training and the workshops have been excellent. A few weeks ago we had an exercise on Gill Tuckwell's literature, which reflected on black professionals and race. I was impacted by it and it made me reflect on what had been happening in my life. In particular if a small thing goes wrong, it can make me feel like a failure. It can make me feel like rejecting myself totally and the fear of failing, I have also learned from presentations. A colleague presented a case study of a client; a black child who called the counsellor 'mummy' the counsellor was white. The language used, It was interesting to see that language plays a large part in our thinking, also what is meant by this child could be different to what the counsellor perceives the child to mean. This could influence the relationship between counsellor and client. The counsellor's experience and background really showed up in the presentation. In my placement as the last speaker said, black issues are not discussed in my placement. Recently I had an experience where a white client refused to see me. I felt strongly that it was to do with the fact that I was black counsellor. She wiped her hands when I touched her in greeting. I was supported at my placement I had feared that this client as going to make a complaint against me, possibly to BACP. But nothing materialised and I felt totally supported on placement".

Black female
"I come from a country that has a black majority. When I was young, I did not know there were issues concerning blacks. It was only when I travelled I realised there were people different from me. Also back in my country, the legacy of colonisation, is one that made me think oh there is a difference, there as those people who came to our land and took over. Now we are like second citizens in the country that led to a struggle for independence. Now after independence, when we the black majority think we are the ones who are in power, I find there is still an imbalance of power between those who have and those who do not have. Whether it is a black issue thing or not, I perceive it as a power thing. Since I have come here and I am learning about black issues, have a wider understanding that besides having power imbalance, there is oppression of one race to another. There is discrimination, but again those who are in

power always have the upper hand in bringing the issue to counselling. As a counsellor there are certain powers that I have over the client, as in setting the timing and the price. So whether you are counselling white or black the issues are power imbalance".

Black female
"You know I have been jogged by what you have just said regarding power. In the case I mentioned before. Part of me felt that this person had the power to destroy my career. I felt as if that power was to do with the fact that she was white, who would be believed, even though I was the counsellor. So even though counsellors are in powerful positions, clients also with regards to race have some of that power as well. On the course we have been reminded to talk about the differences. To acknowledge and be aware of these differences in counselling. During my placement, I went out, greeted my client and as we entered the room she almost instantly wiped her hand. I was aware of that but I wasn't going to openly mention it. From the minute she sat down I was very aware of our differences. She said what exactly do you do in this place? I said that we believe that through talking and exploring issues with us, people find insights and answers to their own questions. She said, talking is not what I want, I want advice. You may get into trouble if you give me advice. She said you have to find someone that you click with". Two conversations on I said to her that what I am hearing is that perhaps you feel that as black women I can't understand you. She said oh why did you say that? And she was very agitated. So obviously the issue of race had impacted on the counselling situation. This carried on for a while and she vehemently denied that it had anything to do with it. Then as she was leaving she said openly in reception she said, it is not because you are black that I wouldn't talk to you, there was an Indian guy here and I wouldn't talk to him either. Then she went out and came back asked can I have your name? So I gave her my name and she left, but I couldn't believe what had happened, it was my first experience of that. It is quite important for me to address this issue, because I am definitely more aware of the impact and feel more empowered because of the course. But it is more difficult at work because it is out there in the big wide world and racism is a matter of life. Also where on the course I can feel supported by the ethos of the course, out there I was expecting to be punished".

White female:
"The impact of black issues on my placement, because two of my clients are black. I have actually now had the confidence to bring in black issues to my relationship with the client. In building up the relationship, I immediately say I am a white counsellor, I bring it into the conversation. As a result of that my first client turned round and said," you are white, but you are a good listener" Then I did not feel that black issue was important. But it was important because later as time went on my client began to open up and experience her own feelings because of the impact of what I brought in, which was about black issues. So the training has helped me build confidence, it has had a great impact".

(Turkish)Asian female
"It applies to me as well. What we are learning here is enormous, it is major learning. Before this course I thought I had learned enough reading studying about history and black people. But when I started the course I realised that I really did not know anything. Just knowing the history and having black friends or being in a black community, it doesn't mean that we know the culture of black people. Because black people have their own culture, women have their own culture. How we develop this culture and how this culture can intervene between us as a counsellor and our clients and in this society. So I learned a lot about myself and my own issues and my inner world. I try with this learning to bring my inner world to its reality. Sometimes I feel the same as you. So this culture of learning, of oppression is so concrete, it makes it very difficult to forget or loose it. It can easily come to the counselling setting or whatever setting. So in my work place, I can easily be destroyed in a minute by somebody who I have experienced a history of being oppressed by. I don't really know. This is what I really need to learn more of. How to build confidence and how to acknowledge and recognise my own self in an appropriate way. How to present my self as I am and not to be oppressed when it comes from my history. I said that I learned a lot, but how does the learning support me? There is more to learn".

White male
"What I have learned? Someone else has mentioned that she thought she knew a lot about black issues when they started on the course, I thought I did as well, but I obviously didn't. I don't have any black clients in my placement work, but I work with a lot black staff and patients at work. What I have noticed is that my reflection during the last year and a half on this course has made me more aware of cultural differences. If I am not thinking about cultural differences then the relation ship with patients or other staff is limited. I have noticed one or two cases where there are big cultural differences between myself and the patient, the relationship that I have developed with them has been different than with any one else on the ward, because I have been interested in their culture for the first time. So I guess that is how it has helped me. I am hoping that when I see a client from a different culture that I will be as confident as I am at work. Listening to people from different cultures on the course, and a tutor has made it much easier to learn. To have the different cultural influences on the course, not just the workshop has helped. If we had all been white people it would have been much harder. My own experience prior to coming on the course, culture was not something I thought about, not even my own culture. The course has helped me look at other cultures and my own culture. So if the course had been all white it would have been easier not to think about culture as a big issue".

White Irish female
"That is interesting what you are saying because I come from a different culture. And I am a white, Irish and a female. Just because I speak the same language and I have got similar sort of skin, there is a difference. So if there was a white group, there would be differences within that because there are people in our group who are not only English, but from other white and foreign language countries. Just to mention, I feel as an Irish female there are issues in my culture that have some similarities towards black culture. Especially in the 50's with regards to racism. So I am quite aware of my issues and very empathetic towards black issues as well".

Black female
"I agree with both of you, and the other thing that we have learnt is that although we can come from the same backgrounds as other people, that there are differences. When we are in a society where the majority or the race in power is different from me, I have certainly felt oppressed by the majority, or the white people in power Also about the tutors, I feel that I can get on with all the tutors, but there is a bit of perhaps I have got to be careful as well. In relation to race, the reaction I may get is, 'how sorry' is it really meant. Can I really make you understand? I am talking about there is two of you in here. I am talking about you -------, not you in particular. Not you in particular, but other white tutors on the course. In counselling practise the lecturer has intervened and said, "I feel, it sounds painful". I am wondering to what extent that feeling can be or whether it is always a reaction to it. I am just wandering how strong the empathy is".

White female
"You are saying because you are a black female, you felt that".

Black female
"I am just wondering how strong the empathy is. You could say "there there" and it doesn't really mean anything. That impacted on me at the time".

White female
"As a white female I may be thinking Isha does not understand because she is black and I am white, whereas I feel as tutors whether black or white, they feel empathetic".

Black female
"I am saying it is quite difficult to forget about my race".

Appendix 10b
Unione year 2. Student Verbal review 3. March 04 4 participants & 2 tutors
Transcribed by Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga
Words in italics were spoken by the researcher.

Researcher
"Can you talk about your experience of understanding black issues and what has your experience of learning about black issues been like, in all areas of your training".

Black female
"One of the motives for coming to the evaluation is the feedback that I received in the form of the last transcript. I very much appreciated that; it widened my understanding of black issues hearing what other colleagues had to say. Where I am from you never hear about black issues. Whenever I read a book I find black issues coming up. Even in the public. I was on a bus and this white woman pointed out that only Hindus don't discriminate and don't have any prejudices. She criticised all other people like, the Irish, the Africans are bad, except the English. So I asked what does she think about partition in Africa. She then brushed it aside and said that she had some good black African friends. Before she was just generalising that every African is a bad person. That is a black issue. My being on this course has helped me to be aware of such issues. Being aware of the issues makes me understand the differences and similarities. For example I am very fond of hugging people, but on the training some people do not want to be hugged. It is a cultural and personal issue. When they ask" how do I feel when people refuse hugs" It hurts, but because I am black and I come from a different cultural background, I accept the other person's feelings. If they are saying they don't like hugs because it's their culture, or they don't like hugs with others too. It's not because I am black but because of the other persons feelings. That is generalising. I should say my empathy has deepened in a way. Let me put myself in the other person's feelings"

White male 1
"When I started on the training my knowledge of black issues and any other cultural issues was quite poor. Coming down to London from Bury St Edmunds, a white middle class area was a learning curve for me. Being on the course has helped me to increase my learning and my understanding of black issues. The real difficultly is that it has made me look at my own prejudices. I don't believe when people say that don't have prejudices, we all have prejudices. It's coming to terms with that and trying to understand what these prejudices are and where they come from that is important. The black issues workshops have created a lot of uncomfortable feelings for me. At times I have felt quite unsafe, very challenged and quite criticised being a white male. I have had to work through that. At time I have come away from the workshops feeling angry and quite defensive. Over the two years I have tried to work through that and really asked myself. Why am I getting angry, are there some prejudices I have got to face. I still don't really know the answers. It has really made me look at it in a very honest way. The black issues workshops makes you look at it in the face. To me as well it is about safety and being safe to feel able to say what you really think and work through what you really think. Sometimes I have not felt particularly safe to be really free and say how I really felt. I have wanted to say something is really out of order and I don't agree with that, but as white male I have not always felt safe enough to be really true with my feelings in the black issues workshops. I don't know how you can overcome that, but I just wanted to say about how unsafe it can feel. I don't know if it is my personal

opinion, but I think that the black issues workshops have caused friction in the group, between the black and white students".

Researcher
"Can I ask you to clarify what you mean by safety?"

"My fears are that if I say something that was honest, I feared the reaction that I would get and that reaction would continue outside of this room. I guess I have the fear of being accused of being racist. The only way that I can describe it as I have written about it in my journal. One Saturday after a workshop, I went away feeling as though I had been walking on broken glass. That's how it feels sometimes, like you have to be very guarded. You have to be careful what you say in case something that you say might be interpreted in the wrong way. Sometimes I have wanted to say something just to work through it and try it out, to say I am trying this, I'm not really sure what I want to say, but I haven't always felt able to do that".

Researcher
"What would the safety be like?"

"The safety would mean just to be free and bounce things out of my head and not fear that I was going to be accused of being racist I guess".

White male 2
"I just heard in the previous conversation about the first workshop and certainly there was some tension. I left quite angry that day because I thought the tension was there because some people at the workshop were asked to think about black issues and they were not doing that. What the black issues workshops have done for me is highlighted some areas that when I first joined the course I thought I knew about, but now feel that I did not know anything about. Obviously working with black colleagues on this training course, not just on the workshops, it has brought home to me that I was not really culturally aware. I am trying to be more like that. I did enjoy the workshops and I did find them a bit tense at times, but I think that is quite healthy. I think my reason for being angry was more my disappointment with some people. It was not dissimilar to the sexuality workshops where I was really disappointed that there was some elements in the group that I felt were not thinking about the topic of sexuality. On a personal note, the black issues workshops have helped me at work, especially, not just with colleagues, who are mainly black, but with patients too, who are from many different cultures including black people. I feel that it has helped me to realise that I am some way short to understanding what it may be like to be black. My thoughts when I first started and my thoughts now have completely changed really. I have noticed on a number of occasions that it really is a powerful issue and that power can be frightening. To be outside and listen as a white man".

Researcher
"Can you elaborate on what you mean when you say, "that power can be frightening?"

What I mean by that is the sort of intensity and the power that I can see in the black members when we are talking about these issues. It can be overpowering as a white person to see how strong that is. Something happened in a PD group and I said to someone later, "That was so powerful". I don't expect that it would invoke the same power and intensity in me as a white man, but when I see that from somewhere else it makes me see that there is a lot in black issues that I don't understand and how powerfully it affects black people".

Researcher
"You mentioned something quite important, that it has affected your work with patients and clients".

"When I say patients I mean mental health patients. The workshops have helped me on the ward. More from the perspective to see at an early stage on this training course, I was not really aware of my own culture let alone any one else's cultures. To start becoming aware of that has helped me in my relationships with patients on the ward. It has become a topic of conversation where I don't think it would have happened before. With me asking questions about other peoples cultures, and finding that it is a really good starting

point. I have mentioned a situation on the ward when I was calling a Rastafarian patient "mate" To him a 'mate' is a partner, to me a 'mate' is a friend. He thought I was being suggestive about partnership. When he pointed it out to me, I realised that I was offending him, as opposed to saying, "are you ok mate?" It was not just the odd word in the corridor. When he pointed that out to me I realised that I was actually offending him. That has been highlighted at work, whereas before I might not have thought much about that. Because of the importance that has been put on differences on the training course, it has helped me. It has definitely helped me, not hindered me in my work and personal life to start thinking about these things and be aware of them".

Researcher
"This is an opportunity for your feedback and also about the other areas of the course like supervision, placement work, and your relationships with the tutors. What has gone well and not so well in terms of the way the tutors have approached black issues".

Black female
"Seeing my tutors working together as a team in such a way that they are supportive to one another makes me realise that teamwork is important in counselling. When I am in supervision I have got others supporting me as a team together. I received some support from a team member in my placement work. In the group supervision I saw a lot of standing together and having a voice about some uncomfortable issues. In the end I was happy to move on. They say unity is power because of being together. In supervision we were able to be empowered and move on. It was a learning journey in this supervision. A colleague has spoken about the power of black people when black issues are being discussed. I have heard that some people when they see a black person they are not looking at a human being they are looking for something different. They are looking at someone who is here for trouble. Just the colour of the skin serves as its own power, just the colour to some people. Blacks are aggressive, blacks are bullies, and blacks are so many things. But again when I think about my being with other people. Some people think I am imposing myself with my hugs. To me that is just a way of affection. I am not imposing myself. So black issues and sexuality of course, they are sensitive issues which unless people talk about them and understand what it is all about they will remain being feared. In my own culture, I never new what it was like to about to talk about black issues. Now I can say that I understand. In a way there are levels because we talk about black issues brings racism. Before we talk about the whites then another layer the coloured people in the middle, then us blacks being the lowest people. After independence we tried to reconcile and ask the people, just give us the same name. We are just people of the country, but still these layers are still there. I don't know how it can be gotten rid of. I come back to my placement. Black issues are never discussed. They are sort of avoided completely. Anyway there was no opportunity to talk about theses issue. I just got on with my client. In this course, I would like to thank you Isha because like my colleagues I did not know much about black issues. Black issues does not only affect blacks and whites, black issues is when you think about the Irish being discriminated in the past and slavery. It is going to take a long time if ever these issues will be understood by all people. If there was a way to start from an early age in the schools. Let the children as Mandela says learn about the rainbow colours and understand about other people's cultures and what affects them. They could go on to a certain level as teenagers, to older people, talk about black issues".

Researcher *"You are not alone"*

White male 1.
"Reflecting on the sessions we have had. Something that stuck in my mind was when you Isha you got us to do an exercise where we all had to line up in order of our colour. I just remember how upset that made some people and how difficult that exercise was and some people not quite being able to identify where they should be in that line. There was quite a lot of tension right the way through that line. That wasn't just about black and white I think that the whole exercise caused a lot of uneasiness. Again speaking honestly it feels as though sometimes that there is a lot of emphasis put on black issues. I'm not criticising that but it seems there is an inequality in the amount of time that is spent on black issues. Other issues are covered. Another issue that is close for me is sex and sexuality, that is covered but there does seem to be inequality. I think as well every time that we do have a black issues workshop, speaking honestly again because of the tension in the

past there is a sinking feeling that goes with a black issues workshop because they are so tense and challenging and tiring and you wonder how am I going to feel when I come out this time".

White Tutor
"Do you think there is another way that black issues could be taught?"

White male 1.
"I don't know the only thing that I can think of is may be to acknowledge it and recognise it more at the beginning of the training. Maybe spend some time looking at it and recognising that these dynamics can happen within any of the sessions and may be how they are going to be dealt with. Maybe visiting it more in the group contract and may be to embrace it more at the beginning. Just to recognise that it may happen and how it is going to be managed. Or maybe had I been more aware that it could cause such tension, maybe it was my naivety, I did not realise it would bring up so much stuff. I do take on board that it is my stuff, but I don't think it is all my stuff; it was stuff that I was also picking up from the group. Maybe if I had gone into the sessions a bit more aware that that might happen I might have had a bit more confidence".

White male 2.
"I want to say something about the question of 'are there too many black issues workshops' I feel that certainly with the black issues and the sexuality workshops there seemed to be a lack of awareness in those groups with some people. I personally felt that is what the workshops are for, to come to some kind of awareness. That is what my anger was about. People who are still asking those kinds of questions then we need more not less of those workshops. I did not get that kind of feeling at the gender workshop. I felt at least I am trying to be open to what others are saying and I think that if people are not doing that then there is tension. That was my experience. It wasn't so much the issue of sexuality or black issues; it was the lack of awareness a tense situation".

White tutor
"Do you think that black issues can be taught without the tension? Do you think it is inevitable?"
I think the tension is healthy. It depends what kind of tension. If its tension because people are getting angry because someone is not reflecting they are just opening their mouths and not thinking, just saying things, then that kind of tension may not be useful. If it is tension about the issues themselves say for example how people feel, maybe a white man in a predominantly black group or a black woman in a predominantly white group. Those kinds of tensions and feeling from those issues feel different to me".

Researcher
"The subject of black issues obviously evokes the way of being of some people who open their mouths without thinking and not reflecting. That is obviously a response of some sort. Not to justify it, but as you are talking about it I am thinking that these responses are part of the dynamic in the group. There are many kinds of responses. Certainly I have found this a difficult dynamic to grapple with in a group situation.

Researcher
There are a couple of questions that I have to ask you. One, is there anything else that you can think of that really felt difficult and not ok for you in the way that tutors have worked with you on black issuse?. Two, is there anything you want to say about your practise?"

White male 2.
"No I did not think there was anything for me. I think by its very nature it has to be challenging and I never felt it was challenging to the point where I could not speak.
The black issues workshops have influenced my practise although I have obviously seen different clients and I am obviously aware of differences even though I have not had a black client yet".

White male 1.
"I'm the same, I haven't had a black client in my placement, but I have had plenty of black clients within triad practice. It has made me more aware of and address things in my practice. It has made me recognise

things and pick up on things in my practice, that maybe I would not pick up on before. There was one situation where my client was sharing how she felt about being a black woman in this country. It is difficult to say how I would have responded to this situation before, but I really tried to work with it and her and understand where she was. I felt sometimes that I was grappling with things. I would like to think that the black issues workshops have facilitated me to get to that place. The other question yes it was just the exercise with the line up that I mentioned before.

Reearcher
"Do you think that black issues means just talking about black clients?"

White male 2
"No I think that white people have black issues. Not that I have any experience of this with my clients. I am thinking, as a white person, what are my black issues? It's what going to those workshops has meant to me and the impact it has had on me. So whilst I cant necessarily link this to a client, I can link it to issues that black colleagues have spoken about throughout the two years, and I can think about what it is like to go to black issues workshops as a white male".

Black woman 2
"It's great being aware and assimilating black issues training on the training course, but I am still weaker outside of the course. My outside supervisor is a white woman and I still feel unsafe to raise issues of oppression outside of the course".

Researcher *"What do mean by safety?"*

Black woman 2
"Safety means having the same opportunities as my white colleagues would have to voice their opinion when they disagree with something. I feel that if I were to mention something was out of place or wrong, I can't help feeling that. For example I have been paying a lot of money for my daughter's music school and I feel that there is black issue. The director has not returned my calls and I haven't felt brave enough to confront her. I am wondering whether the best I could do as a way of empowering myself is leave. But that does not deal with it. So I tend to accept, I recognise that it is not fair and I recognise that you have to move on. I have to find the best way of dealing with it for me".

Appendix 10c
Unione, year 2. transcription final verbal evaluation black issues June 04
Attended by tutors and one black female student.
Words in italics were spoken by the researcher.

Researcher
"This evaluation is about anything that you think we should know about the impact of black issues input in the training over the whole period".

Black female trainee
"My interest in coming to this evaluation is the motivation of getting feedback through a transcript. I have learnt a lot about black issues that I did not know in the beginning. And I have gained insight of black issues that happen every day, everywhere every time. I have also gained insight and learning from other colleagues and tutors concerning black issues. In the beginning I was so afraid to talk about black issues I felt that I would hurt other people's feelings, those who are not black. But seeing the example set by the tutors in one of the workshops, as they talked openly and transparently about black issues, I felt well I can express myself and learn from others as they learn from me as well. I thought that if black issues were brought into the course it has widened my understanding. My understanding is growing and developing. I can now recognise in the street people quarrelling between black and white and know that this might concern black issues".

Researcher
"I was thinking as you were talking about outside of the training, I am also concerned about what goes on inside of the course, but I know this effects our personal lives outside of the course as well. I was remembering yesterday when I was in the post office. There was an African Caribbean man very aggressively cussing the Asian man behind the counter because he couldn't have what he wanted. He was calling out and telling him, "You are being racist" In the past I would have been afraid of that type of situation. I wasn't afraid, I was curious and I felt a bit ashamed because it was a black on black experience. I also feel that there is a lot of stuff that goes on between Africans and Asians because of internalisation. There it was being acted out in front of me in my personal life. I was saddened by it and I wanted to get away from it. I do feel that I have a greater understanding and a greater boldness when these issues are happening. Our issues, what I would consider to be black issues that go on between us as black people. My experience of the impact of black issues on the training course is that black students are bolder in understanding themselves and their relationships with other black people. Also I am hearing white students talking about black issues being white issues, which mean that there is more awareness going on between white people about black issues as well. This means that we have arrived at a stage where we can be explicit that black issues exist. This feels like a stage that has not been explicitly addressed much in the training".

White tutor 1
"I am aware that I am very reluctant to take hold of this. When you offered it to me earlier I had to quickly say something to defend myself. It might be a bit faltering, but there are lots of things that I want to say. I felt moved when you said about what happened on that particular training day. I remember that training day and I think that that was quite a moment for me. There have also been other moments that have been challenging for me in the teaching of this course ever since it started. I am aware of how I am often reluctant to speak. It

isn't that I am not thinking about things; it is that I am often reluctant to speak. There are times when we are reminded by Isha to think about things and I say yes it is another thing on my list to do. Also for me it is painful, what you said happened in the post office; I see things like that all the time. In the post office or in the street. It is either white on black or black on black. It's sad and makes me just want to go home and shut the door. I don't know that I feel any bolder. I feel more secure in myself and in my thinking about where I am, but I don't think I am any braver than ten years ago about confronting racism or addressing black issues or what ever that borderline. There is sometime s a borderline between those two things. I like the way that white students have become bolder and braver. I suppose that I was saying that knowing that black people have to deal with things that I never have to deal with from the minute you set out side of your house and there are things that I can pretend are not happening".

White tutor 2

"I am thinking about speaking, about having a voice. And as two white tutors leading a workshop, the fear that came with that. Also one of the things that I felt about the continuous input of black issues through the postgraduate training and all the discussions that go with that outside of the teaching time have made me slightly more able to speak. I was thinking about one of the things that both white and black students from different perspective, is being able to continue my voice despite my anxiety. But I still censor myself even after all this time. I don't know, in terms of evaluation, how that influences the students, if I am doing that. The other thing is what that consciously or unconsciously creates in the space. The other thing is looking at some of the work in terms of evaluation around identifying black issues, there still seems somehow in some work, not to have been picking up when two white people are working together. It doesn't seem to be translated across to other oppressions. That's a question that I am thinking about for myself in terms of evaluating. At the end of all of this, I have learnt masses, and I still find it a struggle and its still difficult and it still causes me anxiety and its still painful".

Researcher

"I would agree with the feelings that you have identified, I was just thinking that they may never go away. I believe this is an ongoing factor or emotional experience attached to oppression and this particular oppression of racism which is a huge part of black issues. That was one of my concerns throughout the process, that the experiences linked to racism would over take the developmental experiences of students in relation to their understanding of the experience of black issues. For example, what are black people's lives like, not just the racism bit, but the other bits, you know family life, relationships, and background, that sort of thing. In a sense it has, racism has been the major theme that has come out of inserting black issues into the programme. In some ways it is inevitable because it is such a huge and challenging issue that it can't not be. In some ways we have to either move on to other stages or see that this is something that happens in the future. We have to either be moved on and make a decision to stop focusing on racism and try and get on with some of the other issue, or go with the process until it is exhausted, like exhausting a trauma in therapy. Then you can think about oh actually there are other bits to it, like I have a creative, exciting and challenging life to celebrate as a black woman. So that has been one of the major emerging themes that have come out of this study. Also some of the issues that you have mentioned like feeling unsafe were one of the main issues at the beginning in terms of ethical holding of this process. That was assisted by us making ourselves quite vulnerable in the workshop we mentioned earlier. However that was linked to concerns and fears about racism and what I call a hierarchy of oppression, which is the competition between getting attention on other cultural issues. The two other themes have been the role of the black expert, which in a sense is a role that I have placed myself in. Also this theme coming up for the black students where initially either the black students or myself have been relied on to voice their experiences give. To some extent, in my experience, this role has been relinquished and challenged that it is not just about depending on black students, it is about what it is like to be white in that situation. Also about supporting black student's personal development rather than relying on them to inform your learning as a white person. The major theme has been finding a voice, because with all the other prongs that have emerged this seems the most important. It is a horizontal plain because this runs across all the themes. That to me is progress. There is no massive quantum leap because it is about being able to hold the process and having a better idea of what some of the elements might be".

White tutor 1
"I want to respond on something you said about the black expert. It is a reflection, symptom, and symbol of the whole thing. When I suggested that it was time that the white tutors should teach black issues without the black tutor. Initially I thought it was possible, now I am not sure. For me to imagine teaching black issues to a mixed group, suddenly there is this whole thing about visibility. The fact that black people who are schizophrenic or who have some other invisible difference. Thinking about similarities and difference. I perceive my self to be a very visual person. I cannot see you two as anything else but as two black women and us as two white women".

White tutor 2.
"One of the things that I have learnt through the massive input that you have put in through your research is about visibility and the strain that carries with it. And I have seen you in situations where you have been attacked. It has made me think a lot in terms of my own development as a trainer, about my own visibility as a lesbian and making that visible because I can stay invisible in that quite easily. So that has had an impact on my training practice and what I am now standing up for in the field in a much bigger way in terms of my writing. I feel that the risk that I feel you have taken by prioritising this in the training and us taking part in that has had a big impact on me and where I am and taking the risk even though I find it difficult to do. In the sex and sexualities workshop I don't always find it easy and I have learnt about that. I was thinking about being two white trainers recently teaching a black issues workshop. It was kind of a mixed experience really. The fact that we put black issues in the curriculum was questioned and pulled apart and there was lots of criticism about it. The group kept asking why couldn't we call it cultural issues. I know you have been on the receiving end of it as well. My learning is about, I used to feel very defensive about that and I still don't know what the answer is. People's views about why cant it be culture, or white issues or oppressions why is it black issues. Its something about what ever I put up there it is not going to be right. If I put cultural issue there will be questions of black issues being ignored and if I put black issues it will be 'why are you prioritising that'? So I am learning that it doesn't matter the issues come alive around the subject area because they are emotive and it doesn't matter what way they are presented, they come alive. I'm learning that I must try to keep having the voice even though it is difficult. It is something about trying to sustain continuing to speak not trying work against the sensor, the oppression in myself that is trying to silence me. It's about trying to stay vocal which I don't find easy".

Black female trainee
"I would like to agree with you. I, we call it racism, discrimination, oppressions, but I think calling it black issues encompasses a wide area of issues. it brings about as you said, as a lesbian you are being discriminated in certain areas. I remember one colleague who left the course earlier because she said she was a black lesbian and was challenging us that we don't understand what it is like to be black and be a lesbian at the same time. I can never understand another person; I can only understand myself in these issues. The issues of being black and being a black woman. When it comes to doing these things it means that I have to perform many times more than my white counterparts. Also at this age of my life, I face being aged, being too mature and some people think she cant learn anymore, but I continue to learn, Taking the point of Isha, about black on black, once I experience another black woman not acknowledging what I am doing, so the issue of black issues and oppression being different. Also the cultural background and languages and how I used to do things and how I am developing now is all black issues. Sometimes being a foreigner and trying to fit in to a new system, a new culture is also black issues, which are everywhere as Franz Fanon says".

Researcher
"I am thinking about the layer of racism which is what I called it in my journal when I realised it was rearing its ugly head. The layer of racism that we have to get through before we can get to some of the every day experiences that you are talking about. I think that there is possibly a parallel between being really concerned and challenging, almost revolutionary about the fact that black issues have been identified as an item for exploration. There must be some kind of parallel, I'm thinking of the concept of counter-transference, between what happened on the training and what could possibly have gone on if our awareness and attention had not been placed on this agenda. What could possibly go on in a counselling session if a

client is making black issues explicit and a counsellor whoever they are feels this response, why black issues, what is so important about black issues? All the things that have happened on the training in relation to black issues being on the programme, what kind of counter-transference might happen when any of them come up in a counselling session? If we have been able to find a voice and know that it is possible to find a safe place to dialogue about it then I think there is some hope that that dialogue can happen in counselling sessions and group work. There has been a kind of a silence that was going on before, like we know black issues are there, but we can't mention them because of the fears of the challenge of racism or whatever is in us. That for me signifies some hope of keeping the dialogue going".

White tutor1
"That is something I have learned from you, that hopefully that has been conveyed as part of the learning process. So in the situation of counsellor and client, that the counsellor isn't going to respond or react defensively, but will think this is familiar; this reminds me of something that I need to think about before I respond. I am having a response to this material that is making me feel uncomfortable, because I think there is a tendency for counsellors to be defensive quite often if they feel that they are being seen negatively or critically or whatever. So there is something about having the courage to stay with the feeling and think about it, which I think is relevant to black issues and also to other situations as well. This idea of feeling excited by it as well. I continue to feel excited by it and I think that this thing about why not other cultures it makes me cross because that is a given that we are trained to be culturally sensitive, and I think black issues is a better way of describing something that includes that. Culture is too broadly used. In the training organisation that I trained in they currently call it 'Transcultural'. I'm not happy about that, but it's about training and what our contribution is when we go out into other training organisations".

Researcher
"As you are speaking I had another thought about the area of transcultual work which I have been in for years. I haven't even been addressing what I would call the spectrum of because some of the training courses that I have worked I have been asked to present transcultural or race issues. To me neither of them covers the normal development of black or white people in relation to black issues. It came up in some of the interviews with experienced practitioners, that it wasn't in the curriculum, Transcultural, multi-cultural and these other cultural terms were there, but they were not addressing black issues. In some ways they were attempting to address racism, but racism is just one black issue. So how do we get training institutions to take on the developmental process of black peoples? We have the developmental process of white people. There are formulas and theories, but they are still stereotyped. There is very little done on gay and Lesbian developmental processes as though they do not have a developmental process. So I think that putting it in there helps us to recognise those missing bits. This gives me permission to teach and use my experience as a black person within being raised and educated in a eurocentric context ,which is another contradiction in itself because how do I constantly be aware that even though I want to develop the area of black issues most of what I have learned is eurocentric. It is only in the past ten years or so that I have gathered my African centred self together and that is not fully matured yet. So it is like that constant struggle against the systems that we have been educated in order to integrate it and broaden it, so that people coming in have a chance to include themselves and their experiences and not have to eurocentricised initially and then go through the process of finding their identity through travel and therapy and whatever and then having to undo some of it after they have spent their money. It could be costly, but also save money. You get more for your money".

Black female trainee:
"I have got new insights after your talk about the issues of multicultural. Perhaps we need a new definition, of black issues, not just thinking of black or black and white, but thinking of issues that make other human beings oppressed, issues that make other human beings discriminated against, issues that makes other human beings different in a bad way and not acknowledging the positive side of those *issues".*

Researcher "Have you got any suggestions of other names?"

Black female trainee:
"Well it could still remain as black but saying that it is an inclusive name of discriminations and oppressions".

Researcher "What about trans-multi-inter"
(All laugh)

White tutor 1
"Melting pot issues. Everybody puts something in and we will all come out the same. Of course this is not what I mean".

Researcher *"You will come out brown and I will come out white. (All laugh) I'm not going to transcribe that bit".*

White tutor 2:
"I was thinking about the discussion about black and I was reading some of Farhad's stuff on black as a colour and white and the history of the term black and its historical relationship as a word that has been a signifier of all that is negative. Something about putting it in the curriculum and me prioritising it and with that process all the negative stuff has come as well, all the pain and history of the term. I have also felt great joy in the learning that I have shared listening to black and white students and some of the positives that have come out. I think I can get lost in the pain of it, the censorship of it and the whole process of silencing, opposed to staying with the positive. I can lose sight of it more quickly. Something about having this on the course means something about it is about fighting the institutionalised silence on the subject and the social silence on the subject and my personal silence on the subject. Then having to move through all of that to have a relationship with the students and each other and the subject and the issues around it is like trying to have a revolution inside myself. The inner battle is massive which is obviously part of the external world battle as well. But that external world battle that exists inside myself is as problematic as the discussions I have with other people. The interpersonal experience in the groups with others and the students are challenging, but the challenge begins even before I open my mouth and come into contact with anyone else. In terms of trying to think about it all. Those things start to swirl and I think about the power of oppression. The power of silence is so massive There is a value in calling it black issues because it re-prioritising something. Highlighting the fact that everything taught are white issues, we don't actually say that we just call it theory or practice. We don't actually say everything we are talking about is white, because it is invisible".

Researcher
"I find that very moving, that statement, I really do. It gives it a deeper context for me. About that being a negative statement, but it is a real statement that has been disbelieved. I believe it. That it is inside of us, in the DNA so to speak. So it is not about getting rid of something it is about working with something that is real and factual".

Black female trainee:
"We have talked about white issues and black issues, and what are women's issues and men's issues. We can't talk about men's issues because they already have that power".

Researcher "Assumed power I don't believe all men have that power".

Black female trainee:
"Assumed power like in the world".

White tutor 1
"It is inbuilt into our social structure in this part of the world. It wasn't always like that here either".

Researcher "Isn't that how black issue leads us into other issues? We could just talk about power, but that may not work because of the power structures black issues have been missing".

White tutor 1.
"I was thinking about America and black power and how amazingly empowering that was for black people in the sixties. Also how there hasn't really been a movement like that in this country because I think our colonial history is particular and tenuous. The queen still has jurisdiction over some countries. This is not anything to do with teaching and being a student".

White tutor 2.
"I have been thinking about teaching reading a lot lately about binary oppositions. About how the mind is constructed in the way that black needs white and white needs black, or Lesbian needs straight and straight needs Lesbian. I have been wondering and playing around in my mind just then about, when you were talking earlier about black issues, about the potential and possibility of what could be created out of playing with the term. It is interesting that it has appeared in the curriculum not in terms of its relationship to white. Its not black and white issues, it is white issues. This creates a tension in itself, which I think has a positive impact, but also generates all the other things that go with that for white people such as am I allowed to have a voice. The way we have put it into the curriculum, we were thinking earlier about the counter-transference it creates. What it generates into the space by the fact that it doesn't sit with its normal opposition white. It sits alone and what that creates for black and white students".

White tutor 1.
"It invites fantasy".

White tutor 2.
"It does, because I was thinking in the skills group that it was some of the black students who didn't want the title to be 'black issues'. Other black students were glad it was there because they said it relates to our heritage and history. So I think the relationship with the term itself is scope for relentless exploration".

Researcher
"Yes that is what happened initially. The term provoked a lot of response and I think that it took at least the first year for the tutors and the training group to come to terms with what black issues black really meant. You know what do we really mean by it and what assumptions are we placing on this theme?"

White tutor 1
"Can we carry it through?"
"Can we carry it through? Is it just too scary?"

White tutor 1:
"Can we put it in the room and then what? I was thinking about the very first cohort of students, but it is the same every year, but it arrives in the room with a new group of people. I'm now thinking about this idea of the binaries that you mentioned. If it is black, that is its counterpart. Its counterpart isn't just white. I think that is what provokes the anxiety, because it isn't a gestalt in that way".

Researcher
"I want to thank you for attending and contributing. I think that this discussion has taken a different dimension to former discussions. I also think this inevitable because it is a closing discussion. It has been really important and powerful, because it has assisted my review of the research implications of putting it into the programme. This is an important aspect that we as staff need to discuss. We should put it on our away day. So I have appreciated the discussion that we have had. That overview has been important. I hope that it has been all right for you with three tutors here.

Black female trainee:
"Yea I have gained more insight into learning about how my tutors are feeling about the whole thing and seeing that we are all human and we are in search of something fulfilling to other human beings. I want to thank you for having me in your review and I wish you all the best in your research. I would

also like to thank the other two tutors for helping me learn more about black issues. I have learned even more today".

White tutor 1
"My closing comment is that this has been collaborative. This has been primarily a forum for students to speak and has been collaborative".

White tutor 2:
"I was thinking about it as a political issue because previously I have felt a responsibility in the review because of the role we have taken. I don't know what dynamic has been created if our voices are with the student's voices. Something about being equalised in the discussion. I feel like I have had more voice than I have had before. There is something about the teaching of it. We are the tutors and we are supposed to be in a particular role. There is something about being participants in a shared dialogue as opposed to us being in the front of it. The notion that we are some kind of experts and we are not. We are having similar struggles. Also I think it has been incredibly powerful what you have brought to the course"

Appendix 11

Black Issues Project Counselling Staff team evaluation meeting 13.6.03
Transcribed by Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga

This transcription was taken from a recorded team meeting which included a half hour slot for black issues discussion. All staff are white except the researcher.
10 staff including Core Tutors, External Supervisors, PD Facilitators, Moderators

Words in italics are spoken by the researcher.

There was an initial discussion about the use of the term client in relation to all trainees. We agreed that the term practise was more appropriate, as students on skills training are not actually required to work with clients but counselling skills were being developed and practised by all students.

Researcher
How do we know what impact the black issues workshops has had on staff and students and the development of practise on the counsellor training programme?

Reflections

White female tutor: "The impact has had a domino effect. We are changing, therefore students change, therefore practise has an impact on clients".

White female tutor: "A difficult beginning. A difficult thing to admit that, I am not aware as I thought I was".

White female tutor: "Work with University clients has shifted due to being given permission & encouragement to address these issues of diversity".

White female tutor: "Proud to be part of a training that is dealing with this.
As I read assessments, journals, case notes, professional logs, philosophies and how students are finding their way to write about this. The assessment section that says how does difference, similarity, equality issues, oppression affect your role as counsellor etc. I have noticed that sometimes people are bolting it on and on the other hand I am also observing that prompted by this input, there is another way it is becoming embedded in the course due to how we are locating it on the course and integrating it in a different way to previously".

White female moderator: "People are saying positive things. Are we brave enough to say what we are uncomfortable about?"

Impact on supervision.

White male supervisor:"I have been challenged by my supervisees about what is going on in the group. I left a black student who was in the minority and felt silenced. I excused her silence as the effect of a new situation. I let her go because of my racism. There was discomfort. Eventually the student was able to talk about being in the minority and the group engaged with this which eased things". Thinking about this in terms of client counsellor relationships. A black student brought the issue of meeting a white client for the first time and I have begun to think about this. I have also noticed more about other differences, like being Jewish, Irish or asylum seeker".

White female supervisor: "In my supervision group I noticed students getting very defensive when they first started to do the black issues work. I think they were afraid to be called racist. So they wanted to say we don't need any work on this. I believe that this has changed and now it has become easier. The work has now opened up and a whole gamut of issues which link in. I want to engage with this more deeply and get down to the nitty gritty, like talking about black counsellor, white client and gay counsellor and straight client for example".

White male supervisor: "My experience of myself as a white man, working with a group of black women supervisees. Working with both black and white clients. It seems that they were able to settle into some security and solidarity as the year progressed and they were able to discuss the differences and assumptions they made about each other. I have been in touch with an important learning curve where I have learned more about the experience of black counsellor and white client".

White male tutor:"It is very challenging to do this listening without getting into stereotyping I haven't quite got to grips with this aspect of it".

Practice sessions

White female tutor: "In my recent experience of practise assessments students were not picking up black issues, but they were evidencing the capacity to reflect on why they had not picked it up in the sessions and some of their fears. They were evidencing the capacity to go away and think about it and say what stops them doing something, saying something, but they were not evidencing it at the moment a client may need to have something validated. Something still is not happening relationally at the moment when something crucial may need to happen. Although what is happening is that some of them have much more awareness now".

Also some of them are ticking the box of having to jump the criteria of addressing black issues. They are naming something like I am white and they are black and then not taking it any further and as you were saying bolting it on the end. I am constantly challenging this, for some of them this might be a development because they may not have taken the time to recognise this before, so I am not clear what the evidence is".

Researcher

"There was a time when students and colleagues thought that you address the difference between black and white as soon as you open the session. "I am black and you are white or I am white and you are black and how do you feel about this" I think our students are realising there is more than that, because there is a lot more information about how it feels to be in this position. In a recent practise session, level two students were doing this. They were not addressing it. When I came into the room to support them, they were a bit scared. As though they should be doing something because I was there. I would stop them and ask them about the difficulty of addressing the difference or similarity and they would say they were scared. Then I would ask them to have a go and get it wrong. They found it helpful to have a go and then they could take a risk and process what their fear was about. It was not about formalising their counselling it was about just taking a risk to address black issues".

Workshops

White female tutor:"When we worked with a split group. I led the white group and one person could not speak, she was so full of feeling. I tried to let them know that I get lost and stuck with this too and don't know where I am going with this either. In writing about Lesbian issues and therapy, I realise that it feels very different when I am in it. So we cannot underestimate the emotional impact. I am assuming this has a similar impact on students, based on the response afterwards, i.e. emails and contact from students asking for more support. It is such cutting edge work, that it might be written about, but I am not sure how many trainings really go for it and really engage with it".

Researcher
"The opening up of being white is one of the key issues. At first students thought black issues was about racism. Racism is only one thread of black issues. Being white is a huge one. As part of my process I have had to take some more therapy myself and learn what it is like to listen to white people and what it is like to be white. In the skills course, I owned that to the students and in doing so get the black students to listen to white students. Because the amount of feelings about being on the receiving end of racism stops that listening in the other direction. Listening to each other, white on white, black on black and then across the board. It has been a huge learning for me too."

Personal Development group.

Asian male PD facilitator: "The whole session was about being white. People were talking about guilt, fear, and shame, difficulties about staying with being white, making choices. Because of the assumptions about being racist, somehow they had to carry that. It was powerful".

Staff issues

Researcher
"About staff relationships and being the lone black tutor. My white staff peers, saying we are all doing it. Yet I was still as the black tutor, holding the fort. I was unable to sit back and let you take some of the flack."

White female tutor: "Important to role model how everybody is challengeable, and we all have this material in us. Out of the pain comes our best modelling and our best teaching".

Further need:

White female tutor: "For the skills group and in terms of further need. It seemed to mean demonstrating that I am not a racist person, or if I am racist, then trying to keep it hidden. Something has to happen for change to be created. So what do I need to facilitate these students in this? There is a big unknown; it is more than about just demonstrating racism or absence of it. About what gets co-created between people, about history, sedimented learning that I still haven't got to yet in my own thinking about black issues/black people. I am somewhere along that road. As though I am looking at a plant somewhere above the ground and I am not sure what the roots are. And I don't know how I can help students to get there when I am still in the process of developing this for myself".

White female tutor: "We need more supervision using supervisors with a commitment to being on the ball addressing and carrying forward black issues. Not having to explain and struggle about issues because we are not being carried forward. Our own supervision and therapy should reflect this".

Tutor responses to evaluation 1. Uni-one

Researcher:

It appears from the responses at this stage of the study, that students have moved on and developed their understanding of black issues in many areas of their training. However the number of students who gained clarity about their early concerns (presented in the first black issues workshop) was low. For both students and staff this area of understanding needs some development.

In comparison to student responses staff feedback seems less confident overall. I have noted that some staff said that they realised that they were less confident than they had previously assumed, after the workshop session. I have also noted that staff members have expressed concerns about not having had black issues input in their own training, therefore not feeling confident about working with trainees in this area.

Staff responses to summaries:
Staff were offered an opportunity to contribute to developing these issues:
It appears from the results that trainees are expressing greater confidence than the tutors. This may be because they have had a greater input into their training. What do you think about this?

Please write below any comments you may wish to share.

Cl "The figures are quite remarkable. For me this also raises the question about what is meant by 'confidence'. Does it mean a greater willingness to take risks (In which case shaky steps into an unknown and a consequent sense of still moving forward) or does it mean feeling safer? (In which case things may have got to a point where there is less growth). Confidence in itself may not be entirely positive. I feel less confident because I have a greater sense of complexity of the issues than I had previously. My lessening of confidence is not a bad state of affairs since it is compelling me forwards, increasing my curiosity"

Co. Another possibility is that student's self perception of their capabilities is different to staff' self awareness of capacities. Staff may be more aware of (conscious) incompetence and the students less aware due to their stage of learning i.e. unconscious incompetence. In other words perhaps students are less aware due to what they don't know and staff more aware of what we don't know.

2. **Do you have any ideas about how this issue can be redressed?**

Cl. *"I think students might benefit from looking at black issues from the perspective which is broader than counselling. E.g. through literature, art, music, film through direct experiencing, through interviews and reading about history. I think literature and the arts can refresh the parts that theory does not reach. The learning may not even be explicit".*

Co. "More staff support and dialogue amongst ourselves for process and reactions to the training events including interpersonal feelings in the team".

It would be very helpful if you could also respond to the questions below.

3. Can you pinpoint any areas where students have evidenced that the black issues training has influenced their practise?

Co. *"I have noticed that students are more able to openly name in practice sessions the differences and similarities between themselves and clients. They are not always evidencing the capacity to work with these issues inside the counselling session itself, but some are beginning to do this. In their logs some of them have done some thinking about black issues and other issues of oppression. Many students put intense efforts into exploring theses issues in depth in their journals which shows the capacity to self reflect and self challenge on black issues as a counsellor".*

4. The black issues project was set up as an attempt to answer this question that has been slightly revised during the research process. How do trainee practitioners in Britain understand their concerns about black issues raised by or about clients during the therapeutic process? If you have any comments to offer about this question or how you see students being facilitated to answer this question. Also how you think they understand their concerns, please write them below.

Co. " *I think that trainees are beginning to acknowledge the importance of black issues despite early resistance.I think many of them have moved on in terms of understanding that black issues is not just about racism. White students have become more aware of the need to look at themselves and their whiteness., as opposed to looking to the black students for all the answers or knowledge of the subject".*

5. Based on your experience of the black issues project, what information would you like to see in a booklet that can be used by staff to support awareness and facilitation of trainee practitioners understanding of black issues in the therapeutic process?

Cl "Information about novels, plays, poetry and art would be useful. It might help students if they were required to read a specific novel as part of the course requirement. This could be used as an exercise to broaden understanding and increase empathy".

Co. *"Information about the dynamics that get stirred up when teaching the subject of black issues so that staff may have a framework for understanding the intensity of feelings that can be expressed".*

UNI-TWO POSTGRADUATE DIPLIMA IN PSYCHODYNAMIC COUNSELLING. YEAR 1 & 2 (02/2003)

Responses from tutors are in italics

1st year students
16 questionnaires contributed from18 participants attending the final workshop.

2nd year students
8 questionnaires contributed from 9 participants attending final workshop.

Q1.Awareness of the importance of learning about black issues. Before the workshops (1st yr), 13 (2nd yr) 4 After the workshops (1st yr) 10 (2nd yr) 7

Q2) Confidence in exploring black issues in counselling relationships. Before the workshops (1st yr) 6 (2nd yr) 4 After the workshops (yr1) 8 (yr2) 4

Q3) Confidence in exploring black issues in personal therapy. Before the workshops (1st yr) 7 (2nd yr) 5 After the workshops to (1st yr) 9 (yr2) 6

Q4) Confidence in exploring black issues in personal development forums. Before the workshops (yr 1) 5 (yr 2) 5 to After the workshops (Yr1) 9 (yr2) 7

Q5) Confidence in exploring black issues in supervision. Before the workshops (yr 1) 8 (yr2) 5 After the workshops (yr 1) 12 (yr 2) 7

Q6) Wanted to learn more about black issues before the workshops. (Yr 1) 15 (Yr 2) 7 Said they had learnt more about black issues. After the workshops (Yr 1) 12 (Yr 2) 7

Q7) Had gained some understanding of their concerns presented at the first workshop. (Yr 1) 5 (Yr 2) 6

From these responses we can deduce that students have moved on and developed their understanding of black issues in many areas of their training. Obviously we cannot be sure what additional factors may have also contributed to these developments. Question 2 suggests that addressing black issues in counselling relationships needs more attention.

"It's good to learn that, as you've anticipated, conducting the workshops has increased students' awareness of black issues. Giving the matter more attention is a time-tabling issue. As matters stand, with only 240 hours' tutor contact per year, it is not realistic to do more. Hopefully, when we re-design the training to make it a 'recognised' training of the BACP, we can remedy the situation as a minimum of 400 hours' of tutor contact is expected, over 2 or 3 years".

Also, the number of students who gained clarity about their early concerns (presented in the first Black Issues workshop) was low. I am aware that staff including myself have not had black issues workshops incorporated into our own training and this may

affect the levels of support available for this aspect of counselling development. Do you have any comments about this?

L . "I have three responses to this:

1) *What does 'clarity' mean? Does it mean 'consciousness-raising' of some kind, or what?*
2) *That tutors have not received training in delivering black issues workshops cannot be assumed to have affected students' responses. That is a hypothesis requiring testing. More broadly, it is surely a valid assumption to suppose that, in many cases, tutors will be aware of the issues, irrespective of whether they have received formal training.*
3) *I doubt that 'support' for black issues workshops is the issue. Rather, it is a question of re-design so that we incorporate black issues, and other questions of 'difference' - gender, disability, age, and sexual orientation, for example - into what the training seeks to achieve."*

I presented black issues workshops on three training courses. One integrative training had three workshops per year, a Person-Centred training had one workshop per year, and your Psychodynamic training course had three workshops per year. All three training courses were staffed by white counsellors - other than me in the role of permanent tutor on the integrative training course. Comparisons of the results from these workshops show that that more black issues workshops and greater contact with the facilitator/ researcher and staff has had an impact. At Uni-two I am in the role of visiting tutor, with very little contact with staff or involvement in the rest of the training or course development. I am unsure as to whether this has made a difference to the responses.

L. "That you are 'unsure' as to whether your status as a VT has had an impact on students' responses suggests that further research is required. If that turned out to be the case, it would have serious implications for higher education, not just for the psychodynamic counselling training Uni-two provides. Before we jump to any such conclusion, it is important therefore to bear the following in mind.

1) *It is reasonable to suppose until such time as we have reason to believe otherwise, that once the training/programme leader and other permanent members of staff make it clear that they support black issues workshops, students will treat them with the seriousness they do all other aspects of their training.*
2) *We suppose, don't we, that it is only black tutors who can efficaciously facilitate black issues workshops? No doubt it's important to assume so. However, the 'logic' here worries me, as it has utterly impractical implications for the foreseeable future. Are we saying that men cannot facilitate workshops focusing on women's oppression, women on the experience of being a man, and heterosexuals on the effects of homophobia? If so, no university department in the country will meet that test.*

This noted, I think it essential that a black tutor continues to facilitate the black issues workshops on our counselling training, not least because it matters to our black students."

2. Do you have any ideas about how the above points can be addressed?

L. "None as yet, I'm afraid, until decisions beyond my control have been made, and until such time as the Government makes it clear what form the state regulation of the psychological therapies will assume. That said, I look forward, with your help, to re-designing the training so that it meets the disparate backgrounds and aspirations of our students.

It would be very helpful if you could also respond to the questions below.
3. Can you pinpoint any areas where students have evidenced that the black issues training has influenced their practise? I.e. case management discussions, assignments, and theory sessions.

"It is hard to 'pinpoint' anything. All I have are impressions. One impression is that many students have, as a result of the black issues workshops, become far more open to thinking of themselves as having difficulties with questions of difference. In this sense, the workshops have been a great success.

Moreover, our current first-year students have let it be known that they wish attention to be paid to other issues of difference – particularly, sexual orientation, and age. It is my impression that the black issues workshops have supported them in making this reasonable demand – a 'reasonable' one, once the timetable permits it".

4. The black issues project was set up as an attempt to answer this question that has been slightly revised during the research process. How do trainee practitioners in Britain understand their concerns about black issues raised by or about clients during the therapeutic process?

Do you have any comments to offer about this question or how you see students being facilitated to answer this question. Also how you think they understand their concerns, please write them below.

L "There's a lot to unpack here.

Concerns about black issues whilst in training, and those raised by clients, are distinct matters, though we may suppose, reasonably enough, that they are often related. For example, I could feel very well trained, yet, when presented with a particular client's difficulties, experience much confusion, panic, and so forth.

Another distinction is called for – that between how a trainee may have experienced her training vis-à-vis black issues (with all that could say of transference, projection, and so on) and how, after her training, when she has had further clinical experience, she retrospectively thinks about what her training has enabled her to do.

I'm saying that I do know how to answer your question – well, in fact your two questions. They're trying to cover far too much. There are several distinct questions at stake here, as I think of matters:

- How did the black issues workshops go for you whilst you were training?
- How do you think of them now?
- At the time, did the workshops help you to meet the concerns of your black clients?

- Do you think of that differently now?
- How, in retrospect, do you think the workshops have helped you to understand the therapeutic process?

5. What information would you like to see in a booklet that can be used by staff to support awareness and facilitation of trainee practitioners' understanding of black issues in the therapeutic process?

L. "Perhaps a series of statements, as well as information gleaned from research, would be useful.

- *How to raise issues of 'difference' in a sensitive, therapeutically productive manner.*
- *Some kind of statement to the effect that all of us, no matter how well trained, have difficulties with issues of difference, including black issues.*
- *Some kind of statement to the effect that the white counsellor/therapist has an ethical obligation to be non-defensive about black issues.*
- *Something about how questions of difference - particularly black issues, in this context – often challenge our theoretical commitments – for example, our understanding of transference and counter-transference dynamics."*

UNI-THREE Post Graduate Diploma in Person Centred Counselling.
Review of student evaluation of black issues workshops. Year 1 (2002/2003)
13 forms returned

Q1. Aware of the importance of learning about black issues. Before the workshops. 13 After the workshop, 7.

Q2. Confidence addressing black issues in counselling relationships. Before the workshops 7 After the workshops 8

Q3. Addressing black issues in personal therapy. Before the workshops 7. After the workshops 10

Q4. Exploring black issues in personal development forums. Before the workshops 6. After the workshops 6.

Q5. Confidence exploring black issues in supervision. Before the workshops 9. After the workshops 7.

Q6. Wanted to learn more about black issues in counselling relationships. Before the workshop 13. After the workshops 7.

Q7. Gained more information about their initial concerns about black issues. 3

Out of 20 students only 13 out of 20 forms returned were usable. This is more than 50% of the group.
The scoring showed a slight change in the understanding of black issues.

I presented black issues workshops on three training courses. One psychodynamic training course which had three workshops per year, one integrative training which had two workshops per year and your person Centred training which had one workshop per year. All three training courses were staffed by white counsellors other than me in the role of permanent tutor on the integrative training course.

Comparison of the results from these workshops shows that it is clear that more black issues workshops and more contact with the facilitator/researcher has had an impact. Although I am now in an established role of staff supervision facilitator, I am unsure as to whether this made a difference to students understanding of black issues.

It would really help my analysis if you could consider these findings and answer the questions below?

What factors do think have contributed to the students understanding of black issues since the black issues workshops?

C."Some of the black students felt more confident to air their issues when you as a black tutor appeared. This led to more open discussion and further understanding within the wider group".
"Continued discussions as and when racism has arisen. It has been vital to establish that these issues can be openly discussed. It is also vital to have black staff members".

How do you think the use of a black supervision facilitator has contributed to student understanding of black issues?

C. "My awareness as a white facilitator has increased leading to greater confidence in addressing issues within the group"
I think this has helped staff members to continue to increase their awareness. As we learn, the students learn and more areas become open for discussion and understanding".

What would you like to see in a training booklet for about understanding black issues in the therapeutic process?

C. "A check list for reflection on awareness. Pointers towards sensitive issues. Ideas about cultural learning styles. Experiences of other tutors of strengths and difficulties overcome in a multi-cultural environment".

C. "A recommendation for white therapists to go into experiential workshops lead by black facilitators or black and white open discussion group to explore black/white dynamics".

Is there anything else that you want to say about the impact of the black issues workshops?

C. "More than one workshop a year is integral"

"It has been painful process for white students exploring this issue. It appears that black students have felt heard and pleased to have been able to impact on the learning of others as well as explore their own feelings"

Comments On: Black Issues Transcript
March 2004

I think students in the discussion are making very similar points to those of earlier discussions. I think my understanding of their process would be enhanced by more specific information. Example 1: White Male 1 (p. 1) says: 'I have wanted to say something is really out of order and I don't agree with that.' I'm curious about what he believed was out of order and therefore not within the scope of the exploration. Example 2: White Male 2 (p. 6) comments that 'it's what going to those (black issues) workshops has meant to me and the impact it has had on me ..... I can link it to issues that black colleagues have spoken about throughout the two years, and I can think about what it is like to go to black issues workshops as a white male.' I'd have like some detail about the impact, what it is like going to the workshops, what colleagues have spoken about during the year and what is the special significance attached to being not just white but also male. I think some important information might be gained through being more concrete and specific here and elsewhere.

It's interesting that the men talking include gender as a factor in their experience ('as a white male') but not the women. Does it point to something of the complexity of the issues?

There are several references to how the black issues workshops have caused 'friction' in the group. Maybe there is a bigger issue here in terms of how students can learn to work with conflict and discomfort. Theoretically, I'm thinking about what Fritz Perls says about getting through the false layers of experience, from 'cliche' to 'explosion' with all the other layers in between ('role' layer, 'impasse', 'implosion').

1. It feels like students begin at the 'cliche' layer, being nice to each other, not rocking the boat, not gaining insight because there is no creative grit.

2. Then they move to the 'role' layer where they contribute what is expected of them as counsellors, but without genuineness. So they will say how they are not racist and how appalling racism is etc. but they are not so willing to look at aspects of themselves which are a challenge to this expectation. The White Male (p. 5) seems to prefer this mode of being, would prefer that people reflect first before opening their mouths. Perhaps it works better the other way round, that there needs to be a space where people can be spontaneous, act or speak and then examine in the light of experience. It reminds me of a line from Buber, where he says (roughly paraphrased) that it is the nature of human beings too jump into experience and to examine the consequences and what has been created after, not before, the jump. Sometimes we do not know what are our thoughts and feelings until we have said them and we will not know that they are our thoughts and feelings until we have said them.

3. Some move beyond this but frequently they get stuck at the 'impasse' layer, where they are nearing a breakthrough and experience anxiety, which they want to retreat from.

4. There are some who can bear the difficult feelings and therefore move through this gaining real insight in the process. Maybe this is what the student (p. 2) is describing when he refers to the 'safety' which would enable him to be 'free to bounce things out of my head and not fear that I was going to be accused of being racist.' The Black Female (p. 4) seems to be suggesting a similar thing: 'unless people talk about them (black and sexual orientation issues) and understand what it is all about, they will remain being feared.'

The possibility of being called a racist is such a strong disincentive to exploration. It closes things down or limits how far they can go. There is an obligation on all who are involved in the discussion: how can we explore difficult views and feelings, which may upset or disturb others, without others responding with labels or by being judgemental and at the same time being able to acknowledge and work with the hurt or disturbance that has been created?

I think all this has parallels in the process we as a team go through in relation to each other (not just on black issues) and I think our stuck points are similar. Maybe this affects our ability to work with students on black issues.

The comments made by White Male 2 (p. 2) highlight the possibilities of students over-generalising: 'I am some way short to understanding what it may be like to be black.' It's important that students continue to recognise that they are working with individuals not collectives and that each experience is unique.

Hugh