

THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY ROUTINES BY SINGLE, XHOSA-SPEAKING
MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

by

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The majority (40%) of South African children are raised by single mothers. Single mothers often deal with a unique combination of social and economic stressors, putting them and their children at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes. Yet family routines can be a vital resilience resource. Routines help to maintain order and stability in the home; they foster a sense of belonging and group cohesion; and they are spaces where caretakers teach children unique context-specific competencies and values. In this grounded theory study, single (i.e. unmarried and unpartnered) Xhosa-speaking mothers ($N = 26$) who live in abject poverty were sampled from several peri-urban, informal settlements outside of Cape Town, South Africa. The study's aim was to understand how these women manage their family routines after becoming parents. Semi-structured interviews ($n = 21$) and naturalistic home observations ($n = 8$) showed that routines can be hampered by maternal *Intrapsychic risks* (e.g. cognitive and affective difficulties such as stress and anxiety, feelings of worthlessness or psychological unpreparedness for motherhood), normative *Parenting challenges* (e.g. child misbehaviour or parental inexperience), *Scheduling challenges* (e.g. time starvation or chaotic daily rosters), *Interpersonal risks* (e.g. community stigma, not meeting family-of-origin expectations, or conflict with the biological father), and *Economic risks* (e.g. unemployment, halted education, or lack of basic needs). Yet women inherently also experienced personal growth during this phase of life and tapped into an extensive range of intra- and interpersonal competencies. The management of family routines concerned five adaptive processes: *Managing maternal mental health* (e.g. cognitive, affective, conative and behavioural strategies that mothers used to retain or regain positive feelings, achieve role balance, and increase motivation); *Assistive parent-child actions and interactions during routines* (e.g. immediate mother-child transactions within the proximal space that improved task execution and mother-child experiences); *Scheduling actions* (e.g. strategies that helped women manage limited resources

such as time, balance packed rosters, and improve timetable stability); *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships* (e.g. extra- and intrafamilial adult relationships that mothers cultivated and accessed for support); and *Attenuating economic risks*. The findings demonstrate the profoundly dynamic nature of the management process, highlighting key pre- and postpartum contextual obstacles, as well as powerful strengths in single-mother families. To bolster family routines, practitioners should not focus exclusively on postpartum phases of adaptation, but also consider the events that cause women's single-parent status and the impact of these experiences on maternal mental health.

OPSOMMING

Die meerderheid (40%) van Suid-Afrikaanse kinders word deur enkelmoeders groot gemaak. Enkelmoeders word dikwels gekonfronteer met 'n unieke kombinasie van sosiale en ekonomiese stressors, wat hulle en hul kinders tot 'n groter risiko stem vir 'n reeks negatiewe uitkomst. Tog, gesinsroetines kan 'n belangrike veerkragtigheids hulpbron wees. Roetines help om orde en stabiliteit in die huis te handhaaf; dit bevorder 'n gevoel van samehörigheid en groepskohesie; en dit is ruimtes waar versorgers unieke konteksspesifieke vaardighede en waardes aan kinders kan oordra. In hierdie gegronde-teorie studie is enkelopende (d.w.s. ongetroude en onverbode) Xhosa-sprekende ma's ($N = 26$) wat in armoede leef, uit informele nedersettings buite Kaapstad, Suid-Afrika, op toevallige wyse betrek by die studie. Die doel van die studie was om te verstaan hoe hierdie vroue hul gesinsroetines bestuur nadat hulle ouers geword het. Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude ($n = 21$) en naturalistiese tuiswaarnemings ($n = 8$) het getoon dat roetines bemoelik kan word deur ma's se *Intrapsigiese risiko's* (bv. kognitiewe en affektiewe probleme soos stres en ang, gevoelens van waardeloosheid, of sielkundige onvoorbereidheid vir moederskap), normatiewe *Ouerskapsuitdagings* (bv. kinder wangedrag, of onervare ouers), *Skeduleringsuitdagings* (bv. 'n gebrek aan tyd of chaotiese daaglikse roosters), *Interpersoonlike risiko's* (bv. gemeenskapsstigma, om nie aan gesin-van-oorsprong se verwagtinge te voldoen nie, of konflik met die biologiese vader), en *Ekonomiese risiko's* (bv. werkloosheid, onderbroke opvoeding, of 'n gebrek aan basiese behoeftes). Tog het die ma's persoonlike groei ervaar gedurende hierdie lewensfase en 'n wye verskeidenheid intra- en interpersoonlike vaardighede gebruik. Die bestuur van gesinsroetines het betrekking tot vyf aanpassingsprosesse: die *Bestuur van ma's se geestesgesondheid* (bv. kognitiewe, affektiewe, konatiewe, en gedragstrategieë wat ma's gebruik het om positiewe gevoelens te behou of te herwin, rolbalans te bereik, en motivering te verhoog); *Behulp same moeder-kind aksies en interaksies tydens roetines* (bv. onmiddellike moeder-kind transaksies binne die

proksimale ruimte wat taakuitvoering en moeder-kind ervarings verbeter het); *Skeduleringsaksies* (bv. strategieë wat ma's gehelp het om beperkte hulpbronne, soos tyd, te bestuur, belaaide roosters te balanseer, en roosterstabiliteit te verbeter); die ***Bestuur en koördinerings van belangrike volwasse verhoudings*** (bv. verhoudings met eksterne- en intragesins volwassenes wat ma's gekweek het en gebruik het vir ondersteuning); en die ***Vermindering van ekonomiese risiko's***. Die bevindinge het die uiters dinamiese aard van die bestuursproses getoon, met die klem op pre- en postpartum kontekstuele struikelblokke, asook kragtige vaardighede in enkelmoedergesinne. Om gesinsroetines te versterk moet praktisyns nie uitsluitlik fokus op die postpartumfases van aanpassing nie. Praktisyns moet ook die gebeure wat vroue se enkelouerstatus veroorsaak, en die impak van hierdie ervarings op ma's se geestesgesondheid, oorweeg.

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This research project was about family routines because they have the power to shape who we are. I have certainly been moulded by my childhood routines. Thus I want to thank my mom and dad who religiously read to me every night when I was a little girl; who made me fall in love with *Anne of Green Gables*, *A Little Princess*, and the *Famous Five*; who allowed us to dance on the coffee table (our "stage") in the evenings before dinner; and who invited our grandparents for festive Sunday lunches every week. Thank you, mom and dad, for giving me such a deep sense of belonging. Thank you for all your love and support, and always encouraging me to pursue my dreams.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	I
Abstract.....	II
Opsomming.....	IV
Acknowledgements.....	VI
List of tables.....	XVI
List of figures.....	XVII
CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	1
1.1 The Family Routine: More Than Habitual Group Activity	3
1.2 The Lack of Available Research.....	6
1.3 Research Questions.....	7
1.4 Presentation of The Research.....	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Single Motherhood.....	11
2.1.1 The heterogeneity of the “single parenthood” experience	11
2.1.2 Risk and protective factors associated with single-mother families.....	13
2.1.3 Managing family routines in single-mother families.....	20
2.1.4 Concluding remarks on single motherhood	24
2.2 Theoretical Perspectives That Guided My Understanding of Family Routines and Their Management.....	25

2.2.1 The circumplex model of marital and family systems	27
2.2.1.1 <i>The family as a developing system</i>	27
2.2.1.2 <i>Family cohesion</i>	31
2.2.1.3 <i>Family flexibility</i>	34
2.2.1.4 <i>Family communication</i>	37
2.2.1.5 <i>Change over time</i>	38
2.2.2 Family resilience	39
2.2.2.1 <i>A brief overview of family resilience definitions</i>	39
2.2.2.2 <i>The resiliency model of family stress, adjustment, and adaptation</i>	45
2.2.2.3 <i>Concluding remarks on the resiliency model</i>	52
2.2.3 Wolin and Bennett's (1984) seminal text on family rituals	52
2.2.3.1 <i>Family routines and communicative elements</i>	53
2.2.3.2 <i>Family routines and time</i>	54
2.2.3.3 <i>Family boundaries and family cohesion</i>	59
2.2.3.4 <i>Concluding remarks on Wolin and Bennett's seminal text</i>	62
2.2.4 Ecological cultural niche theory	62
2.2.4.1 <i>Routines as context-specific developmental pathways</i>	65
2.2.4.2 <i>The unique objective and subjective features of a specific routine produce unique developmental outcomes</i>	68
2.2.4.3 <i>Ecocultural implications for the measurement of family routines</i>	73
2.2.4.4 <i>Concluding remarks on an ecocultural understanding of family routines</i>	76

2.3 Chapter Conclusion.....	77
CHAPTER 3: METHOD	78
3.1 Research Design.....	78
3.2 Sampling	82
3.3 Participants.....	87
3.4 Procedure	95
3.4.1 Collecting interview data	96
3.4.1.1 Interview schedule	97
3.4.2 Collecting observation data.....	98
3.5 Ethical Considerations	102
3.6 Trustworthiness.....	103
3.7 Data Analysis.....	105
3.7.1 Procedures followed when analysing interview data.....	106
3.7.2 Procedures followed when analysing observational data	112
3.8 Conclusion	113
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF RESEARCH QUESTION ONE - FACTORS THAT HINDER THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY ROUTINES.....	114
4.1 Pre- and Postpartum Transition Stages	116
4.1.1 Unaware	118
4.1.2 Unsure	118
4.1.3 Confirmation.....	119
4.1.4 Secrecy.....	120

4.1.5 Disclosure	120
4.1.6 Disclosure repercussions.....	121
4.1.7 Acceptance (versus rejection/ambivalence).....	122
4.1.8 Birth	123
4.1.9 Parenthood	123
4.2 Areas of Risk That Have a Negative Impact on Family Routines	124
4.2.1 Interpersonal risk	125
4.2.2 Economic risk	147
4.2.3 Parenting challenges	160
4.2.4 Scheduling challenges.....	168
4.2.5 Intrapsychic risk.....	176
4.3 Conclusion	177
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS ADDRESSING RESEARCH QUESTION TWO – FACTORS THAT FACILITATE THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY ROUTINES	178
5.1 Overarching Category 1: Managing Personal Mental Health.....	179
5.1.1 Category 1, theme 1: Positively reframing identity	181
5.1.1.1 <i>The self as “good”</i>	181
5.1.1.2 <i>Accepting the self as “mother”</i>	184
5.1.1.3 <i>The self as “role model”</i>	192
5.1.1.4 <i>The self as “hustler”</i>	193
5.1.1.5 <i>Balancing pre- and post-baby selves</i>	198
5.1.1.6 <i>Constructive self-talk</i>	200

5.1.2 Category 1, theme 2: Positively reframing circumstances.....	201
5.1.2.1 <i>Belief in divine assistance</i>	203
5.1.2.2 <i>Adversity brings personal growth</i>	205
5.1.2.3 <i>“Everything happens for a reason”</i>	207
5.1.2.4 <i>Rewriting the past, hope for the future</i>	209
5.1.3 Category 1, theme 3: Wellbeing behaviours.....	212
5.1.3.1 <i>Idiosyncratic feel-good activities</i>	212
5.2 Overarching Category 2: Managing and Coordinating Significant Adult Relationships	214
5.2.1 Category 2, theme 1: Cultivate a symbiotic give-and-take relationship with cohabiting family	216
5.2.1.1 <i>Make time for family-time routines</i>	223
5.2.1.2 <i>Communicate love, appreciation, and support</i>	224
5.2.1.3 <i>Manage conflict</i>	226
5.2.2 Category 2, theme 2: Cope with new relational dynamics concerning the biological father	227
5.2.2.1 <i>Aim to establish a new, amicable co-parenting relationship</i>	228
5.2.2.2 <i>Create personal emotional boundaries</i>	233
5.2.2.3 <i>Filling the father-role gap in family routines</i>	236
5.2.3 Category 2, theme 3: Acquire and accept assistance from wider community ..	239
5.2.4 Category 2, theme 4: Set boundaries for new dating partners	241
5.3 Overarching Category 3: Assistive Parent-Child Actions and Interactions During Routines	243
5.3.1 Category 3, theme 1: Beneficial parental actions during a routine.....	245

5.3.1.1	<i>Displays of care and affection</i>	245
5.3.1.2	<i>Fortify child boundaries</i>	246
5.3.1.3	<i>Effective teaching techniques</i>	249
5.3.2	Category 3, theme 2: Beneficial child influences during a routine	256
5.3.2.1	<i>Fundamental demographics: Child age and quantity</i>	256
5.3.2.2	<i>Fastidiousness about schedules and habits</i>	258
5.3.2.3	<i>A jovial mood</i>	259
5.4	Overarching Category 4: Scheduling Actions	260
5.4.1	Category 4, theme 1: Schedule design	263
5.4.1.1	<i>Deliberate, proactive planning</i>	263
5.4.1.2	<i>Prioritise certain routines</i>	265
5.4.1.3	<i>Clear future vision</i>	266
5.4.1.4	<i>Balance</i>	267
5.4.1.5	<i>Create a workable timetable</i>	268
5.4.1.6	<i>Task tag-teaming sequences with cohabiting adults</i>	269
5.4.1.7	<i>Joint planning and negotiating schedules with cohabiting adults</i>	271
5.4.2	Category 4, theme 2: Schedule implementation	273
5.4.2.1	<i>Dealing with derailment</i>	273
5.4.2.2	<i>Consistency</i>	274
5.4.2.3	<i>Margin of error in timetable</i>	277
5.4.2.4	<i>Organised and prepped</i>	279

5.4.2.5 <i>Weekends as a buffer</i>	281
5.4.2.6 <i>Multitasking</i>	282
5.4.2.7 <i>Find special mother-child moments during mundane routines</i>	284
5.5 Attenuating Economic Risks.....	286
5.6 Concluding Remarks.....	290
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	291
6.1 A Substantive Theory on the Management of Family Routines in Low-Income, Xhosa- Speaking Single-Mother Families With Young Children.....	291
6.2 Recommendations For Intervention.....	301
6.2.1 Identify at-risk pregnant women early to reduce maternal intrapsychic risk....	302
6.2.2 Build on single mothers' parenting strengths and competencies.....	309
6.2.3 Build on women's time management and scheduling skills.....	311
6.2.4 Help single mothers increase interpersonal resources	314
6.2.5 Improve the relationships between fathers and mothers.....	318
6.2.6 Help women decrease economic risks in tangible ways.....	326
6.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research.....	328
6.4 Conclusion	331
REFERENCES	332
ADDENDUM A Key terms and their definitions.....	372
ADDENDUM B The circumplex model dimension of communication	376
ADDENDUM C A family map illustrating how a never-married single mother experience different levels of systemic cohesion and flexibility over time	377

ADDENDUM D	The resiliency model’s rhythmic family typologies	379
ADDENDUM E	The defining qualities of the three ritual subtypes: celebrations, traditions and patterned family interactions.....	381
ADDENDUM F	Information given to Salesian Life Choices about the research project	385
ADDENDUM G	Written consent from Salesian Life Choices	388
ADDENDUM H	Participant consent forms in English and Xhosa	389
ADDENDUM I	Biographical questionnaires in English and Xhosa.....	398
ADDENDUM J	The interview schedule in English and Xhosa	400
ADDENDUM K	An example of a coding memo during the initial stages of analysis	404
ADDENDUM L	Coding-list of factors that assisted participants in managing and maintaining routines	405
ADDENDUM M	Refining “assistance and maintenance” codes by grouping and organising preliminary codes.....	409
ADDENDUM N	Memo concerning the meaning of the word “attitude”	413
ADDENDUM O	Innitial network view of “managing and coordinating significant adult relationships”	414
ADDENDUM P	Network view illustrating focussed coding and clustering of themes: accepting maternal identity engenders 1) a sense of responsibility, and 2) feelings of love.....	415
ADDENDUM Q	Analytic questions that aid data analysis of naturalistic observations..	416
ADDENDUM R	Hustler queen comic book.....	417

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 2.1. Circumplex model: Cohesion dimension.....	32-33
2. Table 2.2. Circumplex model: Flexibility dimension.....	35-36
3. Table 4.1. Explanation of interview excerpt markers.....	115

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Figure 2.1. The direct and indirect effects of maternal work demands, work-family conflict, maternal depressive symptoms and family routines on child adjustment in single-mother households (McLoyd, Toyokawa, & Kaplan, 2008).....23
2. Figure 2.2. The adjustment phase of the resiliency model of family stress, adjustment, and adaptation (McCubbin, Thompson, & McCubbin, 1996).....47
3. Figure 2.3. The adaptation phase of the resiliency model of family stress, adjustment, and adaptation. (McCubbin, Thompson, & McCubbin, 1996).....50
4. Figure 2.4. The cyclical, ordered nature of daily routines.....57
5. Figure 2.5. Daily time, and the experience of its progression, represented as a cylindrical spiral.....58
6. Figure 3.1. Map of Cape Town metropole illustrating the area where the participants lived (Google Maps, n.d.).....88
7. Figure 3.2. Memo on acceptance of the maternal identity, illustrating progression over time and an intrapsychic shift.....108
8. Figure 4.1. The ten typical stages of transitioning into single motherhood.....117

9.	Figure 4.2. Five domains of risk that had a negative impact on the management of family routines in single-mother families.....	124
10.	Figure 4.3. Schematic of Lindelwa’s living quarters, observed during her child’s bath-time routine.....	150
11.	Figure 4.4. Schematic of Sindiswa’s living quarters, observed during child-centred learning routines.....	151
12.	Figure 5.1. The five thematic categories of facilitative factors that promote the management of routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother families.....	178
13.	Figure 5.2. Themes and subthemes for category 1: Managing personal mental health.....	180
14.	Figure 5.3. Six online memes illustrating some of the current discourses around the hustler identity.....	197
15.	Figure 5.4. Themes and subthemes for category 2: Manage and coordinate significant adult relationships.....	215
16.	Figure 5.5. Themes and subthemes for category 3: Assistive parent-child actions and interactions during routines.....	244

17. Figure 5.6. Themes and subthemes for category 4: Scheduling actions.....	262
18. Figure 5.7. How the four thematic categories attenuate economic risks.....	289
19. Figure 6.1. A simplified framework that combines the five domains of risk, and the five processes that facilitate the management of family routines.....	294
20. Figure 6.2. Speculative model, predicting what factors hinder the management of family routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother families.....	295
21. Figure 6.3. Speculative model, predicting what factors facilitate the management of family routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother families.....	298

CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The South African social landscape is characterised by non-traditional family forms that do not always fit the ideological mould of the nuclear family. Of the various available family forms, single motherhood is the most prevalent type of parenting, with the majority of children aged 0 to 17 years being raised by single females (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2012b). Looking at racial distribution, single motherhood is most prevalent in families who identify themselves as black, and these statistics have been consistent over the past decade (StatsSA, 2005, 2012b). For every 100 black South African children under the age of 17 years, 41 live in homes where their mother is present but not their father, as opposed to 27 who live with both biological parents (StatsSA, 2012a). The numbers of single parents also seem to be rising in certain areas. In the Western Cape province, the proportion of female-headed households increased from 27.7% in 1996 to 36.3% in 2011 (StatsSA, 2014a). At the time of the last census, the City of Cape Town municipal district had the highest proportion of female-headed households in the province, at 38.2% (StatsSA, 2014a). The communities where this research study took place are some of the poorest in the City of Cape Town municipal district.

One could thus conclude that more than a third of black mothers are single parents. Many of these families are also struggling financially. The unemployment rates of black single mothers are high (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). This is supported by Census 2011 data showing that black women have the highest unemployment rate (at 41.2%) when compared to black men and all other racial groups (StatsSA, 2012b). Female-headed households also tend to be less well off, having to contend with almost half the annual income than their male counterparts (R67 330 versus R128 329 respectively) (StatsSA, 2012b).

The rationale for this study thus rests on the premise that single mothers constitute a significant proportion of the South African population, and yet these single mothers often have to deal with a unique cocktail of developmental, economic and familial stressors.

Becoming a parent can be stressful. Adjusting to life with young children in the home is a major practical and psychological undertaking. Traditional cultural representations of this phase of life depict it as a jubilant occasion, with parents elated by their new “bundles of joy”. However, over fifty years of research has shown that this period is also earmarked by discomfort and, in some cases, by distress and dysfunction (Cowan & Cowan, 2012; Grochowski & Karraker, 2006; McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012).

Secondly, single parents face challenges that couples do not. Based on an extensive review, Anderson (2012) concludes that single-parent families tend to be more psychologically vulnerable than two-parent families because single parents contend with greater financial constraints, less practical and emotional assistance, longer workhours, a greater frequency of life changes and upheavals, and a higher prevalence of depression and anxiety. They often must also deal with societal stigma (Anderson, 2012). Managing family routines is a unique complication faced by low-income single mothers, because of a lack of resources (e.g. time, money, and additional helping hands). Therefore, Anderson (2012, p. 130) mentions that, although many single parents cope, they “live on the edge of crisis”, because any unexpected need for additional finances, or a disruption in the daily schedule, can completely unsettle the equilibrium of this delicate system, propelling the family into chaos.

However, many single parents are able to cope in spite of the challenges they face. They not only withstand systemic disruption, but also ensure the continued maturation of all family members (Anderson, 2012). In other words, they display resilience. In the last 30 years, studies

have become increasingly interested in resilience and thus look at the resources, protective factors and strengths that promote wellbeing (Bonanno, Romero, & Klein, 2015; Masten & Monn, 2015; McCubbin, Thompson, & McCubbin, 1996; Ungar, 2010; Walsh, 2012). This study highlights one such resilience resource, namely family routines.

1.1 The Family Routine: More Than Habitual Group Activity

When we think of the word *routine*, we sometimes think of the mundane, repetitive ordering of everyday activities. However, an extensive body of evidence shows that stable family routines are vital resilience resources, improving both parent and child outcomes. Although research on the routines in *single-mother* families is limited, we can extrapolate from several other stressful family conditions that provide some empirical evidence of the protective role family routines play.

For instance, using daily routines as intervention sites has gained considerable attention from researchers working in the field of childhood special education (Bernheimer & Keogh, 1995; Buschbacher, Fox, & Clarke, 2004; Kashinath, Woods, & Goldstein, 2006; Moes & Frea, 2002; Schlebusch, Samuels, & Dada, 2016). Families who maintain greater routinisation, in spite of significant child-behaviour problems, tend to have greater levels of family satisfaction (Schlebusch et al., 2016). Childhood routines have also been associated with better physical health in conditions such as childhood obesity, or chronic ailments such as childhood headaches and childhood asthma (Anderson & Whitaker, 2010; Crespo et al., 2013; Fiese, Wamboldt, & Anbar, 2005; Fiese, Winter, Wamboldt, Anbar, & Wamboldt, 2010; Frare, Axia, & Battistella, 2002; Peterson-Sweeney, 2009; Schreier & Chen, 2010).

Routines likewise have a positive effect during normative transitions. When parents report less decline, or even improvement, in family routines after their children enter kindergarten,

biomarkers show that parents have lower levels of stress (i.e. lower mean levels and less variability in adrenocortical arousal) (DeCaro & Worthman, 2011).

In conditions of poverty, routines are beneficial for both parents and children. Prolonged workhours can cause parents to feel overburdened and drained, but attending regular family dinnertime routines has a buffering effect (Jacob, Allen, Hill, Mead, & Ferris, 2008). Low-income families tend to experience higher levels of chaos, disorganisation, disrupted routines and instability in the home (Evans, Gonnella, Marcynyszyn, Gentile, & Salpekar, 2005). However, in low-income homes, adolescents fare better and are less negatively affected by financial deprivation when caregivers use family routines to preserve order (Budescu & Taylor, 2013). With children who live in low-income, urban neighbourhoods, family routines may also attenuate the relationship between child hyperactivity/impulsivity and oppositional defiant disorder symptoms (Lanza & Drabick, 2011). In families with limited resources, regular family routines are associated with healthier diets (despite food insecurity), fewer risky behaviours, better self-regulation, better academic performance, better cognitive development, and better mental health for children (Compañ, Moreno, Ruiz, & Pascual, 2002; Eisenberg, Olson, Neumark-Sztainer, Story, & Bearinger, 2004; Ferretti & Bub, 2014; Koszewski, Behrends, Nichols, Sehi, & Jones, 2011).

Zajicek-Farber, Mayer, Daughtery, and Rodkey (2014) looked at longitudinal data gathered from 2 977 children from low-income families across three time-periods (viz. the child at 14 months, 36 months and 60 months) and used structural equation modelling to investigate associations between early parenting and child outcomes. Zajicek-Farber et al. (2014) found that regular child bedtime routines safeguarded against the effects of problematic early parenting behaviours and parenting stress, because routinised children had better emotion and behaviour regulation, and were better prepared to develop language and problem-solving skills

during kindergarten. In support of Zajicek-Faber et al.'s (2014) findings, Yoon, Newkirk, and Perry-Jenkins (2015) also found that meaningful family dinners temper the positive association between parenting stress and children's internalising and externalising problems, and David, LeBlanc and Self-Brown (2015) found that routines decrease the negative correlation between domestic violence and school readiness in preschool-aged children.

In her review, Anderson (2012) mentioned that the potential of routines to improve resilience is particularly true for single parenthood, as it provides a measure of order and predictability, helps to regulate child behaviours, decreases parents' feelings of being overwhelmed, and buffers against stress.

I explain in Chapter 2 that family routines (termed *activity settings*) are laden with culturally symbolic meanings and help to create a sense of group identity, cohesion, and unity, be it family-member-to-family-member, generation-to-generation, or family-to-family within a specific cultural community (Gallimore, Goldenberg, & Weisner, 1993; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Routines are also likened to proximal *ecocultural niches* (Gallimore et al., 1993; Weisner, 1984, 2002a, 2002b). Each routine is a focused space providing the opportunity for apprenticeship, modelling, and joint activity to take place between caregiver and child. It is here that parents teach children the values and skills needed to thrive in their specific physical and cultural environment (Weisner, 2002a, 2002b). Apart from the acquisition of skills and values, routines are crucial in the early years when children attach to significant caregivers. Routines become consistent spaces in which supportive and responsive interactions between parent and young child occur. Consistent joint interactions with responsive caregivers are most important for the optimal growth of infants and toddlers (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child [NSCDC], 2008, 2012). These early childhood experiences have lasting impacts on the child's emotional world and will even improve neural connections and brain

architecture in the first five years of a child's life (NSCDC, 2012). These neural connections lay the groundwork for future wellbeing and development (NSCDC, 2008, 2012).

It therefore is evident that routines can assist families who are dealing with a range of stressors, whether normative (such as the transition into kindergarten) or non-normative (such as illness, poverty, or family violence). Zajicek-Farber et al. (2014) suggest that, in policy and practice, professionals should use child-centred routines to address the potentially negative consequences of childhood environments that have been compromised by the effects of poverty. The daily routine activities of families should play a major role when planning interventions and should be considered as an important unit of analysis when conducting research (Fiese et al., 2002; Gallimore et al., 1993).

1.2 The Lack of Available Research

Although theorists often mention the relational, cultural, developmental, and environmental sophistication of the family routine construct (Fiese & Jones, 2012; Fiese et al., 2002; Gallimore et al., 1993; Rossano, 2012; Spagnola & Fiese, 2007; Weisner, 2002a, 2002b; Weisner, Matheson, Coots, & Bernheimer, 2005; Wolin & Bennett, 1984), more needs to be known about how families effectively organise and manage their routines. Factors that hinder or enable the formation of stable routines during major life transitions (such as the transition to parenthood) should be investigated because, as Howe (2002) mentions, these factors have important implications for family satisfaction and can be targeted during preventative and treatment interventions.

Only a few international studies addressed how daily routines are managed. For example, Medved (2004) looked at how couples create a work-life balance through communicative practices. On the other hand, Hall (2007) examined how English and Canadian two-earner

families with preschool children impose order in the home and coordinate day-to-day activities. Some studies have examined routines during periods of hardship. For example, in one recently published paper, Bagatell (2016) looked at the routines of families in which an adolescent had been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Another study investigated the routines of parents who have a young child suffering from severe developmental delay (Maul & Singer, 2009). Schultz-Krohn, (2004) examined the routines of families residing in a shelter for the homeless. However, no international research could be found that examines how family routines are developed, adapted and maintained during normative life transitions such as the transition to parenthood. More recent, local work has been published about the challenges that first-time, two-parent families face (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a) and the assisting factors they utilise (De Goede & Greeff, 2016b) when trying to sustain their routines. However, because of the diversity of South African families, De Goede and Greeff (2016b) encourage researchers to explore how routines are managed in varying contexts. In addition, no routine-related literature addresses the unique situation of low-income, single mothers. These limits call for a comprehensive look at family routines, because the lack of adequate theory and research makes it difficult to create well-designed intervention programmes, especially ones that are contextually sensitive. This qualitative, grounded theory research study is a step towards addressing these multiple gaps in the literature.

1.3 Research Questions

The research question is: How are family routines managed, from the perspective of low-income, single, Xhosa-speaking mothers with young children? The aim was to explore some of the potential sub-processes and components involved in the management of these families' routines. The primary research question can be broken down into two secondary questions:

- What hampers the management of family routines?

- What facilitates the management of family routines?

The terminology used to formulate my research questions comprises somewhat complex, abstract concepts with specific theoretical underpinnings. Thus, I feel it is important to define several key terms. In *Addendum A*, I provide an explanation of key terms, including *single mother*, *families with young children*, *management*, and *family routine*.

1.4 Presentation of the Research

In this first chapter, I described the rationale behind my research study, highlighted the prevalence of single motherhood in South Africa, described some of the challenges that single-mother families face, and pointed to the value that family routines can add to family life. I presented the specific research questions that directed this study, and explained key terms. In Chapter 2 I provide an overview of the literature. In this second chapter I contextualise single motherhood, provide the theoretical underpinnings for my research, and dissect the family routine construct. In Chapter 3 I discuss what methods I used to execute my study, including the research design, a description of the participants, sampling procedures, the process followed while collecting interview and observational data, the analytic process followed to build the substantive theory, ethical considerations, and the safeguards put in place to improve the trustworthiness of results. The results are presented in the subsequent two chapters, with each chapter focusing on one of the research questions. Thus, in Chapter 4 I address the question: *What hampers the management of family routines by low-income, single, Xhosa-speaking mothers with young children?* In Chapter 5 I address the question: *What facilitates the management of family routines?* The results in Chapters 4 and 5 are rich in contextual detail and here I aim to give the reader insight into the everyday experiences of the participating single mothers who live in Cape Town townships. In Chapter 6 I build on Chapters 4 and 5 and discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the preceding two chapters. In this last

chapter I also highlight some of the limitations inherent in this research project, provide recommendations for subsequent investigations, and finally conclude my study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of a grounded theory approach is to develop theory inductively, and to ground knowledge in real-life experiences rather than a researcher's preconceived understanding of the laws that govern reality. However, researchers cannot pretend they have a complete vacuity of mind, as no researcher lives in a theoretical vacuum. Thus, instead of claiming to be unaffected by experience or acquired knowledge, it is more beneficial to highlight my viewpoints outright (Suddaby, 2006). The theoretical perspectives that researchers bring to the analytic process can be understood as "sensitizing concepts" in grounded theory, and serve as points of departure during the research process (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 16-17). According to Charmaz (2006), these guiding perspectives help to develop rather than limit the researcher's initial ideas. However, although I began my study from these vantage points, the aim was also to remain as open as possible to whatever I saw within the data (Charmaz, 2006). Through various techniques and precautions (described in Chapter 3), the analytic methods used in a grounded theory approach assist the researcher in going *beyond* her previous understandings of the phenomenon and ensure that the researcher is not locked into these sensitising concepts (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to contextualise this research study and discuss sensitising concepts. The chapter is divided into two broad sections.

In the first section (namely *2.1 Single Motherhood*), I aim to describe the causes, context, corollaries, risks, and protective factors associated with the single-mother family, paying attention to both international research and the South African environment. In the second section of this chapter (namely *2.2 Theoretical Perspectives That Guide My Understanding of Family Routines and Their Management*), I have a more conceptual focus on the family routine as a psychological construct. This second section is subdivided into four, with each subsection focusing on a different theoretical perspective: 1) the *circumplex model of marital and family*

systems (from here on the circumplex model), developed by Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell (1979); 2) the *resiliency model of family stress, adjustment and adaptation* (from here on the resiliency model), devised by McCubbin et al. (1996); 3) family rituals, as understood by Wolin and Bennett (1984); and 4) *ecological-cultural niche theory* (from here on ecocultural theory), as described by Weisner and associates (Gallimore et al., 1993; Weisner, 1984, 2002a, 2002b).

2.1 Single Motherhood

In this section I aim to tease out some of the complexities and experiences related to single parenthood. I first contextualise single parenthood and the various types of situations that single parents find themselves in. I then consider certain risk and protective factors associated with single motherhood. I discuss why some of the causal pathways that link single motherhood and various family outcomes are unclear. In particular, I consider whether single parenthood is, in itself, a risk factor, or whether poverty, as a confounding variable, explains away most of the variance between this family form and a range of poor health outcomes. Finally, I go into greater detail about family routines, discussing how they can be challenging to maintain in single-mother families.

2.1.1 The heterogeneity of the “single parenthood” experience

Single parenthood is not a homogenous parenting form (Anderson, 2012). Firstly, single parents have different types of living arrangements (such as those who live alone with their children, those who live with a romantic partner, and those who live with extended family). Secondly, one can also argue that gender divides the single-parent experience because lone fathers and lone mothers have vastly different cultural, social, and economic circumstances (Anderson, 2012). In the last few decades, research on single parenthood tended to focus on single mothers rather than single fathers. Some researchers are starting to pay more attention

to the experiences of single fathers (e.g. Goldscheider & Kaufman, 2006; Hook & Chalasani, 2008; Spector, 2006; Yopp & Rosenstein, 2012). The subsequent discussion will concentrate on single motherhood because the experiences of lone fathers go beyond the scope of the current study (for an extensive review on South African fathers, see Richter & Morrell, 2006). Thirdly, the heterogeneity of single parenthood can be ascribed to the substantial variation in the types of events that lead up to people's single-parent status (Anderson, 2012). Some adults become single parents because of a pre-marital, unplanned pregnancy; some lose their partner through divorce; others enter widowhood; and a small but increasing number intentionally decide to take on solo childrearing after a range of unsuccessful romantic relationships. These subgroups have some commonalities, but other challenges are subtype-specific (Anderson, 2012). For example, the experience of becoming a teenage single mother, with an uncommitted partner, is markedly different from the woman whose husband passed away. Both women might face the same daily practical challenges (such as trying to juggle different household and childcare tasks), but they will typically deal with different levels of societal acceptance; the one ostracised, the other legitimised. The former might also face conflict with the biological father or experience feelings of rejection after the romantic relationship dissolves, whereas the latter will go through a period of grief and mourning.

Although many single-parent families live happy, fulfilling lives, Anderson (2012) believes that most parents still favour raising children with the support of a loving, committed partner. Anderson (2012) asserts that single parenthood is a default family form in that it ensues after the parent fails to obtain some other family ideal. This failure is either because the parent was unsuccessful in establishing a satisfying, long-term romantic relationship before having children (e.g. teenage mothers, or older, unattached women who wish to experience motherhood and then opt for adoption/artificial insemination) or, after having children, the romantic relationship is terminated prematurely (through separation, divorce, or death).

Therefore, it is usually the case that a form of loss sets the scene for the onset of this life event, be it the loss of a loved one, the loss of a relationship, or the loss of a dream (Anderson, 2012). This loss can be accompanied by pain, unresolved conflict, anger, and disappointment (Anderson, 2012). Consequently, becoming a single parent frequently means that while the parent is coming to terms with the day-to-day practicalities of being the primary caretaker, he or she must simultaneously cope with some form of social and emotional turmoil. This context of loss can affect parental satisfaction and potential. However, the level of family functioning is ultimately determined by a range of intricate, interrelating individual, familial, community and macro-societal influences that increase either risk or resilience (Anderson, 2012).

2.1.2 Risk and protective factors associated with single-mother families

There exists the stereotype that single-mother families are so-called ‘broken homes’, and therefore inherently deficient because they deviate from the idealised two-parent, nuclear family (Anderson, 2012). However, the risks accompanying single motherhood paint a complex picture.

Compared to traditional two-parent families, single-mother families are associated with a range of problematic family outcomes. Single mothers are more likely to experience psychological distress, common mental disorders such as anxiety and depression, social isolation, and lack of emotional support (Afifi, Cox, & Enns, 2006; Anderson, 2012; Dziak, Janzen, & Muhajarine, 2010; Ellison, 2003; McBride-Murry, Bynum, Brody, Willert, & Stephens, 2001; Richter & Morrell, 2006; Richter et al., 2011; Targosz et al., 2003; Wade, Veldhuizen, & Cairney, 2011).

The associated risks tend to be ubiquitous within the family system and thus there is an increase in children’s vulnerability to a range of mental health concerns (Schleider, Chorpita, & Weisz, 2014). Children raised by single mothers are at a greater risk for substance abuse (including alcohol and narcotics), suicide attempts, common mental disorders such as depression and

anxiety, internalising and externalising behaviour problems, poor academic and school performance, low self-esteem, crime-related activities and promiscuity (Amato, 2005; Antecol & Bedard, 2007; Barajas, 2011; Daryanani et al., 2017; Goodrum, Jones, Kincaid, Cuellar, & Parent, 2012; McBride-Murry et al., 2001; Raymo, 2015; Schleider et al., 2014; Weitoft, Hjern, Haglund, & Rosén, 2003).

In Sub-Saharan countries such as Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Burundi, neonates and infants of single mothers also have an increased mortality risk when compared to children of married women (Izugbara, 2016). An earlier study by Clark and Hamplová (2013) found that the children of never-married women are significantly more likely to die before age five in six Sub-Saharan countries. In addition to under-age-five mortality, children from never-married single-mother households in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo were significantly more likely to be stunted than those living in cohabiting and married households (Ntoimo & Odimegwu, 2014).

However, it is not clear whether it is the single mother status *per se* that increases risk, or other, comorbid conditions (i.e. poverty) that increase vulnerability. Some studies suggest that, once researchers control for confounding variables such as socioeconomic status, the differences between single-mother families and two-parent families become far less pronounced (Anderson, 2012). Anderson (2012) has criticised past research that tended to ignore the effects of income level, despite the fact that most single mothers are less well off financially. Christopher, England, Smeeding, and Phillips (2002) found that single-mother families have higher poverty rates than any other family type in seven Western nations (the United States, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom). As mentioned in Chapter 1, this is also true for South African single mothers, who contend with high unemployment rates and lower income levels (StatsSA, 2012b). The dual effects of gender and

race in South Africa collide in that 35.4 % of employed women in South Africa are in unskilled occupations (such as domestic workers), but on top of that, only a third of black women in South Africa have a remunerated job (as compared to 56.1% of white women) (StatsSA, 2012b).

Widespread poverty is a pervasive stressor on the African continent, with extreme deprivation being concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank Group, 2016). Based on the updated poverty line of \$1.90 a day, poverty in this region has experienced a steady increase over the last decade, amounting to 900 million extremely poor individuals in 2012 (World Bank Group, 2016). Using only income as indicator, 43% of the global poor now reside in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank Group, 2016). To give these statistics further context, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), an adjusted headcount indicator that calculates the incidence and breadth of those who lack adequate health,¹ education,² and standards of living,³ also shows that those living in Sub-Saharan Africa are more affected by extreme deprivation than people in other parts of the world (World Bank Group, 2016).

Different poverty indicators are used in South Africa. The 2011 census showed that 45.5% of the South African population is poor (23 million) when applying the upper-bound poverty line⁴ (StatsSA, 2014b). Based on the food poverty line,⁵ one in three (32.7%) South African households are extremely poor, with not enough money to sustain an adequate diet (StatsSA, 2015a). A 2016 survey revealed that one fifth of households in South Africa ran out of money for food in the twelve-month period prior to the study (StatsSA, 2016). Despite the United

¹ Identified by high child mortality rates and poor nutrition.

² Attributable to poor schooling and poor school attendance.

³ Owing to a lack of cooking fuel, toilet facilities, water, electricity, floors, and assets.

⁴ Inflation-adjusted poverty line of R620 per capita per month, with which individuals can at least purchase both adequate food to satisfy basic dietary needs and some non-food items that cater to other basic needs, such as money for transport and clothes (StatsSA, 2014b).

⁵ The threshold below which individuals have insufficient consumption expenditure to cater for their daily dietary requirements (StatsSA, 2015b). Based on food prices in 2011, the food poverty line was set at R321 per person per month (StatsSA, 2015b).

Nations Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030, Bicaba, Brixiová, and Ncube (2015) predicted that reducing poverty will become increasingly challenging over time and that progress in Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to slow after 2017.

When collating research over the last few decades, it is clear that poverty has pervasive effects on adults' and children's mental, emotional and behavioural health (for reviews see Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010; Coulton, Crampton, Irwin, Spilsbury, & Korbin, 2007; Freisthler, Merritt, & LaScala, 2006; Yoshikawa, Aber, & Beardslee, 2012). Co-factors of poverty, such as distressed neighbourhoods, persistently low-performing schools, overcrowding, crime and gang-related activity, housing problems, poor workplace conditions such as low job quality and high job instability, poor access to health care, and less nutritious food supplies, all play a role in increasing family stress and vulnerability (Coley, Lynch, & Kull, 2015; Coulton et al. 2007; Freisthler et al., 2006; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Anderson (2012) believes that poverty's contribution to a single mother's mental wellbeing is especially erosive, affecting her self-esteem and independence. This may lead to her gradually losing her sense of self. This state of emotional vulnerability can potentially affect her childrearing practices (Anderson, 2012).

Not only does poverty negatively affect wellbeing, special attention must be paid to inequality, as it adds another facet to the problem. Within-country inequality remains highest in middle-income countries in Southern Africa (Bicaba et al., 2015), and South Africa is no exception (StatsSA, 2015a). This is of concern, since systematic reviews have demonstrated that there is a strong, consistent, statistically significant association between income inequality and population health, with some evidence indicating causality (Babones, 2008; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2006, 2007, 2009). Wilkinson and Pickett (2006, 2009) hypothesized that this association exists because unequal societies are socially corrosive and give rise to differentiation in social status. It is likely that social status differentiation has a negative impact

on mental health, because it could increase 1) feelings of mistrust, inferiority, and humiliation, 2) levels of chronic stress, 3) a sense of uncontrollability over one's life, and 4) an awareness that one is being devalued and disrespected within one's society (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2006).

Anderson (2012) suggested that, when poverty's influence is factored in, the difference between vulnerability in one- and two-parent families disappears. Several studies support Anderson's conclusion that poverty and other confounding variables are to blame for the poor health outcomes in single-mother families. For example, although single mothers used more negative parenting techniques, such as psychologically controlling and rejecting behaviours (Daryanani, Hamilton, Abramson, & Alloy, 2016), had more common mental disorders (Cooper et al., 2008), and had less time available for mother-child interactions (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008) than partnered mothers, these differences became negligible once researchers controlled for levels of income.

To further emphasise that there is nothing inherently detrimental about being raised by a single parent, one might consider that, although Daryanani et al. (2016) found a higher prevalence of depressive disorders in adolescents from single-mother families (16%) as opposed to adolescents from two-parent families (10%), it still means that 84% of teenagers raised by single mothers (the majority) did *not* meet the criteria for such a disorder. Hence, although there is some risk associated with single motherhood, many children raised in these households are happy, secure, and well-adjusted (Shook, Jones, Forehand, Dorsey, & Brody, 2010).

Clearly, poverty has a pervasive effect on single mothers and their children. Despite this, I do believe the picture is a complex one. Poor outcomes cannot, in all contexts, be explained by low socioeconomic status alone. There are certain risk factors connected to single motherhood that go beyond comorbid conditions such as poverty. For example, the stigma accompanying never-married single motherhood can have a negative impact on women (Ellison, 2003).

Society categorises pregnant women by their marital status, and the ‘out-of-wedlock’ children of single women are often socially labelled (Ellison, 2003). Differences in social authority, prestige, and access to resources will markedly alter the social mobility and approval that never-married single mothers can enjoy within their community. Black mothers who live in poverty and who unintentionally conceive before marriage may experience the triple jeopardy of class, race, and family structure, finding themselves on the lowest tier of social power in their society.

In South Africa, single mothers are often never-married women, and the marriage rates of black South Africans seem to be declining (Posel, Rudwick, & Casale, 2011; Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010). Practicing *ilobolo* or *lobola*⁶ in the context of widespread poverty may be one reason for this decline. Because of high unemployment rates and diminished income levels, men struggle to pay lobola and thus cannot always comply with the cultural traditions and expectations needed to wed (Hunter, 2006).

Whether married or not, approximately half of South African fathers are not involved in their children’s lives on a daily basis (Richter & Morrell, 2008). Some findings suggest that single mothers who are not married to the biological father at the time of their child’s birth can expect little long-term paternal involvement. In a longitudinal birth cohort sampled from Soweto, Johannesburg, Richter (cited in Richter & Morrell, 2006) found that, when mothers and fathers were not married, only 20% of biological fathers were still in contact with their children by age 11. In findings on the same cohort published later (sample size of 1 557 girls and boys followed from birth to age 18), Richter et al. (2012) found that, in the first five years of the children’s

⁶ In the Zulu, Swazi, Xhosa and Ndebele cultures, a prospective groom pays a bride price to the family of the woman he intends to marry (Ngema, 2013). This price is negotiated based on the social standing of the bride-to-be and her family. Factors such as her level of education, her lineage, attractiveness, and her virginity are considered. The price can be substantial.

lives, nearly 60% of the sample did not reside with their fathers, 30% had no contact with non-resident fathers, and 40% did not receive financial support from their fathers.

The regular involvement of a non-resident father can be an important protective factor for children. Jackson, Preston, and Franke (2010) found that, in their sample of 89 low-income, single black mothers and their preschool children, children had more behaviour problems when parenting stress was high. There was also an increase in child behaviour problems when mothers made use of physical discipline such as spanking (Jackson et al., 2010). However, when non-resident fathers made frequent contact with their children, the association between harsh maternal discipline and child behaviour problems disappeared (Jackson et al., 2010).

The lack of father involvement in South Africa is due to a myriad of reasons. Besides the already mentioned delay in marriage and the high price of lobola (Posel et al., 2011), other contributing factors to father absenteeism are the fluidity of modern family life and the growing cultural independence of women (Richter et al., 2011, 2012). Another issue raised is that South Africans tend to consider childrearing a feminine task, although some of these views may be slowly changing (Richter & Morrell, 2006; Richter et al., 2012).

Moreover, financial strain can encourage father absenteeism. For example, in 2002, only 7 000 out of 67 000 court-mandated Umlazi residents (mostly male) paid child support (Morrell & Richter, 2006). Paternal abandonment may be triggered by fathers' feelings of shame and failure when they cannot provide for their children financially (Ramphela, 2002). Being a breadwinner is still viewed as a primary paternal task (Richter et al., 2012), but the burden of not being able to attain this ideal, especially when the unemployment rate is venturing closer to 30% (StatsSA, 2016b), may be too much for some men to bear (Richter & Morrell, 2008). Accordingly, comparing men in the highest and lowest income categories, high earners are thrice as likely to live with their children (Desmond & Desmond, 2006).

Other factors that contribute to the absence of fathers can be found in South Africa's history of racial exploitation and degradation. Colonialism weakened the African family during apartheid by employing the migrant labour system, which compelled men to work on mines and live in all-male hostels, while women were often confined to the homestead, tending to children (Ramphela & Richter, 2006). It has been noted that migrant labour was a form of racial discrimination that created and preserved the status of single motherhood in South Africa (Ramphela & Richter, 2006). Today it is still common for men to move to urban areas in search of work, while women remain behind to tend to children (Ramphela & Richter, 2006).

A final note must be made. Absent biological fathers do not imply absent *men* in single-mother families. Many South African children do live in households with maternal uncles, grandfathers, or even older brothers (Richter et al., 2012), who may play critical roles in the lives of children (Mkhize, 2006). These men may function as paternal figures, although there is not enough empirical evidence available to fully understand if and how these male figures mitigate the negative impact of absent biological fathers.

2.1.3 Managing family routines in single-mother families

Motherhood can be challenging even for married women who are well educated, financially stable, emotionally invested, and ready to parent; but for single mothers, everyday hassles can be overwhelming (Taylor & Conger, 2017). For single mothers who live alone, it may be more challenging to maintain regular and smoothly running family routines due to their limited resources (e.g. time, money, and additional helping hands) (Fiese & Jones, 2012; Koulouglioti, Cole, & Moskow, 2011). Less income (especially due to lower levels of education and shorter billable hours) means that single mothers are more restricted when trying to arrange work and care domains (Bakker & Karsten, 2013). In low-income settings, single mothers often need to contend with additional obstacles, such as extended and irregular working hours (e.g. shift-

work schedules) and an inadequate public transport system characterised by long distances and meandering routes (Roy, Tubbs, & Burton, 2004). These demanding work schedules and protracted travel time undermine opportunities for family time (Roy et al., 2004). Juggling these challenges in an already overwhelmed, time-starved, resource-deprived system increases the possibility of erratic or absent family routines (Roy et al., 2004; Tubbs, Roy, & Burton, 2005). Thus, understandably, single-mother households have less available time to invest in childcare when compared to two-parent households (Kalil, Ryan, & Chor, 2014). It is not surprising that Gable and Lutz (2000) note that having children prepare pre-cooked, packaged meals on their own is a real possibility in single-parent homes. Single parents often feel stretched, with little time for respite (Anderson, 2012). To manage schedules, single parents are relentlessly balancing different life domains and responsibilities and any unexpected incident can unsettle or even overthrow the fragile order of family routines (Anderson, 2012).

McLoyd, Toyokawa, and Kaplan (2008) compared single-mother households ($n = 252$) with mothers in two-parent households ($n = 203$) and looked at how child adjustment could be affected by maternal work demands, work-family conflict, maternal depressive symptoms, and family routines. In Figure 2.1 I provide the statistical equation model that explains some of the interactions between these five variables in single-mother families. The figure shows that single mothers who experienced greater work demands (i.e. more shift work, longer work hours, a greater number of working days, and greater travelling distances) also experienced greater work-family conflict (McLoyd et al., 2008). There was no direct positive correlation between work demands and depressive symptoms; however, there was an indirect effect in that greater work-family conflict predicted more depressive symptoms (McLoyd et al., 2008). In turn, family routines seemed to be hampered by both maternal depressive symptoms and work-family conflict, as both these variables predicted less family routinisation (McLoyd et al., 2008). Finally, more maternal depressive symptoms and fewer family routines predicted

greater internalising and externalising behaviour problems in children (McLoyd et al., 2008). It must also be noted that higher maternal education served as a protective factor in that it was negatively associated with work-family conflict (McLoyd et al., 2008). Very importantly, married or cohabiting mothers' mean scores of work demands, work-family conflict, and family routinisation did not differ significantly from those of single mothers (McLoyd et al., 2008).

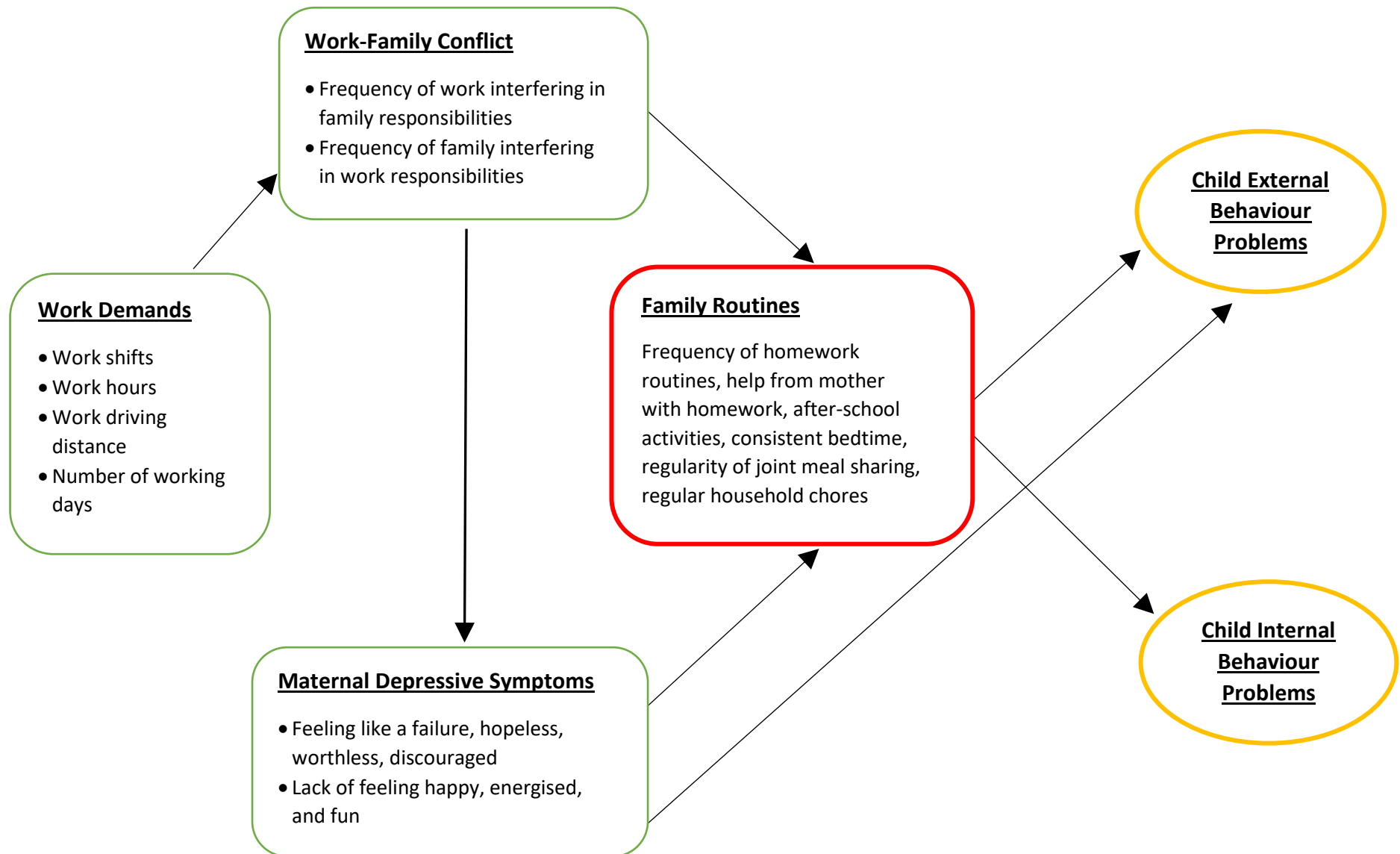


Figure 2.1. The direct and indirect effects of maternal work demands, work-family conflict, maternal depressive symptoms and family routines on child adjustment in single-mother households. Adapted from “Work demands, work-family conflict, and child adjustment in African American families: The mediating role of family routines,” by V. C. McLoyd, T. Toyokawa and R. Kaplan, 2008, *Journal of Family Issues*, 29, p. 1260. Copyright 2008 by Sage Publications.

However, what was surprising was that, in two-parent households, none of these mediating processes occurred and thus family routines were not negatively affected when mothers in two-parent households had greater work-family conflict or more maternal depressive symptoms (McLoyd et al., 2008).

Although Figure 2.1 shows how work demands can eventually have a negative impact on child behaviour in single-mother families, it must be noted that having a job and struggling to balance various life domains may still be better for single mothers than being unemployed. Evidence from the study by Meier, Musick, Flood and Dunifon (2016) suggests that employed single mothers, as compared to those without work, fare better, with lower stress levels and fewer feelings of sadness. Thus, it is evident that family routines can be of benefit to single mothers and their children, but it may not always be easy to consistently implement these routines.

2.1.4 Concluding remarks on single motherhood

In this first section of Chapter 2 I have discussed the heterogeneity of single parenthood, pointing to the varied contexts and experiences that single parents face. The only common denominator seems to be that most single parents enter this situation through some form of loss. I aimed to show that, in the current South African climate, single mothers live in a context of financial strain, potential stigma, and systematic discrimination due to the triple jeopardy of race, class, and a non-traditional family structure. Irrespective of the reasons why so many South African fathers are absent from their children's lives, the evidence presented in this section shows that single mothers are at greater psychological risk, and their children developmentally more vulnerable. I then tried to illustrate how family routines can have a mitigating effect on this vulnerability through various pathways. Ironically, studies have shown that family routines are much harder to manage in single-parent households. This section thus contextualised this research study. With such a large portion of the South African population

living in extreme resource-deprived conditions, it is critical to support single-mother families and bolster their resilience by encouraging healthy family routines. In the following section I will look at four theoretical perspectives that have, to some extent, informed my understanding of the family routine as a psychological construct.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives that Guided My Understanding of Family Routines and Their Management

At the end of this section I hope to have touched on different aspects of the family routine construct, including some of its potential components, some of its correlates and corollaries, some approaches to its measurement, potential factors associated with its management, and its various functions within the family system. In each of the four subsections I look at a key theory. Where needed, I try to supplement the discussion with other published works.

The fundamental motivation for this study rests on the aspiration to strengthen and support the healthy functioning of South African families through the use of their routines. To achieve this goal, we must first have a template for what we consider to be *healthy family functioning*.⁷ With such a template in mind, we will know what we need to work towards when intervening with struggling families, and how routines can ideally be used to support such an endeavour. Therefore, in the first subsection, I discuss the circumplex model developed by Olson et al. (1979). As a well-established model within the subfield of family psychology, it provides an overview of how healthy and less-healthy families operate. I chose this specific model because it has a long history of evidence supporting its premises. It also strives toward cultural sensitivity.

⁷ Family functioning is seen as the interactive processes by which the family fulfils its various functions. These functions may include aspects such as fostering supportive interpersonal relationships and promoting the development and wellbeing of each family member.

Then, in the second subsection I will discuss family resilience by looking specifically at the resiliency model devised by McCubbin et al. (1996). While the circumplex model provides a broad template for understanding general family functioning and its correlates, the resiliency model provides a template for understanding family processes that come into play specifically during times of distress. The resiliency model can thus give some indication of how family routines are changed and maintained during periods of family strain. After these broader discussions on family functioning, I will examine the family routine construct more closely.

In the third subsection I will examine a seminal article published in 1984 by Wolin and Bennett. This article seems to be one of the first attempts to conceptualise what a family routine is, by viewing family routines as a subtype of family ritual. This article provides an important theoretical base when trying to understand what routines are, and how they function within families.

In the last subsection I will discuss ecocultural theory, as described by Weisner and associates (Gallimore et al., 1993; Weisner, 1984, 2002a, 2002b). Ecocultural theory provides a context- and culture-sensitive point of view on family routines. The ecocultural perspective compels professionals to take into consideration how distal historical, social, environmental, and economic complexities filter down and affect every-day, proximate family interactions via the family's routines. Based on this ecocultural framework I will also touch on issues regarding the measurement of routines and highlight what important elements practitioners should consider when trying to improve the sustainability of a family's routines within their unique milieu. I must note that my aim with the ensuing discussion is not to simplify, but rather to consider the intricacy of the family routine construct and tease out its complexity.

2.2.1 The circumplex model of marital and family systems

In this first theoretical subsection I will discuss the circumplex model (Olson et al., 1979) because it provides a broad template for understanding healthy family functioning. With over 1 200 published studies that have used the circumplex model, it is one of the more well-recognised and well-tested theories within psychology, and its genesis is based on a fusion of findings from research, theory, and practice (Olson, 2011). It was introduced in the late 1970s, and originated from within the field of family psychology (Olson, Russell, & Sprekle, 2014).

The circumplex model was developed by collecting a variety of therapeutic and social science perspectives and extrapolating over 50 concepts used by researchers to describe family dynamics (Olson et al., 1979). Similar concepts were then clustered together to arrive at a simplified, coherent blueprint of family functioning (Olson et al., 1979). This blueprint helps not only to understand key family processes, but can be used as a diagnostic tool because it predicts the family unit's level of wellbeing and performance (Olson et al., 2014). The circumplex model has demonstrated its discriminate power to differentiate between clinical and non-clinical families (Olson et al., 2014). The developers of the model also stipulated therapeutic principles and treatment goals so that practitioners can help poor-performing families advance to a more beneficial side of the health spectrum (Olson et al., 2014). In the following sections I will discuss the key principles of this conceptual map, including 1) the family as developing system, 2) family cohesion, 3) family flexibility, 4) family communication, and 5) change over time. I will then highlight what these key principles suggest for our understanding of family routines.

2.2.1.1 The family as a developing system

Like many family-orientated theories, the circumplex model (Olson et al., 1979) takes on a systemic perspective, likening the family unit to a multi-level, nested, social system that

labours to maintain operational stability and relational harmony despite an ever-changing environment. Family psychology takes on an interpersonal perspective, believing that health and wellbeing are maintained not by the intrapsychic tensions within the individual, but by transactional patterns taking place within families, and between families and their environment (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013).

Also, the term *family* is not limited to the traditional idea, which holds that entrance into this social group only takes place via birth, adoption, or marriage. A more inclusive, contemporary definition of family is that it is a unit of people who *decide* to live their lives alongside one another in a kinship relationship, and there may or may not be genetic connections or legal sanctions such as adoption and marriage (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013).

Family systems theory integrates concepts from psychology, biology, mathematics and engineering (Broderick, 1993). The biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy formulated general systems theory after World War I and II (Broderick, 1993). Simultaneously, the mathematician Norbert Wiener proposed that there is a cybernetic process whereby complex systems regulate equilibrium through the use of communicative feedback loops (Broderick, 1993). The anthropologist and ethnologist Gregory Bateson used cybernetic principles to reinvestigate psychological constructs such as communication and became the first theorist to equate the family unit to a cybernetic system (Broderick, 1993).

At its core, a system refers to a placing together of distinctive entities in a specific order, and this unique composition creates distinct patterned processes and characteristics that go beyond the sum of the individual parts (i.e. family members) (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). In other words, when individuals are grouped together they create additional patterns of interaction that one could not have predicted or explained if one had only investigated the individuals in isolation (Cox & Paley, 2003). Furthermore, family psychologists would hold

that pathology or dysfunction does not have one, unidirectional cause (e.g. a childhood trauma being the stimulus and depression being the outcome). When working with social phenomena that exhibit organised complexity, it is too reductionistic to think along the lines of linear causality. It is more appropriate to consider *circular causality*, where one force sets in motion a network of consequences, and these consequences, in turn, set in motion several responses (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). The family system possesses a network of bi-directional relationships (Cox & Paley, 2003). Any action by one family member will affect all family members. This will have a reverberating effect, and all family members will respond. Each of these responses will again have an impact on every other individual within the system, and so on. Therefore, as the system moves through time, there are continual loops of mutual influence (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013).

In addition to circular causation, relationships are often also *hierarchical* because of the system's intergenerational quality. Likewise, the system is *self-regulating* and *rule-governed* (Broderick, 1993), meaning that family members are taught what is permitted and what is expected from them. These rules help regulate the system and maintain order and stability. Not only do rules exist, but meta-rules (the rules about rules) occur, in that family members have procedures and regulations in place for the application, enforcement, and modification of rules (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Furthermore, the *redundancy principle*, hypothesised by Jackson (1965), operates within family systems (Whitchurch & Constantine, 2009). The *redundancy principle* implies that, although family members have endless behavioural options available to them when they respond to each other, they restrict themselves to a relatively narrow and predictable range of actions (Whitchurch & Constantine, 2009).

Every system strives to maintain *homeostasis* (i.e. a relative equilibrium in which most systemic features remain constant and predictable) (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013).

Achieving homeostasis is, however, a dynamic process. Thus, systemic constancy is rooted in intermittent adaptation and transformation. Change in family life is inevitable and necessary because of a continuously fluctuating environment and shifting family needs (Walsh, 2012). What homeostasis means is thus not operational rigidity (doing the same thing day in and day out), but stability in overall long-term functioning. To achieve this the family needs to control or contain change so that it does not become random or reckless. To this end, the system continuously evaluates its performance by using feedback loops. Feedback loops are circular communicative mechanisms that provide information about the family unit's viability (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Feedback loops either encourage a systemic response that will reduce or reverse current changes in the system (attenuating or negative feedback), or encourage a systemic response that will accelerate the initial change in the same direction (amplifying or positive feedback) (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013).

Finally, the system's *nested* quality can be equated to Russian Matryoshka dolls (a series of wooden figures, decreasing in size, each one placed inside another) in that each family system contains smaller subsystems (e.g. parent-child dyads, sibling dyads and triads, wife-husband dyads or parent-grandparent dyads); but at the same time the family system is immersed in larger supra-systems that fit together in a hierarchy, and there is increasing complexity at each systemic level (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Thus, the family system is embedded within the larger family network and community, which is in turn overarched by greater, multifaceted, societal configurations (e.g. cultural systems, ecological systems, political systems, government systems, and economic systems).

Via bidirectional interactions, these systemic levels continuously affect one another. The family's state of vulnerability versus resilience is affected by a range of multisystem features: the environment (e.g. sociocultural political, historical, and physical environment), family-

level structural features (e.g. composition, developmental stage, and size), family member interactional patterns (e.g. quality of communication, amount and value of time spent together, approaches to problem solving, conflict management styles, rule setting and behavioural enforcement) and the characteristics of individuals (e.g. ages, needs, temperaments, competencies, personalities and biopsychosocial health) (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012).

Individual family members develop and change concurrently. These growing individuals need to negotiate these changes within their relationships. A well-functioning family recognises the potential of each family member, encourages their growth, provides support and protection for their maturation, and respects their self-exploration and discovery (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013; Walsh, 2012). It is the task of society to create an environment in which this level of functioning is possible for families, and to engage in reparative and preventative work when families struggle to achieve these ideals.

The circumplex model directs our attention to three family-level dimensions (i.e. cohesion, flexibility, and communication) that have consistently been identified as highly relevant for good functioning (Olson et al., 2014). These three dimensions are essential for understanding and treating family problems. It is my belief that routines play an especially significant role in the dimensions of cohesion and flexibility, whereas the dimension of communication is always a pervasive, mitigating variable involved in almost all family processes and phenomena, including family routines.

2.2.1.2 Family cohesion

Cohesion is defined by Olson and Gorall (2006, p. 3) as “the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another”. It reflects how the family unit balances separation against togetherness. It aims to measure how unified family members are by taking into account: emotional boundaries and intimacy (e.g. whether parent-child relationships are close, yet

display intergenerational parameters, how much affective responses are displayed and encouraged by romantic partners, or how open and honest family members are when sharing difficult experiences), coalitions (e.g. how much loyalty do individuals have towards one another), time (how much time is spent together versus apart), social connections and leisure (e.g. how many friends and hobbies are shared by family members), space (e.g. whether there are shared family spaces as well as respected private spaces within the home). In Table 2.1 one can see that the dimension has three balanced levels (i.e. very connected, connected, and somewhat connected), which are all deemed advantageous, but two unbalanced levels at either end of the spectrum (i.e. enmeshed and disengaged).

Table 2.1

Circumplex model: Cohesion dimension

	UNBALANCED	3 BALANCED TYPES			UNBALANCED
	enmeshed families	very connected	connected families	somewhat connected	disengaged families
Togetherness (“we”) versus Separateness (“I”).	Incessant “we” perspectives. The desires of individuals are eclipsed by that of the family. Everyone’s focus is expected to be exclusively inside the family.	Adequate balance between “I” and “we” perspectives. All individuals are encouraged to have intra- and extrafamilial interests and pursuits. Family members maintain a relative equilibrium between togetherness and separateness.			Only “I” perspectives. Individuals are overly focused on their own pursuits outside the family, at the cost of family togetherness.
Emotional Closeness	Family members are extremely close and overly involved in each other’s lives. The marital dyad is too entangled. In parent-child relationships there is excessive closeness and few intergenerational boundaries.	Couples are emotionally close and function as a unit, but also respect each other’s individuality. Within parent-child relationship, parents connect with children and children feel they have the freedom to be open with parents, but parents maintain intergenerational boundaries.			Within the couple dyad there are infrequent displays of affection, and a lack of emotional intimacy. Within parent-child relationships there exists little closeness and severe intergenerational boundaries.

(continued)

Table 2.1

Circumplex model: Cohesion dimension

	UNBALANCED	3 BALANCED TYPES			UNBALANCED
	enmeshed families	very connected	connected families	somewhat connected	disengaged families
Loyalty	The loyalty and commitment of family members are demanded.	Family members are loyal and committed to family life, but not in excess, having the freedom to pursue individual goals as well.			The loyalty and commitment towards each other are insufficient.
Activities	Everything is shared. Separate activities, friends and interests are seen as disloyal. Family members are not permitted to enjoy time alone. Private spaces in the home are often not allowed.	Involvement in each other's lives is promoted, but privacy and individuality are respected. Family members enjoy both shared and separate activities, friends and interests. Family members spend some time together, but are allowed time apart. In the home, there are communal as well as private spaces.			Individuality dominates and little is shared. Separate "me-time" routines are maximised, with few family time activities. Spaces in the home are rarely shared; most members go off to different corners of the home.
Dependence/ Independence	Family members are overly dependent on each other and lack self-reliance.	Family members depend on each other, but individuals can and do take autonomous action when needed.			Everyone operates autonomously and rarely depends on other family members.

Note: Adapted from "Circumplex model of marital and family systems," by D. H. Olson, 2000, *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22, p. 148. Copyright 2000 by the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice.

The two unbalanced ends of the spectrum are generally said to be harmful for family wellbeing and development. But it must be noted that, if a family *does* fall into an extreme category, they can still be well-functioning, with the proviso that there is consensus among family members and that their *modus operandi* is satisfying to all (Olson et al., 2014). Hence in certain cultures considerable family togetherness and support is revered. One can think, for example, of the concept of *ubuntu* in some African cultures. The concept emboldens human interconnection

and interdependence. Within these cultures, intergenerational devotion is thus often a shared family goal, taking precedence over individual autonomy.

2.2.1.3 Family flexibility

In the circumplex model, flexibility is defined as “the ability of a marital or family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress” (Olson et al., 2014, p. 12). Flexibility focuses on how assertive family members are allowed to be, how much voice and control certain individuals enjoy, what leadership styles are employed (e.g. authoritarian versus egalitarian), how children are disciplined, how much negotiating power different family members have at their disposal, what styles of negotiation are used, how stringent the roles are that family members assume, and how malleable the rules are that govern relationships (Olson & Gorall, 2003). The dimension of flexibility can be viewed as meta-rules – the rules about how rules are made and enforced. Extremely high (i.e. chaotic) and extremely low (i.e. rigid) levels of flexibility tend to be problematic over time (Olson & Gorall, 2003). Balanced family types (who achieve constancy but who are also willing to adapt when needed) will achieve a healthier, more satisfying family life. Table 2.2, following, explains the difference between families who fall into one of the three moderate categories (i.e. somewhat flexible families, flexible families, and very flexible families) versus families who fall into the unbalanced categories at each of the extreme ends of the spectrum (i.e. rigid families and chaotic families).

Table 2.2

Circumplex model: Flexibility dimension

	UNBALANCED	3 BALANCED TYPES			UNBALANCED
	rigid families	somewhat flexible	flexible families	very flexible	chaotic families
Leadership	Authoritarian style. Parents or caregivers are too demanding and have unduly high expectations for children. Parental power is absolute and strict control is maintained.	Shared leadership. Children are given a say in matters but still have to respect parents or caregivers and accept guidance from them. An atmosphere of teamwork is encouraged, with adults providing direction and support.			Lacking or erratic leadership. Parents or caregivers are uninvolved, have few or inconsistent expectations for children, and give little guidance and support.
Discipline and rules	Autocratic and domineering discipline. Children are policed with a “law-and-order” approach. Adults are strict and thus misbehaviour from children is punished rigidly, with little lenience.	Democratic discipline. Parents allow children to suggest and negotiate fair, age-appropriate consequences for misbehaviour. Misbehaviour is addressed and seen as “teachable moments”. The context in which misbehaviour takes place is considered.			Absent or inconsistent discipline. Adults tend to have an “anything goes” laissez-faire approach. Consequences for misbehaviour is either too lenient or erratic, making discipline ineffective.
Negotiation	Adults in authority allow limited opportunity for compromise, impose decisions rather than co-create or reach consensus with others.	Cooperation is lauded. Input from everyone is desired, and usually family members strive to and succeed in reaching consensus when making decisions.			During negotiations, decisions are either made impulsively or options are debated <i>ad infinitum</i> because little leadership is provided to give direction.
Roles	There is a limited range of roles available to each family member. Roles are narrowly defined with little malleability.	More equitable sharing of various roles. Role parameters are malleable over time. Despite this, roles are still clearly defined. Family members are not confused about their position and function within the family.			Family members are confused because of continuous role changes; role allocation and role parameters are not well-defined and consistently communicated.

(continued)

Table 2.2

Circumplex model: Flexibility dimension

	UNBALANCED	3 BALANCED TYPES			UNBALANCED
	rigid families	somewhat flexible	flexible families	very flexible	chaotic families
Routines	Family routines are rigidly implemented and are not adequately adjusted over time to retain appropriate meaning and function.	Family routines do display consistency and predictability, but can be adequately adjusted if the need arises, depending on changing family needs and values.			The family is not routinised. They either do not value routines, or they are not able to consistently implement family routines.

Note: Adapted from “Circumplex model of marital and family systems,” by D. H. Olson, 2000, *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22, p. 148. Copyright 2000 by the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice.

The logic behind the circumplex model is that balanced families who have some operational flexibility, as opposed to more extreme family types, have a larger repertoire of behaviours they allow themselves to use, especially when they are confronted with stressors (Olson et al., 2014). The belief is that different coping strategies are usually required to deal with different types of adversity, so the greater the family’s behavioural repertoire, the greater their adaptability in various situations. In clinical cases, the goal of therapy is thus to improve the family’s ability to adapt and negotiate systemic change over time (Olson, 2000).

From the circumplex model one can deduce that routines have value in their repetition, but they must not be applied like dogma. Change is an inescapable and vital part of existence, and the management of family routines is a dynamic endeavour, requiring regular adjustments and amendments to schedules. All structured, habitually practised activities are to some degree peppered with spontaneous occurrences. Imber-Black (2012) refers to the closed (patterned and expected) and open (amorphous and unexpected) parts of ritualised family activities.

Conversely, disorganised, unpredictable change devoid of meaning and balance can hamper a family's functioning (Weisner et al., 2005). When family routines are too capricious and erratic, they will not be secure enough to survive intra- and extra-familial stressors. It is essential that routines are arranged into a daily schedule that organises family life in a predictable and stable way. But, when the family is too rigid, their routines can become culturally inconsequential, or developmentally inappropriate. A family should continually meet the changing biogenic, psychogenic, and idiosyncratic needs of individual family members in relation to the environmental and cultural demands placed on them by their surroundings. Therefore, in a well-functioning family, it is likely that there is a degree of balance between the scheduled and the impulsive, the structured and the unconstrained, the certain and the unknown during family routines.

2.2.1.4 Family communication

The third dimension, communication, is defined as “the positive communication skills utilized in the couple or family system” (Olson & Gorall, 2006, p. 3). It is viewed as a moderating component and, depending on its quality, it will either aid or restrict how well the family achieves balanced levels of cohesion and flexibility. In *Addendum B*, I list six features that affect the quality of family communication (Olson, 2000). Compared to unbalanced families, balanced families are said to have better communication (in terms of quality and frequency). Balanced families display more supportive communication and empathy, engage in reflective listening, convey transparent and clear messages, display more positive affect when communicating, and engage in effective problem-solving strategies (Olson et al., 2014). Poor communication (e.g. contradictory or vague messages, secrecy, criticism, lack of empathy, and conveying exclusion or indifference) restricts the ability of family members to openly share feelings and reveal needs (Olson et al., 2014). Thus, proficient communication skills will

enable families to be more effective in negotiating change, making balanced families better equipped to modify levels of cohesion and flexibility when the need arises (Olson et al., 2014).

2.2.1.5 Change over time

Throughout the family life cycle, the family's composition, life-cycle phase, and developmental needs can alter their levels of cohesion and flexibility (Olson & Gorall, 2003). In *Addendum C I* provide a family map illustrating how a never-married single mother progresses through different developmental stages, and how each stage can lead to different levels of systemic cohesion and flexibility.

2.2.1.6 Concluding remarks on the circumplex model

The aim of this first theoretical section was to provide a template for understanding family functioning. The circumplex model provides one such perspective and may indicate how routines could be used to optimise family wellbeing. The circumplex model highlights the systemic nature of family life and, as a derivative of that, the systemic complexity of family routines. This section alerts one to potentially important issues affecting the management of family routines, such as: how families balance togetherness and autonomy via routines; how space within the home affects the enactment of family-time and me-time routines; how strictly or leniently families enforce their daily schedules; how the various roles and tasks are shared among family members during routines; who in the family attains the authority to make decisions regarding their routines; how family routines are shaped and changed during different life-cycle phases; and how effectively family members communicate about and during their routines.

In the following section I will discuss the concept of family resilience and important resilience processes that could influence the management of family routines during periods of family strain and adversity.

2.2.2 Family resilience

In this second theoretical subsection I will briefly define resilience and, more specifically, *family* resilience as a psychological construct, and then provide an overview of the resiliency model (McCubbin et al., 1996). The aim is not to give a detailed account of how McCubbin et al. (1996) conceptualise global family coping processes during times of family distress, but rather to examine how *routines*, in particular, are maintained and changed over time during such periods, and the factors that could affect these processes.

2.2.2.1 A brief overview of family resilience definitions

From the year 2000 to 2010, the number of social science journals containing the words *resilient*, *resiliency* and *resilience* in titles increased from around 200 to 800 (Bonanno et al., 2015). Resilience has taken on various meanings within various subspecialisations of Psychology, because research within this area has tended to cluster around either children, adults, families, or communities. The basic premise of resilience research is that normative as well as unexpected life stressors are an inevitable part of life. The main aim of research in this field is to identify what makes an individual, a family, or a community withstand such disruptive life experiences, adapt to challenges, and move towards increased health and stability (Langeland, Wahl, Kristoffersen, & Hanestad, 2007; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; McCubbin et al., 1996; Walsh, 2012, 2015).

Masten and Monn (2015) and Bonanno et al. (2015) mention that the two main subfields of resilience research, namely individual and family resilience, both which began around the

1960s, have many theoretical parallels and comparable practical approaches to treatment. For example, both bodies of work have roots in general systems theory and both recognise the protective role caregivers can play in the lives of children who are exposed to high-risk situations. However, attempts to integrate these two areas of enquiry have been surprisingly slow (Bonanno et al., 2015; Masten & Monn, 2015).

Very early resilience studies had a focus on children and early development, where theorists tried to understand why some children thrive in later life, despite growing up in highly destructive family environments (Walsh, 2012). In research, this move away from the traditional focus on understanding psychopathology, towards a focus on human flourishing, coping and strengths, was a major paradigm shift in the mental health profession (Masten & Monn, 2015; Walsh, 2012). However, individual resilience was originally conceptualised as mainly intrapsychic competencies, originating from within the individual, which makes the person psychologically hardy and impervious to distress (Walsh, 2012). As the field of resilience evolved, it started to recognise group relational processes.

Within the subfield of family psychology, some theories are broad guiding frameworks such as that described by Walsh (2012), whereas others are detailed predictive models such as the resiliency model (McCubbin et al., 1996). Eventually, resilience studies transcended individual and family orientations, and have recently advanced to community concepts such as *social capital*, *collective efficacy*, and *sense of community* (Bonanno et al., 2015).

Rather than getting stuck in the details of individual versus family versus community resilience, I align my view with Masten and Monn (2015, p. 6) and contend that human adaptation, in the face of adversity, arises

from continuous interactions across many levels of function within individuals as well as between individuals and their environments. The course of development reflects those myriad interactions, from the molecular level to the societal level.

Thus, resilience is dynamic and multi-systemic, with a complex mix of proximal and distal factors that work together to either produce conditions of vulnerability or durability. In my view, family resilience theories are very much aligned with this multi-systemic perspective.

However, despite this multi-systemic approach, a major problem in resilience research is still the controversy around what exactly constitutes resilience (DeHaan, Hawley, & Deal, 2002, 2013). Many conceptualisations of resilience have emerged over the last few decades. Despite some controversy vis-à-vis how to define a resilient family, one thing researchers in the field agree on is that resilience only exists in conditions of adversity (Bonanno et al., 2015; DeHaan et al., 2013; Walsh, 2012). An individual, family, or community must be resilient *against something*. A complex question within the family resilience field is whether resilience is a process, an outcome, or a potential.

Masten (2014, p. 10) proposes a scalable, broad definition of resilience that could refer to an individual cell, a person, the family unit, or even an economy, which is “the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten its function, viability, or development”. Besides the fact that Masten’s (2014) definition is applicable on different systemic levels, it also recognises resilience as *a capacity*. Theorists place further importance on what Masten and Monn (2015, p. 6) call “the emergent nature of manifested resilience”, and thus resilience is not seen merely as the *outcome* of family coping, but encompasses the adaptive actions themselves. Theoretically, what constitutes a resilient family is not limited to those who have already attained a list of successful results, but includes systems that have *the potential for adapting* successfully, inferred from the resources and competencies present

within these systems and their immediate surroundings (Masten & Monn, 2015). This means that family resilience researchers often focus their studies on understanding the processes of reacting to and interacting with a stressor, rather than measuring long-term outcome trajectories (Bonanno et al., 2015). Resilient family processes have been subdivided into promotive processes and protective processes by Masten and Monn (2015). Promotive processes are those associated with family and individual success, independent of their exposure to risk and adversity, whereas protective processes are factors that are uniquely relevant during times of strain (Masten & Monn, 2015). What is sometimes problematic in resilience research is that the lines between the promotive and the protective are often blurred, in that factors like family communication, parenting styles and even family routines are relevant as both promotive and protective resources.

Hawley and DeHaan's (1996, p. 293) definition also has a process orientation:

Family resilience describes the path a family follows as it adapts and prospers in the face of stress, both in the present and over time. Resilient families positively respond to these conditions in unique ways, depending on the context, developmental level, the interactive combination of risk and protective factors, and the family's shared outlook.

One can see that this definition by Hawley and DeHaan (1996) does not place a lot of emphasises on setting criteria for functional family outcomes, but rather on the course and progression of family coping, over time, earmarked by the family's ability to balance risk factors with protective resources. Hawley and DeHaan's (1996) definition is useful because it highlights that successful adaptation should be viewed within the family's specific ecocultural context and the developmental needs of family members.

On the other hand, McCubbin et al. (1996, p. 5) define family resilience as

the positive behavioural patterns and functional competence individuals and the family unit demonstrate under stressful or adverse circumstances, which determine the family's ability to recover by maintaining its integrity as a unit while ensuring, and where necessary restoring, the wellbeing of family members and the family unit as a whole.

In their definition of family resilience, McCubbin et al. (1996) place emphasis on the competencies possessed by individuals, as well as the competencies possessed by the family unit in its entirety. For McCubbin et al. (1996), the words *maintaining* and *restoring* are two essential, multilevel processes that are described in detail in their resiliency model (discussed in section 2.2.2.2).

Walsh (2015, p. 14) defines family resilience as “the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges” and as something that “involves the potential for recovery, repair, and growth in families”. Walsh (2015) identifies three key groupings of protective processes that empower the family system as a whole: positive belief systems; flexible and connected organisational patterns; and effective communication and joint problem solving. Again, Walsh (2012) does not describe resilience merely as an outcome or end product, but as the endeavour of continually reacting to a stressor. This means that, in times of trouble, a resilient family is not unencumbered by problems and may even display some dysfunctional behaviour patterns. In fact, it is rare to find a family completely void of functional difficulties (Walsh, 2012). Because a resilient family is not necessarily asymptomatic, it muddies the water of construct parameters. Walsh believes that a resilient family can come together regardless of the problems they have and, in so doing, they support one another, cushion each other against stress, reduce potential dysfunction, and encourage healthy adaptation over time (Walsh, 2012). The

emphasis, again, is on the *potential* of the family to shoulder a burden and foster relational maturity.

For Walsh (2015), as with DeHaan et al. (2013) and McCubbin et al. (1996), resilience should be viewed bearing the family's unique ecosystem and culture in mind. Walsh (2015) also emphasises the developmental nature of resilience, since stressors and their consequences change over time, and thus coping requires different strategies at different periods of the unfolding problem.

Despite the idea that resilience is viewed as a capacity for coping, DeHaan et al. (2013) and Bonanno et al. (2015) mention the importance of operationalising successful post-adversity, adaptive outcomes. The problem has often been how to define and operationalise successful post-adversity outcomes in families, given the contextual variability of families around the globe. In the past, healthy family functioning and adaptive outcomes have been equated to families who are a) asymptomatic, b) typical, or c) ideal (Walsh, 2012). But, for example, it is dangerous to equate healthy family outcomes with what is "typical" in a society, because this approach tends to pathologise difference (e.g. single-mother, same-sex, and adoptive families). On the other hand, what is "typical" family functioning within a specific population may not always be beneficial, and this approach may inadvertently condone an unhealthy status quo (Walsh, 2012). Thus, what is seen as "healthy" adaptation after adversity should depend on the ecological and cultural setting, the particular family (including their worldviews, structure, and developmental needs), the type of stressor and its corollaries, and the family's pre-adversity functioning (Bonanno et al., 2015; DeHaan et al., 2013; Walsh, 2015).

In this study, the aim was not to quantify the coping and functioning of participating families and, in so doing, classify them as either "resilient" or "non-resilient". The reasoning behind this is that even so-called "problem" families can have adaptive resources or coping strategies,

and they may thus simply be on the path to recovery. Rather, the approach taken in this study was to understand any contextual risks that the participating families contend with, and then identify the potential resources that participants feel help them maintain, or move closer to, healthy family routinisation. The results of this study will lead to various propositions that, as DeHaan et al. (2002) suggest, should be verified empirically with subsequent longitudinal research designs. In future studies, family functioning (including family routinisation) should ideally be assessed prior to, during, and after stressors (where possible) so that common pathways that lead to adaptive long-term outcomes can be confirmed (DeHaan et al., 2002).

In the next section I will discuss the resiliency model as devised by McCubbin et al. (1996), with a special focus on how family routines are changed and maintained when a family faces a stressor.

2.2.2.2 The resiliency model of family stress, adjustment, and adaptation

The resiliency model is a perfect vehicle for understanding how family routines are maintained, as well as altered, during times of systemic stress (McCubbin et al., 1996). The resiliency model is the most recent version of the original ABCX model proposed by Hill in 1949 (McCubbin et al., 1996). The original ABCX model, which was based on studies of family adjustment during World War II, has been revised four times over the last half a century. The current resiliency model makes several key assumptions.

Firstly, all families will experience hardship at some point during their lives. When families are confronted with hardship, there are two consecutive phases of coping, one termed *adjustment* (Figure 2.2) and the other *adaptation* (Figure 2.3). These two phases are multisystemic and therefore occur on individual-to-family and family-to-community levels (McCubbin et al., 1996). During these two phases of responding to a stressor, the family aims to promote development, and maintain or restore emotional and physical wellbeing on these

various systemic levels (McCubbin et al., 1996). Families possess and nurture strengths, capabilities and patterns of functioning that encourage healthy system functioning and individual development. These competencies protect the family system when the system is confronted with normative developmental transitions, as well as non-normative and unexpected life stressors. During the adjustment and adaptation processes, the model emphasises four domains of family functioning, namely a) interpersonal relationships; b) structure and functioning; c) development, wellbeing, and spirituality; and c) community relationships and nature (McCubbin et al., 1996). It is essential that the family either maintains or recovers *balance* and *harmony* in these four family domains. Thus, balance and harmony, in the face of adversity, are important systemic goals.

To understand the role that family routines play during resilience processes, one must take a closer look at the concepts of family *resources* and family *typology*. In the resiliency model, family *resources* are described as abilities and characteristics in an individual, an entire family system, or a community that either help the family resist disruption, or help them regain balance and harmony after a crisis has set in (McCubbin et al., 1996). According to McCubbin et al. (1996), family routines are resources involved in both the adjustment and adaptation processes. Other resources may include financial stability, supportive friends, family cohesion, flexibility, stamina and durability (i.e. hardiness), meaningful spiritual beliefs that are shared by all family members, open and clear communication patterns, and family rituals such as special traditions and celebrations (McCubbin et al., 1996). Family *typology* refers to a family's habitual, predictable patterns of behaviour that are established over time. It concerns how a family "typically appraises, operates, and/or behaves" (McCubbin et al., 1996, p. 65). In *Addendum D*, I provide further details regarding different family typologies. For the discussion at hand, it is important to understand that one such typology relates to rhythmicity, and highly rhythmic families are said to 1) view routines as important, and 2) are also able to implement these

routines consistently (McCubbin et al., 1996). To understand how a rhythmic family will deal with adversity, the processes of adjustment and adaptation are explained through an illustrative example of a single mother who has a new work opportunity, and this requires the family to relocate. First, the adjustment phase of coping commences, seen in Figure 2.2.

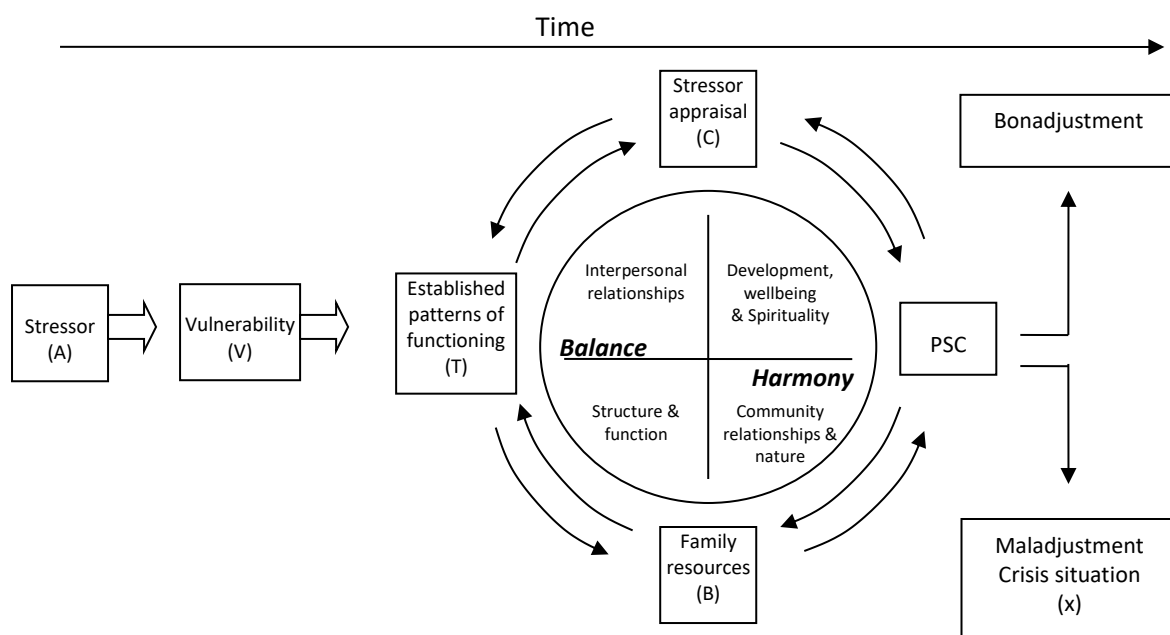


Figure 2.2. The adjustment phase of the resiliency model of family stress, adjustment, and adaptation. Reproduced from *Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation* (p. 15) by H. I. McCubbin, A. I. Thompson, and M. A. McCubbin, 1996, Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Publishers. Copyright 1996 by McCubbin, Thompson, McCubbin and Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin.

In Figure 2.2, the single mother's new job and relocation is the family stressor (A). A stressor is an event that can put pressure on a family and cause disruptive change (McCubbin et al., 1996). The new neighbourhood in which the single mother and her family now live in, brings with it structural challenges, such as a complex transport system, new schools that children need to attend, and unfamiliar social networks. The new work opportunity also incurs new maternal work and transport schedules. The stressor interacts with the family's pre-existing

vulnerability (V). These forgoing conditions may include things like poor health, poverty, or concurrent life transitions (McCubbin et al., 1996).

Because the family has a highly rhythmic typology (T), they not only deem their family routines to be important, but go to great lengths to ensure they implement routines consistently. Before the move, the family used to eat dinner at 6 o'clock every evening. The dinner routine was seen as essential for overall family wellbeing, because it was a time for relational connection, parent-child communication, affect and behaviour monitoring of children, religious expression and spiritual identity formation through prayer rituals, and a way to discuss how extra-familial relationships (e.g. school, friends, and colleagues) influence family members. Thus, the dinner routine played a vital role in ensuring that balance and harmony were maintained in the four key family domains of 1) structure and functioning, 2) interpersonal relationships, 3) development, wellbeing, and spirituality, and 4) community relationships. The new employment schedules and the relocation jeopardise the dinner routine, since the mother can no longer attend the regular 6 o'clock dinner.

The family together appraises the situation (C). They evaluate and define the gravity of the stressor and its associated consequences. Stressor appraisals can range from being viewed as a catastrophe to "no big deal". Appraisals during the recovery process are influenced by culture and ethnicity. The single-mother family look at the risk and, based on their shared definition of the problem, they decide it is probably only a moderate setback. They also assess their available resources (B), such as finances and the individual strengths and talents of family members.

Based on their assessment, the family members devise a plan of action by tapping into their problem-solving and coping abilities (PSC). They decide to make a few minor alterations by moving dinner to 8 o'clock. In the new house, they use some of their savings (B) and creativity

(B) to make the dining room look beautiful and inviting. With small changes here and there, the family can now continue to have their meaningful evening routine and retain a sense of continuity, despite the relocation. Thus, during the adjustment period, minor corrections are made to routines in order to keep them operational. If this is done successfully, bonadjustment occurs and harmony and balance in the system are maintained. However, these minor alterations are not always sufficient, in which case the outcome of this first phase is maladjustment, and a family crisis (X) ensues. In this instance, it becomes apparent that regaining stability is unlikely unless the family initiates the adaptation process, prompting extensive system transformation and restructuring (seen in Figure 2.3).

The adaptation phase is comparable to the adjustment phase in that problem solving and coping, family typology, family resources, and family appraisals are still involved this in cyclical process. One of the major differences in the adaptation phase, as seen in Figure 2.3, is that resources are now also used to recover functional elements that may have been lost due to the stressor. The family must try to retain, amend, and restore some of their patterns of functioning (T), especially those that are still relevant, meaningful, and functional (McCubbin et al., 1996). Conversely, the family needs to discard patterns that are no longer useful, and may need to introduce novel patterns of functioning (TT) that could successfully revive balance and harmony (McCubbin et al., 1996).

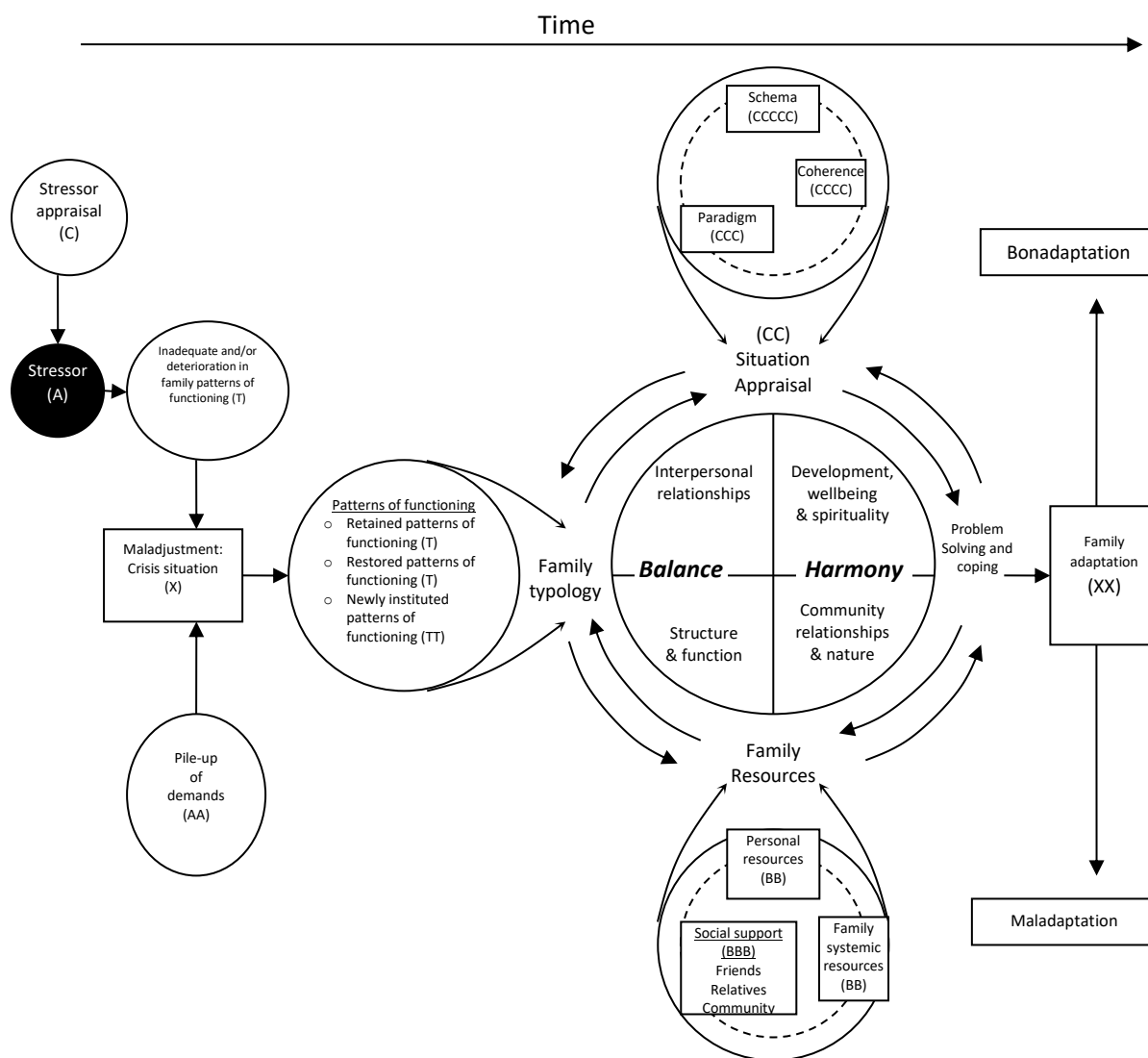


Figure 2.3. The adaptation phase of the resiliency model of family stress, adjustment and adaptation. Reproduced from *Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation* (p. 25) by H. I. McCubbin, A. I. Thompson, and M. A. McCubbin, 1996, Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Publishers. Copyright 1996 by McCubbin, Thompson, McCubbin and Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin.

For the family in my example, the mother’s new employment conditions suddenly require her to work night shifts and the family struggles to adjust to the additional challenges incurred by the stressor. Because of the new night shift schedule, there is major systemic disruption because the mother loses the opportunity to take part in any evening routines. Joint dinnertime, bedtime, bath-time, and homework routines are lost. The family’s patterns of functioning (T) begin to

deteriorate. The mother feels that she never sees her children and relational quality is being threatened. The family reappraise the situation (C) and recognise a lack of cohesion, an increase in family conflict, an increase in child behaviour problems and a decline in children's scholastic achievements. There is thus a pile-up of demands (AA), and the family is in crisis (X).

The family decides on a new plan of action and again they tap into their problem-solving and coping abilities (PSC). The maternal grandmother decides to move into the family home in order to assist her daughter with raising the children. The grandmother's availability, willingness to assist and domestic skills thus become major resources of social support (BBB). The children will consequently still have their evening routines with their grandmother. The amendment helps to restore old patterns of functioning (T), but this is still not sufficient. The family also create three new routines (TT) to improve mother-child connections: a new check-in telephone routine between mother and children in the evenings, a more extensive family-time weekend routine, and several special mother-child morning routines. These new routines further improve family connections. These new routines also require other personal and systemic resources, such as additional finances (BB) for weekend outings. After they implement the new set of routines, the family re-evaluate and appraise the current situation (CC) to see if balance and harmony have been restored. The adaptation process is cyclical, meaning that, while dealing with the stressor over a period of time, family appraisals, typology, resources, and problem-solving and coping abilities are recurrently and dynamically incorporated (McCubbin et al., 1996). Bonadaptation is achieved when family members are able to eventually restore systemic balance and harmony in the four family domains of functioning (McCubbin et al., 1996).

2.2.2.3 Concluding remarks on the resiliency model

McCubbin et al.'s (1996) resiliency model reveals the complexity of managing family routines during periods of family strain. It seems that, in order to manage family routines during these adverse times, specific routines often need to be maintained, restored, discarded, altered, or newly implemented. To do this successfully, other system components and processes are fundamental, such as the family's level of rhythmicity, their appraisals of the stressor and its pile-up of demands, the effectiveness of their joint problem-solving and coping strategies, and additional individual, family and community resources. During periods of crisis family, routines should also be structured in such a way that they assist the family in sustaining the four important domains of family functioning (i.e. interpersonal relationships; structure and functioning; development, wellbeing and spirituality; and relationships with the wider community and nature). Thus, the efficacy of family routines can be evaluated by looking at how well they promote each of these four functional domains during times of adversity. In the following section, I discuss Wolin and Bennett's (1984) understanding of family rituals.

2.2.3 Wolin and Bennett's seminal text on family rituals

In the mid-1980s, Wolin and Bennett (1984) published an article on rituals and I consider this to be a formative text in the subfield of family routines. The article is one of the first attempts to conceptualise, on paper, what the family routine construct is and why it is important in family life.

Wolin and Bennett (1984) postulate that the concept of ritual should be used as an umbrella term that can be subdivided into three subtypes: *celebrations*, *traditions*, and *patterned family interactions* (i.e. *family routines*). For a more detailed discussion on the defining qualities of these different subtypes, please see *Addendum E*. These family rituals are defined as symbolic behaviours, enacted by several family members, and reappear in the same form over time

because they hold meaning for all involved (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). By extrapolating from Wolin and Bennett's (1984) paper, several central themes surrounding routines emerge, namely *communication* (section 2.2.3.1), *time* (section 2.2.3.2), and family *boundaries* versus family *cohesion* (section 2.2.3.3). I will subsequently discuss each of these themes separately, although they should be regarded as interrelating.

2.2.3.1 Family routines and communicative elements

Family routines convey cultural meanings to family members. The way routines are performed articulates to family members the rules of cohabitation and becomes spaces where group beliefs, norms, values, and myths are transmitted and perpetuated (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). These are transmitted vertically (from generation to generation through parenting practices) and horizontally (from one family to another within a community) (Rossano, 2012; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Thus, daily routines are learning experiences during which each family member is instructed about their position, role, and connections within the family, and to the larger community (Fiese & Jones, 2012; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Ritualised family activities exemplify the “power of form and structure on the collective mind of the group” (Wolin & Bennett, 1984, p. 407). Wolin and Bennett's (1984) assertion that rituals communicate has been reiterated by numerous subsequent writers (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2006; Bruess & Kudak, 2011; Galvin, Braithwaite, & Bylund, 2016). Baxter and Braithwaite (2006) explain that ritualised family activities can be powerful, condensed expressions of social relationships. At times they are overtly aesthetic, with an element of stylisation (e.g. dinner around a nicely decorated table) (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2006). Most importantly, rituals can exemplify what the family deems to be sacred (e.g. a valued story-time routine that communicates the sanctity of the parent-child bond) (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2006).

But symbolic meaning is embedded in even the most ordinary of routines. Something as simple as using knives and forks rather than chopsticks at mealtimes can convey some symbolic meaning, continuity through the generations, and group identity. Chopsticks have been used as eating utensils in most of East Asia for centuries. The instruments the family chooses to eat food with express something about their ethnic identity and, if they had to change this behaviour permanently, they might see the change as a threat to their heritage and sense of self.

Wolin and Bennett (1984) wrote of two types of communication, the *affective* and the *symbolic*. *Affective* communication is said to happen because 1) the structure of ritualised activities make it a safe space to communicate feelings, 2) these activities can be moving, theatrical performances that engage the senses and arouse vivid memories, and 3) these activities require a “coming together” of family members, and the expected joint participation encourages loving communication. Wolin and Bennett (1984) believe that the mimicry, repetition, exaggeration, and even the pace and profusion with which ritualised activities are performed, can give them communicative power. As for *symbolic* communication, this happens through the routine’s objects and behavioural scripts, such as the way a prayer is performed before bed or the attire worn to church. These properties become tokens of cultural embeddedness.

2.2.3.2 Family routines and time

Because the family moves through time, change is inexorable and family adaptability is essential. *Time* is an important component of family routines. To begin with, we see that routines *stabilise* the family despite the ever-changing nature of existence. Routines stabilise the family through the past-present-future linkages of multiple generations (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). In terms of intergenerational time, the connections between multiple generations are possible because routines become daily practices that emulate what past generations have done. These generational reproductions occur insofar as major macro-level shifts, such as new

technologies and globalisation, will allow. Likewise, the extant generation supposes that its offspring will observe these customs in the future. Thus, the past and future are embedded in the present via family rituals. Wolin and Bennett (1984) emphasise that, when rituals are enacted over multiple generations, they preserve family paradigms, buffer against uncontrollable variation, and promote cultural continuity. Smit's (2011) research confirms this assertion, finding that weekly intergenerational rituals employed by young adults in South African families were practised to honour family histories, maintain family memories, unify the young and elderly, and sustain intergenerational interaction and emotional connection.

Despite fostering stability and continuity over time, routines also flag and facilitate change. On the one hand, a new routine might signal how the family rejects the status quo by refusing to observe a widely accepted, conventional routine (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). New, contemporary routines might highlight how the customs of previous generations are no longer practically and culturally appropriate. Changes in family routines also emulate shifts in the family's age-related needs and can help the family unit go from one developmental phase to the next, such as new parent-child communication routines when adult children move out of their childhood homes for the first time, or new leisure-time routines after retirement. There are periods in the life cycle when it is easy to maintain systemic order and structure and, in these stress-free intervals, routines should remain relatively constant (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). However, if routines are to remain effective and meaningful, the family must be able to adapt the type of routines they use, the content of their routines, the timing of routines, and the frequency with which they use them. If not, routines will become dysfunctional, hollowed out and void of meaning (Fiese, Foley, & Spagnola, 2006; Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

I would like to add more complexity to this discussion of change and continuity by directing my attention to quotidian time. We often do not think only of how time affects us over the

course of a lifetime, but also how it affects us over the course of a day, even over the course of a few seconds. In terms of quotidian experiences, routines again invoke an interplay between permanence and transience, and repetition and change over time.

To illustrate this point, I draw from both qualitative interviews with first-time parents as well as Le Poidevin's (2015) philosophical understanding of temporality. Because of their repetitive, cyclical nature (Howe, 2002), daily routines help to structure circadian schedules, decrease everyday ambiguity and uncertainty, and anchor the family in the here-and-now (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Therefore routines promote a sense of 'sameness' and permanence as we move from day to day, and week to week.

Paradoxically, routines also amplify our awareness of the ticking clock. What my previous research with South African first-time parents showed was that routines have a component of temporality built into them (De Goede & Greeff, 2016b). For one, this is evident in the language we use when talking about different routines: e.g. dinnertime, bedtime, story-time, bath-time, my-time, his-time, our-time, or family-time. Furthermore, the daily enactment of routines is often a temporal *experience* for family members (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a, 2016b). As time passes throughout the day, one routine flows into another in a set sequence, with timeslots allocated to each task. I use the word *allocation* in the broadest sense of the word in that I suspect the family's level of *intentionality* when "allocating" timeslots will vary greatly. These timeslots can be loosely arranged or rigid, depending on a range of systemic and individual factors (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a, 2016b). But, irrespective of whether the schedule is more lackadaisical or cast in iron, there is always some semblance of a 24-hour (and sometimes a seven-day) ordering of activities (see Figure 2.4).

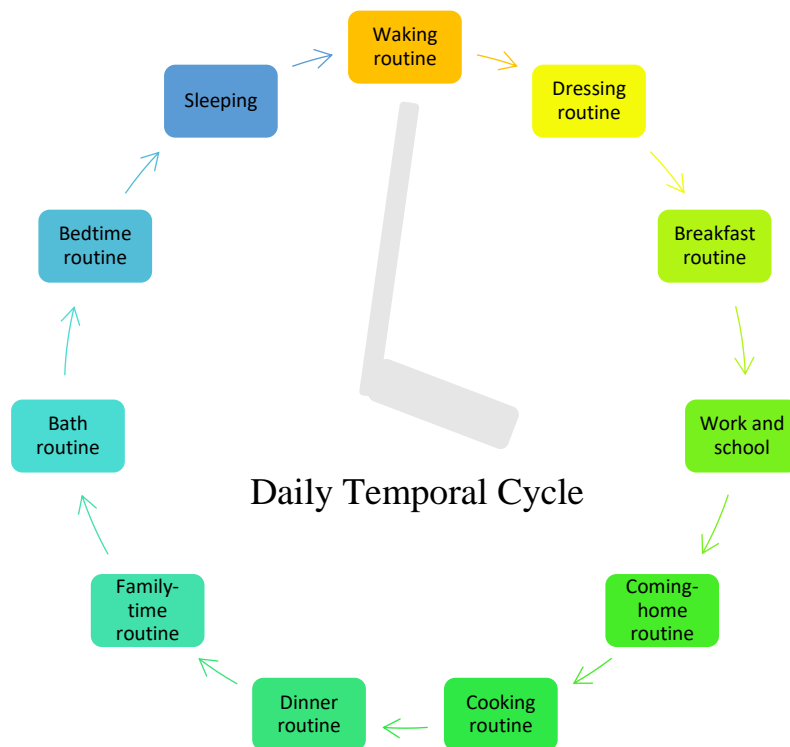


Figure 2.4. The cyclical, ordered nature of daily routines.

When family members go about their day, there is a degree of cognisance regarding the progression of time and how many routines still need to be accomplished before bedtime (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a). The experience that time is fleeting becomes amplified when family members are pressed for time (De Goede & Greeff, 2016b). Parents with young children express how they need to “rush” through tasks so that the next routine in the schedule can begin. Stressed out, time-starved parents are acutely aware of how the minutes are counting down (De Goede & Greeff, 2016b).

How we perceive time is a complex philosophical discussion and one I am not going to entertain here in detail (see Le Poidevin, 2015). However, I will mention that we have a range of elementary time experiences, which include concepts such as *duration* (events feeling long versus short); *time order* (event A happened prior to B); different moments in time related to the *past*, the *specious present*, and the *immediate future*; as well as change and *ephemerality*

(Le Poidevin, 2015). The daily schedule likely intensifies the ordering element of our temporal experiences (i.e. breakfast happens before going to work) as well as perceptions of ephemerality.

Thus, considering quotidian experiences, time would not be represented by a horizontal straight line. Rather, it is better represented by a three-dimensional image of a cylindrical spiral (see Figure 2.5). This spiral in Figure 2.5 amalgamates the paradoxical sensation that, on a daily basis, there is both the feeling of transience (because of the progression of time) as well as sameness (because of the daily repetition of certain routines).

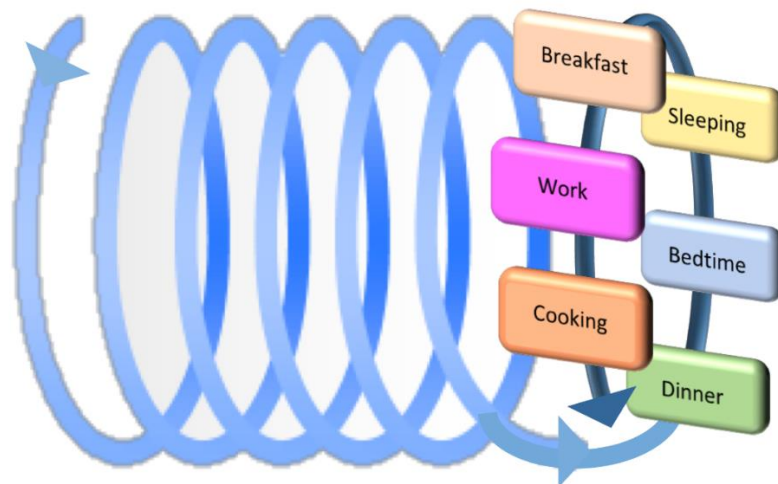


Figure 2.5. Daily time, and the experience of its progression, represented as a cylindrical spiral.

To summarise, time is a principal component of family routines, and is relevant whether time is evaluated across multiple generations, or whether it is evaluated over the course of a day.

2.2.3.3 *Family boundaries and family cohesion*

In the previous section I spoke about how family routines promote a dialectic interplay between change and continuity over time. Family routines stimulate a similar paradox – between family boundaries and family connections.

On the one hand, when it comes to group boundaries, the family reinforces whom they deem to be a part of their group by encouraging specific group members to attend family routines. This solidifies the symbolic boundary between the family unit and the outside world. Oswald (2002), for example, points out how families use special rituals to either include or systematically exclude gay and lesbian family members, especially by not inviting these individuals to important family events. One's invitation to a family event thus signifies one's "insider-ness" or "outsider-ness" (Oswald, 2002). But individual family members may also use routines to signify a discontent with the family and thus establish a boundary between the self and the rest of the group. One example is when a family member wants to communicate a change in beliefs or attitudes (Imber-Black, 2012), such as a teenager who no longer believes in the religion practised by her parents and then refuses to go to church on Sundays or pray at dinner. Furthermore, the behavioural scripts enacted during a routine can establish intra-group boundaries and hierarchies, making plain to family members that "this is *your* place within our unit". Through the unique way family routines are organised, they exemplify the intergenerational ordering of sub-systems, such as parental dyads, fractioned-off parent-child alliances, parent-grandparent coalitions, and sibling partnerships. Even something as simple as the seating arrangement around a dinner table can convey to family members what their position is in the family hierarchy. Finally, routines are a way to show family members "this is how *we* do things", creating behavioural boundaries. Behavioural boundaries are promoted by directive messages during routines, which help to establish and reinforce rules for acceptable

and unacceptable group conduct. Fiese et al. (2006, p. 69) describe dinnertime behaviours such as saying, “get your elbows off the table”, “it’s your turn to do the dishes tonight”, or “say please and thank you” as examples of instrumental, directive messages that reinforce family rules and behavioural boundaries.

Furthermore, family routines become the lens through which we can analyse the cohesion dimension of the circumplex model (Olson et al., 2014). Wolin and Bennett (1984) believe that family rituals stimulate group unity. Coming together during family routines and performing culturally meaningful behavioural scripts first help to create family identity, and then later fortify and verify the bond between family members (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). For example, Bruess and Kudak (2008; 2011) point to couple routines that keep partners connected, signal their “coupleness” to the outside world, and sustain their marital culture. When family members do not spend time with each other, it signals disengagement and a weakening of emotional ties (Imber-Black, 2012). Enjoyable and fun family-time routines are special moments that foster a sense of belonging, cultivate feelings of closeness, give value and meaning to life, and ensure the longevity of the system as a whole. Similar to religious events like Christmas or life-transition celebrations such as a wedding, special weekly routines can allow families to express joy and affection, not only through verbal utterances, but through symbolic acts and objects. These meaningful weekly routines give family members a chance to appreciate life with festivity (Imber-Black, 2012). During family meals, for example, the use of special foods and recipes, terms of endearment, repeated blessings, and retold family stories are tied to emotions that help family members feel united and safe (Fiese et al., 2006). Fiese et al. (2006) found that parents who report greater levels of meaning attached to their family routines and rituals also display better interpersonal involvement during mealtimes (Fiese et al., 2006). Less meaningful routines may still be important for creating order and structure in the home, but there seem to be additional benefits when families value their routines as sacred shared moments, and see

these practices as an important opportunity for relational investment. When parents attribute greater value and symbolic meaning to their family activities, children, adolescents and emerging adults experience less emotional distress and anxiety and greater levels of self-esteem, secure attachment, lovability, feelings of belonging, and likeability (Fiese, 1992; Fiese & Kline, 1993; Fiese et al., 2006; Homer, Freeman, Zabriskie, & Eggett, 2007; Kiser, 2007; Yoon, 2012). Crespo, Kielikowski, Pryor and Jose (2011) examined the relationship between the meaning of family ritual, family cohesion and adolescent wellbeing in 713 adolescent-parent dyads in New Zealand. The results showed longitudinal bidirectional effects between parents' perceptions of the meaning attached to rituals and family cohesion (Crespo et al., 2011). A study of 150 married couples in Portugal found that greater family investment in rituals was associated with 1) lower levels of avoidant attachment, 2) more positive relationship quality, and 3) greater levels of relationship closeness (Crespo, Davide, Costa, & Fletcher, 2008). Finally, engaging in shared parent-child routines during pre-, early-, and mid-adolescence was associated with decreases in family conflict five years later (Dubas & Gerris, 2002).

A last point concerning family cohesion is that Wolin and Bennett (1984) not only deemed family rituals as important for intra-group cohesion, but also deemed these practices as manifestations of how well the family unit is integrated into its surrounding culture. For example, daily routines can indicate to what extent a minority or migrant family embraces versus resists a country's dominant culture. It may also reflect how well a dominant culture embraces a minority group. Lewik (2016) showed how sub-Saharan immigrants, living in Berlin, Germany, restrict their day-to-day movements throughout the city and only perform daily routines in certain areas where they felt they could avoid racial discrimination and attacks. Thus, even the places where everyday routines are carried out (or *not* carried out) can reveal powerful cultural, racial, and political connections or disconnections.

2.2.3.4 Concluding remarks on Wolin and Bennett's (1984) seminal text

When trying to understand the family routine construct, Wolin and Bennett's (1984) paper is a useful foundation to build on. Wolin and Bennett's (1984) insistence that cultural meanings are embedded in family routines integrates well with Weisner's (1984) ecocultural framework. However, ecocultural theory expands on the ideas of Wolin and Bennett (1984) by drawing attention more explicitly to parent-child interactions during routines. By using concepts such as the *zone of proximal engagement*, *ecological-cultural niche* and *activity setting*, we can gain a clearer sense of *how* exactly context-specific values and skills are passed on from one generation to the next during a specific family routine. Although Wolin and Bennett (1984) explain that routines emulate and cultivate the family's identity and heritage, ecocultural theory additionally points to how families proactively use their routines to moderate environmental pressures and adapt to their surroundings. In the following section I will elaborate on these ecocultural principles.

2.2.4 Ecological cultural niche theory

Ecocultural theory, as devised by Weisner and associates (Bernheimer, Gallimore, & Weisner, 1990; Gallimore et al., 1993; Weisner, 1984, 2002a, 2002b, 2010; Weisner et al., 2005) draws from the work of the psychological anthropologists, John and Beatrice Whiting, and extensions of their work, such as Super and Harkness' conception of the developmental niche (Harkness & Super 1993, 1994; Super & Harkness, 1986, 1997; Whiting, 1980; Whiting & Edwards, 1973, 1988; Whiting & Whiting, 1975).

Ecocultural theory postulates that all families are situated within a material, ecological world (e.g. weather conditions, vegetation, the type of subsistence economy, class and economic inequalities, public health systems, housing conditions, recreational opportunities, labour

forces and work environments, transport infrastructure, and educational systems) as well as a cultural world (e.g. gender ideologies, economic ideologies such as capitalism versus socialism, religion, ethnic traditions, viewpoints on morality and justice, and parenting/childcare customs) (Bernheimer et al., 1990). These material and cultural features shape the type and timing of family routines. One can say that family routines and daily schedules are created by ecocultural forces, but are also continuously shaped by family members to mitigate environmental effects (Bernheimer et al., 1990). Thus, the family is both reactive and proactive when confronted by ecocultural forces.

Weisner et al. (2005) believe that daily routines and the surrounding environment should be compatible and supportive of family goals (i.e. there should be *social-ecological fit*). The family's material and social contexts should provide fitting resources and opportunities for families so that they can execute the desired daily routines, achieve various daily objectives, and accomplishing long-term aspirations (Weisner, 2010; Weisner et al., 2005).

Unfortunately, not all societies grant their citizens the same liberties and opportunities. Also, societies to some extent tend to favour a particular group of people within a country's borders who may thus have a higher ceiling than families from dissimilar classes, races, sexual orientations, and structures. Accordingly, in assessing social-ecological fit, researchers and practitioners should try and establish to what extent environmental resources and constraints either encourage, or undermine, what family members wish to accomplish with their daily routines (Weisner et al., 2005). Practitioners should assess the effectiveness of family coping strategies in non-conducive environments, and determine how families try to balance scarce resources with available opportunities (Weisner et al., 2005).

When working with culturally diverse families, practitioners should celebrate indigenous knowledge, be aware of their own lack of understanding, respect families who are different,

and empower families to direct their own lives. However, not all observed family routines are health-promoting. By engaging in certain, more harmful, family routines on a regular basis, noxious messages can be transmitted from one generation to the next, legitimising behaviours that do not promote the health and wellbeing of all. Examples include a parent's drinking routine (Black, 2001; Haugland, 2005) or unhealthy mealtime practices linked to obesity (Fiese & Bost, 2016; Fiese, Hammons, & Grigsby-Toussaint, 2012). By enacting and re-enacting these routines, destructive health messages can become deeply rooted in the family's belief systems.

Therefore, the concept of social-ecological fit does to some extent ask of practitioners to assess the appropriateness of a family's daily routines by looking at whether certain routines foster family growth and thriving in that milieu. This should be done with extreme caution, as it would require an understanding of what is "appropriate", "healthy" and "beneficial" within a particular cultural setting. Practitioners should draw on professional experience and research, but be conscious of their own cultural bias. For example, sleep hygiene practices can improve children's sleeping patterns and, in turn, improved sleep has a positive effect on children's wellbeing (discussed in section 2.2.4.2). Especially important for sleep hygiene is that children should fall asleep independently, and that their bedrooms should be television free (Mindell, Meltzer, Carskadon, & Chervin, 2009a). But families who live in one-room homes and who share a single bed to sleep on cannot be expected to meet these ideals.

Rogoff (2003, p. 23) states that "the idea of a single desirable 'outcome' of development needs to be discarded as ethnocentric". Some families might even have routines that seem a little incongruent with their said values and future goals, especially when the needs of the current situation takes precedence over long-term aspirations. In any case, ecocultural theory necessitates cross-cultural sensitivity from professionals.

2.2.4.1 Routines as context-specific developmental pathways

Like Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), Weisner (2010) suggests that child development centres on the immediate settings in which children are reared. As mentioned, these proximal settings are constructed by caretakers, based on the wider material and cultural conditions in which they find themselves. Daily family routines are thus seen as context-specific constructions that transmute the characteristics of distal supra-systems into proximate determinants of parent-child behaviours and interactions (Super & Harkness, 1997). Fiese and Bost (2016) add that children are not passive recipients within these spaces, but progressively co-construct their routines as they become older.

A number of cross-cultural studies provide empirical evidence that ethnically diverse families approach their family routines differently, such as bedtime and sleeping routines (Louis & Govindama, 2004; Milan, Snow, & Belay, 2007), play-time and learning routines (Göncü, Mistry & Mosier, 2000; Parmar, Harkness, & Super, 2004), after-school routines (Newman et al., 2007), extra-curricular activities (Kremer-Sadlik, Izquierdo, & Fatigante, 2010), family-time routines (Kremer-Sadlik, Fatigante, & Fasulo, 2008), and reading routines (Arzubiaga, Rueda, & Monzo, 2002). With a mixed-methods approach using week-long time-use diaries and qualitative interviews, Harkness et al. (2011) showed that even among six Western, middle-class countries (Italy, Spain, Poland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States) there were disparities in how much time children spend engaging in different family routines, and the cultural meanings parents attribute to these routines.

Importantly, to understand and assess unique, context-specific, child-centred routines, professionals must look at each routine's objective and subjective components (Gallimore et al., 1993; Weisner, 2010). This is a key contribution that ecocultural theory makes to the field

of family routines. Objective features are the observable conditions involved in an activity setting or family routine. These include 1) the people who regularly participate in the routine, 2) the tools, objects, artefacts, and resources that family members typically use during the activity, 3) the behavioural sequences family members predictably adhere to during the activity, and 4) the place in which the routine is usually performed (Gallimore et al., 1993; Weisner, 2010). In contrast, subjective features are the meanings (i.e. the values, motivations, and purposes) family members attach to these family activities, as well as the meanings they attach to each of the objective features (Gallimore et al., 1993). Thus, one might consider why family members think it is important to include these specific people in the activity, use these particular tools, and perform the activity in this specific way, and in this specific place. I believe one can use these criteria to understand, in detail, the cultural significance of any type of family routine.

Ecocultural theory further draws on Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal engagement in order to explain how skills and values are passed on from caretaker to child. According to Vygotskian theory, higher cognitive functions in children emerge through instruction and practical activity in a social setting (Newman & Holzman, 2014; Vygotsky 1978). Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is invoked during routines, as these are spaces for development-sensitive interaction to occur – routines are usually goal-directed activities needed for survival within the family's particular material and social environment, and accordingly they create the perfect opportunity for children to receive coaching and modelling from more capable caretakers (Gallimore et al., 1993; Newman & Holzman, 2014). Through caregiver-child apprenticeship, children's intellectual capacities are stimulated during routines and they are able to gain new, necessary skills and values that go beyond their current level of maturation (Newman & Holzman, 2013; Weisner, 2002a).

Each child's environment requires different skills and values for survival, and thus these different contexts will lead to vastly different daily routines. Extensive educational pursuits might be essential for survival in a suburban environment, for example. It is also to be expected that adolescents from highly modernised, technologically driven societies will spend some of their leisure time involved in indoor, media-related routines, such as playing on computers or watching television (Griffiths, 2011). In wealthy, industrialised nations, these technologies are intricately intertwined in the fabric of everyday life and therefore it stands to reason that parents will endorse some of these leisure pursuits, because being 'techno-savvy' is an important skill required in this environment. Contrastingly, in remote rural communities in developing nations, young children's activities often revolve around the homestead, where they can acquire skills related to the subsistence economy (e.g. competences centred on animal husbandry and agriculture) (Super & Harkness, 2008). For example, 30 years ago in rural Kenya it was not uncommon for children to take care of younger siblings, watch cows, and pull out weeds in the garden as part of their daily routines (Harkness & Super, 1985). Similarly, in rural West Indies horticultural villages it is important to pass on local ethnobotanical knowledge to children (Quinlan, Quinlan, Council, & Roulette, 2016). Within this context, boys acquire knowledge related to the care of trees, whereas girls acquire knowledge related to the medicinal properties of plants (Quinlan et al., 2016). In micro-economies with less market involvement, such as these Caribbean horticulture villages, local skills and knowledge have an impact on adult success and survival (Quinlan et al., 2016). Therefore, by prohibiting children from engaging in some routines and endorsing other routines, children can be moulded into competent adults within their unique environment (Super & Harkness, 1997).

2.2.4.2 The unique objective and subjective features of a specific routine produce unique developmental outcomes

How routines are of benefit to families is a multifaceted story. The mechanisms through which routines improve family outcomes are not perfectly clear. We can speculate about causal links, but these are not exhaustive, well-delineated, and extensively verified (Fiese et al., 2002; Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). There is probably a complex, bidirectional effect between a range of important variables (Fiese et al., 2002).

Specific types of routines, and the unique way they have been designed, may have distinctive developmental outcomes. As an example, one can venture a guess about the pathways involved in bedtime routines when drawing from the findings of several empirical sleep-related studies. In a sample of 10 230 seven-year-old UK children (with data collected at ages three, five, and seven), Kelly, Kelly and Sacker (2013) found that children with non-regular bedtimes had more behavioural difficulties. As children's exposure to non-regular bedtimes increased over the course of early childhood there was an incremental worsening in their behavioural scores, but those children who changed from non-regular to regular bedtimes demonstrated an improvement in behaviour (Kelly et al., 2013). Thus, constant bedtime routines are important for children's behaviour regulation. It is not only temporal frequency and consistency that are important mechanisms. Parents who implement certain specific activities during a bedtime routine can ensure that their children attain the recommended hours of sleep. For example, Hale, Berger, LeBourgeois and Brooks-Gunn (2011) found in a sample of 4 274 at-risk, US children aged zero to five, that language-based bedtime routines (such as singing, reading, and storytelling) were positively associated with children's sleep duration at night, as well as higher verbal test scores. For children from new-born to age ten, consistent sleep hygiene practices (i.e. letting children fall asleep independently, going to bed before 21:00, following a set of

established bed-time behaviours, reading to children before bed, prohibiting caffeine intake, and ensuring bedrooms are television-free spaces) were also associated with better sleep (i.e. shorter sleep onset latency, less night-time waking and longer total sleep time) (Mindell et al., 2009a). Mindell, Telofski, Wiegand, and Kurtz (2009b) further found that with more regular bedtime routines there was not only a significant reduction in young children's problematic sleeping behaviours, but also an improvement in the mother's mood. Taking all of these sleep-related studies into account, it seems that a bedtime routine can potentially improve child development through multiple pathways. First, a bedtime routine promotes better circadian rhythms in children, which could make them psychologically and physiologically more regulated. Second, a bedtime routine ensures adequate sleep duration, which most likely promotes healthy brain chemistry and cell development in children. Third, a bedtime routine ensures a higher frequency of positive parent-child interactions through storytelling and singing activities. Fourth, a well-structured, regulated bedtime routine is also more enjoyable for parents. And finally, a bedtime routine that incorporates storytelling and reading increases a child's exposure to language-based activities, further bolstering children's cognitive development. Bedtime routines can thus affect children concurrently through physiological, cognitive, social and emotional pathways. Yet we need studies that use more sophisticated methods to really understand which variables are at play, and how.

An extensive body of literature provides evidence that different types of weekly routines are associated with different developmental outcomes in children. For example, several specific family routines have been associated with higher social-emotional school readiness in preschool-aged children (Muñiz, Silver, & Stein, 2014). Muñiz et al. (2014) used a large sample consisting of 8 550 children whose mothers rated the weekly frequency of their children's participation in reading, storytelling, singing, play-time and family dinner routines. For each family, dinner routines were deemed to be present if children participated in these activities

five or more times per week (Muñiz et al., 2014). Child-participated storytelling, reading, and singing routines were considered to be present if these occurred three or more times per week (Muñiz et al., 2014). Play-time routines were deemed to be present if they occurred more than once a week (Muñiz et al., 2014). Families were given an overall score for how routinised they were, ranging from zero to five (five meaning that all five types of routines occurred as described in the above frequencies) (Muñiz et al., 2014). Mothers then rated their children's social and emotional health (SEH) on a 24-item instrument, and overall scores were dichotomised into either high or low SEH, with high designated as more than one standard deviation above the mean (Muñiz et al., 2014). Overall, only 16.6% of children had high rates of SEH (Muñiz et al., 2014). After controlling for confounding variables, the multivariate analyses found that, with each additional family routine, the odds of a child having high SEH increased by 1.47 (Muñiz et al., 2014). In adjusted models, the odds of high SEH were also calculated for the presence of select routines. Participation in family dinners increased the odds of high SEH by 1.4 (95% confidence interval [CI], 1.3 to 1.6), storytelling increased it by 1.9 (95% CI, 1.6 to 2.4), singing increased it by 1.5 (95% CI, 1.2 to 1.9) and the presence of play-time routines increased SEH by 1.3 (95% CI, 1.1 to 1.5) (Muñiz et al., 2014).

In a longitudinal study with 3 250 participants, Ferretti and Bub (2016) used structural equation modelling to examine whether family routines during preschool predict children's school readiness at kindergarten. Greater family routinisation was associated with a bigger decline in behavioural problems, such as hyperactivity and inattentiveness, as reported by teachers (Ferretti & Bub, 2016). Greater routinisation also predicted better scores in reading and mathematics and larger improvements in physical health (Ferretti & Bub, 2016). Again, specific routines had a greater impact on certain outcomes. Storytelling most strongly predicted children's social-emotional development (Ferretti & Bub, 2016). Additionally, bedtime

routines were found to be the most relevant child-centred activity for academic and health outcomes (Ferretti & Bub, 2016).

Routines such as dinnertime, for example, can provide spaces that promote language development, because sitting around a dinner table can be a dedicated time for family members to engage in focused communication, with more elaborate story sharing and discussion taking place (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). During this time, children are firstly exposed to the more mature vocabularies of adults; secondly, they have an opportunity to study the rules of grammar; thirdly, they get a chance to witness the rules of communicative reciprocity within a particular culture (e.g. the manners and social cues that regulate back-and-forth sequences); and fourthly, they are given opportunities to practise their own communication skills (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2002; Ely, Gleason, MacGibbon, & Zaretsky, 2001; Spagnola & Fiese, 2007).

It is not only dinnertime routines that influence language proficiencies. Rossano (2012) noted that, during daily childcare routines, infant-caregiver exchanges are ritualised, meaning that they are rule-governed, sequenced exchanges. Infants and caregivers engage in turn-taking sessions, which are first introduced by a signal, either initiated by the adult or child, which grabs the attention of the other person (e.g. a sound from the infant, or the adult leaning in and using motherese vocalisations) (Rossano, 2012). These interactions then follow a sequenced, repetitive pattern in that, after the initiation, the pair orientates towards one another (e.g. the infant calms down and the caregiver becomes more soothing); they greet each other (e.g. the infant smiles and moves their limbs while the caregiver becomes more lively); and then a play dialogue between them ensues during which they exchange sounds and gestures very similar to the sequences found in adult conversations (Rossano, 2012). These interactions can become more formalised, such as the exaggerated facial expressions of adults (termed motionese) or the stylised gestures and utterances in games like 'peek-a-boo' (Rossano, 2012). Young

children need these ritualised communicative exchanges to stimulate their cognitive development (NSCDC, 2008, 2012; World Bank Group, 2015b).

How often a parent or caregiver directly speaks to an infant is important. Weisleder and Fernald (2013) looked at the all-day recordings of low-income Spanish speaking families and found that the frequency of caregiver-infant exchanges varied greatly, with some infants hearing only five words per minute while others hearing 100. Nonetheless, 18 month old infants whose caregivers spoke to them more often and who thus experienced more child-directed speech, had more proficient language processing abilities and larger vocabularies at two years of age (Weisleder & Fernald, 2013). Higher levels of non-child-directed speech merely overheard by the child had no significant association with vocabulary (Weisleder & Fernald, 2013). Thus, it is not merely having a routine that is important, but the particular features within routines that play a role in successful development.

I have stated that academic skills, such as early literacy competencies, can be developed during joint story-book reading routines (Fiese, Eckert, & Spagnola, 2005; Rosenkoetter & Barton, 2002; Serpell, Sonnenschein, Baker, & Ganapathy, 2002), but there are *particular* features that, when incorporated into such a reading routine, could improve skill acquisition. These features include parental responsiveness, displays of affection (e.g. cuddling), taking turns to sound out words and phrases, and reading stories that children find engaging (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). Some studies suggest that joint storybook reading before bedtime not only increases literacy skills, but moulds personal identities in that children will likely see themselves as *Readers* (a person for whom reading extended texts is a significant, pleasurable, recreational activity and a consistent part of daily life) (Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 2010; Carter, Chard, & Pool, 2009; Strommen & Mates, 2004).

For children's nutritional health, the following mealtime factors are important: 1) the *frequency* with which families have dinner together, particularly ensuring it is three times per week or more (Hammons & Fiese, 2011); 2) *the quality of communication*, meaning positive, clear messages from parents and family members showing genuine interest in each other's activities (Czaja, Hartmann, Rief, & Hilbert, 2011; Fiese et al., 2012; Jacobs & Fiese, 2007; Kong et al., 2013); 3) *the effectiveness of affect management*, meaning adequate responses from parents by modelling how to manage one's emotions and stress when their children display negativity (Berge, Jin, Hannan, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2013); and 4) *the level of tranquillity and order within the setting*, meaning eating at the table in an un-chaotic environment that is free from frenetic activity, unpredictability, ambient noise, and habitual distractions such as cell phones and television sets (Coon, Goldberg, Rogers, & Tucker, 2001; Fiese & Bost, 2016; Fiese et al., 2012; Harrison & Liechty, 2012; Tal, Zuckerman, & Wansink, 2014).

Therefore, it seems that many particular facets/features of family routines can be linked to specific developmental outcomes in children. These features are continually shaped by the family's context, and thus a culturally sensitive lens must be used by practitioners when assessing the family's developmental goals, and the child's development ecology.

2.2.4.3 Ecocultural implications for the measurement of family routines

Ecocultural theory informs us that, in order to assess unique and differing, context-specific routines, we should consider both objective and subjective features of family routines. For example, when investigating a dinner routine, one would first look at who is involved, who is absent or excluded, and the significance this holds for family members (e.g. often men and women eat together, but in some cultures they dine apart); secondly, one would look at established behavioural scripts and why family members value them (e.g. the importance of religious acts such as prayers of thanks, or the purpose of unique, repeated stories); thirdly, one

would look at the importance of the tools used (e.g. what is the meaning behind serving a particular traditional dish or using specific cutlery, crockery, and decorations); and finally, one would ask what the significance is of performing the dinner routine in a specific setting (e.g. around the kitchen table, in a tatami-mat room, or in front of the television).

Practitioners should also consider engaging in ethnographic research *over time*. Objective and subjective features of routines may change over the course of development, having important implications for developmental outcomes (Fiese et al., 2002).

Ecocultural theory also necessitates that standardised measurement instruments become more sophisticated and culturally sensitive. Instruments that measure family routines, such as the Family Times and Routines Index (FTRI; McCubbin et al., 1996) and the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ; Fiese & Kline, 1993), are not culturally sensitive enough. These instruments assess how much family members value certain types of routines, and how consistently these routines are implemented. For example, the questionnaires may ask family members whether they regularly share meals together, such as dinner. Yet, these questionnaires have a narrow selection of activities that may not be well-suited to all environments. Some resource-deprived families may not have the luxury of having dinner together each night because parents work late. But these families may have implemented a range of strategies to counterbalance this lack of time around the dinner table. Questionnaires such as the FRQ do not assess these unique coping strategies. Furthermore, because these questionnaires only include a set of predetermined family activities, they can overlook other cherished family routines that are more culturally unique. A similar limitation is found in questionnaires assessing child-specific routines, such as the Child Routines Inventory (CRI; Sytsma, Kelley, & Wymer, 2001). The CRI is perhaps more suited to a typical Western context (asking, for example, if the child regularly engages in homework). However, from an ecocultural

perspective, clinicians and researchers must also consider what family members view as an ideal range of child-centred routines (that work specifically within their environment), and whether family members feel they are able to perform these desired child-centred routines consistently and adequately.

The Ecocultural Family Interview (EFI, Weisner, 2002b; Weisner, Bernheimer, & Coots, 1997) is a more culturally sensitive assessment technique than the questionnaires already mentioned. It is an open-ended, semi-structured conversation rather than a question-response interview (Weisner, 2002b). It helps practitioners to assess a routine's objective and subjective features, as well as aspects related to how routines are created and sustained (Weisner, 2002b).

In addition, ecocultural theory centres on the idea that routines are important settings for child development, but I would add that there are probably mediating factors that affect how conducive these routines are for learning. When assessing child-centred routines, one should augment an ecocultural framework by assessing additional, well-established psychological correlates of child development. Mediating variables such as the quality of caregivers' communication, affect management, and styles of discipline will have an impact on children's skill acquisition, problem exploration, cognitive processing, and information retention. I have mentioned that the reliability and appropriateness of *serve-and-return responses* between infant and caregiver are essential for developing children's cognitive, emotional, and social capacities (NSCDC, 2012). Thus, in the formative years of development, it would be important to assess the *intensity* of a child's *exposure* to these reciprocal interactions during routines by looking at their 1) *duration*, 2) *frequency*, and 3) amount of sudden *interruption* (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000).

A single approach to gathering data can be limiting if one considers the complexity, richness and variety of family routines across the world. Measurement thus needs to expand beyond

traditional questionnaires. Using mixed-methods approaches (that potentially combine interviews, questionnaires, direct observations, diaries, artefacts, and imagery) may have real advantages, not only for cross-cultural studies, but for family psychology in general (Weisner & Fiese, 2011).

In this research study I used interviews and video observations, but decided not to use questionnaires such as the FTRI, FRQ and CRI, since these measurement approaches have underlying cultural perspectives that could interfere with the grounded theory approach. Although new mobile-based technologies can improve data collection (Lwin, Hashimoto, & Murayama, 2014; Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010) because one can collect real-time information (Reimers & Stewart, 2009) and increase the probability that participants will disclose sensitive information (West, Ghimire, & Axinn, 2015), I decided not to use this approach to collecting data since it was unclear whether this specific population of low-income single mothers would have regular access to a personal mobile phone.

2.2.4.4 Concluding remarks on an ecocultural understanding of family routines

Ecocultural theory compels practitioners and researchers to see the central role routines play in family life. Routines continually shape families in subtle ways, and vice versa. For researchers and practitioners who want to understand family life, routines become the perfect lens through which to appreciate what is both unique and what is common to different types of families in different contexts. By reconceptualising routines from an ecocultural perspective, practitioners and researchers can gain a more complete understanding of a family's functioning in both historical and geographical spaces. It creates a clear idea of how routines become context-specific sites for child development, and helps one understand the subjective and objective features involved in different types of family routines and how these features reflect larger systemic conditions surrounding the family.

2.3 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I aimed to contextualise single motherhood in South Africa and provide some theoretical underpinnings for the family routine construct. Coming back to what Charmaz (2006, pp. 16-17) described as “sensitizing concepts” in grounded theory, the literature presented here has highlighted a range of important points of departure for collecting and analysing data. At the core, this chapter highlights that family routines are part of an intricate, multifaceted system, situated within a very unique cultural and physical environment. Consequently, the management of routines in single-mother families is most likely a complex process requiring multiple strategies and situation-specific resources. In the following chapter I will discuss the specific methods used to collect and analyse data.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

In this chapter I outline the methods used to collect and analyse data. At the outset, I describe the chosen research design and the reason for selecting a grounded theory approach. Secondly, I discuss sampling practices, followed by a description of my research participants. The subsequent discussion regarding procedure is subdivided into two sections, one focusing on the procedures followed during the one-on-one interviews, and the other explicating steps taken during naturalistic observations. An important part of qualitative research is transparency and critical self-reflection on the research design and process. The ensuing section focuses on ethical considerations and trustworthiness. I end this chapter with a detailed account of how I analysed the interviews and videos using the ATLAS.ti (version 7) software package (Friese, 2014).

3.1 Research Design

Ungar (2003) suggests that it is advantageous to use qualitative methods in resilience-focused research, because in both resilience and qualitative research 1) the unique context in which phenomena exist are relevant, 2) the lived experiences of the actors are central, 3) the power of minority voices is promoted, 4) localised definitions and meanings are encouraged, and 5) professionals are urged to openly recognise and explore their partiality. This study made use of a qualitative, grounded theory research design (Charmaz, 2006, 2008), which is particularly useful when aiming to understand complex processes and develop a substantive theory grounded in real-life experiences (Lingard, Albert, & Levinson, 2008; Morse & Richards, 2002). The grounded theory design was deemed appropriate, given that the current study examines a very specific process (i.e. the management of family routines) in a very specific local context (i.e. Xhosa-speaking single mothers living in relative poverty).

Methodologists and researchers often highlight that grounded theory is an inductive approach to theory building (Henning, 2004). There exists the belief, often with inexperienced grounded theory researchers, that one must approach the data as if a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) and be unencumbered by previously gained knowledge, thus building one's concepts purely from the raw data itself (Suddaby, 2006; Thornberg, 2011). However, in more recent years there is a realisation that, even when aiming to build a theory inductively, one that is wholly "grounded" in the collected data, there remains a dialectical back and forth between the inductive and deductive during analysis (LaRossa, 2005). This is because no researcher can approach an analysis completely uninhibited by prior knowledge. So, what is grounded theory if it is not purely inductive theory building?

For me, grounded theory is identified by a very distinct set of procedures for collecting and systematically analysing information. At its core, these techniques help the researcher ask theoretical questions. In psychology, other qualitative designs are often intended to describe experiences (such as phenomenological approaches), but grounded theory is deliberately designed to explain (LaRossa, 2005). I believe these theoretical questions help the researcher consider aspects of the data that might not always be apparent, such as context and intervening conditions, underlying cause-and-effect relationships, action strategies, reciprocities, boundaries, and sequences. In my opinion, the emerging results thus do not merely reorganise and then recount participant stories. The researcher rather aims to dissect phenomena, conceptualise potential connections between phenomena, and identify underlying processes that direct phenomena.

However, grounded theory is not a unified methodological approach, and researchers differ on what techniques they deem essential. Originally developed through the partnership of Glaser and Strauss (1967), it morphed into mainly two different streams after the 1970s (Charmaz,

2006; Kelle, 2007). Glaser and Strauss were originally motivated to create this methodology because social science researchers from the 1940s to 1960s were encouraged to test and confirm the validity of existing theories, rather than generate their own, neoteric explanatory models (LaRossa, 2005). However, Glaser and Strauss later diverged on technical issues, each publishing their own set of fundamentals, and consequently grounded theorists started to align themselves with either a Glaserian or a Straussian approach (Charmaz, 2006). The most prominent difference lies within Glaser's conception of theoretical coding and coding families, as opposed to Straus and Corbin's coding paradigm (Kelle, 2007). In more recent years I would say that various researchers (Charmaz, 2008; Clarke, 2005; Dey, 1999; LaRossa, 2005) have attempted to reinterpret, expand on, or even simplify grounded theory approaches.

Grounded theory is thus an umbrella term for a collection of somewhat divergent schools of thought. Despite this, I would contend that it is not a heterogeneous group and that each school of thought still upholds several practices that unify the methodology (Charmaz, 2006). I agree with LaRossa (2005) and Charmaz (2008) that, if one adheres to several key principles, the details need not be obeyed like dogma, thus leaving some investigative freedom in the hands of the analyst. Although features such as theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation (described in section 3.1.) may also be important aspects of this research design to some, the analytic techniques are central. I align my own view of grounded theory to many of the principles highlighted by LaRossa (2005):

- a) Dissecting language is a fundamental part of building one's theory, and the microanalysis of words and phrases should be an important focus in the first phases of coding, especially when one has interview or textual data.
- b) Constructing theoretical categories requires the researcher to identify and define subcomponents, and thus dimensionality is built into the theorising process.

- c) The process of coding and then building theoretical categories (Kelle, 2007) requires continuous empirical and conceptual comparisons (Hallberg, 2006). These comparisons can focus on data fragments, generated codes, or categories, and may occur within a transcript, between transcripts, or between interview transcript and other forms of collected data, such as video recordings.
- d) Coding phases are often triadic and include open, axial, and focused coding. (These phases will be described in more detail in section 3.5.) However, there is a dynamic, cyclical course to these phases, as qualitative data analysis is an iterative process.
- e) The final narrative may take different forms. One may explain the central theory by telling idiographic stories (where the researcher reinforces the theory with detailed, anecdotal accounts from participants), confessional stories (where the researcher puts herself at the centre of her discussion, illustrating her own thinking and experiences throughout the research process), or theoretical stories (focusing on the complexity of variables and their interrelatedness). Idiographic, confessional, and theoretical stories can be combined into a single narrative, and this, you will see, is my approach, with a focus on the idiographic in Chapters 4 and 5, and a more theoretical discussion in Chapter 6.

One unique element to the current study's grounded theory design is its additional use of observational data (as opposed to only using participant interviews). In using different sources of information, one can look at phenomena from different analytical angles and thus create different layers to the emerging theory (Konecki, 2011). Using visual data is not a common practice in grounded theory studies, despite the popularity of visual material in the 21st century. Konecki (2011, p. 134) writes that

visual data has been quietly but consistently neglected both as a potential primary and potential auxiliary source for generating/construction GT [grounded theory]. It is difficult to explain that, in spite of the “visual turn” in social communications at the end of the 20th century, so little theoretical attention was paid to visual data in grounded theory studies. Maybe the reason has been that social research, in general, has been based mainly on analysis of textual data supported largely by statistical methods.

For this study, videotaped family routines were used as an auxiliary source of information, supplementing participant interviews to strengthen the substantive theory. Bearing in mind that part of the aim of this research study was to understand what hampers and what facilitates the management of family routines, videos were used to specifically investigate the micro-behaviours of parents and children during routines, as well as to proximate contextual influences within the home.

3.2 Sampling

As with almost all qualitative research studies (Morrow, 2005), I have used non-probability, criterion-based purposive sampling, meaning that participants were deliberately selected because they matched a set of demographic criteria. These criteria were based on the focus and parameters of the study. The unit of analysis was the single-mother family. This phrasing may be misleading, as “single” does not imply “alone”, “isolated” or “unsupported”. The phrase merely refers to a situation in which the biological mother is raising her offspring without the daily assistance of the biological father or a romantic partner. Participants had to identify themselves as belonging to this family form. Thus, participants could have had different living arrangements, as long as the parent was unmarried/widowed/divorced and considered herself

to be the primary caretaker of her biological child/ren. The participant inclusion criteria for these families were as follows:

- a) The mother was the primary caretaker of her biological children and they lived under the same roof. This meant that neither the biological father, nor a stepfather or a romantic partner who functions as a father figure, resided in the home.
- b) Xhosa was regarded as the family's home language.
- c) The title of this dissertation focuses one's attention specifically on single mothers with young children. Families with young children is a specific developmental phase in family life, when an individual or a couple transitions from childlessness to parenthood. Therefore, for the first time in their lives, these young adults move up a generation and take primary responsibility for the care of their own offspring (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012). (For more clarity, see Addendum A). The transition requires dynamic coping strategies, and family members must adapt and work together in order to regain functional stability within the system (McCubbin et al., 1996). Usually, after a period of time, the family settles into this new phase and the family system stabilises. Because the study focused on this specific transitional phase, the participants were women who had transitioned from childlessness into parenthood within the five years preceding data collection (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012). Thus, the oldest biological child of the mother could not be older than five years of age (Olson & Gorall, 2003).

- d) The family must have been living in poverty. The poverty line used in this study was set by StatsSA (2015b), based on an internationally accepted cost-of-basic-needs approach. StatsSA (2015b) established three poverty lines (viz. the food poverty line, lower-bound poverty line, and upper-bound poverty line) in order to capture various degrees of financial deprivation. By determining what the cost of a nutritionally viable (2 100 kilojoules per day) normative food basket would be in South Africa, and adding a basic allowance for non-food items such as transport, clothing and shelter, an upper-bound poverty line was set at R779 expenditure per person per month (StatsSA, 2015b). This StatsSA (2015b) estimated upper-bound poverty line was used in this study. Thus, participants' household expenditure per capita per month could not exceed this line.

Families structure their routines to proactively manage their cultural contexts (Gallimore et al., 1993). Language is an important transporter of culture, and for this reason language is a key factor to consider when conducting research in this field. Although single motherhood could be challenging for any parent (irrespective of race, ethnicity, and language), it has already been shown that, in South Africa, single motherhood is a particularly prevalent form of parenting within the black population. Thus, single motherhood is a relevant issue to explore within this population group. However, this racial category is by no means homogenous and includes a myriad of language sub-categories. Unfortunately, it is impractical to conduct interviews in all African languages due to constraints of budget, manpower, and time. Thus, rather than having a stratified sample in terms of language, the aim was to focus on one well-defined, homogenous group. Qualitative research is focused on the idiographic and emic, rather than nomothetic and etic (Morrow, 2005). Thus, in qualitative research, the objective is not statistical generalisability, but to understand what is unique to this specific group of respondents and to extrapolate what can be applied to other situations (and groups of people) through logical deductions. As the research was conducted in Western Cape townships where people are

predominantly Xhosa speaking, it was decided to clearly define the sample by only conducting interviews with Xhosa-speaking mothers.

The snowball method of finding participants is deemed to be an acceptable, effective strategy, especially when the researcher wishes to locate good examples of the phenomenon under investigation (Morrow, 2005). To identify participants, I often made use of snowball/networking methods. The managing director at Salesian Life Choices, a registered non-profit organisation, was asked to assist with recruitment. Salesian Life Choices specialises in social development and has an established network in impoverished Cape Town communities. The managing director received a copy of a document containing relevant information about the research project (see *Addendum F*) and gave written consent to assist in recruitment strategies (see the signed consent form in *Addendum G*). At the time of this study, Salesian Life Choices had been in existence for 12 years and it runs various health and social interventions targeted at youth, adults, and families. The communities it serves are some of the poorest in the Cape Town metropole. In 2015, it reached approximately 7 000 individuals living in these communities. However, the Life Choices staff were asked to help recruit single mothers who were not taking part in the Life Choices Family Affairs intervention, as these parenting skills workshops could unduly have influenced the views of prospective participants. Two staff members (Vutomi Ngobeni and Noluthando Kwayimani), both with extensive experience in the social development field, helped substantially with recruitment.

Theoretical sampling, as part of the grounded theory methodology, was also employed (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thus, further sampling of participants was informed by the theoretical questions that arose during data analysis. For example, while analysing the initial interviews I realised there could be distinct experiential differences between mothers who lived with extended family members and those who lived entirely alone with their young

child/ren. In these two types of living arrangements, there could be differences in terms of the availability of social support or, conversely, the amount of crowding and conflict in the home. My thinking was that social support availability, crowding, and family conflict could have an impact on the management of family routines. It was easier to find participants who lived in extended-family homes, as these cohabiting living arrangements seemed to be more common. Thus, I asked the two fieldworkers to also find and recruit participants who lived alone with their children. I could find only two cases, but in doing so I could to some extent compare the experiences of mothers who lived alone with those who lived with their extended families. My thinking at the time was that these comparisons could help build the substantive theory.

Morrow (2005) believes that sample size should depend on whether the researcher wants maximum participant heterogeneity, maximum homogeneity, or extreme cases. Sample size has been a contentious topic and guidelines have ranged from three participants to hundreds (Morrow, 2005). Morrow (2005, p. 255) contends that merely having large sample numbers has little value in providing credibility to the study findings:

Playing the “numbers game” is often either an attempt to manage discomfort associated with the inevitable ambiguity of conducting qualitative research or the need to “fit” one’s research into the traditional postpositivist standards of institutional review boards, doctoral committees, or journal review boards. I have found that, when necessary to predict sample size, the “magic number 12” is as good as any, though in my own research I tend toward a larger sample size — as many as 20 or 30 participants.

Morrow (2005) believes that, rather than numbers, data quality (i.e. depth and variety) is most important. I did not use the “magic number 12”, but rather collected data until I felt I had reached *theoretical* saturation (Charmaz, 2008). Theoretical saturation refers to a point during

analysis when the analyst believes all the concepts within the substantive theory are well understood, explicated, and delineated (Sbaraini, Carter, Evans, & Blinkhorn, 2011). This is, however, a judgement call in that any concept can theoretically be subdivided into additional components (Charmaz, 2008). Theoretical saturation is an ideal that can be likened to the open curve of a hyperbole, which can in principle continue *ad infinitum*, but practically it needs to end somewhere on the page. Charmaz (2008) believes that researcher boredom is a good indication of saturation, because at this point, nothing novel is being discovered in the dataset.

3.3 Participants

A total of 26 single mothers took part in this study. Eighteen participants took part in the interview phase of research, five participants took part in the naturalistic observation phase of research, and three participants took part in both the interview and observation phases (thus I had 21 interviews and eight recorded home observations).

The mean age of the single mothers was 26 years ($SD = 4$), ranging from 20 to 38. Most participants lived in areas of Khayelitsha ($n = 12$) and Delft ($n = 10$). Other participants were

from Gugulethu ($n = 2$), Crossroads ($n = 1$) and Nyanga ($n = 1$). These adjacent neighbourhoods cover an area with a radius of approximately 7.5 km, as shown in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1. Map of Cape Town metropole illustrating the area where the participants lived (Google Maps, n.d.).

In terms of household structure, in three homes the participant was the sole adult in the home, while 23 participants lived in extended families with other adult relatives present. Other adults consisted mostly of the participants' mothers (15 mothers, of whom nine were also single parents), sisters (14 participants lived with one or more sister) and brothers (14 participants lived with one or more brother). A total of 10 participants also lived with additional children other than their own. In extended families, the participant and her child/ren lived with almost four additional family members ($M = 3.58$; $SD = 2.16$; range from 1 to 10). Of the 15 employed participants, nine had non-permanent jobs. Working participants mostly had non-professional jobs such as call centre operators, community workers for non-profit organisations, cashiers,

hostesses, child minders, and personal assistants. Mean household expenditure per capita per month was R436.86 ($SD = 176.46$), which amounted to approximately R14.56 per person per day, less than the World Bank Group (2015a) poverty line of \$1.90 a day. It is also less than StatsSA's (2015b, p. 1) upper- (R779) and lower- (R501) bound poverty lines, meaning that the participants and their families "do not have command over enough resources to consume or purchase both adequate food and non-food items and are therefore forced to sacrifice food to obtain essential non-food items".

In terms of educational attainment, two participants had obtained a university or college degree, one had obtained a diploma, 20 finished high school and three finished primary school. Only two participants had had a second child, while 24 only had one child. The mean age of the first child was 36.3 months ($SD = 17.8$; ranging from two months to five years). The circumstances that led to the mothers' single status were fairly homogenous. Only two participants wanted and planned for a child despite not being married. Another mother was engaged but her partner passed away during the pregnancy. The other 23 participants were unmarried and had unplanned pregnancies, after which the romantic relationship with the biological father ended. Given the high prevalence of never-married mothers in South Africa (explained in Chapters 1 and 2), it is to be expected that most participants had pre-marital, unplanned pregnancies. Finally, the involvement of biological fathers was somewhat varied. Four fathers engaged with their child a minimum of once a week, six fathers saw their child once or twice a month, and 16 fathers were minimally involved, seeing their child only once every few years or never.

3.3.1 Some background information on Xhosa culture

With a population size of approximately eight million, the Xhosa people (also known as the *amaXhosa*, and historically, the Cape or Southern Nguni) are an ethnic group predominantly

residing in Southern Africa, especially the Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces of South Africa (Joyce, 2009; StatsSA, 2012). South Africa has 11 official languages with two of them regarded as European imports (English and Afrikaans). The *amaXhosa* refer to their language as *isiXhosa*. Xhosa speakers are the second largest language group in South Africa, after Zulu speakers (StatsSA, 2012).

The indigenous African language / ethnic groups as they are designated in modern-day South Africa (i.e. Xhosa, Zulu, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Northern Sotho, Swazi, Ndebele, Venda, and Tswana) are the results of a complex and nuanced past (Joyce, 2009). The cultural boundaries between these ethnic groups are not always exact because they have similar customs and shared histories. At the same time, one group may not be homogenous and there may be distinct subgroups and exceptions to the general 'rule' (Joyce, 2009). Colonialism, modernisation, and globalisation have also meant that many long-established, traditional customs have given way to some Western practises (Joyce, 2009). Thus, any discussion of a particular group's culture will be very general and likely oversimplified.

Keeping this caution in mind, there are a few cultural and historical details about the *amaXhosa*, that I would like to highlight. It seems that by the year 1730 the *amaXhosa* had migrated from the Northern regions of South Africa to settle along the Eastern and Southern coasts, known as the Transkei region (Joyce, 2009). Yet, by 1779 the Xhosa people and white settlers were in open conflict over who would take possession of the region (Joyce, 2009). Decades of war with settlers ended when the remaining Xhosa lands were incorporated into the then Cape Colony (Joyce, 2009). With the Glen Grey Act of 1894, the *amaXhosa* were allowed by the Cape colonial government to govern themselves, but the act also implied that it was impossible for the two races (European and African) to integrate (Joyce, 2009). The underlying rhetoric was that the two racially distinct groups of people could not live together as a common people and

needed to develop separately (Joyce, 2009). These sentiments were eventually reflected in Apartheid ideology. Decades later the Apartheid regime established two separate republics (Transkei and Ciskei), also known as homelands, where the *amaXhosa* were forced to live (Joyce, 2009). Apartheid legislation reduced Xhosa people's political, social, and economic autonomy (Mtuze, 2004). Over time, because of this kind of systemic racism, Xhosa people became increasingly impoverished.

Also important to note is that for many Xhosa people kingship ties are not limited to the family nucleus but extend to a wider group of people who can trace their bloodline back to a common person. Therefore, the *amaXhosa* can be subdivided into several clans (Joyce, 2009; Mndende, 2006). Clan identity is typically deemed essential for wellbeing (Mndende, 2006). Ancestors have a prominent, spiritual presence in the lives of many Xhosa people (Joyce, 2009). Xhosa people tend to believe in a supreme being (called *Qamata*, or Creator) who they believe brought everything into existence (Mndende, 2006). Yet, ancestors function as intermediaries between the individual and this supreme being (Mndende, 2006). Ancestors can protect and favour their living descendants, or may punish them when displeased (Mndende, 2006). Throughout life, especially at important developmental milestones, Xhosa people honour their ancestors through different cultural ceremonies and ritual sacrifices, termed *isiko* (Mndende, 2006). Many Xhosa people have also adopted Christianity into their belief system (Joyce, 2009).

There is a rich oral tradition in Xhosa culture where important stories and legends are passed on verbally from one generation to the next (Joyce, 2009; Mndende, 2006; Zenani, 1992). The elders within a clan are revered for their knowledge and wisdom, and play a central role during ritualised ceremonies (Mndende, 2006). Respect is a key value within Xhosa culture and young people are expected to demonstrate this virtue in the presence of their elders (Mtuze, 2004).

By celebrating different rites of passage, young people enforce their standing within the larger community and strengthen their connections to ancestors (Mndende, 2006). For example, at birth a new-born is introduced to his/her community and ancestors through a naming ritual and the slaughtering of a goat (called *ukuqatywa*); adolescent males enter adulthood through ritualised circumcision (*ulwaluko*); and when girls start menstruating they take part in *intonjane* to celebrate their passage into womanhood (Mndende, 2006). During these rituals, elders convey essential cultural information to the younger generations and thus, they help young people connect to their heritage, clan identity, and ancestors. Not all of these ceremonies are rigidly adhered to by all Xhosa families, especially in the face of increased urbanisation and modernisation (Padmanabhanunni, Jaffer, & Steenkamp, 2017). Yet, many of these rituals are still popular and enjoy widespread acceptance (Mndende, 2006; Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017).

Young girls undergoing *intonjane* are typically secluded for several days in a hut and during this period an elder female from the clan (*iintombi ezindala*) guides the initiate through the process and offers her advice on reproductive and sexual health (Mndende, 2006; Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). *Intonjane* symbolises that the initiate has reached puberty and is therefore biologically mature and eligible for marriage (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). During the elaborate *intonjane* ritual, several animals may be slaughtered, community women give the initiate gifts (such as *ingcawe*, an indigenous blanket), and important songs, speeches, and dances are performed (Mndende, 2006). In conjunction with these rituals, *inkciyo* (virginity testing) may start to take place (Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna 2014; Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). During *inkciyo* a female elder typically inspects a young woman's genitalia to verify if her hymen is still intact (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). One of the motivations behind this practice, is to deter adolescent females from premarital sexual intercourse (Mubangizi, 2012; Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna, 2014). The sexual 'purity' of

an unmarried woman seems to be highly regarded by some girls and their families (Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna 2014). It has also been noted that a virgin bride may secure a larger bride price (lobola) for her family (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). Although the practice of *inkciyo* was outlawed by the South African government in 2005, there has been a resurgence due to the high prevalence of HIV infections (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). The revival may have been spurred on by the belief that *inkciyo* is a preventative measure against the spread of sexually transmitted disease because it encourages abstinence (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). It is still commonly performed in several Southern African regions (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017; Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna 2014; Vincent 2006). Padmanabhanunni et al. (2017) reported that in Swaziland, for example, virgin female adolescents come together to take part in a mass annual chastity ceremony called the Reed Dance or *Umhlanga* ceremony, and an estimated 98 000 girls registered for the 2016 event (Akwei, 2016; Nxumalo, 2014).

Virginity testing may not be a once-off experience and female adolescents may have to undergo the ritual several times (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). In some cases it continues into adulthood (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). Women may have mixed feelings about the ritual. Some who need to frequently submit to the practice, can feel that family members do not trust them to remain chaste and 'pure' (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). Other women have indicated that the practice is intrusive, uncomfortable, and affects their sexual agency (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017). At the same time, meeting family expectations by 'passing' the virginity test can be a source of great pride and confidence because it symbolises that they are 'good girls' that have maintained the traditional standard of purity before marriage (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2017; Taylor, Dlamini, Sathiparsad, Jinabhai, & De Vries. 2007; Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna 2014). Not everyone participates in public ceremonies and some elect to undergo the ritual in private (Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna, 2014). Young women who support the practice and who take part in public ceremonies report that they do not feel coerced or forced

into it by their families (Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna, 2014). Young female advocates of the ritual believe it is a celebration of their Xhosa heritage; something that enforces a sense of cultural belonging, community respect, and social identity (Swaartbooi-Xabadiya & Nduna, 2014).

In Xhosa culture, traditional family life tends to be patriarchal, with men seen as the head of the household (Joyce, 2009). In the past, polygamy was also accepted, with the proviso that the husband should be able to pay the bride price for each of his wives (Mtuze, 2004). Regarding role distribution, the male-breadwinner-female-homemaker ideal is often strived for (Hunter, 2006).

Traditionally, Xhosa marriage (*umshato*) could include the practice of *ukuthwalwa* where a man chooses his young future bride, then, without her knowledge, he negotiates the bride price with her parents, and with their consent he abducts her (Mubangizi, 2012). Thus, she is forced into marriage (Mubangizi, 2012). This practice is not widely accepted anymore and it is also illegal in South Africa (Mubangizi, 2012). Nevertheless, in the last decade there have been reported incidents of underaged girls still being forced into marriage through this custom (Fihlani, 2009) and some political leaders have made public statements that seem to endorse the practice (Van der Westhuizen, 2011). Despite these reported incidents of *ukuthwalwa*, in contemporary South Africa, most Xhosa couples will have a typical romance and courtship before getting engaged. However, lobola is still widely endorsed with one study reporting that 88% of their sampled graduate university students ($n = 75$) consider bride price to be an integral part of an African marriage because it encourages a husband's continued gratitude, respect, and appreciation for his wife's dignity and worth (Mwamwenda & Monyooe, 1997). Typically, men pay a higher price when the bride is well educated, when her family has wealth and status,

when she is physically attractive and desirable, and when she is a virgin with no children. However, although there is widespread support for lobola, Mubangizi (2012, p.41) writes that,

among the arguments used against the custom are issues of human rights. Central to these is the right to equality and the prohibition of discrimination between men and women. Why should men ‘pay’ for women when women are now recognized as equal to their husbands? And, why should some women draw ‘a higher price’ than others if all are equal in the eyes of the law?

As noted, the cultural elements I highlighted here are simplified generalisations. This is not an exhaustive discussion on Xhosa culture and certainly does not do justice to the full, rich, nuanced history of the *amaXhosa* people. In this section I merely provide fragments of information that could help readers appreciate what never-married single mothers may experience during this phase of their lives.

3.4 Procedure

As explained previously, two types of data were collected, namely semi-structured interview data and naturalistic observations. The substantive theory was constructed by focusing primarily on information gathered from interviews. Observations of family routines were used to supplement the interview data and thus helped to identify any information not conveyed by participant accounts. Data collection was thus divided into two phases, starting with interviews (subsection 3.4.1), and then progressing to observations (subsection 3.4.2).

3.4.1 Collecting interview data

The Xhosa-speaking fieldworkers who initially helped with participant recruitment each received five days of intensive training in qualitative interviewing. Fieldworker training focused on general interviewing skills (e.g. what is the purpose of interviewing, how to build rapport, how to formulate relevant probing questions) and ethics (e.g. confidentiality and informed consent, and how and when to refer participants for psychological support). The semi-structured interview schedule used in this study was comprehensively explained and demonstrated to the fieldworkers. Then, the fieldworkers had the opportunity to practise their skills with mock interviews. During these mock interviews the fieldworkers' competence with the specific interview protocol was rigorously assessed and both women received constant feedback about their personal skillset and areas of growth. Once fieldworkers were completely comfortable with the research protocol, competent with the interview schedule, and able to effectively probe key issues that might arise during interviews, data collection commenced. Both fieldworkers had years of experience working in the social development sector as community lay counsellors, and thus they both had experience with building rapport and counselling.

After fieldworker training, families (who matched the inclusion criteria) were contacted telephonically. A face-to-face meeting was scheduled with interested mothers. Before each interview, participants were provided with a standard written consent form (see *Addendum H*), which was explained in full. It was clarified that the participants could either take part in the interview process alone, take part in both the interview and the observation activities, or alternatively only take part in the observation phase. Agreeing to take part in both the observation and interview activities was thus not a prerequisite for study participation. For every interview and every observation, a R50 grocery gift voucher was given to the mothers as

a token of gratitude for their participation. Participants were assured of: 1) their right to privacy, 2) that identifiable information would be kept confidential, 3) the voluntary nature of their contribution, 4) the significance and meaning of informed consent, 5) that it was their prerogative to withdraw from the study at any given point, and 6) that if they chose to withdraw they would not face any negative repercussions. After granting consent, the mothers completed a biographical questionnaire (see *Addendum I*). All documents were made available in both English and Xhosa. Interviews with the mother were conducted in English if she was comfortable with English, otherwise one of the fieldworkers conducted the session in Xhosa. Interviews took place in the participants' homes. All interviews were audio-recorded, since no participant expressed concern after we asked for recording permission. Interviewers kept field journals to jot down impressions of the interview, potential challenges during the session, and any additional information that could be relevant during analysis. I initially accompanied fieldworkers and conducted some of the first interviews myself, especially when we were sure the participant was fluent in English. When fieldworkers conducted interviews they received feedback about their work. This feedback and follow-up process was essential because there was the risk that fieldworkers would neglected to explore certain cultural concepts and nuances with participants, especially when the meaning of these cultural traditions seemed self-evident to the Xhosa interviewer. An example of this would be the concept of *paying the damages*. The fieldworkers knew what participants were referring to when they spoke of this practice, but to me, as someone who is not personally a member of the Xhosa culture, this concept needed further clarification and exploration.

3.4.1.1 Interview schedule

Initial interview questions were broad in order to understand the context in which daily routines occur (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Thus, there was an initial focus on the experience of becoming

a single parent. Subsequent questions focused on family ideals and goals, because these are deemed to be important social and cultural drivers that direct family routines (Gallimore et al., 1993). Furthermore, the participants were asked to describe a “typical day” for their family in a time-ordered sequence, including morning routines, mid-morning routines, afternoon routines and evening routines. The participants also described the family’s typical weekend. Further probes regarding these routines dealt with what happens during a typical type of routine (e.g. a typical morning routine versus a typical bedtime routine), who is usually involved, who is usually in charge, what is deemed important during the routine, what is taught to children during the routine, what difficulties are often encountered, what do family members do to deal with these difficulties, and what assists mothers to keep the routine going. In addition, the participants were asked to describe a particularly difficult situation when they struggled to manage their family routines and what actions they took to overcome these challenges (see *Addendum J* for the interview schedule). Interviews were usually more than 60 minutes in duration. Five participants had their interviews split into two parts and thus the interview was conducted over a two-day period in order to avoid interviewee fatigue.

3.4.2 Collecting observation data

Mothers who consented to take part in the observation phase of data collection were asked what family routine they consider to be most important and special. This was the routine that I aimed to video record. However, one mother mentioned “outings to the park” as the routine most important to her. Due to practical constraints, I could not video record this routine and thus she suggested her second favourite routine.

A date and time was scheduled for observations. If the mother had not taken part in the interview phase of the research, a pre-recording home visit was also scheduled in order to build

rapport and assess potential practical constraints with video angles and lighting. Observations were naturalistic in nature, meaning that I aimed to capture normal family interactions in everyday contexts. It was stressed to the participants that I wanted to capture what typically happened and that they should go about their activities “just the way they always do and to try and forget about the camera”.

The fieldworker arrived at the participant’s home 30 minutes before the routine typically started and installed a camera with a wide-angle lens on a tripod (with external microphones to improve sound quality) in the room the routine typically takes place in. All family members, and especially the participating children, had the opportunity to become habituated to the camera. Recording started 20 minutes prior to the routine because, when being recorded, behaviour is usually self-conscious for approximately 20 minutes and then the camera fades into the background (DuFon, 2002). The fieldworker was not present during the recording so as to limit interference in the natural process. After the routine, the parent was asked to rate the ‘typicality’ of the routine on a scale from one (very atypical routine) to five (very typical routine). I planned to make an appointment for a second observation if the participant gave a score below three. None of the eight participating parents gave scores below three and usually described the recorded routines as “very typical”. In total, 353 minutes of video data was obtained, containing footage of mother-child interactions during important family routines. Recordings were not always limited to one single routine, because multiple, overlapping tasks sometimes took place during the recording period. Thus, recorded activities included: after-school homework and fun-time, evening bath- and bedtime, morning bath-time, mother-child bonding, breakfast routines, morning household cleaning, baby naptime, and evening TV-watching routines.

3.4.2.1 Reflection on practical issues related to video recordings.

I would like to reflect briefly on the observation phase of data collection as this methodological approach was a fairly new practice in studying family routines and an uncommonly used data source in grounded theory designs. My own experiences might help to inform methodological decisions in future family-orientated research.

At the outset, I have to note that the observation phase of data collection was fraught with substantial challenges. Firstly, video recordings of late afternoon and early evening routines were easier to collect because family morning routines usually occurred between 4:00 am and 6:30 am and often included the mother and other adult family members getting dressed for work. This made it harder to collect data because there was a risk that these videos would infringe too much on the family's privacy. Video data certainly adds additional ethical considerations, especially when used inside intimate family spaces such as participant homes. I tried to be as sensitive as possible to these issues. Thus, very early morning routines were not captured on tape, which meant I could only rely on interviews to give me information about early morning activities.

Secondly, Hall and Gallery (2001, p.257) argue that researcher reflexivity and rationality should form an important part of grounded theory designs, "attending to the effects of researcher-participant interactions on the construction of data and to power and trust relationships between researchers and participants". To some extent any research activity infringes upon the privacy of research participants (despite the presence of informed consent). This invasion is amplified when collecting video recorded data in participant homes. The value of these video observations lies in their ability to capture real-time experiences in the natural habitat. The contradiction is that the presence of a video camera has the potential to create an

unnatural situation. It is important to decrease this sense of invasion. Participating mothers live in extreme poverty and are marginalized due to the history of Apartheid. I am from a different social class and from an advantaged racial group. Thus, the potential power imbalance between me and the participants could add to this sense of invasion. Also, my previous employment experience demonstrated to me that children sometimes experience the presence of a white woman in their community as atypical. On a personal level, I found myself grappling with these emotionally laden issues. This phase of data collection was thus conducted with caution. I believed it was essential to work closely with the fieldworkers. Data collection was a collaborative effort and considerable energy went into building rapport with participants. It was most important for me to ensure that participants were accurately informed about how data would be used and stored. It was essential that participants were fully aware of the risks and implications of their research participation and that they were completely certain of their willingness to participate. For future researchers who utilize video recordings, I would say, building transparent, respectful relationships with participants is key. Researchers must ensure that their participants truly understand what participation will entail. Participants in this study felt comfortable with video observations. Yet, when I had to translate videos I separated the audio and visual files so that none of the visual information were shared with translators. These additional steps need to be taken to ensure that participants' privacy and dignity are respected.

Thirdly, interviews, unlike naturalistic observations of family routines, could be scheduled for any time of the day and in any location, making it much easier for mothers to participate in the research. However, video recordings of family routines needed to occur at the *typical* time and place. Any unforeseen circumstances (e.g. worker protests, sudden changes in school schedules, train breakdowns, or electricity blackouts) meant that scheduled observations were cancelled for the day. Rescheduling was often a lengthy process. These cancellations also had substantial financial implications since fieldworkers and drivers still had to be compensated.

The unpredictable environment was thus not only a challenge when trying to complete research activities, but was indicative of the challenges that single mothers contend with on a regular basis.

Lastly, safety was a concern. Every effort was made to keep fieldworkers safe by employing a driver that could take them to participant homes and back because carrying recording equipment made them a target for theft. Despite these precautions, we encountered two robberies. One fieldworker was held at gunpoint and assaulted. She received professional counselling to deal with the trauma. Within a high-risk South African context, practical challenges such as these cannot be ignored when designing research studies.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Fieldworkers were fully informed of the ethical rules and procedures, and issues surrounding confidentiality were stressed. Fieldworkers were closely monitored to ensure adherence to ethical standards. Furthermore, all possible precautions have been taken to store the information safely and privately. Thus, all the physical materials (e.g. biographical questionnaires) are stored in a secure cabinet and electronic versions of the data are stored on my personal computer, which is password protected. After five years the electronic data will be wiped clean and the physical questionnaires will be destroyed. The dignity and rights of the respondents were not infringed upon. As mentioned, participation was voluntary and respondents were fully informed of the research objectives and procedures, thus no participant was misled in this study. Participants were aware that they could decline participation or withdraw from the study at any point without suffering adverse consequences. All participants were given the contact details of Lifeline and the FAMSA offices in Khayelitsha. These non-profit organisations have a respectable reputation and provide free psychological support

services to a range of beneficiaries. Confidentiality was maintained and only my supervisor, the fieldworkers and I had access to any identifying information on the participants. When presenting results, pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identities. I obtained ethical clearance from Stellenbosch University's Research Ethics Committee (DESC_Degoede2013) on 26 November 2013.

3.6 Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness, this study made use of the criteria set forth by Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), which have also been elaborated on by subsequent theorists (Krefting, 1991; Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Originally, Guba (1981) established four criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I must state outright that I believe no interpretation of qualitative data can truly be completely replicated because all research findings are interpretations of reality, influenced by the worldview of the analyst. In qualitative research, we merely present one of these interpretations (i.e. one perspective on 'truth'). Morrow (2005, p. 252) wrote that

if the researcher is the instrument of the investigation, how is it possible to conceive of confirmability? Nevertheless, these [trustworthiness] criteria may be useful in communicating with postpositivist [...] reviewers who are not fully conversant with qualitative approaches.

Shenton (2004) proposes several strategies that can be used to improve trustworthiness. Firstly, familiarity with the participant culture and context is important (Shenton, 2004). Morrow (2005) says that understanding context, immersing oneself in the culture, and building rapport with participants are essential for analysing participant meanings and experiences. To this end,

I made use of two Xhosa-speaking single mothers to help me collect data. These women also became an integral part of my analysis, because they could provide me with unique insights into cultural elements such as “paying the damages”, the “hustler” identity, and power hierarchies within Xhosa-speaking families. Data collection also took place over an extended period of time (one year), and multiple contact opportunities with participants helped us to build rapport.

A researcher’s expertise also lends further credibility to the research findings (Shenton, 2004). Although I have prior experience conducting qualitative research, I attended two week-long workshops to further improve my analytic skills. Workshops included an advanced course in qualitative data analysis using ATLAS.ti (7). Triangulation, through the use of both interviews and observations, helped me to cross-validate the findings (Shenton, 2004). The constant-comparison method in grounded theory helped me to identify any potential rival conclusions (Shenton, 2004). Continuous debriefing with my supervisor and using other experienced doctoral students as sounding boards ensured accountability, helped me to expand my understanding of the phenomena under investigation, and bolstered the accuracy of the results (Shenton, 2004). Shenton (2004) believes any peer scrutiny of the project is beneficial, including presentations at conferences, because these can give the researcher a fresh perspective. Peer scrutiny by academics who are not closely involved in the project can help to challenge assumptions that are taken for granted by the analyst (Shenton, 2004). Presenting some of my research results at the *Centre for Research on Families and Relationships* in Edinburgh provided feedback from national and international scholars and pointed out elements in my study that needed clarification (De Goede & Greeff, 2016c). I also presented findings at the *Pathways to Resilience IV* international conference (De Goede & Greeff, 2017), and the feedback from health experts who work for the Western Cape Department of Health was very encouraging. Conference attendees with extensive experience in the field of maternal

and infant health believed that my results were pertinent to some of their large-scale provincial interventions, and this lends further credibility to my findings because of its application potential. In addition, an expert analyst in the utilisation of the ATLAS.ti (7) software package was employed as a qualitative research consultant. Dr Susanne Friese of Qualitative Research and Consulting (QUARC) in Germany, who is the author of the book *Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.ti*. (Friese, 2014), has over 20 years of experience in qualitative data analysis. She looked at my dataset and provided feedback regarding my initial coding in ATLAS.ti (7). Finally, I made use of member checks (Shenton, 2004) and contacted three participants to discuss a simplified synopsis of my research findings. These discussions were used to bolster the analysis and the participants often excitedly elaborated on themes by giving additional examples.

It was also important for me, as researcher, to describe my analytic techniques in detail. Friese (personal communication, January 10, 2015) explained that qualitative researchers are not explicit enough about the strategies they used when coding and categorising data. Shenton (2004) also encourages researchers to leave an audit trail, because qualitative researchers spend months in the coding phase of analysis, yet the process is often reduced to a sentence or two when writing up research papers. I aim to give a much more detailed account of my analytic procedure in the next section and supplement the discussion with examples extracted from the ATLAS.ti (7) software.

3.7 Data Analysis

I followed slightly different steps for exploring and analysing the interview and observational data, especially during the initial coding phases. I therefore discuss these processes separately.

3.7.1 Procedures followed when analysing interview data

Although I describe the analytic stages in sequence (first open coding, followed by focused coding, and finally refining the substantive theory in narrative form), it was not a linear process. I moved through several analytic iterations, going back and forth between various stages (LaRossa, 2005). Consistent with grounded theory procedures, data collection and analysis happened simultaneously to ensure that any potential emerging concepts from early interviews could be explored in subsequent conversations with the participants (Charmaz, 2008). A good example of this was the concept of “paying the damages”, which I discuss in Chapter 4. This was a phrase used several times in the first few interviews and I realised that subsequent interviews needed to explore this cultural tradition in more detail.

Interviews were translated into English and transcribed, uploaded into ATLAS.ti (7), and then I used line-by-line open coding of the written text (Charmaz, 2008). Because grounded theories focus on understanding process, Charmaz (2008) suggests using active codes when possible (i.e. “communicate” and “communicating” rather than “communication”). I used grounded theory micro-analytic techniques, described by Charmaz (2006, 2008) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) to analyse the interviews. These guiding principles ensure that the analysis generates a rich, in-depth, analytically comprehensive account of what is happening in the participants’ lives. For example, I used the five “W” questions of *where*, *what*, *when*, *who*, and *why*, as well as *how*, *with what effect*, *so what*, and *what if* (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Other techniques relate to the microanalysis of participants’ words and phrases and their various contextual meanings (i.e. the meaning of the word “hustler” as described in Chapter 5) (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I was also mindful of when a participant conveyed an emotion and the described conditions that provoked these feelings (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I was alerted to expressions that signify time and process, such as “then” and

“now” (i.e. participants spoke of how they accepted and came to love their child over time) (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Continuous memo writing helped with the micro-analytic process (Charmaz, 2008). For example, in Figure 3.2 is a memo I wrote about *acceptance of the maternal identity*. I recognised that, when one of the participants (number 12) described her pregnancy, there was a change or shift in intrapsychic experiences. Over a period of time this participant’s emotions changed from negative to positive. One can see this change clearly in her interview excerpts in Figure 3.2. I wrote a memo about this, and found that this change from negative to positive occurred for most of the participants.

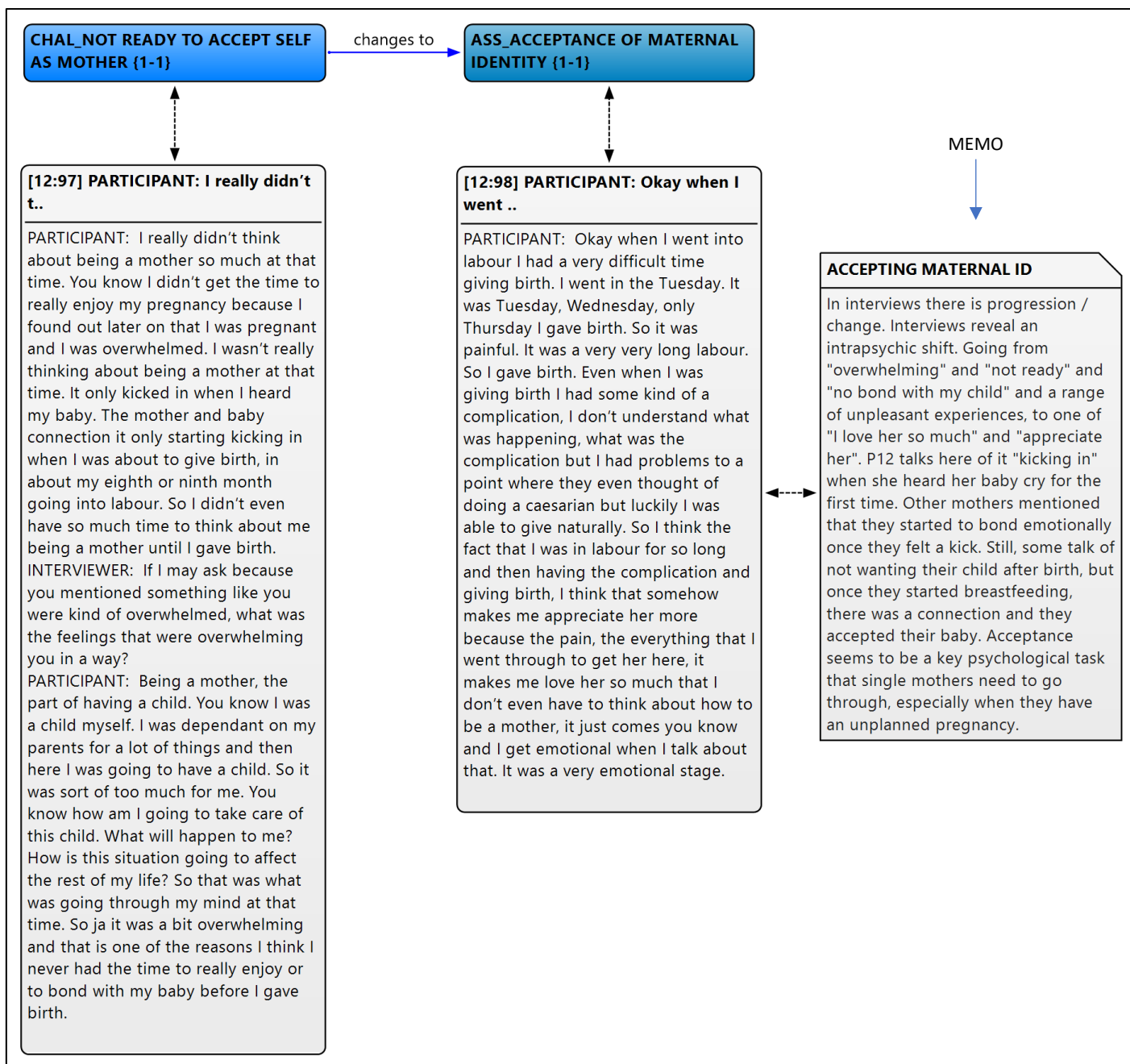


Figure 3.2. Memo on acceptance of the maternal identity, illustrating progression over time and an intrapsychic shift.

As another example, I provide readers with a participant quote and the reflective memo I wrote during the initial phase of open coding (see *Addendum K*). During this coding phase I moved back and forth across the interviews, constantly comparing data fragments within and between interviews, in order to identify similarities and discrepancies (Hallberg, 2006). The ATLAS.ti

program assisted me in making comparisons through the *Codes Co-occurring Table* function and the *Co-occurrence Explorer* (Friese, 2014). Using these tools, I looked at any potential differences in the types of codes associated with divergent living arrangements and contrasting employment statuses. The Codes Co-occurring Table function and the Co-occurrence Explorer (Friese, 2014) are non-statistical functions and purely tools used to augment exploration of the data. By creating *Primary Document Families* one can, for example, cluster together all the interviews of mothers who worked versus those who were not employed, and through the Codes Co-occurring Table, compare whether there were any recurring codes in one group but not the other (i.e. *boredom*, which occurred among some non-working mothers, versus *not enough family-time*, which occurred among several working mothers). Using these ATLAS.ti (7) functions, I also looked for coding similarities and differences based on the type of daily routine (i.e. bathing routines versus bedtime routines).

During open coding one fragments the data, whereas the subsequent focused coding helps to reintegrate data into a coherent whole (Charmaz, 2006). During focused coding I determined the suitability and frequency of earlier codes. After discarding inconsequential codes and reformulating poorly/inaccurately labelled ones, I used the most meaningful (and usually the most recurrent) codes to re-examine the dataset (Charmaz, 2006). “Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57-58). This focused coding phase is said to be one of the last analytic stages, although I believe most analysts start to become cognisant of key explanatory themes relatively early on in the coding process (Charmaz, 2006). When I felt I was nearing the end of open coding (although this phase never fully ends completely), I used two tools in the ATLAS.ti program to formally assist with focused coding.

Firstly, I generated two primary coding lists. One list involved codes of any situation, trait, person, action, object, or process that *assisted* parents in managing their family routines. The other code list centred on potential *challenges* experienced by parents when managing their family routines. Some of the codes were similar in conceptual content, and these had to be merged and renamed. Other codes were too general or unspecific and required further refinement and segmentation. In *Addendum L* you will find a code list I generated relatively early on in the coding process. The list contains codes describing anything that helped mothers manage their routines – I called the list *Assistance and Maintenance*. All codes in this early list were designated with the prefix “ASS_” in order to visually group these codes together in ATLAS.ti (7). I also created other prefixes to start grouping codes, such as “actions taken towards child” and “actions taken towards other adults”. The list originally contained 163 codes. From this code list I started to think about conceptual categories and subcategories by grouping together discrete codes that had theoretical commonalities. *Addendum M* provides an example of how I started to think about grouping and organising the early list of 163 codes. One can also see notes I made in red concerning codes that I needed to follow up on or reinvestigate. These coding lists functioned as analytical memos and helped me to explore possible links between data fragments.

Throughout this process, discussions with my supervisor and memo writing helped me to interrogate the terminology I used when creating coding labels. For example, one can see in *Addenda L* and *M* how I used the word *attitude* in some of my code names. This term I later discarded. In *Addendum N* I provide the memo I wrote after discussing the term *attitude* with my supervisor.

To further assist with focused coding, I used the *Network Interface* in ATLAS.ti (Friese, 2014). This function helped me to graphically examine and “physically” manipulate the links between

quotes, codes (now also known as themes) and larger categories by moving entities around in this two-dimensional space. This is similar to what Charmaz (2006) describes as *clustering* or conceptual mapping. For the process of clustering, Charmaz (2006, p. 87) suggests that one:

Start with the main topic or idea at the center; work quickly; move out from the nucleus into smaller subclusters; keep all related material in the same subcluster; make the connections clear between each idea, code, and/or category; keep branching out until you have exhausted your knowledge; try several different clusters on the same topic; use clustering to play with your material.

By using the Network Interface in ATLAS.ti (7) it was easier to see multiple conceptual connections and even question and critique links I previously thought relevant. I would say that using the Network Interface became one of the most crucial steps in my analysis. For example, in *Addendum O* I provide an earlier version of the overarching category, *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships*. By going back and forth between quotes and themes, and continuously asking micro-analytic questions, the overarching category changed into a more refined network of conceptual themes and subthemes. From this Network Interface, I could try different clusters of themes and play around with different thematic definitions to improve analytic accuracy. In *Addendum P* one can also see how clustering helped me to think about maternal identity, and how maternal identity might engender two types of feelings (i.e. a sense of responsibility on the one hand, and feelings of love on the other). I later termed these two related feelings *devotion*, which I will describe in Chapter 5. Constant consultations with my research supervisor helped me to interrogate and refine my clusters.

Charmaz (2008) suggests that researchers should not feel obliged to conduct what Corbin and Strauss (2008) term axial coding (which is when the researcher establishes the properties and

dimensions of each category). To assist with axial coding, one may use a framework that requires the analyst to code for 1) *conditions*, such as the situational elements and circumstances in which the phenomena occurs, 2) *actions and interactions*, such as the patterned responses of people when confronted with a situation, as well as 3) *consequences*, such as the effect these actions had (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Charmaz (2006) finds that this framework may either enhance or limit the researcher's foresight and suggests that analysts who can tolerate ambiguity, and who prefer working with flexible parameters, need not engage in this endeavour. Although I did not formally implement an axial coding phase, factors related to conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences emerged spontaneously during the analysis.

3.7.2 Procedures followed when analysing observational data

For the audiovisual data, communications in each video were first translated into English and transcribed, and then each video transcription and video were loaded into ATLAS.ti (7) by linking the textual document with the audiovisual file through the use of *Timestamps* and the *Anchor* function (Friese, 2014). This allowed me to view the audio transcript and video simultaneously. Video recordings were segmented into meaningful "incidents" (K. Charmaz, personal communication, September 8, 2013) of mother-child interactions. With the ATLAS.ti (7) software I could use these segments as free-standing, annotated, coded, and linked data fragments (Friese, 2014). I did not transcribe the *actions* taking place during the videos, as this seemed unnecessary when using this particular software. For his work on the interactions between support staff and people with disabilities, Griffiths (2013) transcribed video footage, including each participant's micro-behaviours (e.g. facial expressions, eye movements and gestures). Griffiths (2013) noted, however, that transcribing behaviours in such detail increased the risk of remaining at a purely descriptive level. For me, what was more important was first

replaying video fragments and getting an overall impression of the visual information. Using these replay functions allowed me to use incident-to-incident open coding (Charmaz, 2008) of the audiovisual information. By coding such fragments, I became more aware of the sequence of micro-events (Nilsson, 2012) during family routines, as well as interruptions to those sequences. During analysis, memo writing became an integral part of formulating the observation-related codes and theoretical categories. Charmaz (2006) asserts that, between data collection and writing up the final narrative, memo writing becomes the essential intermediate process. While writing memos I used a range of guiding ethnographic questions to support my enquiry. These analytic questions, suggested by Charmaz and Mitchell (cited in Charmaz, 2006) are provided in *Addendum Q*. After incident-to-incident open coding I engaged in focused coding, following a similar process to the one described in section 3.5.1. At this stage of the analysis I also asked how observations confirmed or contradicted the results obtained from the interview data.

Lastly, after concluding the focused coding stages of *both the interviews and videos*, I committed to paper the final narrative. During this last stage I finalised the groupings of themes, subthemes, and categories, and confirmed their final definitions and relationships. Writing up the “story” was a key stage in the investigative process (Charmaz, 2008).

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I explained the particular methodological strategies employed in this study. In the following three chapters I present (Chapters 4 and 5) and discuss (Chapter 6) the research results, aiming to address the primary research question: *How are family routines managed from the perspective of low-income, single, Xhosa-speaking mothers with young children?*

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF RESEARCH QUESTION ONE - FACTORS THAT HINDER THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY ROUTINES

In this chapter I present the results that refer to the first research question, *What factors hinder the management of family routines?* The chapter is separated into two main sections. The first illustrates a timeline that captures the various stages the single mothers went through when they transitioned from childlessness to parenthood. In the subsequent chapter subdivision I will present five categories of risk that often hindered the mother's ability to manage her family routines successfully.

Participant quotes have been italicised to improve readability. I would like to note that themes were not selected based on their frequency of recurrence in the dataset, but on their potential relevance in relation to the research questions. The reason for including themes and subthemes irrespective of frequency (or 'groundedness') is that, given the non-statistical nature of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, I am not convinced that a higher theme frequency always indicates greater theme relevance. Themes with smaller frequencies do not always carry less meaning or consequence in participants' lives. Nonetheless, most themes discussed in this dissertation are mentioned by several participants (i.e. a quarter of interviewed participants or more). Due to the constant-comparison method in grounded theory, noteworthy exceptions to the "rule" are highlighted.

Each quote has a code containing a participant number, pseudonym, and important biographical information, for example P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed. The meaning of each marker is explained in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

Explanation of interview excerpt markers

Indicator	Marker example	Meaning
Participant number	P14	This marker indicates the number allocated to the participant. “P14” would be the 14th recruited participant.
Pseudonym	Onele	The second marker indicates the pseudonym used instead of the participant’s name.
Participant age	24	The third marker is the participant’s age at the time of data collection.
Number of biological children	1child	The fourth marker refers to the number of biological children the participant has. The child/ren were always residing with the participant.
Family composition	extended/ nuclear	The fifth marker indicates household structure. <i>Nuclear</i> implies that the participant and her biological children are not living with additional family members in the same home. <i>Extended</i> indicates that the nucleus is living with additional family members, such as the participant’s siblings, parents, aunts and uncles, cousins, or nieces and nephews.
Additional cohabitants	6extra	In the case of an extended family structure, the sixth marker indicates how many additional people are living in the house besides the nucleus.
Employment status	employed/ unemployed	The final marker indicates the mother’s employment status. This information can be important because, when a mother is employed, part of her daily planning includes work routines. In contrast, when she is unemployed she is primarily at home during the day, often taking care of children.

The present results are predominantly from the interview data, but where applicable I will draw the reader's attention to how video results mirror, or differ from, the interview findings.

4.1 Pre- and Postpartum Transition Stages

One cannot understand the management of family routines without understanding family context. To appreciate family context, it is essential to describe what the participants experienced during their months of pregnancy. From the data it is clear that most women's stories reflected a fairly similar prepartum sequence of events. Up until the birth (and in some cases slightly after the birth), there were several typical stages through which mothers progressed. Figure 4.1 illustrates this timeline, with nine consecutive transition stages: *Unaware, Unsure, Confirmation, Secrecy, Disclosure, Disclosure Repercussions, Birth and Parenthood*. Figure 4.1 also illustrates a tenth stage, *Acceptance*, which tended to overlap with other stages, and often occurred around the time of birth. Comparing the mothers' experiences it is clear that there were small differences in terms of the timing, duration, and experienced distress of each transition stage.

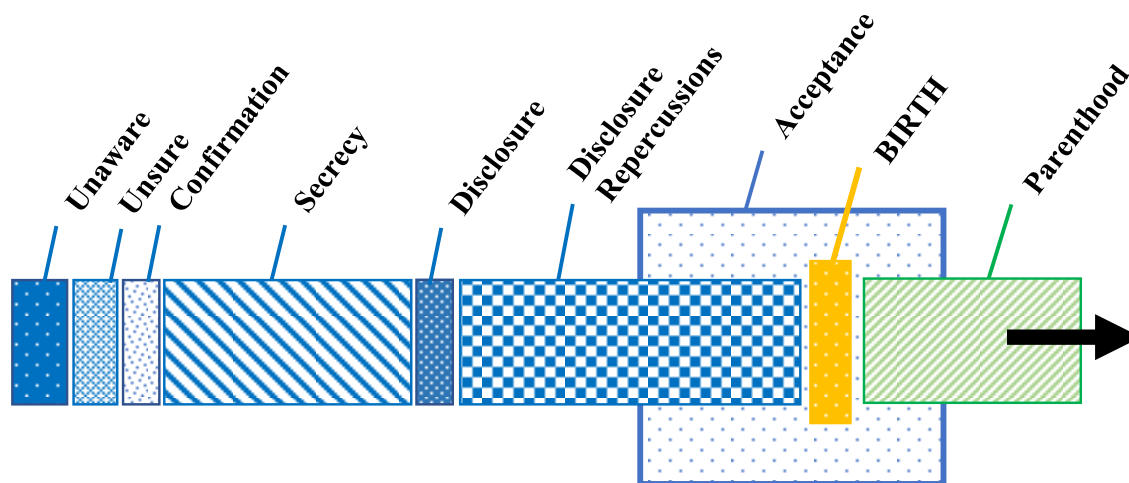


Figure 4.1. The ten typical stages of transitioning into single motherhood.

The intensity of mother's distress during each stage seemed to be affected by the extent of various risk factors. The five domains of risks were: *Interpersonal risks* (discussed in section 4.2.1), *Economic risks* (discussed in section 4.2.2), *Parenting challenges* (discussed in section 4.2.3), *Scheduling challenges* (discussed in section 4.2.4); and *Intrapsychic risks* (discussed in section 4.2.5). Some of these risk factors occur prior to the arrival of the child and can be viewed as predisposing stressors that influenced family routines *indirectly* because they undermined the wellbeing and psychological health of expectant mothers-to-be. For example, the shame and guilt participants felt about having an 'out-of-wedlock' child (viz. intrapsychic risk) and the conflict women encountered from relatives after they revealed the premarital pregnancy (viz. interpersonal risk) were some of these prepartum, predisposing stressors. Other risk factors were expected because they were the typical challenges that most new parents encounter after having their first child (viz. parenting challenges and scheduling challenges). Predisposing risk factors could be enduring and, when they were not resolved before labour, they could exacerbate normal, postpartum difficulties. In the following subsections I will

briefly describe the ten stages illustrated in Figure 4.1, starting with the first stage, termed *Unaware*.

4.1.1 Unaware

In Figure 4.1 one can see that the first stage is labelled *Unaware*. Only two participants in this study planned to fall pregnant. Because almost all the pregnancies described in this study were unplanned, most women had a two- or three-week period in which their changed condition was unbeknownst to them. Compared to couples who conceive intentionally, there was thus a lack of animated anticipation or hope for a pregnancy.

4.1.2 Unsure

At some point, participants recognised several physical signs (mild cramping and spotting, fatigue, nausea, tender breasts, bloating, and the absence of their menstrual cycle) that raised their awareness of a potential pregnancy. Most participants entered a phase of uncertainty, in which they suspected they were pregnant but had not yet confirmed their suspicions with any formal test:

I was not sure in the beginning whether I was pregnant. I missed my period and I then knew from that very first month that I was pregnant. However; on the other hand, I was not sure because it can happen that my cycle was changing. So, I kept on thinking that I am pregnant, maybe I'm not pregnant. But that was perhaps denial. Am I pregnant? Am I not pregnant? I'm pregnant? Am I not pregnant?

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Some individuals waited a considerable amount of time before confirming their pregnancy, such as Lumka, who waited until her fifth month to visit a doctor, and Onele, who chose not to confirm her pregnancy with any formal test. However, Lumka and Onele were the exceptions,

as most women did not stay in this phase for too long and progressed to the confirmation stage within a few weeks.

4.1.3 Confirmation

During the confirmation stage, several women took a home pregnancy test to verify their pregnancy suspicions. Other participants went to a community doctor:

I found out when I was three weeks pregnant [...] I went to town and I bought a pregnancy test and I went to the toilet and it came up positive.

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

I think when I was two months or I was a month and one week; I went to check if I was really pregnant. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

During the confirmation process, none of the women in the study were accompanied by their romantic partners. There was, however, one case where the biological father encouraged the mother to go to a doctor and provided her with the transport money she needed. *Confirmation* tended to be an intensely emotional event. Most women in this study were deeply unhappy (described in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.5). There were three contrasting cases. Lindelwa, Nondumiso, and Yonele were all in their mid-twenties and immediately felt ready and excited to be mothers. All three women believed they were mature enough for this life event. However, these instances were the exceptions. In terms of age, not all of the older participants were happy about their pregnancy, thus it was not age *per se*, but psychological preparedness, that helped Lindelwa, Nondumiso, and Yonele.

4.1.4 Secrecy

After confirmation, a common subsequent stage was *Secrecy*, which was when the mother-to-be withheld her pregnant status from her family members and the biological father. She may have told a trusted friend, but her primary support system was kept in the dark. It was only Esihle and Yonele who did not go through the typical secrecy stage. Esihle's next of kin were all deceased and she thus had no close support system to which to disclose. Yonele was older and had planned her pregnancy. Thus Yonele told her mother immediately. Yonele did, however, take some time to reveal the pregnancy to her partner because she feared he might react badly to the news.

4.1.5 Disclosure

In the stage following secrecy, the pregnancy was revealed. *Disclosure* to the biological father often occurred before the mother-to-be disclosed to her family members. Disclosing to the father was a planned event, and it either happened face-to-face, or via telephone calls and text messages, especially when fathers lived in another province. Leading up to this event there tended to be a lot of anxiety, as Nondumiso explained:

That was so difficult for me to do. It was so very difficult. What I did, I did the scan and I started thinking to myself: "How am I going to break the news to him?" [...] So, he called me and then he said: "Lets meet in town at the usual spot." [...] You know so I was writing in my diary in the taxi: "How would he react? What's going to happen? Would he accept the baby?" [...] So, when I met him he ordered food [...] so what I did, I gave him the scan photo and I went to the bathroom. I just gave him the scan photo and I went to the bathroom. I just left. I wanted for him to digest everything then I came back. Then he asked: "What's happening?" And I told him I was pregnant.

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

One can see from Nondumiso's statement that breaking the news to the biological father was a planned event. In contrast, disclosure to family members were not always as upfront. Frequently, disclosure to family members were viewed as a dreaded assignment for single mothers, even more so than disclosing to the biological father. Almost all the interviewed participants in this study did not know how to begin such a conversation with their next of kin, especially their parents. Under the theme, *Interpersonal risk* (section 4.2.1), I will discuss in further detail why this is often such a daunting undertaking.

4.1.6 Disclosure repercussions

After disclosure transpired, the mothers-to-be had to deal with people's reactions. In this stage, reactions from family members, as well as biological fathers, ranged from positive to negative, although the majority did not seem to take the news well. During this stage of the pregnancy, interpersonal conflict and maternal isolation usually increased. Because of the increase in conflict during this stage, most interviewed participants were under immense pressure and experienced significant distress (see section 4.2.1). At the time of disclosure, most participants were still romantically involved with the biological father of their child. After disclosure, mothers and fathers had to determine what the nature of their affiliation would be. Did they both want a child? Could they make a permanent commitment to one another? Would they get married? If not romantically affiliated, would they be able to remain friends and rather be co-parents? Or, would their connection disintegrate completely? In some instances the couple's affiliation was already unstable prior to the pregnancy and disclosure became the catalyst for a breakup because of the ensuing pressure and conflict. Thumeka, Zintle, Anathi, and Aviwe's partners immediately rejected the pregnancy and promptly ended the relationship. In comparison to these four women who were immediately rebuffed, most of the interviewed participants experienced protracted breakups. In these extended breakups, fathers expressed

their initial enthusiasm for the pregnancy, but over time their commitment to their child deteriorated. There seemed to be several reasons for this deterioration, one of which was a lack of trust and fidelity between partners. Another reason for dissolution was long-distance relationships. In these protracted breakups a lot of distress was experienced, and ill-feelings (such as anger, misery, and revenge) were directed towards the father, especially when he became romantically involved with someone else. When fathers could not accept their new paternal identity, mothers suffered additional psychological and financial strain. In several unique cases, however, the father's initial enthusiasm remained steadfast ($n = 7$), or even intensified ($n = 3$), as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

During this stage there were also cultural traditions that some families wished to observe. These cultural traditions, called *inhlawulo* or *paying the damages*, meant that the biological father (and his family) had to pay penance for impregnating the unwed participant. The biological father thus had to atone for "damaging" the participant's good name, her virginity, and the *labola* (bride price) her family could have received if she had entered matrimony with her virginity intact. More will be said about this tradition and the impact it has on the lives of single mothers (see section 4.2.1).

4.1.7 Acceptance (versus rejection/ambivalence)

In the *Acceptance* phase, most participants came to terms with their new parenting role and their single-mother status. Interviewees often spoke of a moment when there was a cognitive and/or affective shift, and they started to connect with their child (this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, section 5.1). Not only did mothers need to accept their new maternal identity, but their families had to resign themselves to the imminent arrival of an infant. Acceptance is also a psychological task that fathers were faced with. Not everyone navigates the assignment of *acceptance* successfully. When other significant adults, such as the

biological father or next of kin, did not accept the pregnancy (i.e. expressed ambivalence or rejection), it signalled additional post-partum problems for the mother (discussed in section 4.2).

4.1.8 Birth

Birth stories were relatively straightforward in terms of the *physical* procedures, apart from three interviewed participants who had life-threatening health complications. *Psychologically* speaking, though, the birth was a major event. Again, interviewed participants' emotions varied from extremely positive to extremely negative. Some mothers described how they felt a surge of overwhelming love and affection when they saw their babies for the first time; others described aversion, not wanting to hold their child. Interpersonal risk factors (such as conflict with the biological father or lack of family support) seemed to increase the likelihood that labour would be a difficult experience.

4.1.9 Parenthood

On arrival, the infant brought with it a new set of caretaking tasks and responsibilities. Initially there was a learning curve while new mothers confronted the practical, everyday challenges of tending to a new-born baby. The mother-infant dyad seemed to be especially vulnerable in the early stages of parenthood. When new mothers did not have emotional and practical support from experienced relatives, or when new mothers grappled with feelings of loss, pain, and self-loathing, there was a pile-up of risks that augmented participants' vulnerability. As these parents tried to settle into their new role, other obstacles emerged, such as a lack of available family time (see *Scheduling challenges* in section 4.2.4), worries about child development (see *Parenting challenges* in section 4.2.3), and concerns about financial resources (see *Economic risks* in section 4.2.2). In the following section I will describe in more detail how five domains of risk impaired the management of family routines.

4.2 Areas of Risk That Have a Negative Impact on Family Routines

Figure 4.2 illustrates the five domains of risk that had a negative impact on the management of family routines in these single-mother families.

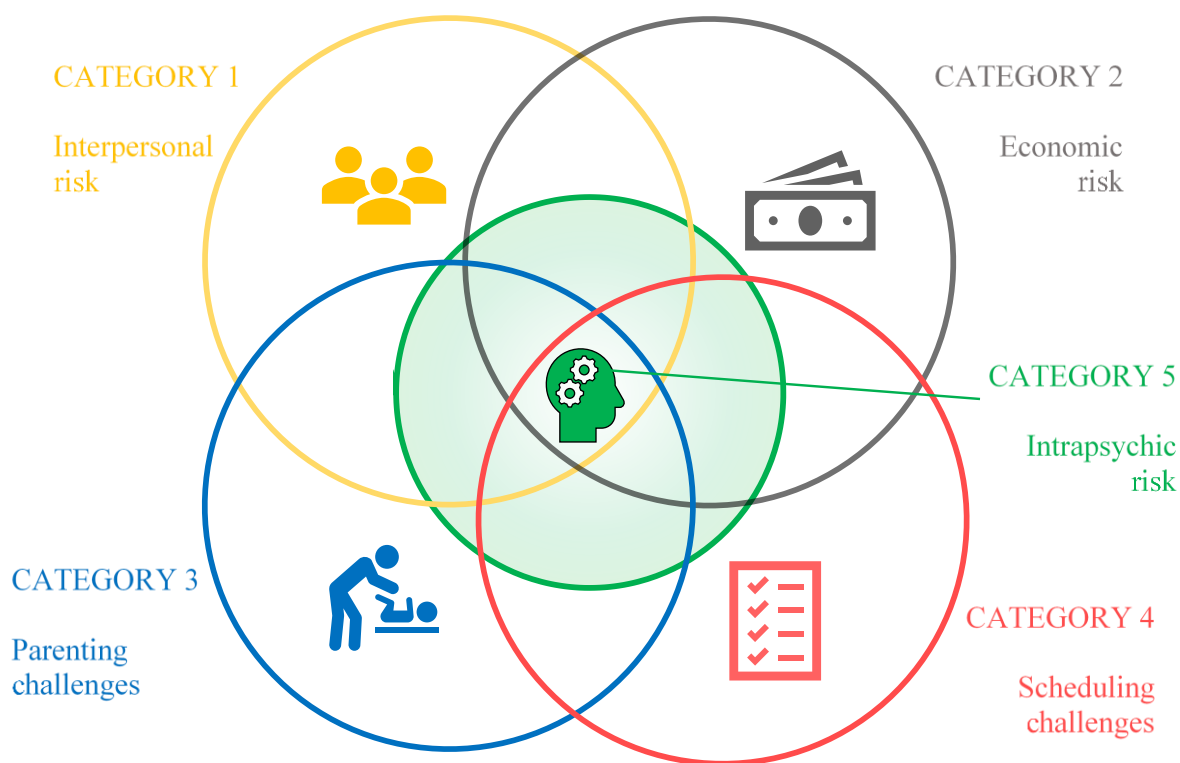


Figure 4.2. Five domains of risk that had a negative impact on the management of family routines in single-mother families.

As mentioned previously, the five domains of risk (viz. interpersonal risk, economic risk, parenting challenges, scheduling challenges and intrapsychic risk) affected routines both directly and indirectly. Figure 4.2. illustrates that these five domains of risk typically intersected and influenced each other. For example, a lack of adequate resources to manage family routines (i.e. economic risk) was more common when biological fathers were unsupportive (i.e. interpersonal risk). In turn, the presence of financial strain, as well as the absence of the biological father, had an impact on the psychological wellbeing of single

mothers (i.e. intrapsychic risk). A lack of father involvement also affected other family resources, such as the number of on-hand caretakers during routines, which therefore hindered mothers' ability to manage daily schedules (i.e. scheduling challenges). The presence of chaotic daily schedules, and a lack of time for respite, then fed back to mothers' intrapsychic risks. When looking at the following sections, readers must bear the interrelatedness of these five domains in mind.

4.2.1 Interpersonal risk

Interpersonal risk factors affected family routines in several ways. First, high levels of interpersonal conflict could influence the mental wellbeing of single mothers. Discord with kin, as well as discord with biological fathers, seemed to escalate during the months of pregnancy. These hurtful experiences had the potential to affect mothers' self-esteem, happiness, and motivation. Furthermore, it stands to reason that the more people there are to lend a hand during family routines, the easier it is to be productive, to accomplish tasks successfully, and to schedule time for respite. In the first few weeks after labour, knowledgeable family members helped to guide inexperienced, new mothers while caring for infants. Yet women who had no or weak support networks were most vulnerable.

Intra-familial conflict during pregnancy occurs because of certain cultural values and expectations placed on young women. Participants explained that, in Xhosa culture, premarital sex is deemed to be a taboo. For several participants the pregnancy felt like a visible sign of their premarital sexual transgressions. Participants explained that, when a woman had a premarital pregnancy, she not only disgraced herself, but she brought shame on her entire family's good name. Several participants also mentioned that Xhosa children were expected to go to university so that they could secure a well-paying job and help their families financially.

For example, Zinnia, Anathi and Lumka mentioned that their premarital pregnancy jeopardised their academic progress and their family's good social standing:

I was scared and I was ashamed about what people would say and my friends and my family. I was really scared. [...] Because I was 19 years old at that time and I was doing matric. My family were looking at me to pass and bring such good things to my family and then I disappointed them. So that is why I was so ashamed; and also what my friends would say. [...] I was so ashamed and scared of what people would say and what would happen to me and my body.

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

The thing is, I come from a Xhosa culture so you cannot get pregnant before getting married. You have to get married and then have a child. So obviously people have their opinions and all of society will judge you if you have a child before marriage. And my parents were respected around here, so you can imagine, if my parents are respected, and then I am the disgrace in the family. So that was the problem. The other problem was that my mom allowed me to go to varsity and the first thing I did there was to just get pregnant. So when I came back home I came back with the pregnancy and then obviously the people would say that you should not have taken a girl to varsity, you should not have taken her to stay there. You should have been a watch dog. So, the blame would shift from me to my mother [...] So the society judge you for who you are and what you say you are or what they think you are.[...] It affects you as a person, individually, and your family around you, and the people around you.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

They send me to school to go study and I come back and here I am: pregnant. To them, when I told them that I was pregnant, it was almost like I fell pregnant while I was at

school [places emphasis on words to indicate significance]. [...] So, and also the feeling of disappointing them [...] I'm the only daughter, I'm the oldest, so, I fell pregnant when I was twenty-one. [...] It was not expected, because I have been a good girl, I've been good for so long and then, twenty-first year, I fall pregnant.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Because of the cultural taboos around premarital sex, and family expectations, the *confirmation* stage of pregnancy was described by 15 interviewed participants as a traumatic event (i.e. shock, worry, guilt, shame, crying, and suicidal thoughts). Most of the interviewed participants tried to keep their pregnancies secret for as long as possible. The *Secrecy* stage of pregnancy tended to be very distressing, as mothers grappled with a range of fears:

I just kept it secret, I kept it to myself, I didn't tell anyone. I did tell my friends that I am pregnant, but it wasn't easy for me to tell my parents. [...] When I was six months the tummy become big and big and big so I had to wash. Sometimes when I was supposed to wash my body I go somewhere where there was no one and I can't take off my clothes when there is people. [...] It's hard for me to tell that: "Mom I am pregnant". [...] It feels like I betrayed her because I was her only child and she was a single mother too.

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

Participants like Thumeka went to great lengths to hide the information from their families for months (often four to six months, but in some cases as long as eight months).

Usually, a range of questions overshadowed any positive, infant-related thoughts and feelings the mothers-to-be might have had. In the following excerpt, Akhona explained how her worries about her family's reaction dominated her thoughts. As a result, she did not have an opportunity to explore the potentially positive implications of being a mother, and struggled to bond with the infant:

At that moment, I wouldn't say I thought much about becoming a parent, as in, how it would be for myself. I was not taking this whole thing, applying it to me, the person that it's happening to. I was just thinking about the people who are close to me, as in: "Am I going to get enough support? What is my mother going to say about this? She's going to be so disappointed." So, for me it was basically, what are they going to say about me? So, it was not like: "I'm bringing a life into this world". I never took that moment to embrace what I am having. [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Additionally, there may have been a history of adverse life events and co-occurring traumas, such as sexual assault or the death of a loved one, that increased mothers' psychological vulnerability. For example, Kholeka had been raped two years prior to her pregnancy. During her pregnancy, Kholeka dreaded having a daughter because she feared exposing a girl to similar adverse experiences:

The first time I heard that I was pregnant was about two years after I was raped. [...] I never thought about abortion, but I wasn't ready for a kid. [...] The first thing that came to my mind was the possibility of the child being a girl and how I would manage to protect her from the same experience, considering the fact that I had a mother who could not protect me due to her absence. I did not know my mother at that particular time. I wished every day that my child would not be a girl. That was my every minute thought. Everyone kept complimenting my beauty and telling me I would have a female child, and that really irritated me. I sometimes wished I could just lie on my stomach and wake up not pregnant. [P25_Kholeka_25_2children_extended_1extra_employed]

Thus, during these early stages of pregnancy, the women seemed to be under immense pressure.

Seven interviewed participants found other trusted individuals (such as an aunt, cousin, friend, or neighbour) to be their spokesperson and break the news to next of kin. Aviwe, for example,

phoned her cousin to intervene on her behalf. Zintle asked her sister to contact their mother, who lived in the Eastern Cape province:

I wasn't ready to tell my parents and I had to tell my cousin. My cousin lives in Khayelitsha. I called her and said: "Hey I'm in trouble." And she said: "What?" I just told her everything and she said: "Okay if ever you want me to tell my aunt (which is my mother), I will tell her." And I said: "No not yet." And she said: "You'll just call me when you ready." And I said: "Okay it's fine." And I called her again and I said: "Hey I think you should tell my mother now because I'm getting bigger."

[P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

I first tell my sisters, because I am living with my two sisters. They were worried thinking, what is my mother going to say? Because my mother is a big lady, like makulu [meaning impressive, important, or foremost] and she is staying in Eastern Cape. My sister phoned my mother and told. I did not tell my mother because I was too scared what she is going to say. [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Six interviewed participants chose to remain silent until the pregnancy was physically apparent, triggering family members to confront them.

Anathi, who lived at a university residence, avoided going home for four months. When she finally went home, her mother noticed her changed figure:

I did not tell my mom. I waited for my mom to find out by herself. [...] My mom found out [...] when she was seeing the belly. I went like for four months alone without being seen by anyone, bearing in mind that I was not living at home, I was living in a residence. So, they did not notice and I did not come home. But one time when I did come home my mom noticed. [P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Some women, such as Thumeka, chose to wash themselves in front of kin and reveal the pregnancy in that way. Lumka hoped her mother would notice the physical signs when she bathed, but this approach failed and eventually she felt compelled to sit her mother down and formally share the news:

When I found out that I was pregnant I wanted them to notice me rather than me having to tell them. You know, I would be like washing, taking a bath, and I would be like all over the place, everyone must look at me, naked. So, for some reason they never noticed, so I had to eventually tell them that: "Hey mom, this is the thing..." Not a very pleasant conversation I must say. Because it's the two of us in the house and so you know, I was going into my sixth month when I decided I had to tell her because it was very late in the pregnancy. So, I sat her down and said, "I have something to tell you." "What is it?" I'm like: "Mom, I know you'll be disappointed, I know I disappointed you." "What's happening?" And she started becoming like sort of worried: "What has happened?" So, I told her that I was pregnant and she started shouting. Yoh, she shouted at me like crazy. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

In most instances, disclosure was described by the interviewees as a stressful undertaking. In the *Disclosure repercussion* phase, the reactions of family members leaned more towards the negative end of the spectrum, but there were noteworthy exceptions. When family members took the news badly, intrafamilial conflict seemed to be very high. Although Lindelwa believed herself to be ready for motherhood, she still felt apprehensive about telling her father. Upon hearing that she was pregnant, Lindelwa's father seemed to be very disappointed:

He said: "How could you? How could you do that to me? I was waiting for you to get married! You are a role model! We did your twenty-first birthday here and you were

supposed to be the role model for the other siblings and now you go and fall pregnant without even marrying the guy!” And I said that I was sorry and that it was a mistake.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

Several mothers were ostracised by their next of kin for a few weeks or, in more severe cases, months. In these instances, next of kin cut off communication and sometimes financial support. For example, Akhona, Anathi, Zintle, and Onele were shunned by family members for several months:

It was very difficult because I would like walk in, in a room, like for instance they sitting in the dining room and I’m in the kitchen cooking, something like that, then when I’m walking in the dining room when I was in the kitchen I hear them they were talking, laughing all that as we used to, but the minute I walk in then everyone will just give me that look of “where the hell you going to?” whatsoever. And the chat will ultimately boom down. No one will talk to one another and all that. So I personally felt like I am like a poison to them you know, because every time when I walk in it becomes like you don’t know where you coming from and you’re no longer part of us, something like that. So that was for me very depressing and from that time I think I kind of ran away a bit from bonding to my child. I was spending a lot of time crying and like I grew up in a lot of hatred, so I was crying most of the time and asking myself: “Why did I do this? I’m so disappointed in myself. How are things going to work out now?” [...] There was now a ground rule that I’m not supposed to go out. They’re [the family] not allowing me to step out of that. It think it was approximately for three months and they were not talking to me for three, four months. I was very flipping lonely. I was so lonely.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Akhona, Anathi, Zintle, and Onele had little emotional assistance during their pregnancies and, as can be seen by Akhona's interview excerpt, experienced isolation and loneliness. Because Zintle's mother did not immediately embrace the pregnancy, it took a considerable amount of time for mother and daughter to reconnect. This only occurred after Zintle gave birth. Similarly, Anathi's mother stopped speaking to her for five months, but eventually accepted the situation shortly before labour:

Mothers always come around. So, when she knew that it was almost time for me to deliver, she actually pulled herself together.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

In less severe cases, the participant's family members brooded over their disappointment for several days, but then came to terms with the pregnancy. Cebisa's mother was better able to navigate this precarious situation and upon hearing the news of the pregnancy, she seemed to master her emotions and react with restraint:

Shame man, my mom -- even if she was disappointed at that time she was still very supportive. She didn't, unlike other people where your parents shout and call you names; she didn't do any of that swearing, ranting and raving. What she did was to sit me down; not that she was excited about having a grandchild, she was not excited, but she was not hard on me. She didn't even tell me to leave her house etc., etc., she was just fine. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Once next of kin accepted the pregnancy, they were encouraging and caring (discussed in Chapter 5). Acceptance from family members could occur quickly, but it was often a lengthy endeavour. In only two instances did family members seem immediately enthusiastic about the imminent arrival of an infant. In a small number of cases, family members never fully came to terms with the 'out-of-wedlock' child. When this occurred, it seemed to increase family conflict

indefinitely, making it harder for the mother to cope psychologically and raise her child. Thus, when ambivalence remained it intruded upon the parenthood stage of transition.

For example, Akhona experienced protracted intrafamilial conflict. Akhona's family tried to accept the situation after Akhona almost lost her life during labour. Unfortunately, four years on, Akhona still experienced conflict with her family members. Although things improved after the birth, Akhona believed that the discord had never been fully resolved:

Now my family don't trust me at all. They don't have faith in me. They don't believe in me at all. So, it's more like now I need to fight in order for them to believe me, in order for them to trust me again. I need to work on that trust again. I need to find the way that they understand that it was a mistake then and I learnt from it. So, it's more like I need to always work on everything. I need to prove myself. [...] I want to see my family united more than this that I see now. I want us to work together as one. [...] No one is going to change the fact that I'm a mother now. Even Sunlight washing powder will never wash that away. I am a mother and they need to accept that, that's just the bottom line. They need to accept that I'm a mother and I have things I need to do for my son.
 [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

What is moving about Akhona's statement is the words "even Sunlight washing powder will never wash that away". This comment from Akhona illustrates that, for her, the premarital pregnancy was an enduring stain on her character. Because her reputation had been tarnished by her perceived transgression, she now continuously felt the need to prove that she was trustworthy.

On the subject of family members' responses to the pregnancy, I must mention the cultural practice of *inhlawulo*, or *paying the damages*, which is a Xhosa ritual (also practised by several other African cultures) that compels male suitors to pay reparations for impregnating an unwed

young woman. The ritual is performed by the two families of the unwed couple. Once the couple's two families are informed of the premarital pregnancy, the male elders of each family meet to negotiate the terms of the payment. Akhona explained what her family's interpretation was of the *inhlawulo* ritual:

In Xhosa culture a girl is not allowed to have sex before marriage – and if, probably, she does have sex, obviously she will be stealing that from the parents. She will be hiding that from the parents. So, when the girl gets pregnant it will, it, it, it kind of means that the boy that impregnated the girl has broken the, the rule, or the law. So, in order for him to pay for that, he needs to pay the damages. So, it's more like: "Okay fine, now you, you have impregnated our girl before marriage, which means that you've taken a gold out of that girl. So, when that girl is getting married to someone else, at the Lobola, fees will be lesser because now she has a child. If you do not want to get married to this girl, you need to pay the damages. [...] So, you have broken the law, you have impregnated our girl, so you're going to pay six cows." The parents [of the pregnant unwed woman] take ownership of the money. They will charge how much is the cow. It's up to them what they want to do with the money because it's their child who has been damaged. [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Some participants believed that in Xhosa culture the child "belongs" to the maternal family, unless the unwed parents decide to enter into matrimony. Thus some believed that Xhosa men only have childrearing authority when they wed the mother of their child. As Akhona explained, paying the damages does not automatically afford fathers any paternal rights:

Okay let me just say, even if the father paid the damages, the damage is not for him to have a say on the child's life. It's for breaking the law; for damaging the girl of this clan. So, either way, if he pays or not, the guy doesn't have a say on his child. So, unless

he just decide to get married; then he will have a say. If he decide to pay the damages, okay fine, we do have a relationship, but it doesn't mean that he will tell us what to do about the child. But: "You can come and see the child if you please. Your family is more than welcome to come and see the child."

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

One can see from the interview excerpt that, when a father decides not to commit to the mother of his child, paying the damages is an important symbolic gesture between the two families and can be the foundation for future cooperation. When the biological father cannot pay the damages, or refuses to pay, it is often believed that he has denied his paternal responsibilities. Akhona explained that, in her view, the father and his family should be refused access to the child if he disregarded the *inhlawulo* custom and his identity should be kept hidden:

So, ja, so if the father of the child didn't pay the damages, the mother mustn't allow the father to see the child. So, it will not be mentioned, even to be mentioned that "you have a father that is so and so name". [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

There is some disparity here, as not all participants followed these customs to the letter. Some families seemed to be more flexible and welcomed father involvement despite his inability to settle *inhlawulo*. If there was thus an understanding between the two families, there was no reason for men to be denied access to their children. As an example, Aviwe welcomed the involvement of the father and his relatives, despite the reality that he denied paternity and asked Aviwe to get an abortion:

I will not keep my daughter away from her second family, from the father's side. If she ever wants to see them, she will see them. That's the most important thing, because my parent could maybe not be around for long and her grandparent on my ex-boyfriend's

side could be around maybe, for whatever. Yes, so I think that's important for her to get to know them. [P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Hence, as can be seen from Aviwe's comment, not all participants wished to cut off ties with paternal relatives if *inhlawulo* did not occur. Akhona explained that, although she believed her culture dictated the father's exclusion from the child's life, some of these beliefs had changed and women did not strictly adhere to these cultural rules anymore:

Things now have changed a bit. [...] I would say other single mothers understand the concept [of paying the damages] or they understand what needs to be done. However, they're not really following it in terms of [...] "I cannot let the child see his father because the father was not there and the father didn't pay the damages." Like, for instance, I wouldn't say they all still following it up to scratch [up to the required standard]. There are some missing things that you find. Okay, so this mother, it's still at the back of the mind that the child belongs to her father, to the baby's daddy, the biological father. But in our culture it was not supposed to be like that. [...] Like for instance, this other mother mentioned something like, "I would love my child to have a father figure, so I'm trying by all means to make sure that her father is involved in her life". Right? It was not supposed to be like that, according to a Xhosa culture. When you have a child before marriage, that child doesn't have a biological father. [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

As I understand it, the long-standing practice of *inhlawulo* was meant to protect young unmarried women from men's impropriety. The hope was that this ritual would deter men from exploiting women for sex. The monetary penalty imposed on men was thus a form of social sanction. Yet Nokwanda questioned the validity of the practice, although she did not think she had much choice in the matter and was obliged to uphold the ritual:

There is nothing much that you can do. It's what they were used to doing; what our forefathers believed in. But, I don't feel it's necessary. Especially when it's a child. It's a child! [...] Cause sometimes, [...] it's too much, you know, for our generation. We're wasting money on top of money. You guys are just banking my man. [laughing.] But, sometimes you can't do much. You've just got to say, we've got to follow the custom.

[P1_Nokwanda_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Nokwanda, who planned her pregnancy with her ex-boyfriend, wondered whether such an antiquated ritual was reasonable in contemporary South Africa, especially given the financial realities that many young men faced. On the positive side, the ritual could help the couple's extended families become better acquainted. In certain cases the ritual introduced kin networks to one another and encouraged greater cooperation between the two sides of relatives. In the case of Kholeka, the ritual seemed to ceremoniously connect the couple's two extended families:

I went with three of my uncles and one elderly man from our family. So we were five people, these four men and I. When we arrived at our destination [the house of Kholeka's boyfriend] we sat by the gate. [...] It is expected that, as soon as we are seated by the kraal, elderly men of the family come to us. [...] So upon our arrival, we discovered the fact that we were at a royal house, in a sense that they were under the [a specific Xhosa clan], who happened to be close advisers to the chief. [...] We got served tea, but I did not have any as I am shy. My people explain the reason of our visit, the fact that I was impregnated. [...] They then called my boyfriend to the meeting and he came and kneeled in front of us. [...] The custom is that the elders ask their son if he knows the girl, and the matter is done if he says "yes". Him saying he knows me means he acknowledges having impregnated me. [...] Immediately after his departure, the

families would start with the damages negotiation, with the visitors clearly stating how much reparation they want. My family requested three cows; which can be R2 500 each in cash. Now the negotiations got real as they agreed to the compensation on condition that on the birth day, the baby would come to them so they may slaughter a sheep and name the child. [...] They then said they would pay the damages at the celebration. [After the birth] they conducted their scrutiny of my child and [...] ended up paying us. They slaughtered a sheep for the baby and it was a big celebration. We ate the meat as the two families. Then they named the baby.

[P25_Kholeka_25_2children_extended_1extra_employed]

Unfortunately, greater collaboration and support between the two families did not always occur after fathers paid the damages. For example, Thumeka believed that, after paying the damages, the father and his family felt absolved from their caretaking responsibilities. In her view, they acted as if paying R5 000 restitution released them from any future financial obligations:

The father of the child, he is living his life. Sometimes it seems like he forget that he ever impregnated someone. I see him once in a year, only at December, the Christmas time. His family knows, they do know about the child because after I found out I was pregnant there's this thing we are doing as the black people, Xhosa. We take the person who is pregnant. Then you go there, you tell the family. They bring only five thousand rand to pay for the damage. Then after there's nothing else they will do about the child. They're done. After that five thousand rand, they're done with the child. You know you will have to see what you are going to do with the child, how you are going to clothe with him, how you are going to feed him, how you are going to take him to school. You'll see yourself because they paid their damage, five thousand rand damage."

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

It thus seemed that, in Thumeka's case, the practice of paying the damages did not unify the two families or improve their cooperation. The participants' experiences of the *inhlawulo* ritual thus varied. For some participants, like Kholeka, it was a celebration that unified relatives for the sake of the child; for other participants it was an outmoded custom (Nokwanda) that symbolised a woman's "damaged" reputation (Akhona), and absolved fathers and their families from ongoing involvement (Thumeka). How families thus interpreted and utilised these customs had an impact on the wellbeing of mothers and children.

As I have mentioned, interpersonal risks did not only centre on the reactions of the next of kin to the pregnancy, but also on the reactions of biological fathers. More than half of the participants experienced feelings of loss, heartache, and anger when thinking of selected fathers' betrayal and abandonment. Some fathers immediately denounced the baby when they found out about the pregnancy, and from then on remained uninvolved in the child's life:

He said that he was not ready for a child. So I presume that he wanted me to abort the child. But, I couldn't. And then he left for home [in the Eastern Cape] and he never came back. [...] There was not communication, because if he wanted to communicate with me he had all my numbers and everything and I told him about my situation.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

I tell my boyfriend that I am pregnant and he did not believe me. He said I am lying. And I told him he must go buy [a pregnancy test] and he must do it, both of us together. Then he did, and we do it together, and still it showed that I am really pregnant. And then he stopped talking to me from then on. He did not want to see me; he did not want to do nothing with me. He stopped to phone me, he stopped everything.

[P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

During the interview, Aviwe was still full of tears and very emotional when recalling what had happened between her and her ex-partner five years earlier:

I just gave him the pregnancy test so that he can know and he said: "What are you going to do, what are your options?" And I said: "What do you mean, what are my options?" And he said: "What are you going to do with the child, because I don't want any child." And I said: "Okay, this is my child also, and I'm keeping it, I'm keeping my baby because I think I'm old enough to not just abort a baby." Because I was 23 years at that time. And he said: "If ever you change your mind, you know where to find me because I don't want any baby. I think I'm going to give you money to do an abortion." And I said: "I don't want your money! I just need you to support me. That's all I'm asking from you." He said: "I'm not going to live in Cape Town forever, I'm going next year." [...] And I said: "What about me and the baby?" [...] And then I kept on calling him and calling him hoping that he will change his mind or something and he never changed his mind, like never. So, I decided to just leave him alone because I just knew he was going to do nothing. His friend told me that he left, [...] he didn't even tell me.

[P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Thumeka was in a precarious position. After disclosing to her partner that he was the father of her unborn child, Thumeka's partner told her that he would deny paternity and spread rumours that she had intercourse with a third party. Thumeka realised her partner was not supportive and did not take the pregnancy seriously. She wished to have an abortion, but was scared that he would tell other people in the community about it. Abortion was often described by women as taboo and thus Thumeka feared public ridicule:

I told him that I was pregnant and he said it's fine, it's okay, he's going to tell his friends that I did something [had sex] with someone else. So, for me it wasn't easy.

When I look at him, the pregnancy was just a joke to him because he doesn't have a responsibility for this child. He's not going to carry this child for nine months and I'm the one who's going to drop out of school because of the situation. So, for him it was just something that was easy. [...] So, he thinks this is a joke [...]. So, it was hard for me. Even when I told him that I was pregnant I didn't have any support [...] and I was very sad with it, and I even think of: "Okay, if I can have an abortion this is the best thing I have to do." [...] But, I know this guy, which now knows about this [pregnancy], so I can't have an abortion because he's going to tell everybody about this [abortion].

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

Because Thumeka feared reproach from community members, she decided to keep the child. In several cases, the mother-to-be initially considered having an abortion but then decided against it because the father seemed excited and expressed a desire to raise the baby. These women thus based their decisions on what they thought men wanted. Yet several of these fathers later changed their minds. Cebisa, for example, feared losing her partner if she aborted the pregnancy:

He had just heard the news that I was pregnant. At that stage, he'd never had a child and he was also much older than me. So, he was excited and fine with all of it. He also told me if perhaps I did an abortion he will be cross with me and would never want to see me again. I then thought, "eish no". I thought: "If I abort this baby and maybe...."

[hesitant pause] Because we were deeply in love, people used to see the two of us everywhere together – "If I abort this baby, then I will have no boyfriend and this guy will not even want to see me on the street. We will just pass each other as if nothing ever happened between us." [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Cebisa explained that her partner remained very supportive throughout her pregnancy, until he moved to a different province and rekindled a previous romance with another woman. Two other participants also mentioned long-distance relationships as an obstacle that caused infidelity and discord in their relationships. Cebisa experienced a lot of interpersonal conflict once the nature of her relationship with the father changed:

He was there during the pregnancy being very supportive. [...] We went together for my sonar scans. [...] The nurses at the day hospital were amazed asking: "Who is this?" The reason they were asking is because other girls were accompanied by their mothers; my boyfriend was the only male that was there. [...] So, he was there, even when I went to do the scan, which I did at a doctor's practice, we went together. We were always together, everywhere we went. But, then he had to go to the Eastern Cape and live there. [...] So, he left to go to the village and he had to stay there permanently, as he was running away from his shenanigans here in Cape Town. So, he went there to stay. While he was there he was still supportive; everything was still fine in the first year, while the child was still small. [...] After a while, he started dating someone else; an old flame of his. They revived their love and I guess it grew. Thereafter this lady would call me and tell me this and that; she'd also tell me that the guy will no longer give support to the child, the father of the child will stop supporting the child financially. However, clearly he also condoned it because if he didn't, a woman wouldn't prevent him from doing what he needs to do for his child. Then he got married. With that girl! After he got married to that girl he was probably not allowed to make contact with us anymore. He doesn't send money or call, he's just there with his girl, his now wife. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Thus, although Cebisa decided to keep her child at the request of the father, he eventually reneged on his promise. Nolitha gave a similar account of broken promises. Likewise, Zinnia decided against an abortion at the biological father's request. Zinnia viewed the father's request as a sign of his emotional and financial commitment:

“Do you want me to keep the baby or do you want me to abort the baby?” And he said: “No, I do not want you to abort the baby, keep the baby, it is my last year studying, so I will look after the baby. Everything will be fine, everything will just happen as the time goes on because now it is only me and you that know everything. So, just do not tell your parents until they see that you are pregnant.” I said: “Okay, that is fine.” I was a bit relieved that he took this in the right way; for the fact that he did not say that I must abort the baby. So, I thought it was a good sign that he would provide for my baby's life and I thought that he would take care of us.

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

However, at the time of the interview, Zinnia's 10-month-old son had only seen his father once. Zinnia explained that, although the father initially professed his paternal devotion, their romantic connection was already in a precarious state before conception. The couple could not mend their relationship and, because of that, they no longer spoke to one another:

But let me tell you something; at the time that I fell pregnant, it was a long-distance relationship, things were not perfect, and we were always fighting, he was cheating, so at the time that I fell pregnant we were trying to fix our relationship, and then I fell pregnant and at that time we did not know where, except the child, where we both stand with each other and I thought, maybe we will fix things. So, he held his child [after the birth] and he talked to him as if everything was okay. [...] Now we do not even chat

on WhatsApp, on Facebook, on anything, we do not chat. [...] I do not communicate with him at all now. [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Yonele seemed to have had an extremely upsetting experience with the father of her child. Unbeknownst to Yonele, the biological father was married to another woman while he was dating Yonele. Yonele believed that they were in a secure, committed relationship when she fell pregnant. After Yonele told him of the pregnancy, he seemed excited about sharing a child with her. However, his initially expressed enthusiasm for fatherhood started to wane after their daughter's birth, and this came to a head when Yonele finally discovered the truth about his marital status:

We were happy at that stage. [...] So, in December month [...] he did give me the money, then I went to buy some clothes and the stuff that I needed for the baby and then I gave birth end of January and he came to collect us and sent us home. Then he came a week later to come and check if everything was okay. But, time passed by [...] he didn't come again, and I phoned him, he didn't answer the phone. [...] I never saw him and then in April I decided to go to where he lives because every time I call him he doesn't answer. If I use some other phone to call, and I speak to him, he just drop the phone on me. So, I had to take action, and I went to his place. [...] I went there and then I knock and then I saw [...] there was a female there, a lady with a child. [...] I was shocked that there was a female there. I didn't know how to react. [...] Then he called me, shouting at me that I'm breaking his marriage and stuff and I asked him: "Did you tell me that you're married?" Then he said: "No, you didn't have the right to come to my house!" He was shouting me and telling me stuff. He said: "Now I've got a problem with my wife because of you and it's all because of – it's your fault."

[...] Then he told me: “No, you must just stay away”. And then I went home and I was very hurt. I was crying. [P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

The conflict with biological fathers seemed to leave many participants with deep wounds. For example, remembering these experiences brought up a lot of unpleasant emotions for Yonele during the interview. One can see how the lack of paternal support continued to affect Yonele psychologically, more than a year on:

Even now I’m still crying to think about it, because I never suspected that he’s married, first of all, not even once, I never – [...] So, when I found out, I was very hurt and I was crying because I didn’t even expect it and for me I was not working at all. So now I was thinking: How am I going to support the baby? [...] I was stressing every time I look at my baby [...] I was vulnerable and I was hurt.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

In some instances there seemed to be miscommunication between mothers and fathers, and disparity over who would have custody over their child. For example, although Nondumiso’s ex-partner initially seemed excited about the pregnancy, there was a misunderstanding between the two parents and confusion over who would be the primary guardian of their child. Nondumiso feared that her ex-partner would take away her son if she allowed her son to visit his paternal relatives in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province:

He [the biological father] told me that I have to go down to KZN to meet the family and everyone, so that there’s going to be some rituals that going to be done. [...] So, I said to him, “okay fine”. I wanted to approve it. But, when I called his sister, his sister told me that after the baby is born, maybe a year or so, the baby is going to be taken away from me if I come to KZN: “I’m going to take it to where I’m staying in the UK.” So, I asked: “In London?” So, she said: “Yes, I’m going to stay with the baby in London,

it's been arranged and everything is okay.” So, I said it was a fine thing, but not so fine to me because he didn't communicate with me! It's more like he's taking my baby away from me! [...] So, he just wanted to take my child away from me! [...] I was angry, I didn't talk to him for 5, 6 months. I just told him: “You know, this is wrong, it is totally wrong, you can't do this to me.”

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

The incident that occurred between Nondumiso and her ex-partner caused friction between the couple and left Nondumiso feeling angry. Hence, at the time of the interview, Nondumiso's son had never met his father. The conflict between the couple also had financial implications for Nondumiso and her son:

There's a lot of challenges, because financially it's so, sometimes is so frustrating because I shout at his father, I yell at him. [...] At times, I ask him where is the money, then he tells me “next week”, and I tell him I want it now [in an angry voice]: “Don't tell me about next week and you put that money in my bank account as soon as possible, this is what I want!” So, with this small job that I'm having, it's like R1 000 in a month, it doesn't cover everything. [...] So financial strains they just come to me in a very hard way. [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

It thus seemed that there was ongoing tension between Nondumiso and her ex-partner. For a few participants, the psychological impact caused by the dissolution of their romantic relationships endured for several years after the event.

The breakup of their romantic relationships could have dire psychological consequences for women. The following excerpt shows the gravity of the situation and the extent of Zinnia's distress during pregnancy:

When I was pregnant and I am hurt, I used to want to do things that are not good, because once I wanted to kill myself. The thing is, the father. [...] That is what broke me, because I was so obsessed with him at that time. [...] It is hard to be a parent. Because when I was not a parent I used to laugh and every day I used to just laugh and be with my friends and I was just a kid. But when I realise I will be a parent there were times when I would just cry all day from stress, thinking: "What would happen to my baby once I give birth." [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

It is within the context of these interpersonal risks that expectant single women entered into parenthood. Contentious relationships with kin, and with biological fathers, amplified participants' intrapsychic risks. Father absenteeism had a cascading effect in that mothers worried about their lack of financial resources (see *Economic risk* in section 4.2.2), as well as the lack of available hands-on assistance during family routines (see *Scheduling challenges* in section 4.2.4). But mothers also worried about their children's social, emotional, cultural, and physical development because of father absenteeism (see *Parenting challenges* in section 4.2.3).

4.2.2 Economic risk

Economic risk factors were pervasive and affected family routines directly and indirectly. Family income could directly shape the structure and type of family routines because it influenced 1) the physical space in which routines were carried out, 2) the available supplies needed to carry out routines, and 3) the flexibility and amount of time mothers had available for their children. Economic risks could also affect family routines indirectly because of the impact poverty had on the mothers' mental health and personal development.

In extended families, the effect of poverty was often attenuated because multiple adults shared financial burdens and worked together to find needed resources (discussed in Chapter 5). Yet

when no one in the home could find stable employment, the effect could be devastating. Olwethu explained how she had to go around to friends and neighbours' houses to beg for food:

When you don't have the food, sometimes, we're not always having the food around because I am not working and my uncle is not working, my brother is also not working. So yes. I maybe go to the neighbours or to some friends to get something. It's not easy. I don't usually ask, but when I don't have a choice, I have to ask.

[P22_Olwethu_24_1child_extended_2extra_unemployed]

Not having food in the home to give to one's child could have a severe impact on mothers' emotional wellbeing. In the following excerpts, Onele, Nolitha and Thumeka describe the strain they and their families experienced when there wasn't food during mealtimes:

You know when you don't have a support system the first thing that hurt most is when the child doesn't have food. Because I don't mind about the nappies, I had the towel nappies so that was okay, not such a problem, but when the child does not have the food – It's so painful because he is looking with the eyes, it's so, so sad.

[P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

To become a single parent it's not nice, because sometimes there's no food for the baby, there's no milk, there's no nappies, so, my mother's the only one that's working in the house. [...] That is bad for her because it's too much stressing.

[P16_Nolitha_24_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Sometimes the child will cry and you don't have food in the house because it also happened to me. [...] I don't know what to do at that point.

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

When we speak of special mealtime routines, we often have an idealised picture in our minds of happy, endearing moments enjoyed by the entire family. These special mealtimes are said to solidify family identity, foster family cohesion, and strengthen the emotional bond of the family unit (as I discussed in Chapter 2). These ideals seem incompatible with the experiences described by Olwethu, Onele, Nolitha, and Thumeka. How can a family enjoy a special meal together when there literally isn't food on the table?

Furthermore, poverty affected the living quarters of participants. As Cebisa explained, she and her child lived in a one-room wooden tool shed in someone's backyard and she wished to one day own her own house:

As you can see, we live in a backyard, we don't actually have a place of our own. In 20 years I wish that we can have a house or plot we can call our own.

[P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

When the participants and their families resided in one-room living quarters, the kitchen, bedroom, television room, bathroom, playroom, and dining room, were all integrated into one communal space. For example, Figure 4.3 illustrates the layout of Lindelwa's home, which she shared with her cousins. During her son's bath-time routine, she placed a plastic container in the middle of the room in which her son could wash. There was very little space for Lindelwa and her son to move in.

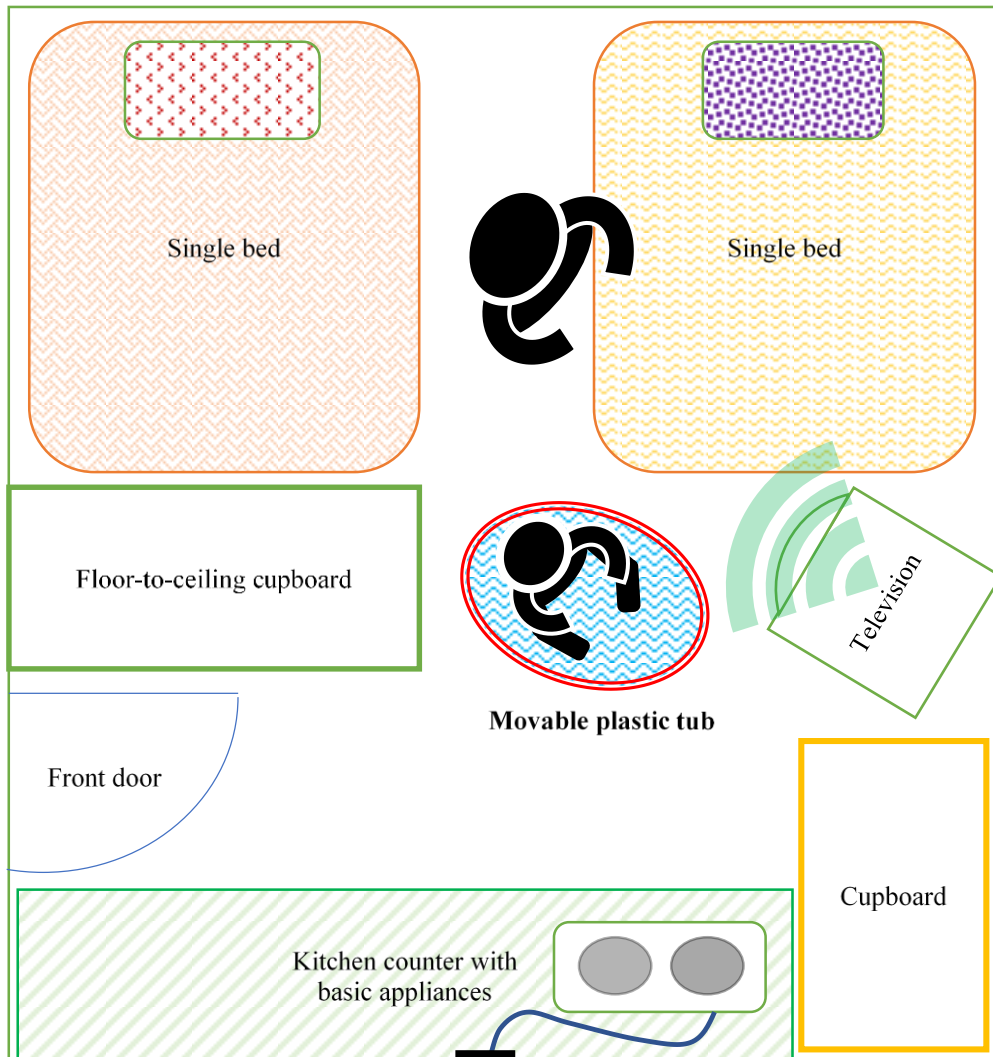


Figure 4.3. Schematic of Lindelwa's living quarters, observed during her child's bath-time routine.

Often, children and adults took a “bath” in a plastic container. For Lindelwa, hot water came from a kettle, not a geyser, and water needed to be fetched from a community tap outside. Thus, the video data showed that, for participants like Lindelwa, a simple bath-time routine could have more hassles than one would expect to see in middle-income homes that have running hot water and ample room to move in.

Contending with limited space impinged on certain family routines because it negatively affected the ergonomics of family activities. Not having dedicated areas for specific routines

meant that work areas were not always comfortable and did not always support the effective execution of various types of tasks. Video data showed that poor ergonomics could have a bearing on bath-time, bedtime, homework, mealtime, and playtime routines. For example, Figure 4.4 illustrates the various routines that Sindiswa and her five-year-old son performed in their one-room living quarters.

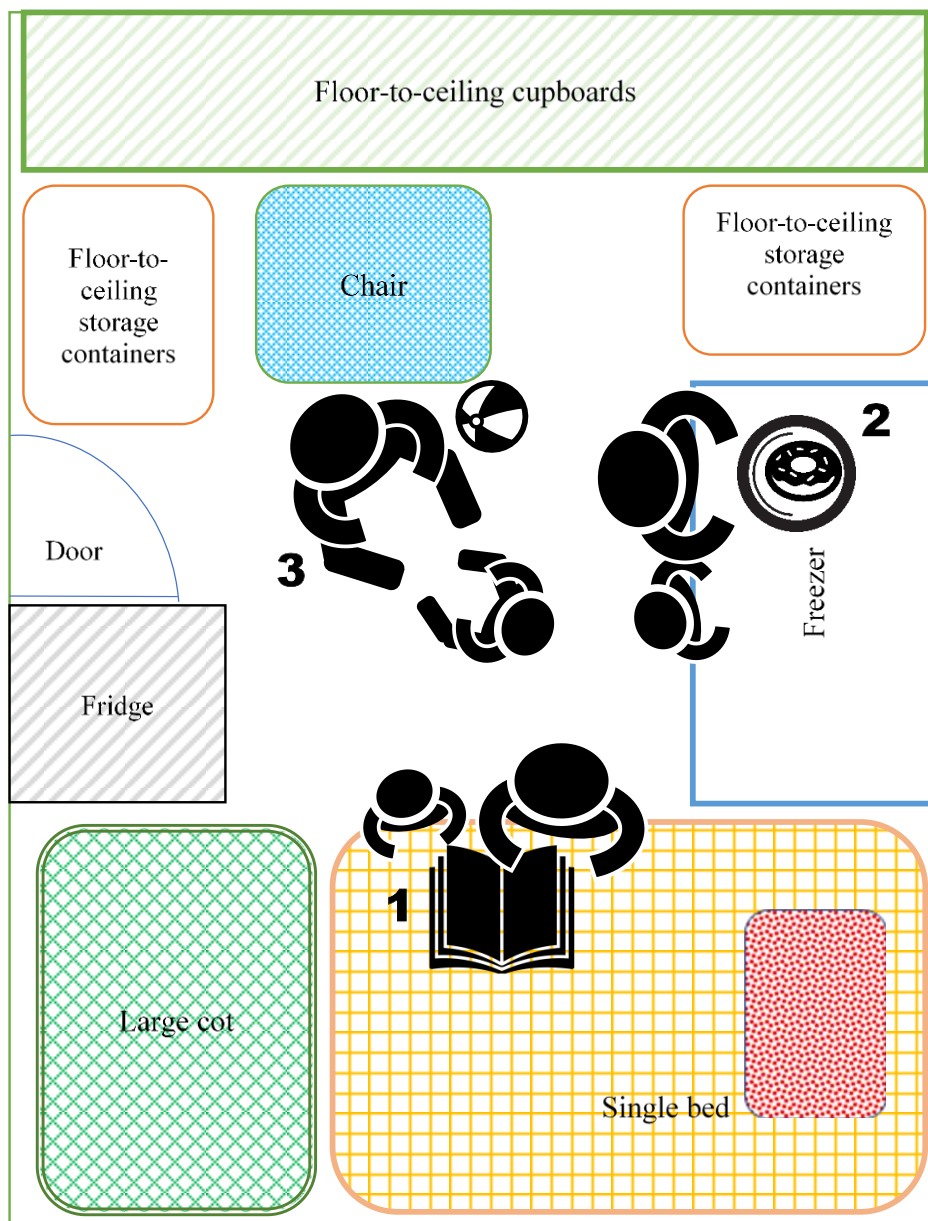


Figure 4.4. Schematic of Sindiswa's living quarters, observed during child-centred learning routines.

Sindiswa was a very attentive mother and clearly had a major focus on child development and learning. She adorned the walls of their home with educational posters. The small living space was filled with toys for her son, and the mother-son team spent the entire afternoon singing, playing, reciting poems, going over the alphabet and months of the year, as well as reading stories and drawing. Yet Sindiswa and her son did not have an ergonomically comfortable space to work in. In Figure 4.4 one can see that the first major learning activity that Sindiswa and her son performed centred on reading and completing cognitive tasks in an activity book. But because there was no space for a table to work at, Sindiswa and her son hunched over the edge of the bed. This hunched position seemed rather uncomfortable. The soft surface of the bed also made it harder for Sindiswa's son to draw in his colouring book. Later, Sindiswa and her son stood and ate a snack while using the freezer top as their dining surface (activity two in Figure 4.4). Finally, Sindiswa and her son started to play with a range of toys but had to sit on the tiled floor in the middle of the space (activity three in Figure 4.4). Despite these physical challenges, Sindiswa worked well with her limited resources and remained undeterred.

The video data also revealed that, in certain instances, child-centred routines were frequently interrupted due to large numbers of people who had to pass through communal spaces. For example, although Yandiswa had a part-time job as a lay counsellor for an NGO, she and her family members also tried to run a tuckshop from their home in the hope that this side business would generate additional income. During Yandiswa's observed routine, customers frequently walked in and out of the area in which Yandiswa's daughter tried to play. Both mother and daughter became distracted by these frequent interruptions and it seemed hard for them to retain focus during their joint activity. Thus, during this observed routine, the serve-and-return sequences between mother and daughter were not as prolonged as in some of the other observed family routines. Participants who lived in multiroom homes, and who had a designated space of their own, could move in and out of different work areas for various types of family routines.

Also, in these cases, mother-child dyads could go off to private areas and enjoy uninterrupted “alone time” when needed. Yandiswa’s observed mother-daughter routine was in stark contrast to Nokwanda’s mother-daughter routine, because Nokwanda enjoyed uninterrupted privacy (described in Chapter 5).

Poverty also impinged on ergonomics by affecting environmental factors such as noise, light, heat, and cold. Not all living spaces promoted comfortable sensory experiences. Videotaped observations showed that, in some homes, lighting was poor and not ideal for cognitive tasks such as reading or drawing. Basic needs such as heating and electricity were not always available. Esihle explained that, in winter, the house was cold and, on top of that, her child sometimes had to take a bath in cold water. This is an unpleasant experience for a child and distressing for mothers like Esihle:

And as you can see winter is around the corner and you’ll be waking my son up – Very often there is no money for paraffin to get the heater on. So, while trying to wake him up he’ll tell you it’s cold. And you want him to get up without any hassles. [...] It would be cold and the water will also be cold. And sometimes I don’t have money to make the place warm. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Not having running water in the home meant that Esihle had to fetch water from a community tap to do her household chores. This trip meant that she sometimes had to leave her daughter in the house unattended. These everyday hassles added to the complexity of managing her daily routines:

When I’m going to do my laundry, I must fetch water from the taps. And after I’m done with the laundry I must go throw the water down the drain by the roadside. Sometimes when I do that I have to put her on my back; sometimes I do leave her in the house and I would hear her crying from afar. And to throw the water I have to cross the road.

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

When the mothers struggled to provide adequately for their children they felt anger towards the men whom they believed had abandoned them. Yonele explained how she regularly compared her own privation to the good fortune of other women:

There is that thing that, you see the other children going around the street, or if you go to the clinic then you see other children maybe wearing some nice clothes, and stuff like that, and I mean, I can't afford those stuff. And I feel, if her father was supportive enough, maybe I wouldn't have the need to look around and be jealous [...] the hate that I've got inside, if he [the father] was here, I wouldn't be needing to look at other people's stuff. [...] It's very hurtful to know that if the father was around I would have something like that, my baby would have something like that, you see.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Seeing more affluent mothers in her community was painful for Yonele, and she resented her child's father for his lack of support. Financial pressure could also cause intrafamilial tension, as was the case with Zinnia, who sometimes "took out her stress" on the rest of the family:

When you are a single mother, even your attitude at home sometimes, it's not good, because you take your stress out on the people that are at home, so my attitude sometimes changes. [...] Then the rest [of the family] will have pain. [...] I began to have a negative attitude towards my mother, because sometimes we want the best for our children, like even a pram, because in the location you are not the only one who has a child and you will just look at that other person and say: "My child does not have this." So, you just go to mom and tell her that you want a pram for your child and my mother cannot afford that and when she says that, then I will just give her the negative attitude and threaten her that I will leave.

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

In addition to the abovementioned economic risks, it was also clear that poverty begets poverty. Cebisa, for example, had to leave her job when she had her child, and this caused her to lose the finances she needed to complete her tertiary education; Esihle had to discontinue her high school education because she had no family to assist her with childcare; Anathi explained that, in order for her to find employment outside of Cape Town or continue her education, she would have to find additional finances to pay for day care; Aviwe was at times so cash poor that she had to loan money just to get to work; and Onele, who dropped out of university, realised how limiting a high school diploma was in terms of her employment stability:

I had to quit school, so, today maybe I'd be a graduate and stuff. So I'm still here working in a call centre. Sometimes, because I just started in the call centre last year, I had to go jobs, job seeking, and you only have a matric and then there was this other time I had to be a nanny looking after a four-year old boy, only during weekends. And they were so sweet that family, but then sometimes the money you have is way too little and you have to budget. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Having a child had a tangible impact on the participants' educational aspirations, financial flexibility and career stability. There was thus the very real possibility that women would remain stuck in a perpetual cycle of hardship. There was also the very real danger that their children's education would be affected negatively. For example, lack of work and available funds meant that Aviwe could not take her daughter to preschool:

Because I'm not working now, my daughter has to go to a crèche and my mom is not working also. It's becoming a very big challenge for me. I think that's a huge challenge, because she wants to go to school now, because she can see that other children are attending school and I say: "You just have to wait for mommy, I don't have school fee,

I will let you know when I have money, then I'll take you to school." It makes me feel sad, because she is four years now, she understands almost everything.

[P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Even long-term financial planning and saving became a cumbersome task when participants faced extreme privation. Esihle tried to save money each month for her children's schooling, hoping that a R20 monthly deposit in a savings account would be sufficient to cover future educational costs:

So, the one on the child support grant; I take R20 from that money every month and save it. Even if maybe I'm not earning enough money yet for – But I'm doing it for – I want them to use it when they go to high school or tertiary. And I think it will be enough at that stage. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Participants not only feared for their own survival, but also for the survival of their parents. Zintle was concerned that her parents were suffering and wished she could also relieve some of their financial burdens:

Like, I wanted to give my mother, I wanted to support my mother, my father. But now, I can't support them because I earn a little money and I must provide to my child. My dream is to support them and give them money every month so that they can't suffer.

[P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Thus, women needed a lifeline that could save them from this downward trajectory. Only a lucky few had well-employed family members who could help them complete their studies. For example, Violet's family provided her with the financial support she needed to finish her undergraduate degree. Likewise, Onele eventually had the opportunity to continue with some of her schooling because nearby family members and friends stepped in. In comparison to

Violet and Onele's experiences, Thumeka's parents were deceased and thus she had to discontinue her education indefinitely. Thumeka recalled how unprepared she was for the financial realities of raising a child:

I have had to stay here with this child till he is now three, I didn't go to school. Then before I got pregnant, I thought it was something that everyone could do because I would see children outside playing, you know, as if they are full in their stomachs. They clothen [sic] up. They have everything, you know. They go to school. It's like, it is fun, you know. But, I didn't know in their homes how they get to school, or how they eat, or where the food came from. So, I realise when I have my own child that it's not easy, it's not something that anyone can do. [...] Now I saw that being a parent, it's very hard. You have some things that you wish your child would have, but you can't have those things. So, it's hard, it's hard. I wish my child some things, but he can't have. When I was young I always say that I want my child to grow up with a father first; when my child start talking, I will take him to the day-care. And now, the day-care's cost. I have to take him with money. I have to have money to take him there. The challenges is, for me not to go to school. Also, I'm unemployed so it's hard for me to give him what I supposed to give him, like food, taking him to school, day-care, [...] because I only have three hundred rand which is from the government, the grant. So, it's not enough for me to do that. [P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

Thumeka further explained that she faced a difficult decision because her aunt offered to raise her child so that Thumeka could finish her education:

Sometimes my family, my aunt, she want my son so that I can go back to school. I said, "No, you can't have my child; at least when he's four I can give you, but now I can't". [P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

First-time mothers like Thumeka often faced this very challenging decision: send children to live with a relative in order to pursue personal academic and career success, or keep the children they loved nearby and sacrifice financial and educational progression. Three participants in this study consciously rebuffed the pressure from their families to “give up” their children, as can be seen in the following excerpt from Unathi’s interview:

My mission was that I want to raise my child alone. I did not want to take my baby to Transkei and then I will be free. My mission was that I wanted to raise my child through thick and thin, by myself. [...] [My mother] wanted to take the baby away from me, but I said, “No, I am not ready”. Even my boyfriend’s mother wanted to take my baby away from me, but I said, “No, I do not want that, I want to raise my child”. Because my boyfriend’s mother said, “No, I can take the baby away and then you can be free, continue with your studies,” and I said, “No, I am not ready, when I am ready I will tell you”. But even today I am not ready for them to take my baby away from me.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Obtaining financial assistance from fathers was a complex endeavour. Not all participants were as successful at acquiring financial input from men. Some fathers were unemployed and simply did not have the means to contribute, such as Phathiswa’s ex-partner, who was emotionally supportive, but not financially. Some participants decided not to ask for financial assistance from the men who fathered their children. Cebisa felt that her ex-partner should be self-motivated to care for their child, and should not have to be coaxed or begged for money:

So, it came from [his new girlfriend] that the father of the child had had enough, he will no longer call or support the child financially or otherwise. She told me I must look after the child myself. Then I thought to myself, I will not chase after a person who knows what they should be doing. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Yonele initially wanted to take her ex-partner to court and force him to provide for their child. However, there were certain rumours of men retaliating violently, and harming or even murdering children to avoid maintenance costs. These rumours deterred Yonele:

I said, I know where [the father] is working so I want to go to court for him to pay maintenance. I can't leave it like this. My mama say: "No, you see, now you're making it worse." Because apparently I don't know if it was my mother's friend at some stage and then he told me the story about someone who was going to court for maintenance money and then she said the wife of that person didn't like that. And my mother asked me: "What if the wife don't like money coming from her husband suddenly. What if he tries something to the baby?" And she said: "No just leave, if he doesn't want to pay maintenance then he doesn't want to pay, just leave him like that." [...] Maybe he can try and do something bad to my baby. For example, ne, there was a story around here in Delft. I don't know if you heard about the lady who went for maintenance for the father? Then the father just said "No just bring my baby to me." And he did receive the court papers that he must pay and that he must go to court. That man didn't go to court and then after the final court letter, the third letter he received, he then went to the lady and said: "Just give me my baby." And then that lady gave him the baby because he is the father. And that man he dug a hole inside the house, [...] and put the baby inside there, even though the baby was not dead, [...] he just put the baby and then dig and then he left. They found the baby after three days. [...] Ja, my boyfriend can try to make something bad to my baby. So my mother said I mustn't force him to maintain the baby if he doesn't want to, then I must just let it go.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Thus, some participants decided not to take legal action to garner the economic assistance they needed from men. This was not a unanimous occurrence and several women were able to acquire financial support from the father (discussed in Chapter 5). Unfortunately, these financial contributions were not always sufficient, given the extent of childcare costs. Despite help from the biological father, Zinnia's financial situation was still dire at times:

His father is supporting him financially. [...] If he gives me the money, it would not be enough and totally they do not understand how expensive things are. [...] There were times like, even if his father is supporting him, you run out of food and also nappies. [...] When we ran out of food, the baby's food, I do not cope. [...] Sometimes I will just leave and let mom deal with it, which it is not right, and then sometimes I will call his father [...] and I will be heartbroken.

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Zinnia seemed to be emotionally overwhelmed when she could not provide adequately for her son. Likewise, one can see the emotional turmoil experienced by Aviwe when she had no money to take her daughter to the doctor:

When she becomes sick, and there is no money, I just think: "Wow, I just wish I aborted you when your father said I must abort you." I think that's a very negative thought.

[P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Given these interview excerpts, it is evident that the economic risks faced by single mothers were pervasive and impinged upon their abilities to manage satisfying family routines.

4.2.3 Parenting challenges

Parenting challenges refer to the obstacles that could encroach upon favourable, proximate parent-child interactions during a specific family routine. They refer to the immediate *how to*

questions parents sometimes face when engaging in childrearing practices, i.e. how should I effectively care for an infant, how can I effectively direct and control misbehaving children, and how should I best teach children the skills and values they will need so that they become fully rounded, mature, self-sufficient adults? All the participants in this study were caring, dedicated mothers and most found answers to these parenting questions (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5). Thus, this theme does not imply that the mothers did not know how to raise their children. The theme simply illustrates that several participants had to grapple with these normal questions at some point after transitioning into parenthood. The term *normal* is used because these questions are common concerns that most first-time parents typically need to consider. For only a select number of participants did these parenting challenges remain ongoing issues.

Immediately after labour, several mothers felt unknowledgeable in their new parenting role:

I was very – I don't know how to explain it because it was overwhelming. Because that was my first child so I didn't know anything, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know how to bath her because she was very small so I would think: "What am I going to do?"
 [P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

During the early stages of parenthood, some participants still had to recover from a traumatic labour; others spoke of their interrupted sleeping patterns and the continuous crying of their new-born baby:

[Single parenting] is not child's play, that I can tell you. It was not a painful labour, but the sleepless nights – Because my baby cried the whole night [...]. Come night – I think my son was working nightshift; in a way, he was working nightshift. He was crying, very, he was so loud. But, then he grew and maybe after 6, 7 months he was so

sweet. So, all those things! Also, there's no milk [breast milk], you don't know who will be assisting you and stuff. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

One can see from the interview excerpt that Onele initially struggled with breastfeeding and did not know how to sooth her son or help him fall asleep. These challenges described by Aviwe and Onele are to be expected during this phase of life. Over time, mothers like Zintle gain experience and settle into their new role:

It is now – it has being now 3 years. I am now no longer, I am no longer worried now, I know what to do with my child. [...] I know exactly how to be a mother now. I had experience. [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

However, risk factors such as a lack of support compound these normal parenting challenges. For example, Aviwe had plenty of family support, and although she initially said she “didn't know anything”, knowledgeable relatives alleviated the pressure:

But, my sisters were there all the way, they were there just to help me with everything, through everything. So, it became easier and easier because the family was there, my cousins were there, my mother was there, and the sisters were supporting me and everything. So, it became easier and easier every day. [P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Aviwe's experience was in stark contrast to that of Thumeka. Thumeka had no experienced relative to guide her through basic childcare techniques:

After 3 months that he was born, my mother died, and I have no father. I only have three siblings, which are boys, all of them. So, I had no one who knows about this child. Who's going to do this for me, or know everything about the child? I also know nothing about this thing. [...] It's a challenge even if to feed him, to bath a little one, especially

after the death of my mother, because she was the one who was bathing him. So, it was a challenge changing a nappy, not to sleep all night. The child is crying, especially at night. He wasn't sleeping, so there was the challenges.

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

As time passed and children matured, other parenting concerns emerged. For example, once children became more mobile and independent they were not always as cooperative as mothers would have liked. Thirteen participants mentioned child misbehaviour as a problem that occurred during a variety of daily routines (e.g. not wanting to eat their food, or go to bed). Again, these scenarios are to be expected, given the children's ages. Some children's disobedience had the potential of slowing down daily routines. Lindelwa said her son was "really not good with time keeping" because he would "sulk", making their delayed morning routines "a battle" [P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]. Thumeka explained that her son refused to eat the food she would provide, making breakfast "difficult" because she could not "make him listen". Thumeka said that during this morning routine they would "always fight" because when it came to her son, "you have to do things in his way" as "he doesn't take orders from anyone" [P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]. Children's disobedience affected parents' enjoyment of these routines:

When my son is naughty, he likes to stand on this desk and I tell him: "No, you will fall!" He just looks at me and continues doing it. [...] And then he runs and I must run after him and he is laughing at me. [...] Sometimes he does not want to bath so I have to grab him and put him by force in the bath and sometimes he does not want to go out of the water, he wants to play [...] so I have to take him out by force. [...] Sometimes I am not in the mood. Sometimes being a mother puts you in a bad space and if he is

being naughty, then I must say “no”, even if I am not in the mood. When he comes from crèche, I must always say “no”, he is playing around and he is touching things he is not supposed to touch, then he is being difficult for me. Even maybe on that day I am in a bad space, it happens that sometimes you do not feel like yourself.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Sometimes my daughter doesn't want to eat and I don't get why, I will have to force her to eat her food. That's what I'm always struggling on. [...] I'll put a kettle on, she'll be all over the place, all over the house and I'll always say, “please don't do that, don't touch this, don't touch the hot water, don't do that” until I get her to the bath and I wash her. And after that I'll put her clothes on and it's always the same thing, she's always running around, even if I'm bathing her, after bathing, and putting her clothes on, she'll always run up and down and I'll have to ask: “Don't do this, don't do that!” Sometimes she doesn't listen what I'm saying, because she is rushing off to play. [...] I just feel a bit pressured because when I always have to run after her and say: “I told you to do this! I told you do that! And you're not doing it!” So, it's a bit of a pressure too. [P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Thus, as Unathi explained, sometimes mothers are “in a bad space”, and demanding children can then add to the “pressure”, as described by Aviwe.

In a small number of instances, participants used strategies that might not always be advisable, such as harsh corporal punishment, or giving difficult babies medication that will make them sleepy:

Then, I lose it, and then I go and take a belt from the wardrobe.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

[If] he doesn't want to go to sleep, then I give him 2 doses of Panado. I know it's a lot, but I just want him to sleep. [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Eish, I do have a problem. I'm not sure what happens but I can give very bad hidings.

Eish, I can really give a hiding. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Also, it seemed that not all parents knew how to implement the most stimulating child-centred routines. Thumeka wished she could afford to send her son to day care, because she thought he would be more stimulated there. Since Thumeka did not have the funds, her son seemed to spend a lot of time watching television during the day. Thumeka's frustration is evident in the following interview excerpt:

Some of the challenges is just, I want to let my baby go to school, to day care, like others, because he's always with me and he gets bored sometimes to stay in the house. We just sit there [...] We have nothing to do unless it's our appointment at the clinic. If we have nothing to do, we just sit there. [...] We do same as every day. There's nothing much, same as every day, there's nothing else to do. [...] We watch TV. Everybody, we just watch TV till late. [...] Every day the same. [...] My son will just sleep, get bored, because there is nothing else he will do. [...] After he eats, and bath, there's nothing he would do. He would sit on the couch while I am cleaning, he will watch TV. [...] So, there's nothing I'm doing, which is hard to do. [...] [In the evening] when I am watching Generations [a popular adult television show], I will put him on my lap then he just sleep. I don't take him to bed, he's just sleep next to me on the couch. Then I will take him to bed. I don't read him stories or something like that to sleep. There's no stories or anything. [P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

Thumeka recognised the importance of engaging her son in more development-sensitive activities, but had not yet implemented these desired routines.

Like Thumeka, several participants in this study struggled to implement age-appropriate bedtime routines. In these cases, bedtime activities were inconsistent and children went to bed late or fell asleep in front of the television. Video data revealed that television often had the same effect on family routines as overcrowding. Television affected the frequency and length of sustained serve-and-return responses between parent and child, because audiovisual stimuli from the television side-tracked both family members' focus. In Figure 4.3 one can see that the television set had a central place in Lindelwa's home, and it was switched on during her son's bath-time. During this routine, the television functioned as a third person and diminished the interactions between Lindelwa and her son. Likewise, Veliswa's observed family routine was also affected by the presence of a television. Lindelwa and Veliswa's observed routines were very different from those of Nokwanda and Sindiswa's. In the absence of any additional stimuli that could distract them, Nokwanda and Sindiswa spent the entire session completely engrossed in their children's activities.

As children matured, mothers became concerned about the social and emotional development of their children because of father absenteeism. Cebisa, for example, worried that her son was noticing his father's absence and lack of support:

Now the child is growing up and has a mind of their own; he can see things. He can see who is taking care of me and who is not; also, that he has not seen his father in a long time. You can even see that the child is asking himself why? Sometime, you'd hear him with other kids talking, so he'd be saying: "My daddy has got money but does not want to give it to me." You'll hear him saying such things, which really hurt.

[P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Even when fathers were somewhat involved, mothers worried that there was no father-child bond. Akhona explained that, although her ex-partner visited their son from time to time, the emotional connection between father and son was missing:

Ja, there is a relationship concerning a child. He works long hours according to him. He doesn't have time to come and see the child. Sometimes he comes from work 12:00, midnight so he cannot come and pass by and see the child and all that. So yeah, between them two there's not much of a relationship. Yes, my son would say "that is my father" when he sees him, but he doesn't really connect with his daddy. There's nothing much that he's learning from the father or whatsoever. There's no bond at all actually. I'm the kind of person that believes that being there for a child financially doesn't mean you are there for the child. A child needs much more better than just financial support. So, the child does not need only a father, but it needs a daddy. I think there is a slight difference between the two. [...] A biological father will be someone who created the child, someone who is there financially, or who is there when the child is sick, that's a father. But the daddy will definitely be someone who's always been present in his son's life. Someone who's always there through bad and good times. The person who is present through each and every single change of the baby's childhood – that's a daddy.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Like Akhona, Yonele worried about her daughter's emotional development:

First of all, love from the father, yes and financial support from the father, but also just to be around the baby, even if he was not working, but just give the father – if the child knows that she got a father and the father loves her, I think the baby will just be complete, because she would know that she got a father and a father who loves her, regardless if he's got money or if he doesn't have money.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Thus, mothers like Akhona and Yonele did not merely wish for financial assistance from fathers, but longed for men's emotional commitment. Thumeka worried about her son's social development because of a lack of male role models in the home:

It's painful, it's not easy at all, because my child, he's a boy, he needs a father, he needs a father and also in house there's no one, there's no male person. He plays with only dolly. He plays dolls. Even if he has to pee he will sit down like a woman. So he knows nothing about a man. When other children ask him where is your father, he can say I don't have one. So it's not easy especially for him. [...] Being a single parent, it's hard, it affects me very much, in my entire life. I feel like there's this part of me – A child needs both parents. You can't grow a child alone, especially he's a boy, he needs a father. There are things that I can't do for him.

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

Several participants were concerned about the cultural implications of father absenteeism. Fathers were at times regarded as an important link between the child and protective ancestors. Several mothers wondered about upcoming rituals their sons would have to experience (e.g. *Ulwaluko*, which is a traditional initiation ceremony involving the circumcision of adolescent males). I will illustrate in Chapter 5 how mothers grappled with this issue of *Filling the father gap*, and how they devised different strategies to address fathers' emotional and cultural absence.

4.2.4 Scheduling challenges

A daily or weekly schedule refers to the *what* and *when* of family routines, meaning 1) what types of routines are implemented, 2) how much time is allocated to each activity, 3) how

consistently and timeously routines are completed, and 4) how ordered and structured routines are when implementing them. The participants in this study struggled with several issues regarding their scheduled routines.

Firstly, almost all the interviewed participants mentioned that finding balance was challenging for them, and investing time in leisure or social activities became a struggle. When mothers had little support from experienced family members, or no additional help from fathers, there was no respite from everyday duties. Akhona explained that, as a single mother, she felt that childrearing responsibilities could not be shared during routines in the same way she would have done if she was married. Akhona felt that all the childcare responsibilities rested on her shoulders. Because of this, she had little time to invest in herself or her friends:

It is actually challenging because you're playing two roles at once, being a father and a mother at the same time [...]. It is challenging. If we were together, we would be sharing roles. We would have been like okay, fine now it's your turn, I'm resting. So, you are the mother on your own. So, everything depends on you. [...] You don't really have your own time when you are a single parent. I hardly have any time where I say, you know, now I focus on me, on Akhona, as an individual, where I can pamper myself, to spoil myself. I don't have that at all, because now the first person in my mind is my son, because I know if I don't do this, who will? No one. Because I am the only person who is there for him. And even in terms of social relationships, in terms of my friends, they hardly see me of course. Now, when they want to go out I say: "Who am I going to leave my child with?" So definitely: "I can't guys, you can go along." [...] So, that's the biggest challenge, because I cannot have time for other things as well.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Similarly, Zinnia wished she had “an extra hand” because, even though she lived with her mother, her mother could not always assist her:

Being a single mother is very stressful, because sometimes you will just need an extra hand to help you with your child and also, my mother will not leave her chores for me. So, I have to look after the baby and do all the things that are supposed to be done for him. So, it is very stressful to be a single mother, because there is no father figure around to help you. [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Unathi explained how little relief she had from her caretaking tasks because her child required constant supervision. Unathi noted that her child’s absent father had little appreciation for the sacrifices she had to make for their child, despite the father visiting on a regular basis:

I think to become a parent is very difficult. [...] And the fathers do not know that. Even if they just give you money they think that they are playing a big role in your life, but it is not. Being with your child 24/7, you must observe him, when he is getting sick, sometimes when they are sick, he [the father] does sleep, because he is away having a nice time, and you are stuck with your child. You must observe the child, you must notice anything that is happening to him, any unusual thing. It is very difficult and it is an important role. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Besides a lack of time for respite, 17 interviewed participants also mentioned that they did not enjoy enough time with their children and wished they could have more quality family-time routines. Lindelwa’s work schedule was desynchronised with her son’s schedule because of her ill-timed work hours. Her workday started at 4:00 pm, an hour before her son arrived home from day care:

The day ends so fast. I wish that we had more of those family times, because you see, I start work at 16:00 and he comes back from crèche at about 17:00, my cousin takes him from crèche at about 17:00 and so we do not do much. The morning session [...] that is the only time that we actually have during the week, because I work at 16:00 and he gets back at 17:00 and I am not here, maybe when I get home at 21:30 he is already asleep, so the morning session is our time. [...] I would love to go and pick him up from crèche, I would love to be that parent who is waiting at the gate for the child to come out from crèche, but I am not doing that. No, I am not doing exactly what I would like to do, because I am going to work.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

Also, when parents *were* at home, routines were not always enjoyed as special bonding moments because, as Akhona said, it was “*rush, rush, rush*”. Akhona believed that her son sometimes felt disconnected from her, but she simply could not provide him with the attention he needed when she had to work late:

When he demands a lot out of me and it kinds of stress me out that I cannot give him the time that he needs, because I believe the moment he wants to spend some time with me he feels something that he's kind of disconnecting with me, so he wants to be with me and bond with me again, and I cannot. So yes. Sometimes I get home very late, like maybe the boss or the transport delayed and I get home very late. I need to quickly cook the supper and make him something to eat quickly and I don't spend time with him. Then, while I'm in the kitchen he's running around in the kitchen because he wants to be around me and he wants to connect with me, he wants to play with me and I cannot give that to him and it kind of frustrate me as well, because now it's like I'm not giving him enough. So that's the real difficult part, I feel, yeah.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Violet explained that she had to return to work fairly quickly after giving birth and wished she could have enjoyed longer maternity leave. When Violet started working again she also tried to continue with her education, meaning that she had even fewer hours to spend with her son each day:

So being a single mother, I think maybe, had I been married, I would probably [...] have stayed longer with my son [on maternity leave]. But, I couldn't, because I had to go hustle [make money], so that was a challenge. Also, not having adequate time, I think, to spend with my son as much as I tried. There's work, there's school, so other than that, I see him every day, but that quality time – There's more that I wish. It's just that you must remember, we leave home at around half past 6 [in the morning], come back at around 6 [in the evening], so there's not much time to do other things.

[P13_Violet_27_1child_extended_1extra_employed]

Lumka started work in the afternoons and got off at 22:00 every night. She wished that she could fetch her daughter from preschool each day. However, when Lumka was at home, she was often exhausted and struggled to accomplish other desired tasks:

I'd love to spend more time with her. More than anything I'd like to have more time with her, because right now I don't have much of that. [...] So I wish I had more time with her, but yes, I'm not able to do that with her right now. [...] I would love for her, when she comes back from preschool to have me waiting for her at home so she could tell me what was her day like, and play with me what they played at school and all that, but I don't have that time. So, it's very little time, I wish I had more. What I would say is a difficulty is, because I come home late, at around 22:00, that's a bit late. So, I come home late. So, I sleep a lot which would then be a difficulty, because if I sleep a lot then

it would have an effect on my routine. So, by me sleeping, there would be something I would have done in the time that I slept. So, I'm tired most of the times. Sometimes, I would not have time to do what I would like to do, because I am so tired.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Like Lumka, Onele's interview illustrated what a demanding work schedule she had to contend with. Onele awoke at 4:00 each morning. When she had to work additional hours she only arrived home at 21:20. Often Onele's son would be sleeping by the time she arrived home. Yet when her son was still awake, Onele could not focus her attention on him, noting that her son had to spend those moments "alone" because she was fatigued and had to prepare for the following day.

In essence it was poverty, and the need to acquire some form of income, that motivated many of the participants to sacrifice special bonding routines with their children, as can be seen from Aviwe's interview excerpt:

My favourite is to take my child out, I take her out to the park. I think it's important to spend time with her. I just want to show her that I love her and even though she doesn't see her father often, I just want her to know that I'm always there for her, I need her to know that, that I'm always there and I'll always be there for her. But no, I'm not able to spend as much time, because I'm always out there trying to get some money. So, I'm not always at home. [P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

One can see that sometimes external forces (e.g. transport, work, and school schedules) compelled parents to adhere to specific timetables. Several participants mentioned that they really had no choice in the matter, and had little power to plan and control some of their family routines:

I did not plan it. Actually, I do not want to do it. It is a totally different routine to what I had in mind. It is there, it needs to be done, and it just happened. I did not really plan for it to happen. My routine is way different than the one in my perfect world.
 [P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

There was the risk that poverty and shift work would not only decrease available family time, but would also hinder the consistency of routines. Cebisa's three-year-old son, for example, did not always have a well-structured bedtime routine because on some days his mother arrived home from work between 9:00 pm and 10:00 pm. This meant that Cebisa's son would often stay up late and wait for her to come home. When Cebisa arrived home late, bedtime activities seemed to be erratic.

Besides the paucity of quality time parents had with children, 11 participants described scenes of chaos during family routines. Chaos was usually the result of schedule derailment. Derailment occurred when something unexpected happened and it suddenly became challenging to finish important tasks within set time limits. Schedule derailment seemed to add a lot of pressure and stress to parents' day, as can be seen from Esihle's interview excerpt:

Sometimes her brother disturbs her when he gets out of bed. Ooh, when that happens the morning is a disaster. If – if – maybe I'm cooking porridge like oats or any porridge that needs cooking; it will be "glug, glug" here "glug, glug" on the stove. If it's Weetbix [a type of cereal] it will be the milk overflowing. Sometimes, while he's eating he may soil his shirt then I have to get him dressed all over again. This one is crying, because she wants a nappy change – sometimes there are times that – there are times, if I tell you, you'll see that this day is, it's really not going according to plan. [...] There are times when I feel like bursting into tears. Because when I have to bath and I'm running late and still have to bath [my baby] as well, maybe he hasn't eaten yet, or maybe I

didn't get a chance to iron his shirt, this one will be crying – when that happens, I just sit and wish I could also just start crying. And sometimes you would ask yourself: Why is my life this way?

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Schedule derailment had a cascading effect. When one activity became delayed it affected the rest of the daily schedule. As Akhona explained, “*when one thing delays, it delays the whole process [...] and it becomes a whole mess*” *[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]*. When derailment occurred, Anathi mentioned that, for her, “*the day would be ruined*” *[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]* because, as Phathiswa explained, “*the time has already gone*” and “*that is the worst thing*” *[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]*. Delayed schedules could have worrying consequences, such as missing one’s transport and then coming late for a job that was already precarious (i.e. non-permanent, low-paying, part time and blue collar).

In summary, more than half of the participating mothers were dissatisfied with their weekly schedules because they did not have enough control over the timing of their family routines. Family schedules were dictated by external forces, such as transport timetables, workplace variables, school schedules, and social support availability. Several participants struggled to achieve balance in their daily schedules, and could not always reserve time for personal respite or parent-child quality time. This lack of quality family time usually occurred when mothers contended with arduous work schedules (i.e. long working hours, or inopportune shifts). Employed participants were often exhausted and felt that, when they were at home, they did not have the energy to engage children fully. Because parents were desperate to have some form of income, they had to sacrifice family time. Besides this form of temporal incongruence,

several participants felt that schedules became too chaotic at times. Chaos ensued when there was a lack of hands-on support, when there was not enough time available to accomplish needed tasks, or when something unexpected occurred that derailed the normal flow of activities. One unsettled or delayed routine in the timetable affected subsequent routines. Thus derailed schedules caused maternal stress and anxiety.

4.2.5 Intrapsychic risk

The previous sections in this chapter provided numerous examples of participants' intrapsychic risk. In the words of Anathi [*P8_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed*], this chapter has shown that "*there were emotional effects before birth and yes, after birth*" because all the single mothers in this study were confronted by adverse experiences that could increase their pre- and postpartum psychological vulnerability.

In the previous sections, a variety of interview excerpts provided examples of women's experienced sadness (e.g. "*it makes me feel sad*", "*it's painful*", "*there are times when I feel like bursting into tears*," "*I was spending a lot of time crying*", "*that was for me very depressing*"), rejection and loss (e.g. "*it's very hurtful*", "*I will be heartbroken*", "*I was vulnerable and I was hurt*", "*that is what broke me*"), stress (e.g. "*it's too much stressing*", "*I was stressed out*"), shame and guilt (e.g. "*it feels like I betrayed her*", "*personally felt like I am like a poison to them*", "*I was so ashamed*"), fear (e.g. "*I was really scared*"), anger (e.g. "*the hate that I've got inside*"), regret and disappointment (e.g. "*I'm so disappointed in myself*", "*sometimes you would ask yourself, why is my life this way*"), and loneliness (e.g. "*I was very flipping lonely, I was so lonely*"). A few participants described symptoms related to depression and anxiety (e.g. "*there were times when I would just cry all day from stress*"). Several participants were visibly upset during the interviews, with a quarter of interviewees crying while they reflected on some of their experiences as single mothers. Two interviewed

participants mentioned that they had had suicidal ideation during their pregnancies (e.g. “*I wanted to kill myself*”). Thus it is clear from the interview data that transitioning into single motherhood was a life event marked by emotional turmoil. It was within the context of this psychological vulnerability that single mothers had to try to manage family routines.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the findings that related to the first research question: *What factors hinder the management of family routines?* To answer this question I provided readers with contextual information, describing the pre- and postpartum stages the single mothers typically went through during this transitional phase in their lives. I then provided evidence that there were multiple, co-occurring risks that could hinder the single mother’s ability to manage family routines as effectively as she would want to. These risks could be clustered into five domains, namely interpersonal, economic, parenting, scheduling, and intrapsychic. The data showed that some mothers had fewer risk factors and more resources at their disposal than others. However, none of the participants in this study were completely risk free. In the following chapter I aim to highlight some of the strategies mothers used to minimise or cope with these five domains of risk.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS ADDRESSING RESEARCH QUESTION TWO – FACTORS THAT FACILITATE THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY ROUTINES

In this chapter I address the findings related to the second research question, namely *What facilitates the management of family routines by single, Xhosa-speaking, low-income mothers with young children?* Five overarching categories were identified as facilitators of the management process. These were: *Managing personal mental health* (section 5.1), *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships* (section 5.2), *Assistive parent-child actions and interactions during routines* (section 5.3), *Scheduling actions* (section 5.4), and *Attenuating economic challenges* (section 5.5) (see Figure 5.1 below).



Figure 5.1. The five thematic categories of facilitative factors that promote the management of routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking, single-mother families.

It is in the nature of qualitative analysis to separate data into discrete, meaningful units, but this seemed counterintuitive to what I found in the data. As was the case with the previous chapter, these five categories of assistive factors were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these categories and their themes were often highly integrated. Therefore, cause-and-effect relationships are likely cyclical and complex. The fifth discussed category, namely *Attenuating economic risks* (section 5.5), is really a mixture of themes found elsewhere in this chapter, with a few add-on interview excerpts. Please bear this overlapping complexity in mind while I present each of the five categories and their respective themes and subthemes.

5.1 Overarching Category 1: Managing Personal Mental Health

I define the category *Managing personal mental health* as the number of cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioural strategies that mothers use to accept their current situation, retain or regain positive feelings, create balance in their lives, and motivate themselves to engage in various parenting routines. The data indicated that cognitive, affective, and conative strategies were intrapsychic processes directed either at the mother's view of herself (intra-evaluations), or at her view of the situation (external evaluations). On the other hand, the data indicated that there also were behavioural strategies and activities the mothers engaged in that further supported emotion self-regulation and wellbeing. These activities allowed for the expression and alleviation of negative thoughts and feelings, and also provided mothers with more frequent positive experiences. Thus, there were three main themes under this first major category, namely *Positively reframing identity* (section 5.1.1.), *Positively reframing circumstances* (section 5.1.2.), and *Wellbeing behaviours* (section 5.1.3). See Figure 5.2, following, for a representation of the three main themes, their definitions and their respective subthemes.

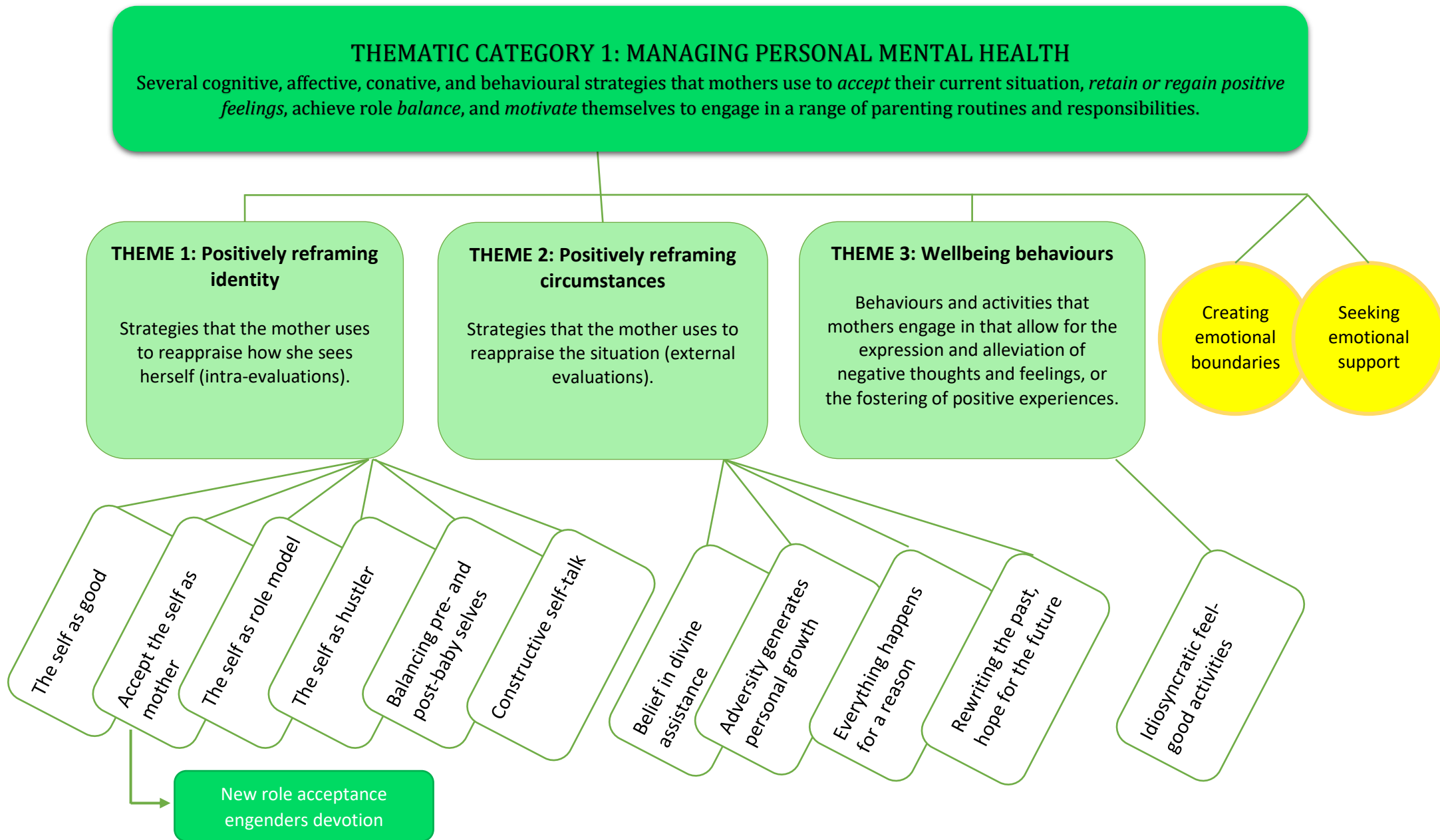


Figure 5.2. Themes and subthemes for category 1: Managing personal mental health.

I must note that, when it came to their feelings about the biological father, several participants spoke about the need to *Create personal emotional boundaries*. Mothers also explained the importance of *Seeking emotional support* from caring adults such as friends, community workers, and family members. These were two themes that could be placed in this section, because both refer to emotion self-regulation. These themes were, however, presented as important components of managing adult relationships and are thus described in section 5.2.2 under the second thematic category, *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships*.

5.1.1 Category 1, theme 1: Positively reframing identity

While analysing the interview data it became clear that mothers' representations of "the self" were actively constructed and even reconstructed to be more positive. These new identities seemed to be a creative reworking of the stigmatised self as "unmarried and pregnant". The weight and meaning that these subthemes carry become evident if one looks at the emotional and social challenges that participants had to deal with at the onset of their pregnancy (as previously discussed in Chapter 4). Figure 5.2 indicates that this first theme, *Positively reframing identity*, has six subthemes, namely *The self as "good"* (section 5.1.1.1), *Accepting the self as "mother"* (section 5.1.1.2), *The self as "role model"* (section 5.1.1.3), *The self as "hustler"* (section 5.1.1.4), *Balancing pre- and post-baby selves* (see section 5.1.1.5), and *Constructive self-talk* (section 5.1.1.6).

5.1.1.1 *The self as "good"*

I defined the subtheme, *The self as "good"*, as a process of reframing one's personal identity from one that is considered to be morally questionable to one that is respectable, even virtuous. Participants emphasised their newfound positive values and traits, such as their selflessness,

gratitude, ability to forgive, fortitude, and perseverance. Four participants spoke of actively refuting the negative stereotypes linked to single motherhood. These participants explained that single mothers were often viewed by society as ‘loose’ or ‘immoral’ women, but it was important for them to try to establish a new identity. Esihle explained that she was concerned that her negative emotions and self-blame would be felt by her children and therefore made the decision to set aside feelings of shame:

I don't blame myself anymore; I'm not angry with [my children] being here anymore. I blamed myself enough during my pregnancy and now I don't want them to feel that – so I no longer regret it and I no hate myself for it. And also the way my parents brought me up and the way they used to love me, so when I think about that I realise [my children] also deserve to be brought up the same way I was.

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

It is noteworthy how Esihle juxtaposed blame and guilt (the culpable self) with parental love (the responsible, affectionate self), essentially reconstructing her personal identity from one that she felt was “bad” to one that can be deemed as “good”. The following excerpt shows how Nondumiso initially felt demoralised about herself, but then shifted her attention to the more constructive traits she possessed. Nondumiso also emphasised the denunciation of external sources of critique:

I think it's because you know, sometimes, daily I used to look down on myself – not realising that somewhere I'm doing some good things to some other people – just undermining myself. But, I did also change me in a way that I don't have to now undermine myself. I need to look up and say, "yes, I have [my son]" and I know the

reason why I have him. And I don't have to have anyone to tell me that: "Why did you have him?" [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

The significance of this theme is highlighted particularly because family ridicule and community stigma often caused the participants severe emotional distress during pregnancy (discussed in Chapter 4). In the next excerpt, Nondumiso continues to illustrate how the negative single-mother identity could be reframed into a more affirming one. She spoke of how her mother assisted her in reshaping her self-image:

So [my mother] became a person who told me that, to be a single woman is not only that you did some negative stuff, maybe just that you grabbed any man in the street and then you become that single parent. Being independent, it's what you need, there's nothing wrong with not to have a man in the house. But what is wrong is when you, as a woman, do not appreciate and accept the situation. You have to move on to make a better life. [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

In this above selection, the stereotype of an immoral woman who “grabbed any man in the street” was transformed into a woman who desired independence. The two-parent, father-breadwinner-mother-homemaker ideal was also challenged by Nondumiso, as she insisted there was “nothing wrong” with a male-less household structure. *Wrong* here, it seems, can imply immoral as well as defective. Female autonomy was commended in this excerpt. The participant went on to speak of a form of *female* morality that encompassed the acceptance and appreciation of one’s circumstances (“what is wrong is when you, as a woman, do not appreciate and accept the situation”). For many participants, principled womanhood was strongly associated with longsuffering acceptance of their maternal responsibilities and gratitude for the blessings in their lives. Having children was seen as a catalyst for character

growth and moral maturity. For example, there seemed to be a distinct shift from selfishness to selflessness for four participants, as the following example from Lumka illustrates:

I was now a mother. I was taking care of my baby. I was bathing her. I was doing everything for her. So, you know it changed me in the sense that I became a more mature person. Yes, I grew up and yeah, she taught me how to be, I can say, a good person. I think I am a good person. She taught me how to love, how to appreciate the things I have now. [...] I have my mother, I have my brother, I have my cousins, I love those people very much and I appreciate my life now more than I had before I had her, before I had my little girl. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

It is noteworthy that the identities of absent biological fathers were often construed as the antithesis of *responsible* and *self-sacrificing*. By juxtaposing their own actions with that of absent fathers, the participants may have attempted to further bolster their own sense of integrity.

5.1.1.2 Accepting the self as “mother”

When transitioning into parenthood, individuals are compelled to appropriate a new parental identity into their self-concept (Cowan & Cowan, 2012). With these single mothers, the process of acceptance seemed to be complex, but nonetheless important for meaningful postpartum adaptation.

Most of the interviewed participants said that when they first heard they were pregnant, they felt overwhelmed, shocked, psychologically unprepared, and ill-equipped for motherhood:

I was so shocked, I did not have any words and I was like, “Oh my God what is happening?” And I thought that if I commit suicide that would be better.

[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Interviewed participants explained that they felt too young for the responsibility of caring for an infant, and feared for the freedoms, pleasures, and opportunities they would have to sacrifice. One can see from the following excerpt how Cebisa initially grappled with this mammoth life change ahead of her:

I was thinking about my future that, I'm going to have a baby! Now I'm going to be a mother! What will I do with a baby? Such things! [...] And I was thinking that my whole life will change, because now I will no longer be thinking for myself alone; I would now have to consider the baby as well. I was scared; can you imagine getting yourself into something you've never experienced before? I was also still a child and still needed to be taken care of myself, now there will be this person calling you mother. So, it was all scary. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Several participants saw this life event as the potential end of their dreams:

I think that when you are unplanned these things come as a shock to you because you have your whole life still ahead and then you say what you want to do and then, boom, something like this happens and then it changes every goal you had.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Only three interviewed participants felt happy and psychologically prepared for motherhood when they discovered their pregnancy. One can see from the following excerpt that Lindelwa (aged 24 at the time) believed she could cope with motherhood:

When I was pregnant I was excited and I was ready. In my mind, I thought I was ready for the responsibility, I mean I was twenty-four; kids were having kids, like seventeen-

year-olds were having kids so: "At least I am twenty-four, I will be able to take care of the child, I will be a good mother to the child." So, I was quite ready.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

In contrast to Lindelwa, participants who were not immediately prepared for motherhood had to try to come to terms with their new role. A very good example of this cognitive shift can be seen in the accounts given by Lumka. Lumka initially felt overwhelmed by the idea of motherhood and psychologically unprepared for this responsibility:

Being a mother, the part of having a child, [...] it was sort of too much for me. You know, how am I going to take care of this child? What will happen to me? How is this situation going to affect the rest of my life? So that was what was going through my mind at that time. So, ja it was a bit overwhelming and that is one of the reasons I think I never had the time to really enjoy or to bond with my baby before I gave birth.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Although it took her some time, one can see that Lumka eventually experienced a cognitive and affective shift in her eighth or ninth month of pregnancy:

I wasn't really thinking about being a mother. [...] The mother and baby connection, it only starting kicking in when I was about to give birth, in about my eighth or ninth month going into labour. So, I didn't even have so much time to think about me being a mother until I gave birth. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

This type of progression in mindset and attitude was a common theme in the interviews. Lumka believed that the hardship she experienced during labour intensified her motherly love.

Everything that I went through to get her here, it makes me love her so much that I don't even have to think about how to be a mother, it just comes, you know, and I get emotional when I talk about that.[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

One can thus see that, within an eight-month period Lumka, progressed from “how am I going to take care of this child” to “I don't even have to think about how to be a mother, it just comes”. When the participants had already accepted their new maternal identity at the time of labour, it was experienced as an intensely happy moment. Violet immediately felt a surge of affection for and connection with her child:

When I gave birth on the Thursday, 25 past 2, I think that's when I experienced unconditional love. [...] I think now, with my child, that's when I experienced unconditional love. The minute I gave birth it was just amazing. [...] I just fell in love. I think my world just changed from that moment on.
[P13_Violet_27_1child_extended_1extra_employed]

In contrast to Violet's experience, Thumeka's mother-infant bonding moment at labour took some time. Thumeka had not yet accepted her child or her new maternal identity when she gave birth. It was only after being coaxed by a nurse that Thumeka tried to hold her son:

In February, I give birth to a little son. At first, it felt like, before I gave birth to this child, I didn't know him, I didn't want him. I didn't want him. [...] I told this nurse, [...] I tell her that I don't like this child: “I don't want him, take this child away, take him.” She said: “You can't do that, this is your child.” [...] I slowly take the child, I put him in my chest, I breastfeed him and I look at his eyes and say: “He's beautiful.” She started to laugh: “He is beautiful!” ... “Okay, I take him.”

Thumeka later said in her interview how she had grown to love her son:

I thought it was impossible for me to love him. That's the positive thing, because I love him and I don't want see anyone take him away from me; I can't stay without him.

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

Acceptance is a process fraught with ambiguity. The process amalgamates two seemingly contradictory states of being: restriction and freedom. On the one hand, participants recognise a seeming lack of choice regarding their current predicament. Many participants expressed that they had, due to a range of circumstances, been saddled with the responsibility of raising a child without the presence of a doting husband. They had little say in this matter and could not walk away from their caretaking responsibilities:

I would say it [being a parent] is the matter of: I know I have to. I know, whatever circumstances come, but I have to. It's something that, it's not that I want to, it's not my choice, I have to make it happen. [...] So, I'm the only person who can make that happen. [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

It's that thing of – there's a saying that says, "there's no other way". You have got to do what you have to do. It does not matter what you say – that used to be a joke at home. They would say: "There is no other way. There's no other way. You just have to do it. Push up, and get up." [...] And this is something I have to do and I must do it for [my children] because they don't know anything. The only thing they know is that I'm their mother who loves them. And they have to eat, they have to bath, they have to play, they have to be clean and beautiful. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

One can see from these interview selections that the participants talk of how they “have to do it” and “must do it” because “there is no other way”. But participants recognised that they are also confronted with an ostensible liberty: the choice to *embrace* their new maternal role on a cognitive and affective level and develop a positive attitude about the situation. Note in the following excerpt how Esihle advises single mothers to “first accept” their situation and then “fall in love” with their children:

The advice I would give [a newly single mother] is that she should first accept her situation and then fall in love with her children, because nothing will change. She must just enjoy it. There is nothing else; the only thing I know is that if you keep wishing that you were here or there or wish you'd done this or that – you'll just be holding yourself back and you will constantly be angry and may take out that anger on your kids. So just accept it. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

What is noteworthy about Esihle’s statement is that, for her, acceptance sparked a range of other positive experiences such as an adoration for her child and enjoyment of the parental experience. Esihle’s insight perfectly captures the current theme, because a psychological acquiescence in the maternal identity implies that, although there is nothing one can do to change one’s situation, one does have a choice about how mental energy will be spent. Both Kholeka and Esihle felt that there should be a re-shifting of energy. For them, rather than investing energy in rehashing the past (i.e. wondering what ought to have happened), one had to refocus one’s attention on present possibilities. Acceptance here is thus a choice of attitude and focus. Essentially, the restriction-freedom duality meant that the participants were often *forced*, by circumstance, to become parents, but also *resolved* to be doting mothers and make the most of it.

i) New role acceptance engenders devotion

As with other theme titles, the word *devotion* was not chosen unthinkingly. As it is used here, devotion sums up the amalgamation of two underlying drives for mothers. Devotion captures some of the ambiguity spoken about in the previous section, where mothers simultaneously possess states of freedom and restriction. Here devotion includes both a sense of responsibility (i.e. accountability, obligation, dedication, duty, and commitment) and a sense of affection (i.e. love, care, attachment, fondness, adoration), which give mothers the stamina and fervour required to maintain their daily routines. The word devotion blends the juxtaposed sentiments of “I *have* to do things for my child” (responsibility) and “I *want* to do things for my child” (affection).

First, I will examine this sense of *affectionate* devotion. In the context of this newly accepted maternal identity, participants spoke about the love they now had for their children, the joy their children bring to their lives, and thus how their children started to function as a “silent motivator”. Both Lindelwa and Yonele mentioned their loving, motherly devotion when speaking about what inspired them to maintain a stringent morning routine:

It is the love of doing it. I know I am needed for that, [...] my son cannot just get to school by himself, or wake up and getting ready; it is the feeling of being needed, him depending on me, for me to do things for him in that session.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

It's for the love I have for them. It's not like I'm struggling to do that, I'm doing it with a happy heart. [P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Aviwe spoke about this kind of affectionate devotion when asked how she maintained her daughter's bedtime routines:

I feel that mother-child bond with her, so it's kind of special to me that I get her to sleep. It's because I am her mother – I need her to know that I love her, I need her to know that I'll always be there every step of the way, whatever she needs I'm always there. [P19_Aviwe_27_Deftl_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

The idea that parental affection acted as an emotional buffer and motivating force for mothers was a common thread in the participants' accounts and helped them to maintain healthy family routines.

The other underlying sentiment connected to motherly devotion was a sense of responsibility and accountability. For Zinnia, Nondumiso and Thumeka, a sense of responsibility was an important driving force when maintaining everyday family routines:

I just felt that now I am a mother, seriously. I have responsibilities that I have to practice every day. [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

That's how it is to be a mom. You become responsible, you take charge of the situation, [...] it's just the way that things are supposed to be, if you're a caring mom. [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

I told myself that this is my routine also, for every day. Because I have to do it because [...] I am the one who looks after him, so it is my duty to do that task. [...] Because I am the guardian of him [...] so I must stick to my routines. [P17_Thumeka_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Onele illustrates in the following excerpt how directly her sense of responsibility played out during a waking-up routine. If she did not feel devoted towards her child's education, the simple act of getting him out of bed on time would lose its importance:

We can wake up at 8, it's not like its necessary to wake up at 7 [...] But he needs to be in school before 8. [...] So I have to. We have to be responsible for him as well, because I don't mind the time for me, because I can take him half past 10, but then what about, he missed all the things that happened in the morning. So, we have to push, [...] but I'm doing it for him. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Thus, it seemed that both feelings of affection and this sense of responsibility helped to drive the mothers during a range of family routines. The concepts of affection and responsibility are grouped together under the term devotion because it is not always easy to tell where a sense of responsibility ends and feelings of affection begin.

5.1.1.3 The self as "role model"

The idea that their children were looking up to them as sources of inspiration seemed to help five participants in a wide range of situations. The desire to be a role model motivated these mothers to tackle larger family issues, such as building their children's characters, getting out of poverty, continuing their own tertiary education, or ending family feuds. Viewing one's self as a potential role model also positively affected self-esteem. In the following excerpt, Akhona explained how her need to be a role model for her son motivated her:

Just know whatever that you're doing, you're not doing only for yourself now, because you have someone looking up to you. [...] Because you want to leave a legacy, you want your son to say: "That's my mother's path!" You want to be a role model.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

For Anathi and Zinnia, the need to be a role model was also linked to how well they tackled financial hardship. Both Anathi and Zinnia wanted to set an example for their children and show them how to become successful adults:

I told myself that I have to go to school and study so that I can give him the best future, and a good future ever. I have grown up a lot, so I want him to look up to me and be proud of me one day. [...] When I finish with my studies, it is important, because I want to be his role model, I want to give him the way to success and [show him how] to be a good son. [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

This theme was in stark contrast to many participants' prepartum experiences of shame and guilt. The present subtheme is interrelated with subthemes 5.1.1.1. and 5.1.1.2 described previously, because it speaks to the participants' identity as "good" and to the participants' identity as "mother".

5.1.1.4 The self as "hustler"

A quarter of the interviewed participants identified themselves either as "a hustler" or someone who "hustles". Additionally, over a third of the interviewed participants spoke of themselves as "strong". Looking at the context in which participants used these terms, both the idea of *hustler* and *strong* reflected mothers' resilient, persevering self-identity. The following quote from Anathi illustrates how she associated the single-parent identity with strength:

A single parent is strong and for me there is nothing wrong with being a single parent.

It means that you have the capacity to build your own life from scratch.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Participants spoke of a family culture that reiterated this idea of resilience. For example, Esihle [P7_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed] spoke of how her mother used to say that there were “no weaklings in her house”. Mothers often mentioned that, when faced with difficult challenges, they would initially be distraught, but then resolved to set aside their emotions and confront the problem head-on. Phrases like “I will just face it” or “I will just deal with it” or “I will pull up my socks and keep going” permeated the interviews. When asking Unathi what advice she would give to other single parents, she said:

“I have been there”. To tell them: “No, just be strong my friend, I have been there.”

You do not know my problems, they are one, and two, and three, but you know, I am strong, and I keep myself going. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Onele explained how she made a deliberate choice to be strong:

I had to wash my baby straight from hospital, no one supported me. [...] After giving birth, you have to sit at home for that 10 days because you are still weak and stuff. On the 5th day I had to get out of the bed and do the washing because there was no one who will do it for me. So, for me being a parent, oh my God, it's so exciting in a way. There are times when you feel like: “God why you abandon me now?” But then I am stronger than I thought I was, because I thought I was weak and I can't cope with this, but then when there is no one looking after you, you have to stand up and say: “If I can't do it, who will?” And even in the evenings when the child was crying at night, my sister was looking after him and she would cry. But then I thought: “No, why am I

crying? If I am crying I am not giving him hope.” So, I have to be strong because if I’m crying who will wipe my tears? So, in a way, for me, being a parent, yes, it’s hard, but in a way it’s so exciting. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

In the excerpt one can see Onele was initially overwhelmed and grappled with her new maternal responsibilities. However, she simply “had to stand up” and chose to view the experience as exciting, despite her many challenges.

When the participants called themselves hustlers it was a loaded comment. But in order for readers to understand the significance of that comment, I have to go beyond the interview data and give some detail about the rich history of the term.

The slang term *hustler* is a layered concept and its meaning has shifted over the last few decades from one of *criminal* to one of *survivor*. Traditionally, the term hustler was synonymous with the terms *swindler* or *thief* and referred to individuals who would use any illicit or unethical means necessary to acquire money (including prostitution and selling illegal substances). However, to understand the contemporary use of the term and the value this identity has for single mothers, one must take a closer look at Northern American hip hop culture.

In the last four decades, hip hop music has played a major role in the forming of a new *hustler* identity. Although hip hop and rap (a subset of hip hop music) are now globally recognised musical genres, they began as a form of musical social protest, originating in the poorer New York communities of the 1970s (Kajikawa, 2009). Neighbourhoods that were predominantly African American, underprivileged, strained by crime and poor education, and denigrated by society used rap music to question the dominant, white American middle-class way of life (Kajikawa, 2009). It was a way to convey a resistant cultural sensibility and reimagine African American neighbourhoods (Kajikawa, 2009). Rap music often questions the race and class

systems in North America, and how these two systems intersect at the expense of the non-white populations. Therefore, several parallels can be drawn between the American “ghetto” and the South African “township”. It is thus not surprising that the lexes used in hip hop and rap music have been appropriated into our local South African discourses.

By examining memes one can effectively explicate the current discourses around the hustler identity. A meme is a cultural element or artefact (e.g. image, video or piece of text) that is rapidly passed on from one individual to another because of the popularity of the meme’s message and imagery. Because of its rapid, widespread sharing, it is almost impossible to identify the original source of a meme. I obtained the following memes from Pinterest and Google Images. Although the selection is not comprehensive, these six memes help to elucidate some of the ideas around the hustler persona:



Image 1. (“Don’t downgrade your dream”, n.d.)

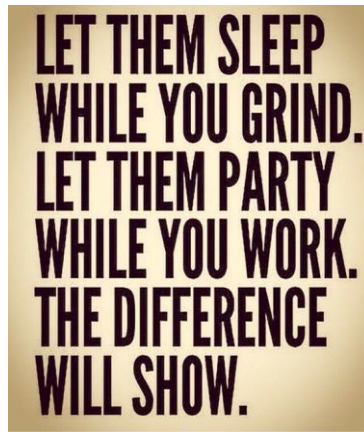


Image 2. (“Let them sleep while you grind”, n.d.)



Image 3. (“The best thing someone can do”, n.d.)



Image 4. (“I was raised to hustle like a man”, n.d.)



Image 5. “Real women hustle hard”, n.d.)



Image 6. “To all the pretty girls working late nights”, n.d.)

Figure 5.3. Six online memes illustrating some of the current discourses around the hustler identity.

From the images in Figure 5.3 above one can see that the hustler persona is indomitable, subversive, competitive, self-assertive, impervious to emotional setbacks, and always striving towards success. There is often a clear undertone of antipathy towards racial inequality, especially when the term is invoked in music. A hustler is someone who usually has little economic opportunity, but who creates their own success despite the behaviour and opinions of other people. Ironically, rap music is largely a male dominated industry, and the hustler identity has in the past been more masculine, and at times even derogatory towards women. However, that seems to be changing, and women often call themselves “hustler queens”, as can

be seen in Image 6. When women invoke this identity, they usually emphasise female independence and resilient perseverance.

5.1.1.5 Balancing pre- and post-baby selves

Although all the interviewed mothers in this study spoke about their new maternal identity, five also stressed that the goals they had pre-pregnancy remained meaningful. The participants explained that these goals had to be coveted and striven towards. Furthermore, there were several additional roles and expectations within the larger family network that were still relevant, despite the participants' new parental status. The emphasis for the participants was that these multiple selves (e.g. mother, daughter, student, career woman, etc.) had to be invested in. Based on participant accounts it seemed that the way a mother achieved this was through 1) knowing what was being expected of her by others, 2) knowing what her personal goals were, and 3) a form of time management that emphasised balance and boundaries between these various roles, goals, and expectations. Anathi, as well as Nondumiso, stressed how essential it was for single mothers to revive the personal goals they had before the arrival of their children:

As I said, you may shift the direction of your life but continue with the goals that you have, but maybe try and achieve them in a different manner than when you were not pregnant or when you did not have the child. So plan your life now with the child by achieving the same goals that you wanted before.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

I think us, we as single parents, I would say us in this new age, we tend to forget that yes, you are a single parent, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it's the end of the world. It means that yes, you have this baby that you have, just dust yourself off and whatever hopes and dreams that you said you wanted to have, maybe you said that

someday you wanted to study Marketing, go and study Marketing. Make your dreams come true. [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Lindelwa explained that achieving personal goals would ultimately have a positive impact on her child's life:

Strive to get to your goals. I know a child can, in a way, hinder what you want to be, but just strive for what you want because at the end of the day we all want to make better lives for our children. [P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

As with Lindelwa, Lumka underscored the idea that focusing on one's personal needs had a positive spill-over effect for other family members. Having "me-time" routines increased mothers' emotional engagement in child- and family-centred activities:

Time management is very important, and spend as much time as possible with your child with your family and with yourself. That is very important because if you have your time, you then understand you, so that when you then understand yourself it's easier then to feed positive energies to others. So, if you have your time you will then make time for your child and then make time for your family. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Finally, Akhona highlighted the importance of setting boundaries. It may be too idealistic to encourage single mothers to "do it all" and meet all family and personal expectations and needs. Thus Akhona tried to find balance and strategised ways to meet various expectations and personal goals, but was fine with her own limitations:

Try and strategise [...] what is expected of you to do, and what time do you have? [...] Make sure that whatever that is expected of you to do, you need to do it, but remember to put yourself up on the list. [...] I do what I can and leave what I cannot, and I acknowledge my strength. [...] I am tired and I just become honest about it and say, “You know what, now I’m tired, I cannot do anything, so I need to suck it in and leave it at that.” [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

The current theme underscores the complex process of negotiating and balancing various personal identities. This subtheme overlaps with scheduling and time management processes (see *Scheduling actions* in section 5.4).

5.1.1.6 Constructive self-talk

Nine participants gave examples of the encouraging internal dialogue they often used. In some cases the participant’s self-talk seemed to go hand-in-hand with a conative “willing” of the self to accomplish daily tasks. For example, when asked what helps her to manage her daily routines, Thumeka first responded by saying “myself” and then explained:

I always tell myself that whatever you want to do in life you can if you put yourself together and do it. [P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

Thumeka “tells herself” that she can “do it”. But Thumeka also revealed in the interviews her lack of choice in the matter. If one has no alternative external source of support, then the drive to succeed must come from within. It seemed to be this “I just tell myself to do it and just do it” attitude that many mothers implied in their commentary. This strategy helped when participants felt lethargic (“*Sometimes I am lazy, but I know I must do it. I tell my mind that I must do it.*” [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]) and when participants

engaged in mundane routines such as washing clothes (“*I tell myself that I am going to do this washing*” [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]).

But constructive self-talk was not only effective for everyday routines, but also helped participants to stay motivated and hopeful in the face of major life stressors, such as extreme economic deprivation. In the following excerpt one can see how Onele’s motivating internal dialogue revolved around her visions of a positive future:

I keep saying, “Okay this will be fine”. I keep motivating myself that it will be fine. But then, I know, one day it will be. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Motivating self-talk was often connected to several subthemes discussed elsewhere in this section. For example, self-talk may give expression to other productive rationalisations, such as the hustler identity (e.g. “I am strong”), finding meaning in adversity (e.g. “everything happens for a reason”), or being oriented to future possibilities (e.g. “my dreams will come true one day”).

5.1.2 Category 1, theme 2: Positively reframing circumstances

The second theme under category 1, namely *Positively reframing circumstances*, concerns participants’ ability to make meaning of their adverse experiences. Participants used a range of rationalisations or justifications that helped them reinterpret the crisis into a more positive event. For example, participants would focus on the positive consequences of the adversity (i.e. “look at what I’ve gained, rather than lost”), or they would contextualise the adversity (i.e. “these things happen, I am not the first single mother and I won’t be the last”), or they would cultivate a positive outlook (i.e. “this situation isn’t permanent, things are going to get better”).

Akhona explained how one's interpretation of the current situation could be reframed. She also emphasised that how you interpreted your circumstances can ultimately slow your progress towards success if your interpretation remained negative:

If you're saying that life is difficult, it's all up in the mind, because you haven't experienced that much. There is someone who is experiencing something worse than what you're experiencing. So why do you have to block your way and scratch your head up as if it's the end of the world? It's not. So, you just need to wake yourself up.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Akhona reframed her personal adversity by telling herself that other people were worse off, and therefore she tried not to catastrophise her own situation. On the other hand, Lumka spoke about making the best of the situation by focusing her attention on what she had, rather than what she lacked:

Having them in my life, having my mother and my daughter in my life, it kind of felt like it was all I needed. Even though the challenges were there but, [...] I have them and they are here. Money and all that, we didn't have them; when I look at it now, it is not really everything. Not everything depends on having money. It's what you make of the situation that you're in. [...] Make the best of the situation that you're in because what else can you do? So, rather make the best of it. [...] So even though you're going through difficulties, appreciate what you have now, because that's what you have. It's what you have, and you kind of have to make that work, appreciate that and just find a way to make your situation better.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Both Akhona and Lumka's quotes illustrate ways they tried to come to terms with their hardship and cope psychologically. Lumka focused on her relational resources rather than her material deficiencies, whereas Akhona contrasted her own circumstances with those whom she believed were less fortunate. These two specific types of reasoning were not spoken of often during the interviews. However, there were four types of situational interpretations that were frequently invoked by the participants, namely *Belief in divine assistance* (see section 5.1.2.1), *Adversity generates personal growth* (see section 5.1.2.2), *"Everything happens for a reason"* (see section 5.1.2.3), and *Rewriting the past, hope for the future* (see section 5.1.2.4). I will subsequently present these four subthemes, as it may be helpful for practitioners to focus on these specific strategies when working with Xhosa-speaking single mothers.

5.1.2.1 Belief in divine assistance

For eight mothers, their spiritual and religious convictions were a source of reassurance. These mothers believed that God would help them and that there was a divine plan for their lives. One can see this conviction in the following examples:

I think I believe that God will not give me the burden that he will never solve. So, I just need to believe that God is here.

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

I keep like motivating myself by saying this was God's plan. He planned everything, even before I was born. Sometimes the regrets won't help, single mothers have to look forward and say "this is the way forward".

[P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Sometimes I feel it is God's will for you to be single – maybe God is testing you to see how are you going to cope with this difficulties that he is putting you through.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Mothers with strong religious convictions also reinterpreted their child as a “gift from God” rather than a burden. This seemed to help these mothers accept their new role as parent because it meant that there was some spiritual reason for their child’s existence, and therefore they could look forward to divinely selected, future prosperity:

Never look down on the situation that you are facing. Always know that you have a baby not for the wrong reasons and not by mistake, but God knows why he has given you such a gift. God knows that whatever you are facing today, tomorrow you will be looking at the stars, and some green pastures, they’re going to come along the way.

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

One of [my friends] said something to me that touched me, because she said: “You know, a child is a gift from God. What if this gift you are carrying will be the president tomorrow?” [...] So, you know somewhere, somehow, I thought: “But God, this is a gift.” [...] Maybe God is showing me something.

[P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

I know that God will always be there, God will always provide. [...] I accepted the situation. [...] It helps me to think that if God gives you something, you must not let it go because of the situation, you must stand still and know something will come at the end of the day. [...] When I look at him, bathing him, I feel so happy: “God gave me this boy.” [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

I must note that this theme is also closely related to *Wellbeing behaviours* (see section 5.1.3), since the mothers implemented a range of feel-good religious routines, either on a daily or weekly basis, which allowed them to give expression to these religious convictions. Going to church, praying in the morning, reading scripture, and regularly listening to or singing religious songs made mothers feel calmer, rejuvenated, or reassured:

I think God helps me. I am a Christian, I go to church and listen to gospel music, even when my spirit is down, I just put the CD on, the gospel CD, to lift up my spirit, because sometimes life, especially when you are not working and you are a single parent, there are challenges. [...] I think God gives me power. As I said before, sometimes it is difficult to be a single mother and not work. [...] Sometimes the pastor will read a verse that motivates you and lifts up your spirit; that is what keeps me going.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Thus, because of their religious convictions, the mothers had the certitude that things would get better, that they would be able to overcome obstacles, and that they would achieve success because a deity was in control of their lives. The belief that a deity was in control of their lives helped these mothers create meaning and reinterpret their adversity as a positive trial, rather than an arbitrary, random event.

5.1.2.2 Adversity brings personal growth

Ten participants stressed that they viewed the adversity they experienced as an opportunity for personal development, rather than as a handicap. Growth was experienced on many levels. For some, growth occurred in how they saw themselves, some experienced positive change in how they viewed other people, several participants recognised a change in their value system by

noting that their priorities had matured, and yet for others there was an increase in skills and character strengths.

For Akhona, the arrival of her child was a catalyst for developing independence, along with feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem:

I would say, him arriving in this world changed everything for me. Even the pregnancy, the rough patch that I went through, changed something in me now. It taught me to be able to stand on my own, not to always lean on someone's shoulder because when they move away from your direction you immediately fall. So, I think through the whole process 'til now I learnt to believe in myself and to be there for my own self because I cannot rely on someone else that I don't even know how long are they going to be around. So, I must just be my own king or queen.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Cebisa gained a sense of self-reliance. In addition, she felt that the arrival of her child improved her ability as a scholar. Thus, although many mothers saw this phase of life as a hindrance to education, Cebisa saw it as something fuelling her studies:

Okay, since giving birth to my child I became focused on my studies; the year I was pregnant I passed with flying colours. People at home couldn't believe it, I literally took all my stress out on the books. After that I continued studying. I wanted a better life for my child. Then I found a job and things became right again. [...] I also learnt standing on my own and not depend on anybody. [...] Then the baby makes you focused, when you have a child you become more focused because you are always thinking for the child, and yourself at the same time. [...] I compare my life to that of my peers who didn't have kids at a young age. Their lives are not perfect, the decisions they make,

they are unruly, [...] they live their lives for themselves and no one else. So, some of them are not working, their lives have no direction. So, all this has awakened my mind, now I even know what I want and when.

[P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

For Violet, a sense of maturity permeated all aspects of her life, including her priorities, perspective on life, daily routines, as well as financial management. Unathi took her newfound maturity a step further, recognising her ability to also positively affect the lives of other single mothers:

It is very difficult, but I learn more. I am proud of being put in that challenge of being a single mother. Then I can go somewhere to teach other single parents to be strong; I have learnt a lot from it. [...] So now I can even motivate other single parents.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

As with the previously discussed subtheme (*Belief in divine assistance*), the current subtheme illustrates one way in which the single mothers could reframe their adverse experiences and improve their sense of coherence regarding life events (i.e. life makes sense). By viewing their circumstances as an opportunity for growth, the mothers could see this phase of life as comprehensible, meaningful, and manageable.

5.1.2.3 “Everything happens for a reason”

Seven participants reframed their situation by emphasising that everything that happened to them happened because of some important benefit. As already mentioned under the subtheme *Belief in divine assistance* (section 5.1.2.1), some participants felt that their child was a gift from God and therefore that there had to be some divine purpose behind their adverse

experiences. But the mothers also created for themselves non-spiritual explanations for the adversity they faced. For example, in the following interview excerpt, Lindelwa describes how she saw the arrival of her child as a way to receive love without depending on a romantic partner:

You know when you are a woman, I don't know if it is a need or what it is, but there is that thing that I need someone to love me and when you do not have a child I feel like you give that empty space to a guy, like you need that guy to fill that empty space. But with the birth of your child you know that that space is filled. I am not looking for love anywhere. [...] That unconditional love you get from your child, it just completes you, you say to yourself, okay this is it, why would I let any man hurt me again if I have this? [...] It is amazing. [P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

Similarly, Onele made sense of her single-mother status by highlighting that there was no guarantee that she would have been better off if things in her life had turned out differently. Thus the participants implored other single mothers not to view their circumstances as “a mistake” or an arbitrary, random event, as can be seen in the following quotes from Lindelwa and Nondumiso:

[Being a single parent] has its challenges but you just have to think about why this person was given to you. For example, he could have been any other person's child, but why exactly was he given to you. You have to live for him, every little thing, I don't know how to say it, but he has to be the centre of everything you do. [P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

It's not a mistake, he's here for a reason, he's here for a purpose. [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

It thus seemed to be important for these single mothers to find some valuable reason or explanation for their adversity. These explanations helped to make their circumstances more comprehensible and meaningful.

5.1.2.4 Rewriting the past, hope for the future

Some seemingly innocuous family routines (for example getting up in the morning or cooking dinner) were not nearly as mundane as they first appeared to be. Even routines that seemed to be mostly functional or practical could have deeply meaningful and far-reaching causes and drives for participants. When analysing the interviews, it seemed that some routines were implemented and maintained because the mothers felt they were ways to correct a problematic past and ensure future prosperity. Ideas about correcting the past centred on three topics. Firstly, some routines were ways to rewrite the family history of poverty; secondly, routines could help break the cycle of generations who were unable to receive a tertiary education; and thirdly, special child-centred routines could negate a family history of childhood maltreatment and neglect.

At the time of the interview, Cebisa's child was three years and three months old. She explained that, when she isn't working nightshift, she implemented an evening homework routine that consisted of age-appropriate cognitive exercises and activities centred on child development. Cebisa maintained the routine because she associated this routine with her son's future educational and professional success, and she wanted him to have better career progression than what she had experienced:

[My son] will go to tertiary because I don't want him working in crazy places where you find out that they are retrenching or the company is closing down and so on. I want him to have a profession. [...] I want him to be able to take on other opportunities and

not be stuck; he must go from high school and straight to a tertiary institution. At the moment, I am working nightshift, but when I am home, I sit down with him and help him with his homework. [...] He complains that I come home late every night unlike other people who finish work early. I tell him, if he doesn't get an education, he will also end up just like me. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Similar to Cebisa's evening homework routine, Nolitha had an afternoon television-watching routine with her two-year-old child, which she also equated with his future educational success as opposed to her own constrained educational history:

My dreams about [my son] is to go to university. It's because I didn't have that chance to go to university, so he must definitely have that opportunity to go, and I will make sure that he goes. [...] Ja, education is the key to success [...]. Every day I give him some DVDs that learn [sic] us about education and learning. [...] We watch it on the TV and then I teach him. [P16_Nolitha_24_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Five mothers found their vision for their child's future to be a strong motivational force during morning routines, as can be seen in the following quote from Lumka:

Right now, [my daughter] is in pre-school and you know in the mornings we would be fighting for her to wake up and get ready for school, and we would have a conversation that "Baby the reason why mummy is doing this is for you to go to school and better yourself". She doesn't understand it now but I will tell her that for as long as I can so that she understands that the reason why she has to wake up so early in the morning is so that she could be what she wants to be in the future. [...] So that's what keeps me going, you know. When I think about what kind of life I would like her to have, I spring

out of bed. So right there at the back of my mind I know what I need to do for her to be well-off. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Akhona and Unathi had turbulent childhoods, and family relationships were earmarked by conflict. Akhona and Unathi wished to rewrite their problematic childhood experiences and provide their children with family routines (such as playtime and bedtime routines) that fostered love and bonding between parent and child:

I want to do things right. I want to build the safe environment for him, the one that I never got. I want to break that chain, that I never got love in my childhood. I never got that emotions, I never connected whatsoever. So, I want to change that. I want him to know that mummy is always there. Mummy is present whatever happens, that mummy is always there. [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

I never got those things, so that is why I want him to have those things, love, being loved, to be observed 24/7, to see that I am always there for him.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Later during the interview, Unathi expanded on this issue of neglect and underscored the need for single mothers to have a vision and mission for their children. According to Unathi, this vision and mission are essential parental motivators. When parents had a vision it ensured that their children received ample parental time and adequate care. It can thus be seen from these excerpts that some routines are interpreted as present vessels for change, moments straddled between past injustices and hopes for the future.

5.1.3 Category 1, theme 3: Wellbeing behaviours

The third major theme under category one was *Wellbeing behaviours*. These are actions taken, or activities engaged in, that have the potential to improve the mood of single mothers. *Wellbeing behaviours* has one subtheme that is discussed in this section, namely *Idiosyncratic feel-good activities* (see section 5.1.3.1). It should be added that *Seeking emotional support* can also qualify as a wellbeing behaviour, but it was decided to discuss support-related endeavours under the second thematic category, namely *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships* (see section 5.2).

5.1.3.1 *Idiosyncratic feel-good activities*

Five participants spoke of regular “me-time” routines in which they engaged that were designed to improve their mood. These activities were idiosyncratic in nature, with different participants mentioning different types of effective feel-good routines. For example, Zinnia spoke of writing in her diary:

I always write. I have a diary so I always write how I feel and always write how I am supposed to overcome the problem and that is what helps me.

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Three participants mentioned the importance of engaging in enjoyable excursions. For example, Unathi underscored her need to spend time outside the house, despite financial restrictions:

Sometimes you are down but you must make yourself happy, because sometimes I do not have money but I take myself out to go and eat breakfast, to go out and there and

see other people and their lifestyle, or maybe go to movies sometimes to keep my mind busy. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

In addition to leisure activities, Unathi, Zintle and Phathiswa all mentioned the importance of personal grooming routines in the morning, which helped them to “face the day”. Unathi, Zintle and Yonele also spoke of the importance of domestic routines, such as cleaning and organising the house:

Organising the house, dressing the way I want to dress, to see that everything is up to standard, even that I am looking nice. In order to lift up my spirit and to motivate myself. [...] It makes me confident because I am clean and I am neat. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

I feel so fresh and relieved and my body’s feeling right when I am bathing. [...] We get tired and then when we bath, the body, it is relaxed and being relieved. [...] Yes, when I am cleaning in my house I feel happy, singing songs and cleaning on the weekend. Ja it makes me feel happy. [...] It is important, because when I am sitting at home on the weekend, dirty, it is not good for me. [...] Singing is very important it makes your soul, your heart to be happy, ja. [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

The above quotes illustrate a potential relationship between one’s physical surroundings (e.g. personal cleanliness and a tidy house) and emotional wellbeing. A clean, organised house and well-groomed appearance could potentially increase a sense of order, control, and accomplishment. The current theme illustrates a link between emotional self-regulation and behaviour. From the perspective of single mothers in this study, diarising their experiences, leisure outings, church-going activities, grooming routines, and spring-cleaning helped them improve their mood.

I must note that none of the themes mentioned under this first thematic category were adequately reflected in the observation data. Visual data cannot effectively capture the intrapsychic experiences and internal processes of single mothers. Observation data is also not retrospective and can only capture what is immediately present in the visual field.

5.2 Overarching Category 2: Managing and Coordinating Significant Adult

Relationships

In this section I will present the second of four overarching thematic categories, namely *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships*. This thematic category was defined as the single mother's ability to positively influence, and be positively influenced by, other noteworthy adults. By doing so, family routines can be better managed, either directly (i.e. improved task accomplishment because of greater financial and human resources) or indirectly (i.e. improved maternal psychological wellbeing). Also, managing and coordinating other adults included setting important boundaries, and protecting both the mother and child from negative adult influences. In Figure 5.4 one can see that participants had to engage with an array of other adults in their lives. These adults either formed part of the family network (especially live-in family members such as the participant's parents, siblings, aunts, and cousins), or these adults were considered extra-familial (such as friends, the child's biological father, professionals working for community organisations, and dating partners). From participant accounts it seems that single mothers who could cultivate healthy relationships with these adults, or tap into some of these relational resources, were more likely to experience post-transition adaptation and manage a variety of family routines with greater ease.

THEMATIC CATEGORY 2: MANAGE AND COORDINATE SIGNIFICANT ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

The single mother's ability to positively influence, and be positively influenced by, other noteworthy adults; and setting important boundaries that protect the mother and child from negative adult influences.

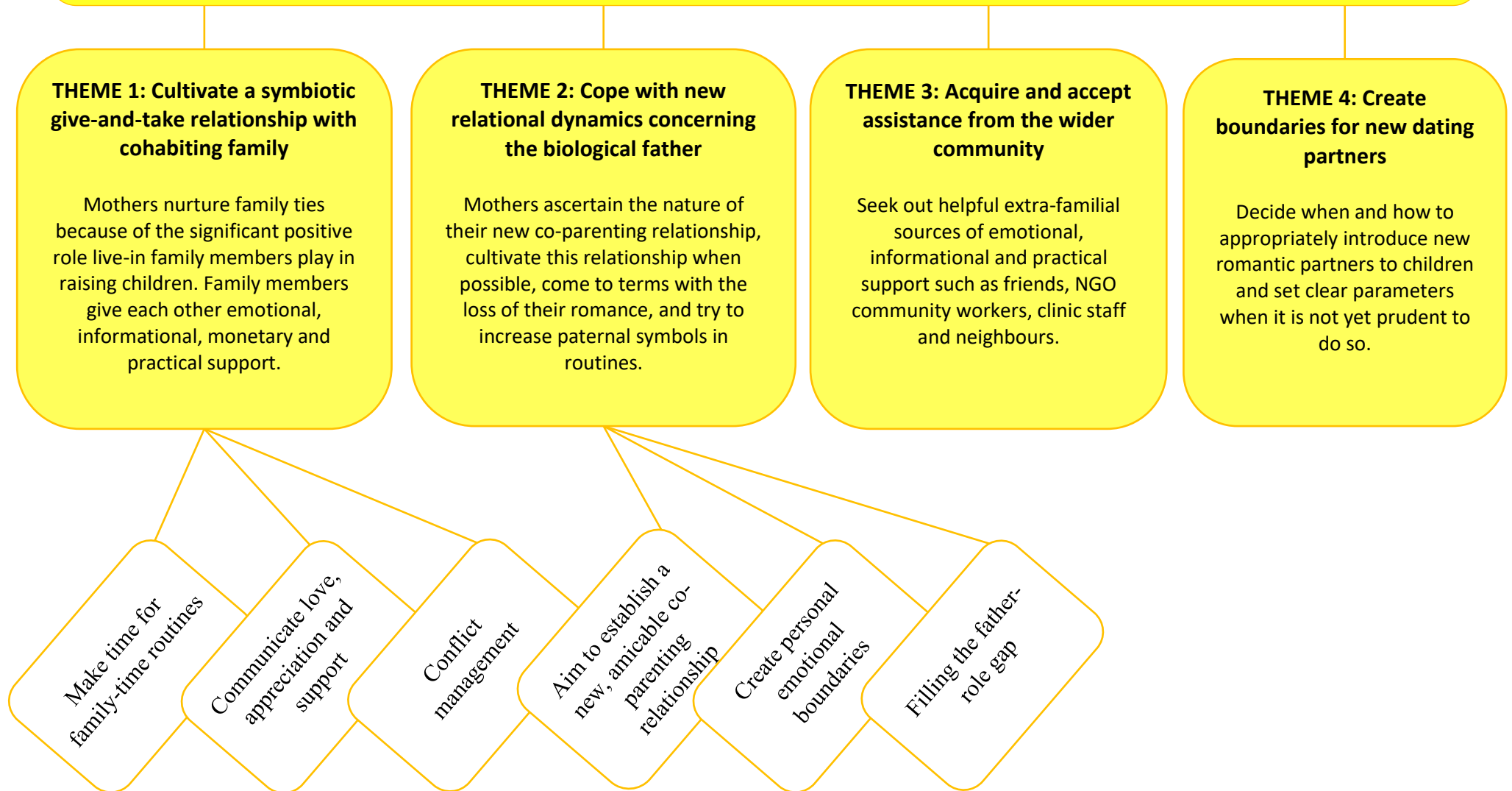


Figure 5.4. Themes and subthemes for category 2: Manage and coordinate significant adult relationships.

The title of this thematic category uses the words manage and coordinate in the broadest sense, in that these terms do not imply control over others, but rather continuous negotiation, mediation, discussion, conciliation, and cooperation. “Manage” also implies effective self-regulation within these complex interactions.

Participants highlighted different strategies that they employed with different people, depending on the nature of their affiliation, as can be seen in Figure 5.4. This section will be subdivided into four main themes: *Cultivate a symbiotic give-and-take relationship with live-in family* (section 5.1.2.1), *Cope with new relational dynamics concerning the biological father* (section 5.1.2.2), *Acquire and accept assistance from the wider community* (section 5.1.2.3), and *Set boundaries for new dating partners* (section 5.1.2.4).

5.2.1 Category 2, theme 1: Cultivate a symbiotic give-and-take relationship with cohabiting family

It was explained in Chapter 4 that participants’ close relatives often reacted negatively when they noticed or heard about the pregnancy. *Acceptance* is not only an important process for single mothers (as discussed in section 5.1.1.2 under the subtheme, *Accepting the self as “mother”*), but also for the rest of the family. Several participants explained that their relatives accepted the pregnancy fairly quickly. Yonele’s mother was supportive from the start:

I did tell my mother [...] she encouraged me to go to the clinic at an early stage [...] she was very supportive, my mother she didn’t have a problem with it. She always encourages me, like if I come from Tygerberg [hospital] and ask me: “How did the check-up go and did you take all the medication?” She even came with that machine to check the high blood, she got it from her work, so I always pump myself and check how

low and how high is my blood pressure. So, I had it under control because of her. So, she was very supportive. [P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Zinnia and Violet explained that their mothers were initially disappointed, but took a few days to calm down and then responded with enthusiasm:

My mother was disappointed. She didn't believe it. I think she took a couple of days and then she was okay with it. [P13_Violet_27_1child_extended_1extra_employed]

Similarly, Lindelwa's father originally expressed great disappointment in his daughter, saying that she was supposed to be the role model in the family. Yet after some time had passed, the situation became more tolerable. Lindelwa explained that her father became accustomed to the idea and loved spending time with his grandson during the holidays:

When we go on holiday to the Eastern Cape [my son] does everything he wants and if I try to be tough on him my father jumps in, so my son gets away with everything in the Eastern Cape. He wakes up at about 06:00 with my father, [...] go for a walk in the fields to check for the cows and all that, [...] he even goes to bed at 10:00. He would be playing the whole time with my father.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

At some point during the interviews, most of the participants spoke of the significant positive role family members played in their lives. It is therefore important that the participants nurture these family ties, as Aviwe advised:

I would advise the single mothers just to keep in contact with the families, because the families are important, because if it wasn't for my family I don't know how I would

have handled being a single mother. So, just if they can just connect with their families so that everything could go easier on them.

[P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Phathiswa explained how her parents helped her to cope with her transition into single parenthood:

My parents, my family actually supports me a lot, they did not neglect me, they supported me from the first day and they love the child and they are willing to do anything and everything for the child.

[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Family members provided support in several ways. For example, certain close family members enhanced the psychological wellbeing of single mothers because of the emotional sustenance and encouragement these relatives provided. Six participants mentioned how helpful it was to relate their feelings to an empathetic, reassuring relative. The reality that emotional support is beneficial for single mothers is reasonable, considering the emotional turmoil many participants experienced during their pregnancies. For Zinnia, this caring individual became her mother. Yet, to give emotional support, Zinnia's mother first had to accept the pregnancy:

My relationship with my mother was good. I used to tell her everything, even the relationship stuff, she used to ask me who I was dating and stuff and then when she found out that I was pregnant, for the first two weeks she was not the same; she was angry at me, she did not want to talk to me, but I do not know who put sense into her head, but she changed. One day she just said to me: "Okay you are pregnant, I accept you and also the baby, just look after yourself and the baby and also please do not let things get to you so that you will pass your matric." [...] Then I was happy because I

would be able to tell her what was happening now because at first if I said something about the pregnancy she would just ignore me, but then she said that she accepted me and my pregnancy “because he or she is my grandson or granddaughter, so just tell me everything that you want and when you are hurt, just tell me so that I can share my experience with you” because she is also a single mother. [...] I wanted to kill myself, but she told me that it was not the end of the world: “You see where I am now and your father was not there when you were young, but now you are old and you go to school, so when you are pregnant it is not the end of the world, just do not let things get to you, if you could just avoid the person that makes you angry.”

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

It seemed that Zinnia already had a strong relationship with her mother prior to the pregnancy, and thus they could resolve the conflict that initially ensued when the pregnancy was disclosed. As a single parent herself, Zinnia’s mother also had unique insight into her daughter’s experiences. Similarly, Nondumiso, Aviwe and Lumka grew up in single-mother families and received substantial support from these matriarchs, whom they respected greatly. For example, Lumka was initially deeply concerned that the lack of involvement from her child’s biological father would leave a large emotional cavity in her child’s life. Yet her mother’s encouragement and counselling seemed to put Lumka at ease:

With that I would say for the whole, from being pregnant to where we are now I have to give it to my mother, she has been there for me all the way. So ja, she has been my pillar of strength. She has been there. When I need to talk, when I need to do whatever, she’s there. So, with the father figure thing, she would tell me: “So what is it that I never gave you? Why do you think that [your daughter] would suffer just because her father is not there?” She would try so much to make me not think about this father

figure thing. [...] So, whenever I need to talk about something, whenever I need counselling, she'd counsel me. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

This situation described by Lumka contrasted strongly with that of Akhona, who was raised in a two-parent household and who felt that she never had an intimate, supportive bond with her own mother. As I explained in Chapter 4, Akhona's pregnancy seemed to only amplify their thorny relationship and the positive mother-daughter experiences mentioned here by Zinnia and Lumka were not a unanimous occurrence.

In addition to emotional support, five participants spoke of certain family members who acted as role models for them. These role models live/d exemplary lives that the participants wished to emulate. Aviwe, for example, spoke of her sister's admirable parenting skills. In the following quotes, Lindelwa speaks of the esteem she had for her father, and Esihle remembered her late parents venerable love for others despite their financial limitations:

And you know what made it easier, you remember when I said that you need to be a role model for your child, I saw that from my father. My father is a role model for me as well so what he is doing to us is what I want to do for my child.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

The way my parents brought me up and the way they used to love me, when I think about that I realise [my kids] also deserve to be brought up the same way I was. At least for the short time I was with [my parents] I was really happy. My mom was not working and really loved small children; so she would go to the crèche to help out without getting paid. So, she loved kids and in the village you know people just dump their kids at crèche. That crèche was not funded, had no support or funding of any sort.

So that's what my mom was doing, but she loved us even though we didn't have much, at home we had nothing. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

For participants like Aviwe, Lindelwa, and Esihle, family role models were sources of information and inspiration. In addition to these psychological benefits, family members also provided practical assistance to these single mothers. Practical assistance could be in the form of monetary resources, assistance with executing childcare routines, or aid in completing domestic tasks. With regard to financial resources, it is important to note that there was usually a symbiotic give-and-take understanding between the single mother and her relatives. From the interviews it became evident that domestic tasks and employment duties were often subdivided among family members, not necessarily by choice but due to economic circumstances. For example, several single mothers were unemployed, but had an employed relative who provided in their financial needs. In these instances, the single mother took over the bulk of the domestic and childcare duties (which were not limited to her own child/ren) while others were at work. On the other hand, when single mothers were the primary breadwinners, other stay-at-home, cohabiting adults took on more domestic tasks.

Accordingly, these single mothers were not passive recipients of social support. Participants had a deep sense of commitment towards the future success of the larger family. When asked what their future aspirations were, most participants wanted to see their entire family financially stable, living in a nice house, well-educated, and happy. One can see this devotion to the extended family in the following excerpt from Nolitha:

My dream is to help my mother because she is getting old now. [My dream] is to get a job so that I can support my mother like she supports me now and supports my baby and my sister and my brother, everyone that is giving me support now with my baby. By getting a job I will support my family, make my sister's and brother's educations go

further because they're willing to go to school, [...] like going to university and studying more. [...] I have to prepare everything when [my mother] goes to work, she must get dressed, I must look after the household and cook for her. She must just get a rest. Then I help my sisters and brother with homework if they have, or anything else that they have. I will motivate them each and every time. I just sit them down, maybe read them some newspaper or magazine, ask them what they wish for in life, then at the end of the day that will help them.

[P16_Nolitha_24_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Thus Nolitha wished to achieve financial success, not only for her own survival, but for the collective wellbeing of herself, her child, her mother, and her siblings. Anathi explained that it was the concept of Ubuntu that motivated her family's cooperative approach:

Well, in our family everyone is inside our home surrounded by peace and harmony and we do not differentiate and say that this is your child, this is my child. It is basically our culture with the ubuntu concept, whereby you just help one another. So, when you buy yourself something, you buy the rest of the team something. That is how our family supplies. So, we do not say that she comes from the mother's side or she comes from -, we are just one. So, it makes it easy for everyone to be there for each other. Which is what happened to me. When I got the job, I started to realise that these people have been there for me for quite a long time so it is time for me to give back to them.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Finally, in terms of practical social support, a participant's cohabiting relatives played a significant part in co-constructing daily schedules and helped participants execute a myriad of routine-related tasks. These practices will be discussed in more detail in section 5.4, under the fourth thematic category, *Scheduling actions*. I will, however, note here that cohabiting

relatives often assisted single mothers with *task tag-teaming*, *dealing with schedule derailment*, and *prepping routines*. What is important to highlight here is that single mothers need to jointly plan, negotiate, and coordinate these schedules with other live-in adults.

To further cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with cohabiting family members, participants suggested three important strategies: *Make time for family-time routines* (section 5.2.1.1), *Communicate love, appreciation, and support* (section 5.2.1.2), and *Conflict management* (section 5.2.1.3). These three subthemes will briefly be defined and described in the three sections that follow.

5.2.1.1 Make time for family-time routines

Seven participants expressed the importance of engaging in enjoyable, shared family-time routines, such as preparing and eating group meals, leisure activities (e.g. watching television), or religious pursuits (e.g. going to church or praying). These family-time routines were beneficial because they created opportunities to communicate and discuss the current events in each other's lives, to develop intimacy, and to ensure the longevity of group unity and cohesion. The benefit of family-time routines can be seen in the following excerpts from Phathiswa and Anathi:

Sitting down and eating and chatting about things about how school was and how work was, how the day was, so it gives more time to communicate with your family. So that we can know each other, maybe when we are old enough we cannot just leave, maybe our sister is in a difficult thing and we cannot just leave her like that, we must know each other so that we can be one. I want to teach [my son] that staying with the family

is important because the dinner is when the whole family is around and you chatting and eating so it is like you are bonding.

[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

We spend family time together and we eat together, we do things together, we pray together. It means that you put yourself there in the centre of everything. You don't have your own life but we [the family] have the same life, so that is how we do it.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

The terminology used in the theme name is important to highlight. The colloquial phrase of “making time” was used here, rather than “finding time”. “Making” was preferred because it points to the active, generative effort required to schedule family-time routines. It is, however, somewhat illogical to say that time must be “made”, because time is a finite resource. In section 5.4 I focus more explicitly on time management and scheduling strategies that helped parents find space in their timetables for the myriad of routines in which they wish to engage.

5.2.1.2 Communicate love, appreciation, and support

Six participants emphasised the importance of expressing their affection for other cohabiting adults. When single mothers communicated their love, appreciation, and support for those they lived with, it fostered healthy relationships:

It is important to check if they are still all right, if they are still happy. “Everybody still happy?” Go to my sister, talk to her, “what is the problem?” Ja, after talking with her she telling what is bothering her, so she comes and join us for dinner. Talking, love each other. I told them sometimes, even if someone is not in the mood, to come sit and eat with us, you must come sit with us so we can comfort each other. “What’s wrong with you? What’s bothering you?”

[P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Love, appreciation, and support can also be communicated to others through one's actions rather than verbal expressions. For example, Phathiswa and Yonele were unemployed but took great pride in their domestic routines because they saw it as a way of honouring those who provided them with monetary resources:

[It is important] to do house chores and to make sure that my mother, when she comes from work, she gets foods. I just make her happy and make her tea when she wants and make everything she wants. And house chores, to cook and to clean the house and the yard when it is dirty. I want to satisfy them because I do not have anything [financial] yet to make them happy so I want to satisfy them. [...] It is [special] cooking for [my mother] and making tea and maybe she is hungry and she will ask if I can make her something. So I do it and am happy to do it. Because it is more like giving back. I do not have anything [financial] to give back now, so I have to give back by doing anything to make her happy, she must be as happy as she makes me. She makes me happy in everything. She takes care of me and my child, she wants me to be happy and she does everything to make us all happy.

[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Because my family is supporting me and my child I feel like I'm owing them to do everything around the house, like to wake up in the morning and clean and do dishes, and I'm enjoying everything that I'm doing around the house because during the day I'm alone so I know I've got to do this, that and that so when [my family] comes home

they can come home and have a meal and then they just relax. Because they went to work to support me and my baby.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

One might say that the act of completing these domestic routines with fervour is thus, on some level, a symbolic message of unity, gratitude, and servitude inherent in these routines.

5.2.1.3 Manage conflict

It was mentioned in Chapter 4 that participants experienced periods of extreme family conflict during their pregnancy. In most cases the conflict was resolved over time. But conflict management is also an ongoing process. It stands to reason that some participants would mention conflict management with live-in family as an important process they needed to engage in in order to ensure family unity. As an example, Akhona spoke at length about her conflict management strategies, especially when she had an argument with her older siblings and mother:

I learnt one thing, that if they're not understanding what I am trying to say and they're becoming angry and they raising their voice or whatsoever I calm down, I make sure that I calm down at that moment. Then maybe later in the day or next week or whatsoever I raise that topic again, try and address them, [...] it's the key of us being connected. It's the key of us being like fully connected and trustworthy towards each other, and loving, and always being there for each other.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

For Akhona, emotional self-regulation was a key strategy when confronted with family conflict. Akhona also tried to avoid escalating conflict by pausing the conversation and

tentatively readdressing the issue at a later stage, when family members were more receptive. Akhona further mentioned the effectiveness of completing certain domestic tasks in advance so that she could avoid heated debates with her relatives. Zintle, on the other hand, tried to engage family members in intimate conversations and encouraged others to share their feelings and perspectives:

I don't like when we fight. When we argue over something. I get frustrated, that we mustn't do it; we must be one in the house. I don't like it when someone is cross and angry and like that. It makes it better by talking to them. When we come home, hello how was your day? How do you feel?

[P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

It was clear from the interviews that some mothers, like Akhona, had a more precarious home life and thus conflict management was a big part of her everyday existence. The out-of-wedlock pregnancy amplified these already antagonistic relationships. In high-conflict situations, single mothers had to have an extensive interpersonal toolkit to help them deal with these interactions.

5.2.2 Category 2, theme 2: Cope with new relational dynamics concerning the biological father

As discussed in Chapter 4, participants often had very turbulent, tension-filled relationships with the biological fathers of their children, especially during, and immediately after, their pregnancies. Six biological fathers saw their children once or twice a month, and four fathers saw their children several times a week. Thus 10 participants had ongoing contact with the father, but 16 women were navigating more challenging affiliations with the biological fathers, with some women seeing their ex-partners once every few years, or never. When managing relationships with the biological father, three coping strategies came to the fore, namely *Aim*

to establish a new, amicable co-parenting relationship (section 5.2.2.1), *Create personal emotional boundaries* (section 5.2.2.2), and *Filling the father-role gap* (section 5.2.2.3).

5.2.2.1 Aim to establish a new, amicable co-parenting relationship

In cases where the single mother and the biological father maintained semi-regular contact, the most positive account of paternal involvement came from Nokwanda. Nokwanda had an unplanned pregnancy, but had significant support from the biological father, who saw his child almost every Saturday and Sunday. Other women, such as Violet, said that their ex-partners saw the child two or three times a week. Violet explained that her ex-partner was ready for fatherhood:

Well honestly, he was excited, he was ready, besides the fact that we're not married, he was already working, he was stable, so he was okay.

[P13_Violet_27_1child_extended_1extra_employed]

Unathi, on the other hand, used the judicial system as a means to resolve conflict and get her child's father more involved:

Yes, he supports the child because at the beginning we had separated. I ended up going to court and then they called us to court and we spoke and sorted out our issues and ever since then everything has been working, if I need something then I phone him and he brings it and he also pays for crèche and transport.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Although Unathi's ex-partner initially denounced his child and refused to take responsibility for their son, he later changed his mind and thus saw his child twice a month. Unathi's ex-

partner therefore not only became more financially involved, but also became more emotionally available after she took legal action.

Five participants who still had semi-regular contact with the biological father mentioned the importance of constructive communication to nurture a more amicable relationship. Contact with the biological father did not only take place telephonically or face-to-face. Lindelwa used Facebook, for example, to keep in contact. However, for this form of contact to work, Lindelwa had to accept that the nature of their relationship was now platonic and she had to give up any hope of rekindling their previous romance. This recognition on her part made it easier to engage him in conversation.

Furthermore, Zinnia specifically spoke about the importance of not criticising and condemning the father of her child. Single mothers like Zinnia are often in precarious positions in that negative interactions with the father could drive him further away, making him even less inclined to be an active participant in his child's life. Yet the single mothers often expressed how their expectations about father involvement were not being met. The question single mothers thus faced was whether they should address these grievances or overlook them and pretend that “*everything was fine*” [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]. Lumka had to continuously deal with her own unmet expectations about father involvement:

You don't really get through [the breakup] because it's like [the father of the child] doesn't make the time. You know I'm trying to make the time to have him involved in the parenting thing, and so we would talk about it and he would be like, “okay I had to go with my friends” and all that. So, it's not something I will “get over”. It's something that he would need to fix in his life, to make time, to make time to [...] be with his

daughter. The only thing I thought was right for me to do at that time was just to talk about it, just to find out where does it go wrong.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Thus, according to Lumka, her daughter's father did not honour his time commitments, although he saw his daughter every second week. For Lumka it was important to engage him in conversation and try to understand the situation from his perspective.

Nokwanda's situation stood out from the other participant experiences. The biological father of her child was very involved in their lives. Nokwanda believed she made an active effort to cultivate an amicable relationship with him. She stressed the need to be flexible and not too controlling:

Nokwanda: So, it is not me saying [in an angry, yelling voice] "You are going to be there for the baby!" [...] You know, when it comes to being a woman, we love to control. When you make time for everybody, when you try to fit in somebody's schedule, we lack flexibility. [...] You know, we love to take control. We even go overboard controlling somebody. You can never control somebody's time.

Interviewer: Can you explain what you mean by that?

Nokwanda: This is what I mean, if you are my friend, I will force you and make you understand that every weekend we need to be together. [...] But that is not actually to uplift each other. [P1_Nokwanda_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Nokwanda further explained that empathy was important. From her perspective, not all men are handy with children and mothers should not be too critical when communicating with the fathers of their children:

I would say, many females lack in understanding. [...] Not all men are blessed to be there for the babies. [...] He can love her in the sense of “that is my daughter”, but not all of them are handy with kids. Maybe he does not have that sense of humour with the kids. So, he always gets bored. So, we always think that he is a bad father: “You know my baby daddy always pushes my baby off.” But he actually loves that child. [...] And then when my baby gets hurt, you will see how quickly he gets to the hospital. Then it hits you: “I broke something that could have been good between my daughter and my baby daddy.” So, time management and the family schedule and the family love, it’s always broken by the females. But we are not actually aware that we are actually causing the breakage. We always think: “No, he did it, because he had other options.” But we don’t look at ourselves. [P1_Nokwanda_24_1chld_extended_4extra_employed]

One can see in the quote above that Nokwanda critically evaluated the role women sometimes play in father absenteeism. Nokwanda stressed the need for women to be self-aware and recognise how they may contribute to mother-father conflict.

Nokwanda’s ex-partner was self-motivated and committed. He displayed an eagerness to have a relationship with his daughter. However, Nokwanda also believed that she created an emotionally open, trusting environment and this contributed to his willingness:

Nokwanda: He wanted to be there. He saw that he needed to be there for her. I didn’t give him that book “How to be a parent”. To him it came naturally. So, he wanted to be the mother, he wanted to be the father. He wanted to be that friend also.

Interviewer: So, do you think you just struck it lucky with him? Or do you think there are some things that you did to help create this situation?

Nokwanda: *Okay, I will give myself the credit. I did it. [Laughter.] When we both met, he was very very different. He was very much going out, he didn't care, he just left on the spur of the moment. And I was the first serious girlfriend. So together we created something different. We became friends before lovers. [...] And the one thing that was nice, I am not the arguing type. So, whenever he would do something wrong, he wouldn't know that I am very angry. So, I would always argue in the form of, we are just having a normal conversation, like we are socialising now. No yelling or screaming. So, I think that's one thing that also made him open up when he was doing something wrong. So, he was very honest. He is still honest. He still updates me even if it is none of my business. But there was no "none of your business" in our relationship. He was very honest and I was also there as a friend. I created the space for him to be there emotionally. Made him trust me with anything, whatever is personal that is happening at home. And for me as a person, made me also see that, okay, he's a guy, but his kind is very rare to find.*[P1_Nokwanda_24_1chld_extended_4extra_employed]

Nokwanda's supportive, non-judgemental approach helped build a solid relationship with the biological father. The excerpt illustrates how well Nokwanda dealt with conflict and the restraint she exercised when angry. In return, the father of Nokwanda's child seemed to be transparent and open with her. Nokwanda and her ex-partner had built a resilient friendship.

The current theme illustrates that mothers and fathers needed to try to re-establish a working relationship after their romantic involvement ended. This seemed to be easier when there was constructive communication between them and a strong friendship to build on. It was also easier when fathers were financially prepared, intrinsically motivated, and excited about their new paternal identity. In cases where co-parents could not resolve their disputes independently, the judicial system could be used to intervene.

5.2.2.2 *Create personal emotional boundaries*

As seen in Chapter 4 the relationship between some participants, and the men who fathered their children, became turbulent during pregnancy, causing feelings of anger, resentment, and heartache on the part of mothers. The participants often described the dissolution of these formerly romantic relationships as something beyond their control, especially when fathers denied paternity, cut off communication, or became romantically involved with a third party. In these instances, the participants did not always have the agency to obtain or retain the active involvement of fathers. To some degree there was thus a feeling of loss of control. However, seven participants spoke about their ability to at least control how they *reacted*, or *acted on* their negative feelings towards the father. The subtheme, *Creating personal emotional boundaries*, centres on the single mother's ability to manage her emotions regarding this failed relationship. It emphasises the effort single mothers made to ensure that conflict with, or ill feelings towards, the father did not spill over into child-centred routines and interactions. This subtheme linked directly with the thematic category, *Managing personal mental health* (section 5.1), but is discussed here because it is also an essential part of managing adult relationships.

The single mothers spoke of how they made a conscious choice to regulate their feelings. It was important for participants not to let residual anger and resentment towards the father affect how they engaged with their children. Lindelwa explained:

You know, with some people they tend to take out whatever differences they had with the father on the child and that is one thing, you never say anything bad about the father of the child in front of the child. When the father pisses me off I want to call him the worst names you can imagine, but I will never do that in front of the child. [...] I will never talk bad about his father in front of him. Even if maybe things change and his father wants to get to know him better, I would not stand in the way of that. You need,

as a single parent, well mother, you need to let go of the anger. I know you did not choose to be a single parent, you would want the father to be there with you, but you just need to let go of the anger first and everything will fall into place because we find that we are being harsh on our children because we still have that anger for the father, especially if the child looks like his father, then you will be reminded every day, “damn this bastard left me with this”, but you just have to work on that anger first and then the mother instinct will kick in. You know what you need to do for your child.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

Lindelwa emphasised that she first had to “work on” or “let go of the anger”, which was followed by “the mother instinct kicking in”. Resigning herself to the reality that the biological father would probably never be a doting husband and parent seemed to help Lindelwa in her parenting role. Similarly, Yonele explained how important it was for her to censor her own feelings and behaviours for the sake of her daughter:

I’m feeling happy. [...] I still do love [the father of my child], but those stuff that happened between us, it changed a lot. But I’ve got a baby to think about I can’t just – even sometimes I will be angry, maybe my baby doesn’t have stuff to eat and I will just want to go inside [the father’s] house and go cause chaos there, but I think of my baby. So, if I didn’t have a child, maybe I would just go and do that, but now I have to think of my baby first, you see, I’m happy as a person because I’ve got a baby to think about – she just bring joys in my life. [P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Appropriating the “mother” identity into one’s self-concept (discussed in section 5.1.2) often implied a grappling with what it meant to be a *single* mother. Kholeka believed that single mothers should accept that the fathers of their children might never be adequately supportive.

Kholeka highlighted that accepting this reality could have a direct impact on women's psychological health and wellbeing:

Share your problems and experiences with other single mothers, because I believe not talking about your problems leads to stress and depression. You would notice that depression is common in youth, and we think people are fine when we see them on the streets. Some fail to accept that they are no longer with fathers of their children. People need to accept when people are no longer part of their lives and focus on themselves and their kids. [P25_Kholeka_25_2children_extended_1extra_employed]

Kholeka implored single mothers to seek help and psychological support so that they could avoid stress and depression. Nokwanda also mentioned how important it was to control her emotions and not let past hurts and fears hinder the relationship between father and child:

When it comes to engaging with the father, personal experience breaks the family. If the father had once hurt me, I always assume that it's going to happen again. The baggage carries over when the baby is around. So that's where it breaks the husband or the boyfriend. And that's where it all creates the distance even when you guys are in one room. So, when you engage with one another, [...] we want him to be there emotionally. But you always hear he has a girlfriend, so if he takes my baby and goes somewhere and I'm not there, the girlfriend is gonna be there. And she's gonna be like playing house and happy family and I'm not there in the picture. Which is, it shouldn't be a problem. Yes, it's a challenge, but it shouldn't be the reason [my daughter] can't be around her father when I am not around. So, that's where it all starts. [...] That's why I say, having time for yourself, and making time for yourself is one thing that keeps you emotionally going. It keeps you physically fit for whatever comes.

[P1_Nokwanda_24_1chld_extended_4extra_employed]

Nokwanda understood that her own fears and disappointments regarding her failed relationship should not hinder the relationship between her daughter and her daughter's father. For Nokwanda, finding "me-time" helped her regulate her emotions (similar to the theme *Wellbeing behaviours* in section 5.1.3). Thus, women had to find an outlet for their negative feelings and had to ensure that contentious relationships with biological fathers did not filter into child-centred routines.

5.2.2.3 Filling the father-role gap in family routines

A family routine can be imagined as a semipermeable cell membrane. A single mother permits, or receives, varying degrees of father contact into the space. Interviews revealed that the frequency and quality of father involvement in family routines were varied. At the one end of the spectrum, Nokwanda had a strong co-parenting coalition with the biological father. Although her ex-partner was not officially deemed to be part of their household, Nokwanda allowed and cultivated extensive involvement from him during their everyday routines. Nokwanda explained that both she and her ex-partner made an effort to spend time together, especially over weekends. Nokwanda also tried to get involved in his interests, such as taking her daughter to watch his soccer matches on Saturdays:

He is a soccer player, so if we can't go and watch the match then we make alternatives, but most of the weekends we always together, he visits, we also visit, every weekend we must see each other. We both want to be there for [our daughter]. And as we are not together, we don't make that an excuse for not being at the same place where she is. [...] So, we always want to be there when the other is there for the child. If we go shopping, we both want to go shopping. If I am going to go and watch a movie, all three of us are going to go and watch a movie. So, we don't say "I'm going to give you time

with her, I already have my time with her midweek”. [...] So that’s the kind of friendship that we have. [...] That is the kind of environment we both created.

[P1_Nokwanda_24_1chld_extended_4extra_employed]

Thus, in Nokwanda’s case, the father of her child was interwoven into their family routines. Because Nokwanda and her ex-partner had a sound friendship, she permitted his presence in their “in-group”. Violet and her ex-partner had an amicable, but more detached, relationship. Violet had a weekend schedule according to which she and the biological father subdivided certain child-centred leisure routines. Thus the biological father was selectively allowed to spend time with his son. Violet spoke of a range of enjoyable child-related activities that the father supervised, such as going to the beach, eating out, playing games, and going to the Aquarium. Hence both Nokwanda and Violet’s children had routines that incorporated their fathers. At the other extreme of the spectrum, family routines had little to no paternal involvement, such as Thumeka [P17_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed], who mentioned that her son “*plays with only dolly*” and “*if he has to pee he will sit down like a woman*” because “*he knows nothing about a man*” (as discussed in Chapter 4).

It was explained in Chapter 4 that, in the face of father absenteeism, some participants worried about the social, emotional, and cultural development of their children. For example, the previously mentioned Thumeka worried that her son’s masculinity would be in jeopardy if there were no male figures who could set an example. Some participants discussed ancestral and cultural knowledge that they believed could only be passed on by men, and that fathers, in particular, should help children connect with important ancestral spirits. When children had intermittent or even little contact with their fathers, mothers aimed to incorporate other quasi-paternal symbols into the space. These symbols could be people (e.g. other male role models to act as father figures), or even paternal-like behaviours (e.g. perceived masculine activities

such as sport). One can see how Violet and Nondumiso tried to incorporate paternal symbols into proximal spaces by finding father figures and male role models for their children:

When my son is well-taken care of, he has a father figure. Children, they need the same sex parent, so if he [the father] is not involved, I would then have to look for somebody that he [my son] would look up to; somebody that is just a father figure, not necessarily a boyfriend, but I mean, just a person that I would see, even if it's a brother, an uncle.
 [P13_Violet_27_1child_extended_1extra_employed]

I know there are some role models, men-figure role models in my community that can help me to make some better choices about my son.
 [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Thus, mothers could find other people and ensure, as Anathi mentioned, that “*the space of the father not being there, has been filled*” [P8_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]. Yet some participants insisted on the amorphous nature of gender, highlighting their own ability to fulfil both male and female parenting roles, as can be seen in the following excerpt from Akhona’s interview:

Play both the roles. You don't have to say this child doesn't have a father. Be the father for your child. That's the only thing that has been keeping me going. I don't care whether [the father] is somewhere out there with other girls. I don't care. But one thing I know is that I'm the mother; I am the father of my child. That's all.
 [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Akhona expressed how important it was for her to perform certain activities that might represent masculinity. Akhona stated that she was critically aware of the shortage of men who

could engage with her son during daily routines, despite her brother's input and despite the fact that the biological father visited his son every few weeks. Akhona believed that she had to make a conscious effort to participate in so-called 'masculine' routines with her son. Accordingly, even though Akhona did not enjoy engaging in sport-related pastimes (a hobby she believed belonged to the male domain), she considered it her duty to kick around a soccer ball with her son on a daily basis. The current theme illustrated that mothers grapple with the complexity of father involvement and need to decide how and when fatherhood would be represented during family routines.

5.2.3 Category 2, theme 3: Acquire and accept assistance from the wider community

Nine single mothers mentioned instances where support from outside the immediate family helped them deal with this challenging phase of their lives. The participants often mentioned friends and other professionals (i.e. staff at non-profit organisations or nurses) who helped them. As the following quote from Thumeka implies, receiving social support from outside the immediate family was not a passive process. It sometimes required the active involvement of the single mother and a deliberate effort by her to reach out to others. The need to seek help was especially important in Thumeka's case, because she did not have immediate family members who could assist her:

So, find all the help you can get, all the advices you can get. When you have a problem with a child, go to people who would think they know better about this. If he's ill you go to the clinic you know. If he doesn't sleep at night you go to someone who know or who have a child before you. "How did you do when a child doesn't sleep? What happened to that child?" You know? [P17_Thumeka_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Friends could provide single mothers with practical support, such as fetching children from the crèche. However, what was more apparent in the data was the essential part friends and professionals played during the months of pregnancy. Onele experienced a great deal of emotional turmoil when she discovered that she was pregnant and initially could not tell her family for fear of retribution. Rather, Onele confided in friends and classmates, and these women provided her with the emotional support and advice she needed. Once Onele gave birth, she had to suspend her education and her friends continued to support her:

My friends, I don't know how to explain it, they were the angels sent by God for me, because financially, emotionally they supported me all the way. They were like the fathers of this child. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

In a similar vein, Lindelwa's pregnancy was emotionally taxing because her relationship with the child's father was ending. Lindelwa felt heartbroken until a friend helped her reappraise and "switch" her approach to the situation:

Somebody knocked some sense into me. You know I was sleeping, like literally crying every single night. [...] And a friend of mine told me that I have to do this for myself: "Do not let your child go through all of this, because if you are not happy then your child is also not happy." So, I switched and I was like, okay, let it be. I am here. I am going to take care of this baby.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

Four participants spoke of the guidance they obtained from professionals in their vicinity. Nondumiso explained that it was vital for single mothers to connect with women who had gone through similar experiences:

By engaging yourself with other single mothers, seeking support, not because you are a weak person but [...] you also need some mental, spiritual help from some other women that could give you power to the struggles you are facing.

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Esihle, who also struggled to accept her pregnancy, attended antenatal classes provided by a non-profit organisation. The organisation opened a channel for her to meet like-minded women who were in a similar predicament. Engaging with other pregnant, single women helped to normalise Esihle's situation and reduce isolation, as can be seen in the following quote:

As I was attending antenatal; I met other parents. [...] So, as I was talking to others, I discovered I was not alone. And as I continued doing what we were being taught there, I fell in love with my baby. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Accordingly, the current subtheme illustrates the important role extrafamilial support plays during the first phases of motherhood. Friends and other community members had a positive impact on single mothers' psychological health, especially when these women felt isolated from or ostracised by their families.

5.2.4 Category 2, theme 4: Set boundaries for new dating partners

Information on dating partners was scant, but four single mothers put emphasis on creating clear boundaries with dating partners in order to protect their children's emotional welfare. These four participants were concerned that their children would become emotionally attached to new male companions. There was the risk that, if these new romances ended, their children would not have the emotional maturity or understanding yet to deal with such a loss:

Some other part of me feels like I should have a partner, but now I don't want to expose my son in that type of relationships. I think I have to wait until he's grown up. [...] So I don't want him just to be confused about not having his father around and seeing some face, getting familiar, and having a bond with the person, and maybe in the long run, or short, the person disappears. Then he becomes so vulnerable again.

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

The participants went to great lengths to set parameters in relation to their family life and dating life. Lindelwa explained how she had learnt from past mistakes and now ensured that any new suitor did not have direct contact with her son:

I keep them away: "No, you cannot meet my child. I have a one-year-old. If you go onto Facebook he is there, or on my profile picture on WhatsApp, it is him, so you will meet him there, not face to face, unless you put a ring on it [become engaged or married]."

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

Cebisa explained the great lengths she went to, to keep her morning routine with her son intact on the rare occasions when she stayed over at her boyfriend's home:

If I've gone out for pleasure I know that I need to get up from wherever I am. [...] I need to make sure I get up 4:00 to 5:00 to ensure I get home on time to get my child ready for school. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

For Cebisa it was important to be there in the morning when her son awoke so that she could continue their usual routine. Accordingly, the single mothers used various strategies to set 'in-group' and "out-group" family boundaries, ensuring that their intimate proximal spaces remained emotionally safe and secure for their children. In the following section I will focus

more directly on what occurred in these proximal spaces by discussing the third overarching category, namely *Assistive parent-child actions and interactions during routines*.

5.3 Overarching Category 3: Assistive Parent-Child Actions and Interactions During Routines

During every parent-child routine (i.e. activity setting), the parent and child engage in a series of transactions. Transactions can either facilitate or hinder the flow of the routine. In Chapter 4 I highlighted several immediate, situational challenges that arise during routines, which all negatively affect task execution and parental enjoyment during routines. For example, child noncompliance and disobedience were highlighted as a hindrance by many interviewees. In this section I focus my attention on the resources (be it personal qualities or behavioural strategies) that can improve the immediate mother-child experiences and interactions during a joint activity. This thematic category was broken down into two main themes, *Beneficial parental actions during a routine*, and *Beneficial child influences during a routine* (see Figure 5.5). Therefore I will first discuss the range of strategies that the parents used to help them regulate children, increase child cooperation, and foster child development (section 5.3.1). In the second section under this thematic category (section 5.3.2), I will highlight certain features displayed or possessed by children that may aid their parents during routines.

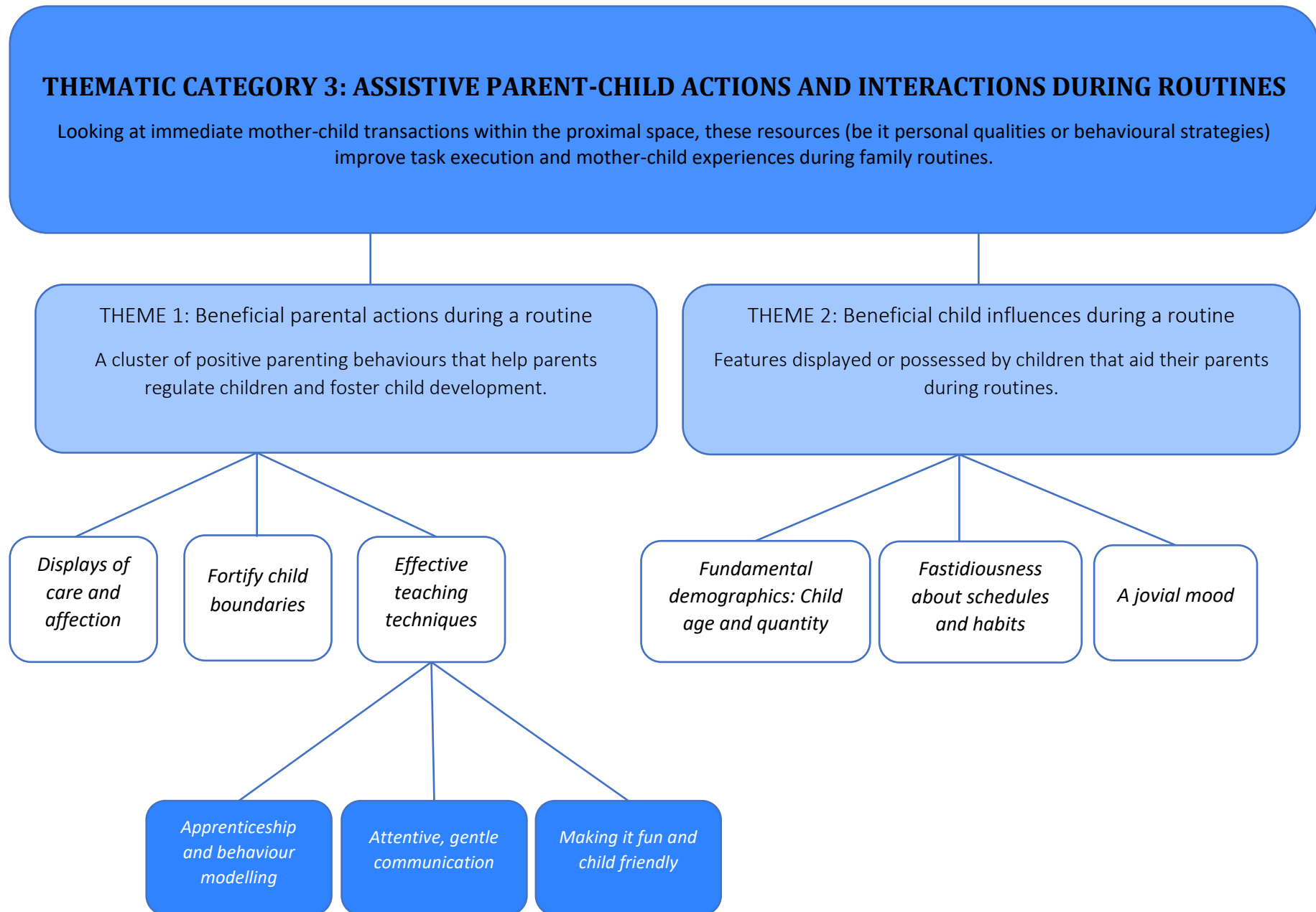


Figure 5.5. Themes and subthemes for category 3: Assistive parent-child actions and interactions during routines.

5.3.1 Category 3, theme 1: Beneficial parental actions during a routine

The data analysis revealed a range of parenting behaviours that mothers described as important during family routines. The cluster of behaviours found in the data centred on three subthemes, namely *Displays of care and affection* (section 5.3.1.1), *Fortify child boundaries* (section 5.3.1.2), and *Effective teaching techniques* (section 5.3.1.3). Effective teaching techniques could further be subdivided into three behavioural clusters, namely i) *Apprenticeship and behaviour modelling*, ii) *Attentive, gentle communication*, and iii) *Making it fun and child friendly*.

5.3.1.1 *Displays of care and affection*

Most participants described how much they loved their children and gave examples of how they displayed care and affection during routines, such as the examples from Onele, Cebisa, and Phathiswa:

For me I think parenting starts by loving him. Sometimes when we wake up in the morning he kisses me and hugs me so that's our good morning and our goodnight as well. When he comes from school we hug and kiss [...] so to me it starts with love.
[P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

When he comes to me or we are having a conversation just the two of us, I want him to feel free to talk to me about anything. I want to show him love, hug him and say goodbye to him when I'm leaving the house going somewhere. I want him to feel that his mother loves him. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

We chatting about how school was [...], I ask him what he did, I am jumping and singing the words, so that he knows that I love him and I care.

[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Displays of affection can be built into the routine and become ingrained in the behavioural scripts followed by parents and children. A kiss upon greeting, a hug before bed, or a meaningful one-on-one conversation about the happenings at school were all examples of routinised displays of parental affection.

5.3.1.2 Fortify child boundaries

Parents struggled with their children's compliance with a myriad of routines, including bath-time, playtime, watching TV, bedtime, and mealtime routines. Ten participants stressed the need to be resolute when enforcing family rules, and set firm boundaries for their children during family routines, as seen in the quote from Esihle:

He knows – “no” is “no” and if – I don't compromise; if something was not right yesterday it is still not right today. [...] As I said earlier; for me a “no” is a “no”.

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Participants emphasised the importance of being assertive and steadfast. Onele explained that setting boundaries was part of her maternal duty, because children would not set such boundaries for themselves. Setting boundaries could also be teaching moments. Three participants stressed the need to continuously explain to children why certain rules were in place. These clarifying messages helped to reinforce rules, as mentioned by Zintle:

It is important to teach the children [...] Talking to him, explaining to him every time [...] that helps. [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Esihle believed that edification with regard to family rules and decorum was effective when it occurred from an early age:

If you teach a child early they will understand. He will understand that I'm not supposed to do this. [...] It is nice to let a child get used to things early.

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

However, Unathi noted that it was still important to be reasonable and to take note of children's age-related limitations and cognitive capacities. Thus, for Unathi, parental instruction should take place within a context of empathic patience, as seen in the following excerpt:

To be calm and understand him sometimes, because he is just a child, he does not yet know right and wrong. [...] But, I understand that he is still learning so he does not know right from wrong, but I am trying to engage him on that and show him how to do things. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Consistently implementing rules necessitated some adaptability on the part of parents in that they needed to be able to switch their communication style from accommodating, affectionate and playful to firmer if the need arose during a routine. Lindelwa and Onele both described enjoyable interactions with their children during typical everyday routines, such as bathing or getting ready in the morning. However, children could at times start to delay the completion of tasks, especially when they got overexcited. Lindelwa and Onele explained that, in these instances, they changed tactics and became sterner to try to contain the frenetic energy of their children:

I am the mother; he has to listen to me. I will pull out the “mother” hat now: “You do this and this and we get out of this house now!”

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

Then I have to change from being lovey dovey and then be: “Now get out of the water”

[said in a stern voice]. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

Four participants gave examples of rewards they give their children for good behaviour (such as a piece of fruit, sweets, time set aside to watch cartoons, or another enjoyable activity like going to church). There was also the possibility of a punishment, such as taking away some of these privileges.

In addition, the participants gave examples of how they rearranged or influenced the physical environment because it prompted more positive behaviours from their children. A basic example of this is when parents pre-emptively packed away objects that had elicited child misbehaviour in the past. By restricting children’s access to these objects, a similar infraction could not occur. Furthermore, some of the parents used “triggers” in the physical space where a routine typically occurred to prime children for the events to come. A trigger in the immediate setting signalled to children what behaviours parents would expect from them next. Hence, by manipulating the environment, parents could shepherd children in a reasonably unobtrusive manner. Environmental manipulations could be as straightforward as switching off lights and electronic devices to signal that it was bedtime, as seen in the excerpt from Yonele’s interview:

Sometimes [my mother] is watching the TV in the dining room then [the children] go with her. [...] Then you just switch the TV off in the dining room and the lights so they know that it’s time to go to bed.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

Finally, parental vigilance played a role in maintaining appropriate child boundaries during family routines. Four participants mentioned the importance of attentively observing their children during routines. Even when parents left their children under the care of other family members, they felt compelled to get status updates with telephonic check-in routines. Also, the participants lived in high-crime neighbourhoods and they thus recognised how important it was to safeguard children from potential predators. The current subtheme illustrates how essential it was for parents to set boundaries within and around proximal spaces. During routines children needed firm family rules and behavioural expectations for their own biopsychosocial development, as well as fortified perimeters around these spaces so that they could learn and play in safety.

5.3.1.3 Effective teaching techniques

All the participants in this study spoke of important values and skills that they tried to pass on to their children. Education seemed to be incredibly important to the mothers, especially formal education, as it was deemed to be a vital pathway out of poverty. The competencies that parents tried to impart related to practical, everyday tasks (such as how to correctly bath, dress, clean, and cook); formal educational activities (such as knowing the alphabet or months of the year); and important social values (including respect for oneself and others, gender-related virtues, cultural traditions, the worth and benefit of learning, and the importance of cooperation, support, and family togetherness). Another value that parents tried to pass on to their children was the importance of time management and adhering to schedules, but this will be discussed in section 5.4 because it relates to schedule implementation.

Parents used a wide variety of techniques to educate their children. I have grouped these techniques under three headings: i) *Apprenticeship and behaviour modelling*, ii) *Attentive*,

clarifying communication, and iii) *Making routines fun and child friendly*. These are discussed briefly in the following three sections.

i) *Apprenticeship and behaviour modelling*

Parents often demonstrated to their children how they should complete tasks or how they should behave. This was sometimes done through apprenticeship, where the parent and child engaged in activities together and the child acted as the parent's trainee helper. Apprenticeship can be seen in the following quote from Zintle as she described how she and her son washed their clothes together over weekends:

I always teach him [...] "when you big, you must do like this, you must do like that". [...] I tell him that, "no this is right, you must leave these clothes, this is right, this is dirty, I must wash these ones". [...] He is really a helper. He wants to help me with everything. What helps is talking to him: "Don't do this, don't, give me this, it's fine you can give me this." [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Apart from apprenticeship, parents tried to model appropriate values for children in the way they executed tasks or engaged with other people. Unathi stressed how important it was for her to model appropriate behaviour and to set a good example for her child:

As a parent sometimes the child learns from you about the things you do and being organised, etcetera, because the children grow so quickly and they observe, you can see the child is still young, he does not know what you are doing, so you must respect whatever you do in front of your child, because sometimes they adapt to you. So you must be an example to your child. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Akhona, who had an active, headstrong young boy, took behavioural modelling very seriously. When Akhona felt her son was being obstinate, she tried to model to her son how to compromise and cooperate during family routines:

I teach [my son] one thing – that okay if you want me to follow you when you doing something, you need to learn to follow me as well when I want you to do something. Then that’s one thing he is slowly getting to understand that: “Okay, fine, today you win mommy, tomorrow I will win. So today we do your thing, tomorrow we do my thing.”

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

The current subtheme illustrates the value the single mothers placed on behaviour modelling and setting appropriate examples in front of their children. By letting children play the role of apprentice, mothers also scaffolded intricate tasks that were beyond their children’s developmental capacities.

ii) Attentive, clarifying communication

Something that seemed to go hand in hand with apprenticeship and modelling was the ability of parents to communicate effectively with their children. The data showed that, when educating their children, the parents tried to give systematic verbal instructions (e.g. “step one, do this, then step two, do this). Parents also explained cause-and-effect relationships (e.g. “If you do this, then that will happen”). They also aimed to provide context and made an effort to answer “why” questions (e.g. “Why is it important to get up and go to school?” or “Why does mommy have to go to work?” or “Why can’t mommy play now?”), as one can see in the following quote from Esihle:

If you're honest and you give him a reason why. Also giving him answers to his questions, that is also good. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Lumka believed that, even though her daughter was still young, it was important to give her context and to explain why certain routines were valuable:

Right now she's in preschool and you know in the mornings we would be fighting for her to wake up and get ready for school and all that, and we would have a conversation that: "Baby, the reason why mommy is doing this is for you to go to school and better yourself." She doesn't understand it now, but I will tell her that for as long as I can so that she understands that the reason why she has to wake up so early in the morning is so that she could be what she wants to be or who she wants to be in the future. So we having that conversation now already that, "this is painful now, but this is what you need to do in order for that to happen or for this to happen." Yes, to understand the value of education. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

How parents communicated with their children was just as important as *what* they communicated. In the interviews the parents used phrases like "*speak softly*" [P16_Nolitha_24_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed] or "*teach him nicely*" [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]. Both the interviews and video recordings demonstrated that it was most effective when parents got down to their child's eye level (even if it meant sitting on the floor), used gentle touch (e.g. holding the child's hands), kept a calm tone, and used loving nicknames such as "baby" to help children understand a difficult situation. This form of attentive, clarifying communication helped to keep routines running smoothly.

iii) Making routines fun and child friendly

Five of the interviewed parents recognised the importance of making family routines and learning experiences more fun and child friendly. The video data confirmed this theme. Parents used jokes, games, singing, jumping, dancing, laughing, drawing, and even playing with bubbles as a means to engage children during routines. In the following quote, Lumka describes the strategy she uses to reinforce what her daughter learned at school:

You know, right now she's a very playful child, hey, so everything to her is play. If you want her to understand something it has to be done in a playful way. But, now we don't have so much time, but when we do have time she would come from preschool and we'd talk about what was her day like, what they did at school. She would do drawings. She would sing the things they sing at school. We'd play together. We do the things she does at school in a playful way. She will come back and tell me: "We do this, we do paintings there". And so she would have the paintings and we'd like: "What is this, what colour is this? Oh, this is green. What alphabet is that?" She knows nothing about alphabets. So that's where we focusing more on alphabets. We play in an educational way. I try to teach her what they have already taught in crèche to emphasise on that because she loves playing. Ja, so if you want her to learn something it must be in a playful manner.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Observation data showed that several participants (e.g. Nokwanda, Lindelwa, Sindiswa, and Yandiswa) were very skilled at making their children's routines fun and engaging. Play was an effective way for the participants to impart knowledge. For example, play such as singing and dancing kept Sindiswa's son excited and focused on learning activities. This made it easier for Sindiswa to manage her son's learning activities and concentration. Sindiswa's one-room home was packed with toys and fun educational posters. The routines of Sindiswa and her son were

strongly contrasted with those of Kholeka, who had a more sombre, highly structured homework routine with her son. Kholeka and her son's routine did not incorporate any play, and mother and son simply worked through activities in a book. Other adults in the space (e.g. grandfather) gave little input. In the case of Kholeka, the family seemed to be more emotionally disconnect from and disinterested in the activity (seen in body language and facial expressions).

Video data confirmed all of the themes described under this third thematic category and illustrated how important it was for parents to 1) *display care and affection*; 2) *fortify child boundaries*; and 3) *effectively teach children by modelling appropriate behaviour using attentive, clarify communication, and making children's routines fun and child friendly*. A perfect example of all of these parenting behaviours, and the effect it has on children, came from the observation of Nokwanda and her infant daughter's bathing routine.

During Nokwanda's home observation, there were constant serve-and-return responses between mother and her eight-month-old infant. When the baby made a sound, Nokwanda responded with animated, exaggerated, happy facial expressions. Nokwanda constantly made use of motherese vocalisations (“*go, go, go, go*”, “*lu, lu, lu, lu*” and “*pha, pha, pha, pha*”) in a sing-song voice. Nokwanda and her daughter regularly made eye contact because Nokwanda ensured that she was at eye level with her daughter by kneeling, bending down, or sitting on the floor. Nokwanda regularly displayed affection with loud kisses (smacking her lips together and burying her face in her little girl's neck), playful touching, snuggling, gently rubbing lotion on her daughter's skin, and swaying her daughter soothingly. Nokwanda would often bounce her daughter playfully. At some point, Nokwanda humorously clapped her hands together and splashed water. One could see Nokwanda's daughter intrigued by these sounds and the infant started to imitate her mother by slapping the water and the plastic bathtub. Thus, by imitating her mother, Nokwanda's daughter was able to explore her environment. Furthermore,

Nokwanda imitated the noises her daughter made and pretended to have a conversation with her. Nokwanda's daughter, nicknamed Mica (pseudonym), reciprocated:

Mica: *Aaagh!*

Nokwanda: *Aaagh!*

Mica: *Aaaagh!*

Nokwanda: *Agh!*

Mica: *Aaagh!*

Nokwanda: *Aagh!*

In a conversational style, Nokwanda sometimes gave running commentary on the tasks she was performing. For example, while she was shampooing, Nokwanda would comment, “*your hair smells fresh, hey*”, and while brushing her daughter's hair Nokwanda declared, “*let's comb your hair*”. Nokwanda made remarks that reinforced the importance of the routine, such as saying to her daughter: “*Yes, the babies wash every day. Mica, always, always! Babies wash all the time.*” Nokwanda regularly used her daughter's name during the routine. Nokwanda's phrases also illustrate to her daughter the concept of personhood, e.g. “*Mica is done!*” and “*Mica's hair is fresh!*” and “*Mica can fly!*”. Nokwanda modelled to her daughter social decorum and manners, such as ending bath-time by thanking her daughter for being a good girl: “*Thank you! Thank you so much girly, you are a big girl now!*” Nokwanda remained vigilant throughout the routine and created boundaries for her daughter by telling her why she could not do certain things (e.g. “*Okay, that's not something you can eat. No, it's a phone, you cannot eat it.*”) and then demonstrating the appropriate behaviour (e.g. illustrating other uses for the mobile phone such as taking videos and pictures). By taking pictures of her daughter with the mobile phone and showing her daughter these images, Nokwanda again illustrated to her daughter the concept of personhood. Phrases also demonstrated the nature of their mother-

daughter relationship, such as when Nokwanda commented: “*My little Mica*”. Throughout the entire routine, Nokwanda’s daughter enjoyed most of her mother’s focus and the infant only experienced a few seconds of maternal inattentiveness while Nokwanda was pouring bathwater. Nokwanda’s daughter responded to her mother with eye contact, soft happy moans, behavioural imitations, and smiles. When Nokwanda’s daughter became unhappy, it only lasted for a few seconds because her mother was able to soothe her quickly. Nokwanda used a relaxed tone when her daughter became a little upset and vocal. Thus, during the entire bathing routine, Nokwanda could engage her daughter, while at the same time performing the various practical tasks needed to execute the routine (e.g. undressing her daughter, preparing the bathwater, washing her, and dressing her). The same serve-and-return sequences were visible in Sindiswa’s routine with her son, even though he was a little older. Thus, irrespective of the child’s age, these parenting behaviours seemed to have had a positive impact on the children. In essence, the video data supported the interview findings.

5.3.2 Category 3, theme 2: Beneficial child influences during a routine

The data showed that during parent-child routines the child does not play a passive role, but also contributes to the successful execution of everyday tasks. Three child-related qualities or advantages came to the fore during data analysis, namely *Fundamental demographics: Child age and quantity* (section 5.3.2.1), *Fastidiousness about schedules and habits* (section 5.3.2.2), and *A jovial mood* (section 5.3.2.3). In the following excerpts I briefly present each of these subthemes.

5.3.2.1 *Fundamental demographics: Child age and quantity*

Older children have better cognitive capacities and can be relied on to complete tasks more independently or comprehend instructions more fully than younger children. Five interviewed

participants gave examples of the age-related competencies that their children had begun to display because these children were now ages three to four, as opposed to infancy. For example, due to financial restrictions, Onele was not always able to buy her son treats, but she felt he was able to mentally grasp the challenging circumstances the family had to deal with and therefore could better manage his own disappointment. Esihle also believed that her four-year-old son was able to comprehend that the family had financial restrictions. In addition to understanding family context, Esihle's son was more involved in routines and acted as his mother's assistant by washing himself and packing away dishes after dinner:

So, his job is to pack away the dishes. [...] And [my son] is able to wash himself. [...]

It does help; at least if you smear soap on his body he is able to rinse himself off.

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Similarly, Zintle had a very competent three-year-old son who was eager to assist her with chores, such as doing the laundry:

Well, my child likes to help me a lot when I am doing washing. He even takes the clean ones and give it to me: "Mommy here's the other ones".

[P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

As children's understanding of everyday tasks improved they needed less adult supervision and assistance, which gave single parents some respite during routines. But the video data revealed that age was also a double-edged sword, because an increase in age meant greater child autonomy, and thus more active (and sometimes misbehaving) children who needed to be supervised with greater vigilance.

It also stands to reason that an increase in the number of children in the home will be associated with an increase in childcare duties, thus producing greater parental strain. Lindelwa pointed out how fortunate she was that she only had one child:

If I had three kids then I would not have a routine as well. So, I think it is maybe because I only have one child. [...] But, if you have three little people, you want them to get dressed, washed, like three times the stress.

[P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

In essence, child age and the number of children in the home were fundamental child-related demographics that affected how well parents could manage their family routines. With fewer children, and more mature children, the task demands of family routines were less stringent.

5.3.2.2 Fastidiousness about schedules and habits

Certain children may intuitively champion the standardisation of weekly routines and effortlessly enjoy following a strict schedule. Five participants mentioned that their children valued routinisation and consistency. Unsurprisingly, the children seemed to champion consistency when they enjoyed certain routines. The participants reported that they also acquired energy and motivation from their children's vigour and this, in turn, helped them to maintain these routines during times of exhaustion or mental depletion. This can be seen in the quote by Onele when she spoke of her son's breakfast and bathing routines. Onele felt that her son acted as schedule monitor, reminding her of tasks that needed to be completed:

Then he is the one who'll be telling me you have to cook the porridge [...] So I will cook the porridge and he will be: "We have to wash me, wash me, I want to wear my clothes." [...] It's a very nice time for him because sometimes I am still, sometimes

you feel like: “Oh, I’m so tired I just feel like sleeping all the time.” He is the one reminding me, all the time and if I say, “No man, just go to bed and sleep”, he will say, “But I haven’t taken a bath!” So sometimes he is motivating me in a way.

[P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

From the excerpt above one can see that a child can play a significant role in how well routines are maintained. Similarly, Zintle described her son as her time keeper. Zintle’s son seemed to possess an internal clock that acted as his mother’s reminder when the timing of routines did not follow the typical pattern:

He knows now this is the time and even if I forgot or maybe it is two minutes past the time, he says, “Mamma I want to wash now”. He also reminds me it is that time for bathing. [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Whether these child characteristics were innate or nurtured cannot be determined from the interview data, but genetics and environment often interact with one another. It is possible that some children are naturally more conscientious, preferring punctuality, and have the skills to organise and plan more proficiently than others. It may also be, as will be discussed in section 5.4, that children can be taught to value routine and to be ‘programmed’ so that schedule adherence becomes a habit.

5.3.2.3 A jovial mood

The data suggested that, when children were happy during routines, their parents became happy. A child’s positive mood could have a reciprocal, positive effect on the parent. Four participants described situations where laughing, cheerful children increased the parents’ own enjoyment of family routines. Video data confirmed this reciprocal relationship. Jovial children

could even help parents disengage from other life stresses. One can see this type of experience in the following quote from Cebisa:

You know when you are with them it's obvious there'll be laughter, where you even forget things happening around you, such as work stress and life issues. You end up concentrating on the fun and laughter you have with them.

[P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

When asking Yonele what she felt helped her maintain child-centred routines, she spoke of the direct payoff she received during bathing, playing, and coming-home routines, when her daughter and the other children in the family expressed delight:

So, to see that joy in their faces. [...] It's just to see [my daughter's] face, the joy that I have for her. [...] It's helping me maintain the routine to see [the children] happy.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

What this theme has illustrated is the positive impact children can have on their parents. A routine is a space for proximal parent-child exchanges. Reciprocity is an integral characteristic of child-centred routines. Both the parents and children had the capacity to enrich each other's experiences during these family activities. In the following section I will discuss the fourth and final thematic category, namely *Scheduling actions*.

5.4 Overarching Category 4: Scheduling Actions

The fourth thematic category discussed in this chapter centred on the term *schedule*. I previously defined a schedule as a strategy of procedure that allows a family to achieve various family-related objectives through their set of weekly routines (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a).

This strategy of procedure includes (1) a “sequence” in which routines take place, and (2) a “timeframe” for each required family operation (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a, p. 318). This section explores the subcomponents or sub-processes involved in scheduling and is subdivided into two sections, as can be seen in Figure 5.6. The first section will explore *Schedule design* (section 5.4.1) and the second *Schedule implementation* (section 5.4.2). It must be said that these were not mutually exclusive processes and both were ongoing.. Both processes included various steps or strategies that increased schedule efficiency and value.

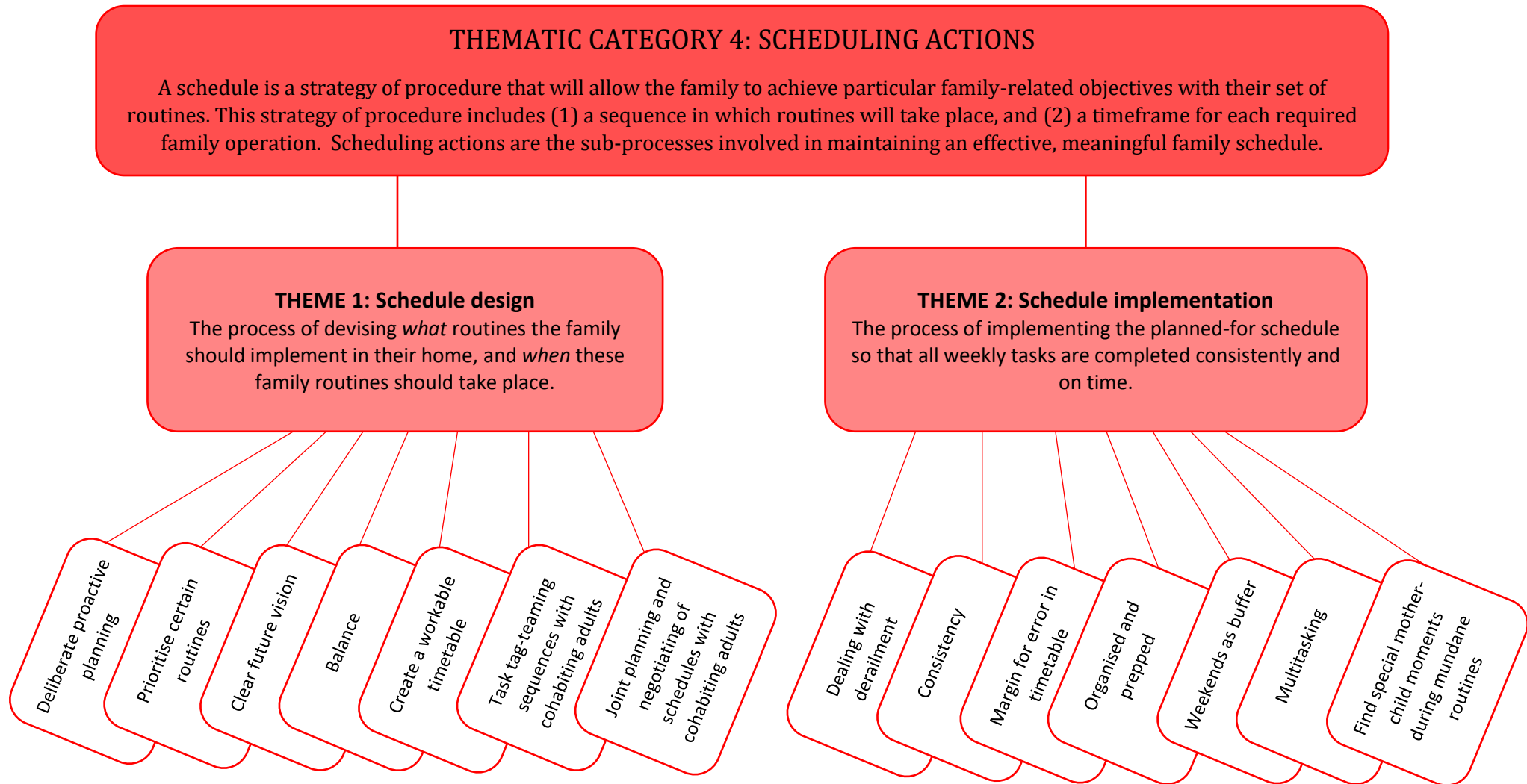


Figure 5.6. Themes and subthemes for category 4: Scheduling actions.

5.4.1 Category 4, theme 1: Schedule design

For several participants a key aspect of managing family routines was the process of designing a daily and/or weekly schedule. The data revealed that, to design such a schedule, a parent had to decide *what* family routines they wanted to engage in and *when* these routines ideally had to take place (while taking into consideration various family resources and constraints).

Scheduling processes did not occur in isolation but was interwoven with other themes and subthemes that I have already highlighted in this chapter. A mother's sense of self and her ability to accept her new parental identity (see *Accept the self as mother*, section 5.1.1.2), her ability to balance multiple core identities (see *Balancing pre- and post-baby selves*, section 5.1.1.5), her ability to cooperate with other live-in family members (see *Cultivate a symbiotic give-and-take relationship with cohabiting family*, section 5.2.1), and her awareness of how present routines could affect future outcomes (see *Rewriting the past, hope for the future*, section 5.1.2.4), were all factors that played a role in schedule design.

Designing a daily schedule of routines and figuring out what needs to be done, and when, includes several steps or strategies. These steps are not successive, but ongoing and cyclical. From Figure 5.6 one can see that the theme *Schedule design* concerns seven subthemes, namely *Deliberate, proactive planning* (section 5.4.1.1), *Prioritise certain routines* (section 5.4.1.2), *Clear future vision* (section 5.4.1.3), *Balance* (section 5.4.1.4), *Create a workable timetable* (section 5.4.1.5), *Task tag-teaming sequences with cohabiting adults* (section 5.4.1.6), and *Joint planning and negotiating schedules with cohabiting adults* (section 5.4.1.7).

5.4.1.1 *Deliberate, proactive planning*

It was apparent from the interviews that, at times, family routines were instituted spontaneously, without major pre-emptive thought or planning on the part of parents:

I can't say it's something I think about, it just happens.

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

We just grow up doing that. We see the elder people were doing that, and we learnt from them. The kids will learn it from us too.

[P17_Thumeka_22_1child_extended_4extra_unemployed]

No, we grew up like that. [P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

I think it comes naturally because it's not something I planned, it's just something I always do. [P19_Aviwe_27_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Thus, some family routines were performed instinctively because parents intuitively followed the behavioural scripts that they were exposed to when they themselves were young. Chapter 4 also showed that parents did not always have complete control over their schedules because of external forces (e.g. work schedules) or a lack of familial resources (e.g. available practical support). Yet, when asking participants what advice they would like to give other single mothers, several participants stressed the importance of being mindful, deliberate, and proactive when devising what daily activities they would like to engage in every week. There was thus some degree of freedom concerning schedule design. This can be seen throughout the subsequent excerpts in this section, such as Akhona [P2_21_1child_extended_5extra=_employed] who used phrases such as “*I manage my time very well*”, “*I even take a pen and write*”, “*I strategise very well*”, “*I'm trying by all means*” and “*I really planned*”. Another example was of Zintle [P21_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed], who used phrases such as “*you must make time*” and “*you must decide which time*”, which also implied intentionality. Thus, for several participants, managing a weekly schedule successfully required some conscious premeditation, rather than a laissez-faire approach.

5.4.1.2 *Prioritise certain routines*

Secondly, a key aspect of schedule design was prioritisation. Due to time constraints, the parents were not always able to adequately engage in every single routine they wished to implement. Some of the participants recognised that there were limits to what they could do and thus, rather than ‘do it all’, they prioritised their children. Prioritising child needs stemmed from participants’ ability to accept their new maternal identity, as can be seen in the following excerpt from Violet’s interview:

I think properly managing of time is key. And prioritising as well, prioritising in the sense that you do what is important to do. But other than that, as a single mother they come first, our children come first. Because for me, he’s my focus, he’s my everything, maybe for other parents, I don’t know, I’m assuming it’s the same. But, I think we just need to manage our time better. We just need to manage our time better because some things we cannot change, some things are beyond our control, such as we are single parents, so we might as well accept and try to find ways that will work for us individually. Individually, but the focus of that, you has to put your child at the centre. If you put your child at the centre, then work around that.

[P13_Violet_27_1child_extended_1extra_employed]

Violet recognised that certain limitations affected her. These limitations were beyond her control (such as the absence of the biological father). Accepting these limitations allowed her to move ahead and solve problems. She therefore prioritised certain routines, ranking her child first, and from there she built the rest of her schedule.

5.4.1.3 Clear future vision

In order to choose which routines should be prioritised, parents had to have a clear future vision for themselves, their children, and their close relatives. The following excerpt from Unathi's interview illustrates the importance of having clear long-term goals:

You are the one who is in charge, whatever you want, it depends on you. [...] First of all you have to have a vision for what you want in life for your child. If you have that mission then you can accomplish that mission; if you do not have any mission for your life then you cannot accomplish anything because you start by neglecting your child because you do not have time for him. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Having clear future aspirations helped Unathi focus her energies on what was important in her life. She later explained that, without such a vision, a parent would prioritise more frivolous pastimes. In another example, Phathiswa, who wished to qualify as a nurse, ensured that she scheduled adequate time to study, in addition to her other parenting and domestic tasks. It was Phathiswa's career vision that motivated her to balance her responsibilities as mother, daughter, and student:

I make sure that I study hard so that I can be something one day and I will be able to do everything I wish to do for my family. [...] Because, I know what I want in the future. I want to be a successful woman. I want to be educated, I want to have my own things, I want to have the life of my dreams.

[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

One can see from Unathi and Phathiswa's interview excerpts that they recognised the link between present-day routines and future success. What parents did in the present would have

long-term consequences. It therefore was imperative to explicitly define their long-term aspirations and structure their daily routines accordingly.

5.4.1.4 Balance

The fourth important concept associated with schedule design is *balance*. Although the single mothers talked of prioritising their children and families, they stressed the importance of not neglecting “me time”, as can be seen in the following excerpt from Anathi’s interview:

I will say, stay true to yourself and who you are, and time management is very important. Make sure that you have time for yourself, your family and for your child as well, and try to balance everything. [...] Every aspect of your life is so important, because it contributes to the goals that you have.

[P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

In Chapter 4 it was clear that the single mothers’ leisure routines often took a backseat. Finding balance and “time for me” was not always easy. Yet participants such as Akhona illustrated how proactive they were when it came to schedule design. In the following excerpt, Akhona describes the steps she took to find balance in her life:

I would say I manage my time very well. I really try so hard to manage my time. [...] I could say I planned it because I sat down and looked at my life and asked myself a question: “Do I like it this way?” [...] I even take a pen and write down: “What is expected of me? What do people expect of me?” Then I kind of strategised what time I have. Then I say okay fine this is what is expected of me. [...] What can I do and what can I not be able to do? So, with the time that I have, what can possibly be done? [...] I know people [in the family] expect a lot from me, but at the same time I expect a lot

from myself as well and I need to make me happy and I need to make them happy, but one thing for sure I come first, my son comes first. So, I have to make sure that I strategise very well [...] So I'm trying by all means. That I really planned.

[P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

I showed in section 5.1.1.5, under the subtheme *Balancing pre- and post-baby selves*, that it was beneficial for single mothers to invest time in the various facets of their identity (e.g. their roles as mother, daughter, sister, student, friend, and employee) because it was advantageous for their mental wellbeing. This balance should be strived for and seemed to be achieved through effective schedule design and time management.

5.4.1.5 Create a workable timetable

After prioritising *what* needed to be done, the mothers needed to create a workable timetable for these routines. Creating a timetable was important for Nolitha, who gave the following advice to other single mothers:

By making sure that she [other single mothers] have time to do everything, making time for chores in the house, making time for her baby, making time for bathing the child, for making something in the house, everything, she must cook. Maybe sometimes make a timetable. [...] I'm going to do that and that and that. Not doing it all at the same time, that helps so much. [P16_Nolitha_24_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

From the above excerpt one can see that, for Nolitha, every routine had to have specific timeslots. For Zintle, timing was also a key part of coping. When asking Zintle what she believed assisted her in maintaining her routines, she responded with the following:

Timing: I know, from that time to this time I must do this, from another time and this time I need to do this. So that I know everything is done by the day.

[P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

One can see from Zintle's interview excerpt that a timetable had to be well defined and clear. To create a workable timetable, the parents first established what the endpoint had to be of a routine (i.e. when was the latest that the activity had to be completed). From there, the participants worked in reverse and established the midpoint and starting point, as can be seen in the following extract from Lumka's interview:

So, I know what needs to be done for us to be done by 07:00. So, I kind of worked it out myself that if I wake up by 06:00 then I will do this, this, and that and then by 07:00 I will be finished. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

It must, however, be added that this timetable had to be tested in practice. Akhona mentioned that she used a trial-and-error approach to also evaluate how effective her schedule was:

I would say I tried different options, they didn't work out, till I got the one that worked. [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

In essence, a workable timetable seems to be clear, well structured, with each routine having specific timeslots. These timeslots need to be realistic so that the end result is achieved on time. This temporal plan should be experimented with and adapted to ensure its long-term utility.

5.4.1.6 Task tag-teaming sequences with cohabiting adults

A key part of schedule design was the involvement of additional family members. It was evident from the data that five participants often had task tag-teaming sequences with other live-in adult family members. Tag-teaming was when cohabiting adults took turns to care for

children and thus, while one was engaged in child-centred routines, the other had time to engage in non-child-related activities (such as recreational pastimes, work, socialising, or household chores). Tag-teaming could thus help single mothers find some balance and much needed respite, such as Yonele, who received a break from childcare on weekends:

On Saturday I don't usually get involved with [the children] because my mother is around the house. So I just bath my child and then I bath myself and then I just go, just to go outside the house, just to have fresh air without them running around and stuff like that. [...] So, I'm having my own time, just to have that "me time" now, because I don't usually have that during the week, because I'm busy with them.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

For Lindelwa, her cousin was an integral part of the daily schedule because, although Lindelwa oversaw morning routines, her cousin took over at 2 am when Lindelwa left for work:

So I drop [my son] off at school and then come back and clean the house, do whatever needs to be done, because I stay with a cousin so she cooks supper so I will do the cleaning and all that, she cooks supper and she fetches [the children], because I am not here and I leave home at about 02:00 to go to my work, and then she takes over from there. [P10_Lindelwa_29_1child_extended_3extra_employed]

In the following excerpt one can see how Yonele and her mother collaborated during a bathing routine. While Yonele was busy with one child, her mother occupied the other children, and vice versa. Thus, the execution of this family routine was a well-coordinated dance between multiple caregivers:

No, I first bath the small one, mine, and then my mother will take her, and then I bath the second one and then I bath the third one. [...] If I bath one of them, then I will give my mother the other two, I put lotion or Vaseline on this one, then next I'm busy preparing the other one, bathing the other one.

[P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

In the following quote from Cebisa, who works night shifts, she talks of how her mother's involvement helps her execute her son's morning routine with greater speed:

All I do is to bath [my son] and prepare his clothes. When he's done he comes to the front [of the house], as the two of us stay together in the back room. By the time he gets to this side my mom has already made his lunch. The reason I do that is because at that time I'm in a hurry to go back to sleep. So, my mom makes all their lunches. If I've bathed him and bring him this side; then he gets here and everything else is done for him. [P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

The current subtheme illustrates the uniquely coordinated schedules that single mothers and their helpers co-construct. For single mothers who live in extended-family households, these kinds of tag-teaming sequences seemed to allow for greater efficiency, as well as a much needed break from childcare tasks.

5.4.1.7 Joint planning and negotiating schedules with cohabiting adults

Because of the integral role other adult family members played in the execution of daily routines, seven participants described instances of *joint* schedule planning and negotiation. Schedule design had to be a collaborative endeavour within the family. One can see in the following quote how Yonele and her mother co-constructed their morning routine:

I did discuss it with my mother. And then we were sharing ideas that: “We must do this and then this. So, to keep [the children] going to school. We don’t send them late to school. If we stick to this routing then you know you going to get them to school in time.” [P20_Yonele_27_1child_extended_5extra_unemployed]

For Akhona, an integral part of managing routines was constant communication with her mother, who, she viewed as a substantial childrearing partner:

It’s like I’m a mother and [my mother is] a father of the child. It’s more like we communicating on everything. Like for instance, if she sees that the transport [which takes the child to school] comes late then she will say “I’m noticing that the transport is coming late and I need you to call the driver and ask the driver to come a bit earlier”. Do you know what I mean? So, it’s more like we communicating on everything. “No, do not wash the child early in the morning, I washed the child late before he went to bed, you know that the child has asthma so do not wash the child in the morning.” [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Having an established, clear schedule that all cohabiting adults agreed on helped to prevent potential conflict in the home, because everyone knew what were expected of them and when. An example of this can be seen in Phathiswa’s family, who jointly decided to take turns cooking dinner:

We have turns. And to know who is cooking, not to just argue when someone is cooking and the person who knows that he or she is cooking can go and prepare for the dinner. Because if you do not know who is cooking you end up arguing [...] so we sat and spoke about every person having a turn to cook. [P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

The current subtheme illustrates the need for cohabiting adults to deliberately coordinate schedules and, as a team, consciously plan the routines they wish to implement within the home. In this section I presented several subthemes related to *Schedule design*. In the following section I will focus on the theme, *Schedule implementation*.

5.4.2 Category 4, theme 2: Schedule implementation

Once parents had established *what* routines they wanted to perform each week, they needed to implement these routines. However, there often were unforeseen challenges that arose on a day-to-day basis, such as an unexpected crises or sudden time constraints. These challenges could hinder schedule implementation. Thus parents continuously respond to these said challenges with a range of strategies. *Schedule implementation* concerned seven subthemes, namely *Dealing with derailment* (section 5.4.2.1), *Consistency* (section 5.4.2.2), *Margin for error in timetable* (section 5.4.2.3), *Organised and prepped* (section 5.4.2.4), *Weekends as a buffer* (section 5.4.2.5), *Multitasking* (section 5.4.2.6), and *Find special mother-child moments during mundane routines* (section 5.4.2.7). I will briefly discuss these seven subthemes.

5.4.2.1 Dealing with derailment

When something unexpected happened or there was a sudden delay in task accomplishment, there was a risk that the entire daily schedule would be ‘thrown out’ because one delayed routine would affect the timing of subsequent routines (described in Chapter 4). Thus, parents often made minor in-the-moment adjustments when a routine became delayed in order to avoid complete schedule derailment. For instance, parents either sped up their normal pace or chose alternative activities so that the routine could be accomplished with greater speed. This can be seen in the following quote from Phathiswa:

Sometimes when I am late then I just do something that is going to be quicker [...] I have to be quick. [P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Other participants relied on family members to step in, increasing the number of caregivers and assistants during a delayed routine. One can see this strategy in the following excerpts from Aviwe, who relied on a sibling, and Akhona, who relied on her mother:

I'll always ask my younger sister to help me because she is always willing to help.

[P19_Aviwe_27_Deft_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

I would say when I run out of time, then I end up doing some other things and sometimes

I end up waking my mother up and, "Please help me with this because I'm really

running out of time!" [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

The participants also used idiosyncratic problem-solving strategies to ensure that they were on time, such as Anathi, who did her make-up and hair on the bus on days when she ran late for work. Dealing with schedule derailment required immediate problem-solving skills, a quick response, and creativity.

5.4.2.2 Consistency

Sixteen participants provided accounts of schedule consistency. Consistency referred to both temporal as well as behavioural consistency. Thus parents underscored how valuable it was for them to “*be on time*” [P8_Anathi_25_1child_extended_5extra_employed], as well as to “*do things properly*” [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]. Being consistent and always following through with the schedule hold several benefits. For one, consistency decreases the potential for schedule derailment. Parents understood that derailment had consequences, such as Lumka who realised that, if she did not finish her morning routine on

time, it would affect her child's schooling. Therefore she was motivated to be punctual in the morning:

All that is motivated by time. I know the consequence of me not doing that in time. In that way, I can say I'm motivated. I'm not sure if its motivation, but I know that is what I have to do. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Being consistent helped parents to avoid the pitfalls of procrastination. When important routines were accomplished on time, then unexpected, additional tasks could be attended to without stress:

She [a single mother] must always do things at the right time. [...] When you wake up, you have your routines so if you are supposed to wash your baby, then you wash your baby so that when some chore comes up then you will be able to do that, knowing that you have finished the first one. So she needs to do all things at the right time. [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Consistency begets consistency. It seems to be circular reasoning, yet when daily routines were implemented uniformly, parents and children became programmed with an internal clock. When routines were accomplished in a similar manner each day, they became habits. Nondumiso [P11_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed] explained that these habits were physiological in that she became used to doing it and it was “in” her “body”. When routines were adhered to consistently, circadian rhythms become calibrated to match the daily timetable. This was especially important for children's compliance. One can see from Unathi's statement that her son fell asleep easily because he was familiar with their schedule:

He always falls asleep early because he is used to a routine.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Eight parents also stressed the need to *teach* children the value of being organised and routinised. One can see in the following examples from Lumka and Esihle how vital it was for these mothers to edify children regarding time management, organisation, and consistency:

Time is so important. It's important that I keep to time so that my child also learns that things has to be done this way for this to happen, because if you don't keep to time, then you're most likely to be the most unorganized person, which is not a very good thing. So, I keep time so that she can learn from me that when she keeps time this is how everything will then happen to how you have planned it. So, you have to have a plan of how everything will work out. [P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

There is something I am teaching [the children]; that everything is done in its own time. Time – do you know how important time is? They say: “value time and time will value you.” That's what my neighbour says when he's drunk [laughing]; he would say, “value time”. So, I am trying to teach them about time and that there is a time for everything.

[P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

Some mothers, like Lumka and Esihle, emphasised the value of consistency itself, while other participants tried to impart to their children the practical merits of adhering to a specific routine. Cebisa tried to teach her son why an exact bedtime was beneficial. Furthermore, she instructed him to consistently perform a set of tasks in the afternoon so that morning routines transpired with greater efficiency:

I teach him that he should go to bed on time so that he won't struggle waking up in the morning. The other thing I teach him is that when he gets back from school, because I'm not here at that time, he should take care of his uniform. He should make sure it does not get creased, as I then would have to iron it in the morning. I teach to always take note of where he puts his things; so that even when I ask for things he's able to tell me where they are. He must know where his shoes are, his bag and if his lunchbox is in the bag, to bring it to this side [the kitchen]. I don't like things to be all over the place because I don't want him to delay the transport when it gets here.

[P3_Cebisa_24_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Thus several participants tried to create a family culture that celebrated consistency. The current subtheme implies that, when the household holds routinisation in high regard, routines became increasingly easier to implement and maintain because adults and children settle into a daily rhythm.

5.4.2.3 Margin of error in timetable

Five participants spoke of adding a temporal buffer or margin of error into the timetable. These five mothers not only aimed to finish their routines on time, but attempted to complete tasks ahead of schedule. For example, Phathiswa explained that she remained ahead of time in the morning. By the time she ate breakfast, everything had been completed, with a few surplus minutes to attend to additional tasks:

I make sure that I stay early. Because, when I do my breakfast it is because I am ready to go to school and we are done with everything, maybe we can still do a few small things with those few minutes that we are left with.

[P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

By having a few additional minutes to spare, the schedule seems less rigid. One can see this in relation to Lumka, who granted her daughter extra time in the morning to be “lazy”:

Well, with waking her up, at first I would start like at 06:30, but now I've moved up the time a little bit, so it's 06:15 now. So that I will give her that time to be lazy and all that, but 06:30 she has to be awake.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Onele put in great effort to be early in the morning. She left her house at 5:20 to catch an early train because she understood that, when using the public transport system one is often delayed. Arriving late at work affected her emotionally and caused additional stress:

I have to catch a train at 25 to 6, I have to take the earlier, because [...] I'm starting work at half past 7, but you know the delays. So to avoid that I have to leave at 25 to. I leave home at 20 past 5 the latest [...] I think I love being on time. I hate being late, [...] that day would be so frustrating for me. Because I have to prepare myself, but then you only have 10 minutes in between, you can't relax. So I need to be calm, I hate doing things in a rush and [...] then everything is upside down. I hate being late, I prefer being on time, all the time. [P14_Onele_24_1child_extended_6extra_employed]

One can see from the excerpt that, when parents were early, they could be “calmer”, less “rushed”, with time to “relax” and “prepare” themselves mentally. Having a margin of error in the timetable and staying ahead of one’s schedule is a more pre-emptive, proactive strategy. Parents who used this strategy seemed to feel more in control, even when an unforeseen crisis arose.

5.4.2.4 Organised and prepped

An organised environment fosters better time management. Half of the interviewed participants illustrated their organisational skills with various examples. However, one mother really stood out in this regard. Unathi was unique in how well she organised and prepped her surroundings. Because she lived on her own she had no assistance from additional caregivers and it was thus vital for her to invest energy in pre-arranging the tools, outfits, and paraphernalia she needed for the following day. In the one-room shed that she shared with her child, she had a specific place for everything. The behavioural scripts she followed during routines were very detailed and exact. Every afternoon she prepped for the next day by getting clothes, school supplies, bath supplies, and snacks ready:

The day before, it is my routine. Even when [my son] comes from crèche [...] I check the school bag, [...] I put three nappies in, I check the message book, I rinse his bottle, put his juice in, put fruit and sandwich and his school book in and then the next day, when I bath him in the morning, I just feed him and everything is ready and packed for him to go to school, that is my routine every day. [...] I do the washing and hang it and when I take the washing from the line, I iron them because I want everything to be organised. [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Unathi explained that she tried to instil these principles in the home and impart the value of prepping routines to her son:

The first thing is that [my son] must be organised, he must put things in order. When he is older I will teach him not to do everything in the morning; at night you must polish your shoes, you put your socks next to your school bag, pack your school bag. When you come back then you unpack what is unnecessary to be in your school bag and then

pack it again with the things that are useful for the following day and then everything will be easier for you. You cannot do everything in the morning.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Unathi explained that, in the morning, her environment was prearranged and ordered, with everything she needed already in a specific position. This level of order helped to decrease the sense of chaos when time was limited:

The first thing that is important for me is to switch on the kettle and then I put the water in the bath and then I wash my hands and then I put [my son] in there because everything is all in there, I prepared everything. The clothes are hanging here [gestures to specific place], everything that I am going to use is all around me, it is only the water that I take to put in the bath and then I start bathing him because I must be quick. I prepare everything for me, [...] so I always make sure that everything is around here [gestures to specific location]. I am an organised person. [...] Being organised [helps me] because if I am not organised I will go up and down, but when I am organised then I know what to do and I will not run out of time. I just decided that I wanted to be organised, prepare the day before, every day, it is my routine because it is easier.

[P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]

Thus, because Unathi did not have to go back and forth looking for items, she maintained greater speed and efficiency. Other participants describe similar afternoon or evening prepping routines so that time-restricted morning routines ran more smoothly. In addition, some parents used weekends to prep for the week ahead by pre-cooking dinners, spring cleaning the house, or organising the laundry. The current theme illustrates how a well-organised living space can play an essential role in managing family routines.

5.4.2.5 Weekends as a buffer

The single mothers, especially those who were employed, were often time deprived. Limited time produced temporal incongruence (meaning that there was a disconnect between the family routines that parents would ideally *want* to implement, and the time they had available to follow through on these desires). Working parents had several strategies to deal with temporal incongruence. One of these strategies, mentioned by nine participants, entailed using weekends, or non-work days, as a buffer so that they could make up for lost time with their children and other family members. For example, Lumka explained that weekends were for mother-daughter bonding routines and leisure activities:

Weekend time it's me and her. We go out. We go shopping. We go play. We spend time together. That's the most time we have.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Nondumiso worked during the week and did not feel very involved in her son's day-to-day routines because her mother ran the household during the week while Nondumiso was working. Thus, on weekends, she made a point of overseeing her son's routines:

I'm trying on weekends, on weekends I make sure that my mom she doesn't hold him, I make sure that my mom doesn't wash him or do anything. I'm the one who's doing everything. I wake up in the morning, I wash him and then I feed him, just to give him the love that he needs. [P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

Phathiswa used weekends to bake and clean the house with her sister and mother:

We like to bake and spring cleaning the house and doing all the things that we could not do during the weekdays. [...] On Saturday's you have to do all the things that you

did not do during the week, because during the week we are in a hurry to wake up and go to school and do that. So now it is your free day to sort out all the things you did not sort out and do. [P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

What the current subtheme showed was that parents' ideal sets of daily routines were not always practically achievable on workdays due to time restrictions. Thus nine participants saw weekends, or off-days, as critically important for catching up and engaging in the bonding routines they did not have time for in the rest of the week.

5.4.2.6 Multitasking

Eight interviewed participants gave examples of their multitasking abilities. Observation data further supported this theme. When asking Nondumiso how she managed her daily routines, she stated:

I am a multitasker, I am a multi-occupied person.

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

This subtheme seemed to contradict what Nolitha said (presented in section 5.4.1.5, under the subtheme *Create a workable timetable*) in terms of scheduling and timing:

Not doing it all at the same time, that helps so much.

[P16_Nolitha_24_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

However, multitasking did not refer to doing “everything at once”. Multitasking still had to take place within the confines of a well-structured timetable and ordered environment. Certain activities lend themselves well to multitasking. For example, cooking (especially food that could be slow cooked), laundry, and bathing routines were often intertwined. In the morning,

Akhona cooked porridge on the stove and concurrently bathed, groomed, and dressed herself and her son. This form of multitasking was manageable because the porridge required little attention. Esihle also slow cooked samp and meat on the stove while bathing the children in the afternoon:

First of all when I'm cooking the porridge I'm bathing at the same time. [...] so I'm multitasking. So I leave the porridge on the stove. Then I go quickly take a bath. Then put my gown on and continue with preparing him. When I'm done preparing him I dress up, and I prepare myself. [P2_Akhona_21_1child_extended_5extra_employed]

Sometimes if I cook samp, I cook samp and red meat, those things are easy to cook; I leave them to boil on their own. So, while I'm cooking I would be bathing [the children]. [P7_Esihle_26_2children_nuclear_unemployed]

The domestic tasks mentioned by Akhona and Esihle do not require constant supervision or mental agility and are thus easy to manage while engaging with children. Thus, during certain routines, parental attention could be divided and spread across multiple household chores. Observation data confirmed that, during certain routines parents could easily perform multiple tasks, especially when infants were sleeping or when older children were self-occupied (e.g. solo playing). However, this is not advisable for *all* family routines, because parental distraction can diminish some of the parent-child serve-and-return responses (discussed in Chapter 4).

Some mothers managed to spend time with their children and complete household chores by fastening their infant or toddler to their backs with a blanket or towel. This clever strategy meant that a mother could continue with chores while her child felt her warmth and presence (similar to the concept of kangarooing a baby, but without skin-to-skin contact). Five

participants used this technique. For Esihle, this strategy was helpful because her child stayed close to her while she worked, and when she had to leave the house to fetch water from the community tap her daughter could easily accompany her. For Zinnia, this strategy was also useful when her son was upset and refused to be comforted by other family members. When Zinnia fastened her son to her back he felt soothed because he could be close to his mother. Simultaneously, this strategy ensured that Zinnia's schedule was not delayed:

[When doing house chores] sometimes he will only want me so I have to take him and calm him down. [...] I put him on the back and continue with my work.

[P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Multitasking in this way also meant that time-deprived parents could feel they were giving their children extra love while completing household chores:

I make sure that I put him on my back, every time, just to give him the love that he needs.

[P11_Nondumiso_26_1child_extended_4extra_employed]

The current subtheme illustrates that multitasking is a strategy that was used by the participants to save valuable time. Multitasking means that, during a routine, a parent has the skills to effectively accomplish certain mundane duties alongside one another. Multitasking also refers to the fastening of a child to the parent's back so that mothers can invest energy in both child bonding and household chores simultaneously.

5.4.2.7 Find special mother-child moments during mundane routines

Because single parents are often time deprived and financially constrained, they do not always have occasions for special parent-child routines that have been demarcated in the schedule and

set aside purely for bonding purposes (discussed in Chapter 4). Although there were some exceptions, most parents did not have time for elaborate leisure activities with their children (such as going to the movies, the zoo, or theme parks), especially when these activities incurred additional costs. Bonding activities were incorporated into other, more commonplace, routines, such as traveling routines, bedtime routines, or grooming routines. Eight participants spoke of the special moments they cherished during ordinary family routines. In the following selection, Lumka spoke of her morning routines with her daughter. She tried to enjoy these morning activities as much as possible because, as I explained in Chapter 4, she had limited time with her daughter during the week:

The most time I have with her is the morning time. So, I have to make the most of that time. From waking her up in the morning, giving her a bath and having her to brush her teeth, that's my favourite. [...] I love watching her learn to do things for herself, [...] because now we at a stage where she wakes up and she knows that she has to grab her brush first, go brush and then come back into the bath water and then she starts: "I can do myself, I can do this, I can do that. Look mommy, this is what is happening." So that is the time that I have with her mostly and that is the time I try to enjoy the most, the morning time. [...] By the time I get home she's already asleep [...] Yeah that's the very most important time, because it's the only time I see her and get to enjoy her and she also gets to be cuddly with her mommy.

[P12_Lumka_25_1child_extended_2extra_employed]

Similarly, Violet attempted to make the most of her travelling time. Violet and her son used public transport and, because of traffic and meandering routes, traveling occupied a significant portion of time in their day. Violet thus found other enjoyable activities to engage in while they

waited for the traffic to clear. It was such a significant part of their daily routine that her son anticipated these enjoyable pastimes (such as going to a fast-food chain for a snack):

To spend time with my son, as I said, the time we have at home is very limited, it is very limited, but the time I have with him on the road it's too much, but because we are together it's worth it. And honestly, it's rare that we just come straight home, we always find something to do in the name of avoiding traffic, we always find something to do. And in fact, there's that expectation.

[P13_Violet_27_1child_extended_1extra_employed]

This subtheme illustrates that not all mother-child bonding activities occurred during exclusive playtime or leisure routines. In time-starved or resource-deprived families, bonding often occurs during nondescript, everyday errands (such as walking to school or waiting for the bus) and task-orientated routines (such as a bathing or grooming routines). Nonetheless, these bonding opportunities could be valuable moments for single mothers and their children. The observation data clearly illustrate how special a bath-time routine could be (as described in section 5.3), because it gives parents and children dedicated time for interacting, playing, talking, and showing affection (via affect, touch, and verbal expressions).

5.5 Attenuating Economic Risks

In Chapter 4 I showed that poverty could affect family routines both directly and indirectly. When single mothers have to contend with limited financial resources, it means that they often have 1) restricted resources while implementing family routines (e.g. limited food, restricted space and unsatisfactory housing, insufficient heating and lighting, and undesirable plumbing and water supplies); 2) limited time available for child- and family-centred activities because of harsh work schedules; 3) intrapsychic strain because of the stress and heartache they

experience when they cannot provide for their children; and 4) suspended schooling, which could perpetuate the cycle of poverty for themselves and their children. In this chapter, various themes show how the impact of poverty on single-mother families could be attenuated (see Figure 5.7 for a theoretical illustration). For example, in the first major thematic category, *Managing personal mental health* (section 5.1), certain intrapsychic strategies seemed to help the participants cope with the psychological strain produced by poverty. More specifically, it was the positive way in which the participants viewed themselves, and the way they viewed their circumstances, that provided them with optimism and drive. Strategies that the participants described as being helpful are, for example, seeing themselves as strong, devoted hustlers who are role models for their children (“*I want to be [my child’s] role model, I want to give him the way to success*” [P9_Zinnia_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]), using motivating self-talk (“*I try to motivate myself when the times are tough*” [P18_Unathi_29_1child_nuclear_unemployed]), believing that God would assist them and alleviate financial pressures (“*I know that God will always be there, God will always provide*” [P21_Zintle_24_1child_extended_2extra_employed]), and cultivating hope for the future:

[A single mother] must have hope and she must persevere, she must have. One day she will get out of the situation, she will stand on her own. She must persevere, she must know that she has to do it, it is in her veins, so she has to do this. [...] She must persevere and have hope. [P15_Phathiswa_20_1child_extended_6extra_unemployed]

Besides *Managing personal mental health*, the participants tried to improve their monetary and human resources by *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships* (section 5.2). Strong coalitions could be formed with cohabiting relatives, caring friends, and biological fathers. With strong coalitions, financial burdens could be shared among several people. But extensive family support also meant that some participants were able to continue with their

education, meaning that, for these fortunate women, poverty would likely not be transmitted to the next generation. Strong bonds with caring relatives or friends also helped the participants emotionally.

The third thematic category, *Assistive parent-child actions and interactions during a routine* (section 5.3), showed how some parents went to great lengths, and invested considerable time, in making learning fun and engaging for children, despite their limited resources. Thus, although poverty could impede children's education, many participants were not deterred by their financial restrictions. Finally, the thematic category, *Scheduling actions* (section 5.4), showed how some mothers consciously planned and designed daily schedules so that they could achieve desired future goals (including monetary and educational aspirations) for themselves and their children. Several of the employed participants used multiple strategies to deal with stringent, time-deprived schedules, and to ensure that they enjoyed special moments with their children despite arduous workhours. A small number of unemployed participants also made extensive use of scheduling to help them find work and structure their days purposively.

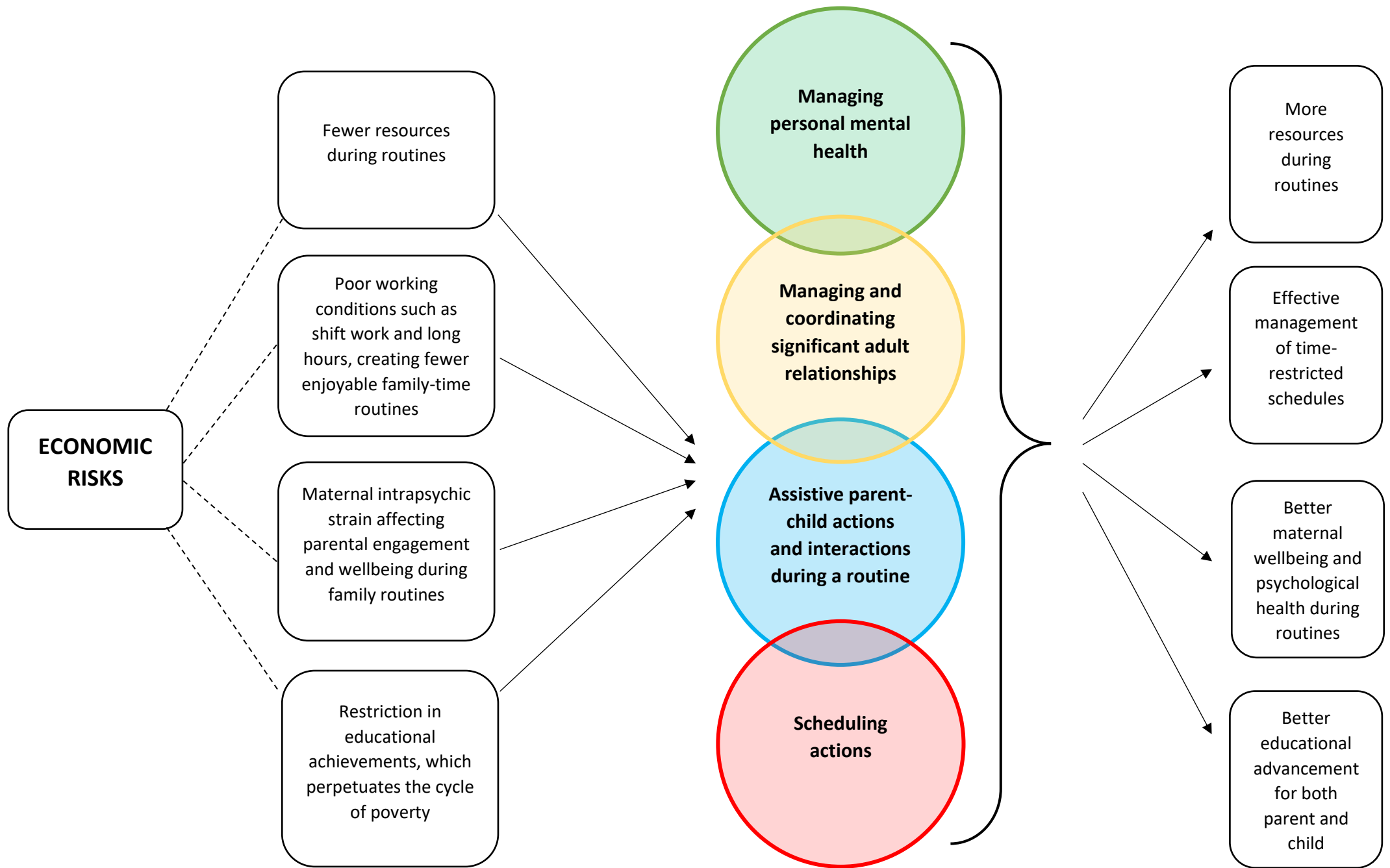


Figure 5.7. How the four thematic categories attenuate economic risks.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

In Chapter 4 I described the various consecutive stages mothers went through during and after pregnancy. I also described five major categories of risk that had a negative impact on mothers' ability to manage their family routines (i.e. *Interpersonal risks*, *Economic risks*, *Parenting challenges*, *Scheduling challenges*, and *Intrapsychic risks*.) In Chapter 5 I highlighted five domains of functioning involved in the successful management of family routines. Firstly, the data showed the importance of single mothers' mental health, and how various intrapsychic coping strategies helped them stay motivated and engaged during family routines. Secondly, the data illustrated the meaningful impact other adults had in the lives of single mothers. Single mothers' ability to manage these complex relationships had a direct effect on family routines because of the emotional, informational, financial, and practical support mothers gained from these social networks. Thirdly, I identified several parenting behaviours that kept children engaged and stimulated during family routines, as well as various child-related features that complemented parenting actions. Fourthly, effective schedule design and implementation helped to ensure that routines remained goal-relevant, adaptive, orderly, and stable over time. Lastly, each of these four thematic categories had the potential to attenuate some of the negative effects that poverty had on single-mother families and their family routines. In the following chapter I will integrate these findings into a theoretical model and make several recommendations for intervention.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In the first section of this chapter I aim to draw together the various theoretical threads of Chapters 4 and 5 and integrate these findings into a coherent, substantive theory on the management of family routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother families with young children. Subsequently, I provide the reader with several recommendations for intervention. I then examine potential research limitations, look at possible focus areas for future research, and finally conclude the study.

6.1 A Substantive Theory on the Management of Family Routines in Low-Income, Xhosa-Speaking Single-Mother Families With Young Children

Based on the findings I presented in Chapters 4 and 5, I have several broad propositions concerning the management of family routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother families with young children.

Proposition 1: Family routines in single-mother families are negatively affected by the extent of several risk factors that increase family vulnerability, including 1) *Intrapsychic risks*, 2) *Parenting challenges*, 3) *Scheduling challenges*, 4) *Interpersonal risks* and 5) *Economic risks* (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

Proposition 2: The family's vulnerability is not merely the sum of encountered risks, because these five domains of risk are interlinked and affect one another. Also, although some single-mother families are confronted with risk factors that could hinder the management of family routines, various factors attenuate the negative impact of these risks.

Proposition 3: The management of family routines by single mothers necessitates the effective management of several family domains. These five major processes include 1) *Managing personal mental health*, 2) *Assistive parent-child actions and interactions during routines*, 3) *Scheduling actions*, 4) *Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships* and 5) *Attenuating economic risks* (see Figures 6.1 and 6.3). As with the five domains of risk, the five processes that facilitate the management of family routines are often dynamically interlinked.

Proposition 4: Consistent with other family systems theories, I propose that both vulnerability and resilience unfold over the course of this life transition (McCubbin & McCubbin, 2005; McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012; Olson et al., 2014; Walsh, 2016). Risk factors (especially interpersonal and intrapsychic) are often already present during the months of pregnancy. If prepartum risks are not resolved or attenuated before labour, they amplify postpartum vulnerability because the arrival of the infant creates additional normative parenting and scheduling obstacles (Cowan & Cowan, 2012; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Pregnancy is thus a prime time for intervention because it can increase mothers' interpersonal and intrapsychic strengths. I also propose that many women inherently experience personal growth during this phase of life and organically acquire helpful skills as time progresses (Walsh, 2015). Thus single mothers frequently mature and settle into their parenting role. Furthermore, mothers' close support networks often become accustomed to the new circumstances and likewise experience beneficial growth over time.

Proposition 5: The five domains of risk, and the five processes that facilitate the management of family routines, can be combined into one simplified framework. In Figure 6.1 one can see that each of the five domains of risk occurs at different levels of propinquity, from the most proximal (viz. intrapsychic) to the most distal (viz. economic). Furthermore, each

domain of risk corresponds with one of the five facilitative processes. As Figure 6.1. illustrates, at the most proximal one finds the mother, as the primary caregiver, and the extent of her *Intrapsychic risk* on the one hand, versus her ability to *Manage personal mental health* on the other. Over the course of the transition into parenthood, there is likely to be a dynamic interplay between these two poles, with intrapsychic risks and strengths in continuous fluctuation as the mother tries to adapt to and cope with her circumstances. The following level is the family routine (i.e. activity setting) itself (Gallimore et al., 1993). At this level, the focus is not only on the individual, but also on the interactions between parent and child while they complete specific daily activities. This activity setting space (meaning space in quotidian time, and space in a physical setting) is likened to a cell with a semipermeable membrane. Thus, features in the space are shaped by how much outside influences the single mother permits and/or receives. In the activity-setting space we find normative *Parenting challenges* that can hinder the management of family routines, balanced by *Assistive parent-child actions and interactions* that can improve the management of family routines. At a more distant level of propinquity, we find *Scheduling challenges* balanced by *Scheduling actions*. The focus here is not on what is occurring during one routine, but rather how the collection of daily routines is organised and timetabled into a coherent whole. The schedule dictates when certain daily routines will occur, their duration, and who will be involved. The subsequent level corresponds with larger social networks that surround the mother and child, and at this level we find *Interpersonal risks* balanced by mothers' ability to *Manage and coordinate significant adult relationships*. Finally, at the most distal level are *Economic risks* versus the *Attenuation of economic risks*.

Furthermore, the factors that hinder the management of family routines (Figure 6.2), and the factors that facilitate the management of family routines (Figure 6.3), can also be separated into two speculative, predictive models.

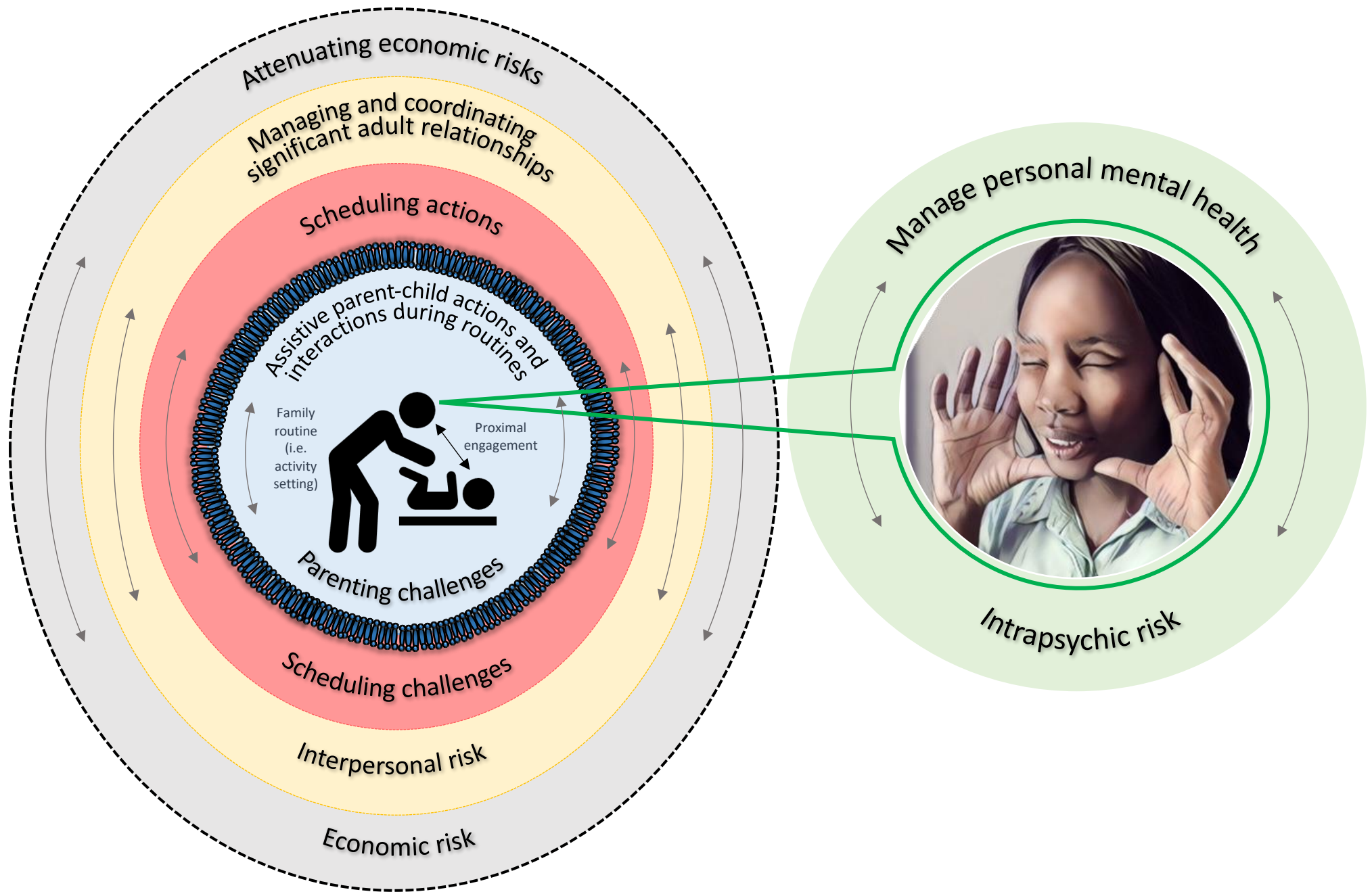


Figure 6.1. A simplified framework that combines the five domains of risk, and the five processes that facilitate the management of family routines.

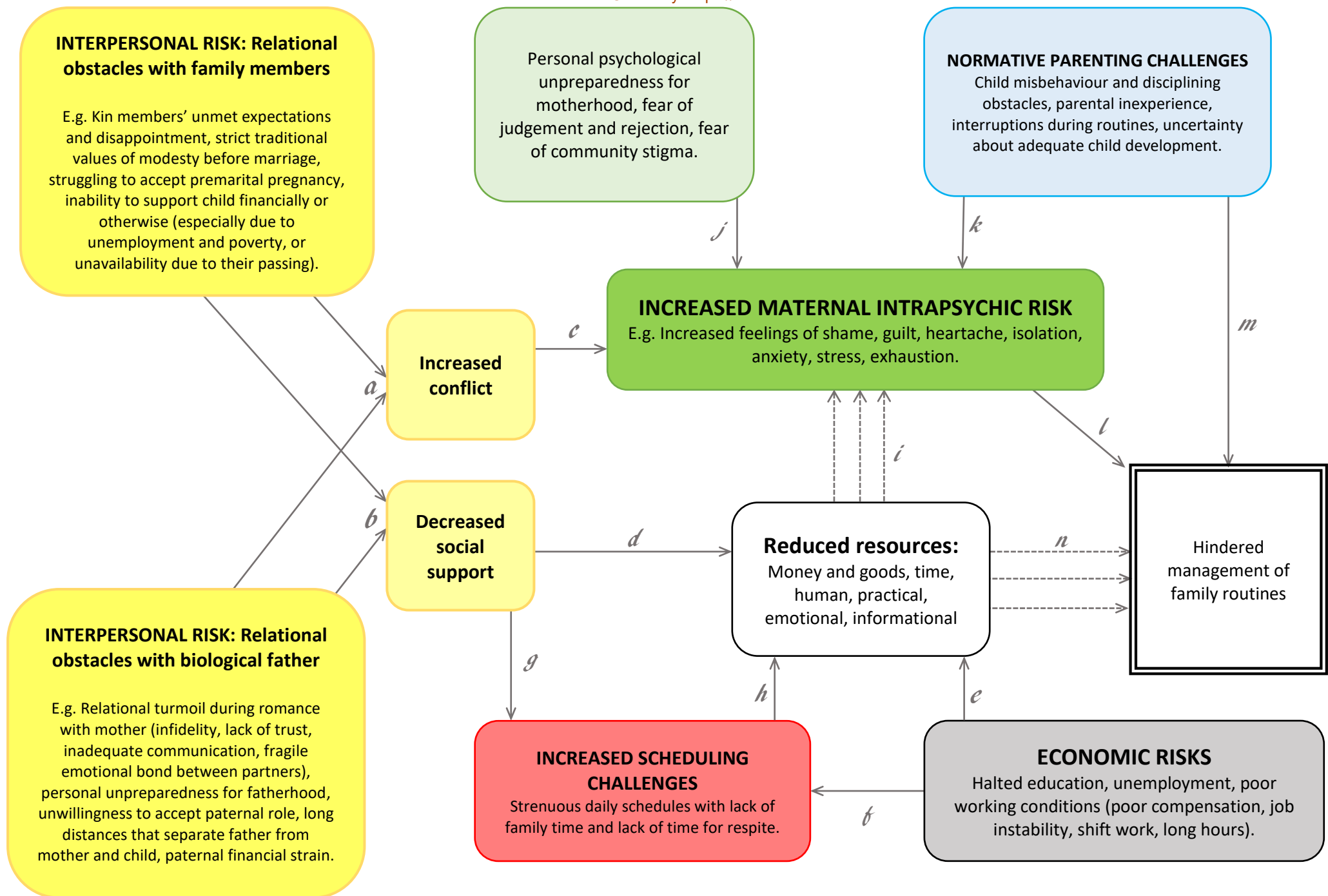


Figure 6.2. Speculative model, predicting what factors hinder the management of family routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother families.

Figure 6.2 illustrates how the five interlinking domains of risk negatively affect the management of family routines. Some of my speculations concerning pathways correspond with findings from the existing literature, which I reference here. Figure 6.2 illustrates that low-income, Xhosa-speaking single mothers may be confronted by two central *interpersonal risks*, namely 1) relational obstacles with the *biological father* of the child, and 2) relational obstacles with *immediate family members*. An increase in relational obstacles with both these two groups of people could increase single mothers' experienced *relational conflict* (see *a*), and decrease their *social support* (see *b*). An increase in *relational conflict* will increase *maternal intrapsychic strain* (see *c*) (Jones, Zalot, Foster, Sterrett, & Chester, 2007; Taylor, 2015). A decrease in *social support* will reduce the *resources* (including money, goods, time, human, practical, emotional, and informational) available to single mothers (see *d*) (Anderson, 2012). Furthermore, *economic risk factors* such as single mothers' halted education, unemployment, and poor working conditions (i.e. poor compensation, job instability, shift work, and long working hours) will further reduce the available *resources* (see *e*), such as time (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008; Roy et al., 2004) money (Bakker & Karsten, 2013) or emotional resources (Meier et al., 2016). It is expected that *economic risk factors* such as shift work and long working hours (see *f*), together with reduced *social support* (see *g*) will increase daily *scheduling challenges*, making them more strenuous to coordinate (Bakker & Karsten, 2013; Koulouglioti et al., 2011; McLoyd et al., 2008). More *strenuous schedules* mean that daily routines will feel rushed, erratic and disorganised, and that there will be fewer opportunities for leisure and child-centred routines (De Goede & Greeff; 2016b; Kalil et al., 2014; Roy et al., 2004; Tubbs et al., 2005). Thus, *strenuous schedules* will further decrease mothers' *resources*, especially emotional resources and temporal resources (see *h*).

Subsequently, as Figure 6.2 illustrates (see *i*), a decrease in these multiple *resources* (i.e. money and goods, time, human, practical, emotional, informational) will increase *maternal*

intrapsychic risk (Anderson, 2012). In addition, women's personal psychological unpreparedness for motherhood (Manzi, Vignoles, & Regalia, 2010), their fear of judgement and rejection by family members, and their fear of community stigma can also exacerbate *intrapsychic risk* (see *j*), such as affecting women's self-esteem and isolating them (Ellison, 2003). I further propose that an increase in *normative parenting challenges* (e.g. child misbehaviour, parental inexperience, etc.) will intensify the distress of mothers who are already psychologically vulnerable (see *k*) (Dishion & Patterson, 2006; Grant et al., 2006). *Severe maternal distress* will then have a direct negative impact on the *management of family routines* (see *l*) by diminishing mothers' motivation, responsiveness, and experienced happiness during daily activities (Atkinson et al., 2000; Campbell et al., 2004; Martins & Gaffan, 2000; McLoyd et al., 2008; Tomlinson, Cooper, & Murray, 2005).

Figure 6.2. illustrates that *normative parenting challenges* during the transition to parenthood, such as child misbehaviour, parental inexperience (Cowan & Cowan, 2012) and interruptions or distractions during family activities (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Evans, 2006) will also have a direct negative effect on the *management of routines* (see *m*) by influencing the flow and efficiency of task accomplishment. A decrease in multiple *resources* will likewise directly compromise the *management of family routines* (see *n*) by compromising 1) parental availability during family routines, 2) the tools and supplies used during each routine, 3) the ergonomic utility of the spaces in which routines are enacted, 4) the consistency with which routines can be implemented, and 5) the duration of each child-centred routine.

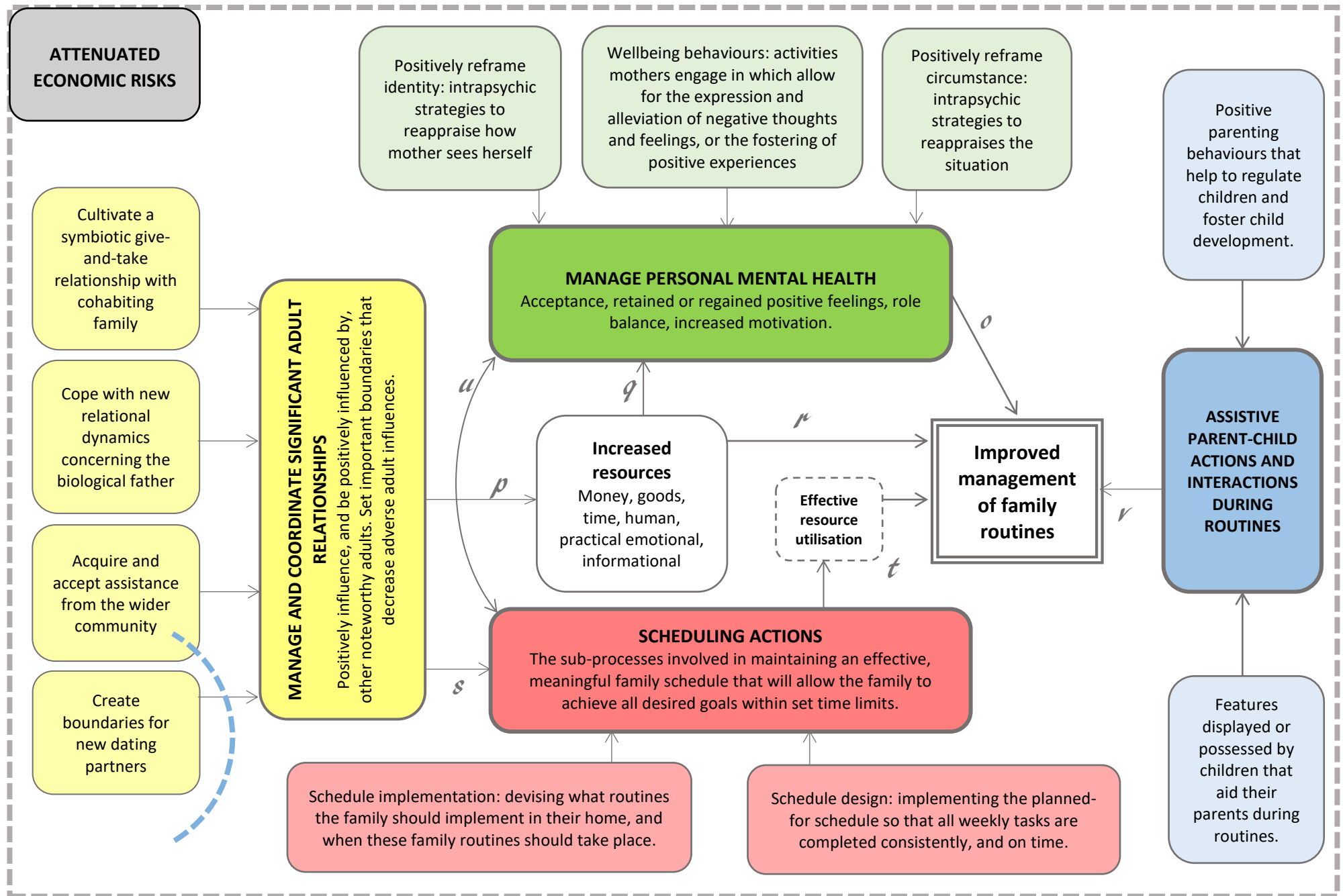


Figure 6.3. Speculative model, predicting what factors facilitate the management of family routines in low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother families.

In Figure 6.3. I hypothesise that, when single mothers can *manage their personal mental health*, they will be better able to engage in a range of parenting routines and responsibilities, thus increasing their ability to manage family routines affectively (see o). This is an ongoing process that likely starts during pregnancy and continues postpartum (Salmela-Aro, 2012). A range of cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioural strategies will help mothers to retain or regain positive feelings, achieve role balance, increase motivation, and embrace their maternal identity (Taylor & Conger, 2017). Personal intrapsychic resources centre on 1) *positively reframing their own identity* (e.g. seeing the self as “good”, accepting the self as “mother” and cultivating a feeling of devotion towards the child, viewing the self as “role model”, viewing the self as a “hustler”, balancing pre- and post-baby selves, and using constructive self-talk); 2) *positively reframing their circumstance* (e.g. believing that they will receive divine assistance, believing that adversity generates personal growth, viewing circumstances as comprehensible in that “everything happens for a reason”, and cultivating hope for the future by viewing the set of circumstance as an opportunity to rewrite the past); and 3) *wellbeing behaviours* (i.e. a range of activities that will allow for the expression and alleviation of negative thoughts and feelings and the fostering of positive experiences) (Walsh, 2015).

Consistent with other resilience perspectives (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, & Ungar, 2005; McCubbin & McCubbin, 2005; Walsh, 2015, 2016), I further hypothesise that, in order to manage family routines effectively, single mothers must *manage and coordinate significant adult relationships*. This implies that they should *cultivate a symbiotic give-and-take relationship with cohabiting family members* and nurture these family ties (i.e. make time for “family time” routines; communicate love, appreciation and support to cohabiting family members; and manage intra-familial conflict); *cope with new relational dynamics concerning the biological father* (i.e. aim to establish a new, amicable co-parenting relationship; create

personal emotional boundaries; and fill the father-role gap when needed); *acquire and accept assistance from the wider community*; and *create boundaries for new dating partners*. By managing and coordinating any of these significant adult relationships successfully, single mothers will increase the *resources* (see *p*) available to them (including money, goods, time, human, practical, emotional, and informational) (Walsh, 2015). I hypothesise that an increase in these resources will lead to an improvement in *maternal mental health* (see *q*) (Taylor & Conger, 2017). These resources provided by other people will also have a direct impact on the resources available during *family routines*, making them easier to manage (see *r*).

I also propose that, when single mothers can effectively *manage and coordinate other significant adult relationships*, they will be more effective at *scheduling actions* (see *s*). Scheduling actions includes *schedule design* (deliberate, proactive planning; prioritising important routines; having a clear future vision; establishing balance; creating a workable timetable; establishing task tag-teaming sequences with cohabiting adults; and joint planning and negotiating schedules with cohabiting adults) and *schedule implementation* (dealing with derailment; maintaining consistency; inserting a margin for error in the timetable; being organised and prepped; using weekends as a buffer for lack of quality time; multitasking; and find special mother-child moments during mundane routines). Reviews on time management (Claessens, Van Eerde, Rutte, & Roe, 2007; Richards, 1987), as well as qualitative studies (De Goede & Greeff, 2016b; Medved, 2004), corroborate the usefulness of some of these scheduling actions. As Figure 6.3 illustrates, *scheduling actions* improves the management of family routines by helping single mothers allocate their limited resources more effectively (see *t*). I hypothesise that better managed schedules will improve mothers' mental health, irrespective of employment status (Claessens et al., 2007; Häfner & Stock, 2010; Häfner, Stock, Pinneker, & Ströhle, 2014; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Van Hoya

300

& Lootens, 2013; Wanberg, Griffiths, & Gavin, 1997). But the effect is likely bidirectional (see *u*) because mothers with better mental health will probably be more proficient at designing and implementing effective schedules. Although not illustrated in Figure 6.3, I propose that, over time, when schedules are designed and implemented well, it will improve the family's ability to achieve various prioritised goals (including developmental, emotional, social, career, etc.) consistently and timeously.

Then, *assistive parent-child actions and interactions during routines* improve the management of family routines in two ways (see *v*). First, positive parenting behaviours, such as 1) displays of care and affection, 2) fortifying child boundaries and 3) effective teaching techniques (through apprenticeship and behaviour modelling; attentive, gentle, communication; and making it fun and child friendly), help to regulate children and foster child development (Belsky & DeHaan, 2011; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Groh, Fearon, IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Roisman, 2017; Holden, Grogan-Kaylor, Durrant, & Gershoff, 2017; Knerr, Gardner, & Cluver, 2013; NSCDC, 2012; Seay, Freysteinson, & McFarlane, 2014). Again, children are not passive recipients during routines but co-construct routines with their parents. Children possess certain features that help their parents to complete various tasks during routines (e.g. more mature children who can engage in self-care, having fewer children, having a child who is fastidious about schedules and habits, and when the child is in a jovial mood).

6.2 Recommendations for Intervention

Based on my research findings I would like to make several recommendations for professionals wishing to support low-income single mothers. Recommendations centre on six key issues.

6.2.1 Identify at-risk pregnant women early to reduce maternal intrapsychic risk

The first recommendation centres on the finding that the participating single mothers experienced intrapsychic strain during and after pregnancy. Prenatal exposure to maternal stress impedes foetal development (Glover, Ahmed-Salim, & Capron, 2016), and it is thus imperative to reduce the duration and intensity of maternal prepartum distress by augmenting pregnant women's intrapersonal and interpersonal resources. The processes of *Positively reframing identity* and *Positively reframing circumstances* can help women during and after pregnancy. The way people interpret stressful events will have an impact on whether trauma will be experienced, and clinicians must consider the internal dialogue mothers maintain about a particular event (Peres, Mercante, & Nasello, 2005). In both the resilience framework of Walsh (2012), as well as the resiliency model of McCubbin and McCubbin (2005), families' belief systems are key protective and recovery resources. How we view ourselves, how we interpret our world, and how we interpret a particular stressor form an important part of coping. Factors such as *sense of coherence* (i.e. seeing the event as comprehensible, meaningful, and manageable) seem to bolster resilience (Antonovsky, 1993; Eriksson & Lindström, 2006), whereas an outlook involving self-pity, abandonment, self-victimisation and self-deprecation may exacerbate psychological suffering (Peres et al., 2005). Families do better when they find meaning in their adversity, contextualise distress, foster a realistic but optimistic view of the future, see their challenges as manageable, develop confidence in their ability to overcome any odds, recognise and assert their personal strengths, approach stressful situations with a proactive attitude, accept what cannot be changed, and hone a "can-do" spirit (Walsh, 2012).

A single mother's identity plays a role in directing, motivating and organising parenting behaviour during family routines. But socially sanctioned identities can enhance feelings of

worth and competence (Stets & Burke, 2000). Unfortunately, the never-married single mother identity is not a widely applauded social identity. Ellison (2003) sees the categorising of women based on their marital status as a form of structural violence because, by classifying women in this way, society tends to favour a particular ideal of female sexuality and maternity. These categories propagate the rhetoric that, in order to be a ‘normal’, ‘good’ and ‘worthy’ woman, one must be married (Ellison, 2003). Ellison (2003, p. 322) suggests that, although single motherhood is a very prevalent family form, there is a lack of public awareness and discourse surrounding the single-mother experience and that this is a type of “cultural censorship”. Although Ellison (2003) focuses her discussion on women in the United States, one can see the same lack of constructive dialogue in South Africa. Furthermore, in her sample of 62 single pregnant women, Ellison (2003) found that participants feared being seen as ‘easy’ and ‘loose’ women and these fears motivated mothers to live in secrecy and isolation during their pregnancy. The mothers in Ellison’s (2003) research described their pregnancy as a traumatic event that seemed to be amplified by their isolation. Isolation limited the pregnant mothers’ access to adequate information and support at a time when it was most needed, therefore limiting their agency (Ellison, 2003). These findings from Ellison (2003) are consistent with the findings of this current study.

However, the data in this study reveal that single mothers not only appropriated certain social identities, but seemed to interrogate identity. The participants in this study grappled with questions around morality. The mothers created narratives on what they considered to be “good” and “bad” human behaviour and aimed to negate the culturally imposed idea of the single mother as “damaged” or “immoral”. During the early stages of pregnancy, professionals can potentially help unmarried pregnant women interrogate their feelings of shame and guilt.

Questions and concerns around abortion can also be explored with women. For the single mothers in this study, virtuous behaviour eventually became less associated with sexual modesty and decorum. Rather, morality became more closely linked to the level of commitment a person displays towards childrearing. Thus single mothers can see themselves as honourable human beings, not because they abstained from premarital sex, but because they devoted themselves to raising their children. Unfortunately, in these new self-affirming narratives, single mothers' commitment towards children is often juxtaposed with the actions of fathers, who were sometimes depicted as the antagonist of the story. When professionals assist single mothers and help them to reduce feelings of shame and guilt, they should be careful not to inadvertently depict uninvolved fathers as the “villains” of the narrative.

Research shows that, when it comes to the transition to parenthood, role salience and congruence are linked to parents' emotional wellbeing and their postpartum adaptation (Cast, 2004). This association may be amplified for mothers who have unplanned pregnancies (Manzi et al., 2010). The suggestion has been made that to reduce the incidence of postpartum depression it could be beneficial to assist pregnant women (especially those with unplanned pregnancies) to construct desired, but attainable, postpartum identities (Manzi et al., 2010). My findings suggest that appropriating a new maternal identity as part of one's self-concept can be a complex and ambiguous process. Although appropriating this new role requires some psychological shifts (Salmela-Aro, 2012), it does not imply that women need to completely set aside meaningful pre-pregnancy life goals. The mothers in this study emphasised a balance between pre-pregnancy and post-pregnancy identities. Furthermore, motherhood instigated the appropriation of new self-affirming identity constructions. After having their child, several women saw themselves as potential role models for their children, and this seemed to be a

meaningful source of motivation. The participants also identified themselves as strong, resilient, enterprising *hustlers*. It is therefore important for professionals to realise that, although this life event can cause single mothers distress, we should not perpetuate the stigma that having an unplanned, premarital pregnancy will inevitably derail women's psychological health or future economic potential. In a study conducted by Freeman (2016), in-depth interviews with 66 low-income single mothers revealed that having a child may become a source of motivation for women to move out of poverty. For some single mothers, their child's wellbeing becomes a central life focus and an important reason for striving towards economic independence (Freeman, 2016). The participants in Freeman's (2016) study saw these attempts at independence as part of their duty as "good mother" and wanted to model to children how to be successful despite structural setbacks (Freeman, 2016). Thus, professionals supporting single mothers should inspire clients to view themselves as role models and harness this hustler identity, because these new selves are culturally relevant personas that could be psychologically encouraging. Desired selves (selves that individuals aspire to become), expected selves (selves that individuals anticipate they will be) and feared selves (selves that individuals are afraid of becoming) are important components of identity that affect wellbeing during life transitions (Manzi et al., 2010). These three possible selves help to organise one's hopes, fears, and goals, and can give a person meaning and direction (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Various studies have shown that a more positive, optimistic outlook on future selves is linked with better psychological adjustment, whereas greater expectations of feared selves relate to depressive symptoms (Manzi et al., 2010; Oyserman, & James, 2011). It is important, however, that clinicians not only give parents platitudes. Professionals must create opportunities for mothers to experience mastery and success (Walsh, 2012) because, although self-identity influences behavioural intent (Rise, Sheeran, & Hukkelberg, 2010), other factors, such as

perception of previous performance, self-efficacy, the strength of goal intentions, perceived control and the *actual control* a parent possesses, also affect behaviour and motivation (e.g. Bandura, 1997; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; Sheeran, 2002).

In addition to reappraising identity, single mothers stressed the importance of reappraising the adverse experiences they faced. Finding a meaningful answer to the question, *Why did this happen to me?*, can be a vital part of coping. Mental health workers can assist single mothers by helping them identify positive explanations and purposes for their challenging circumstances. By doing this one can shift the focus from problems and deficits to possibilities (Walsh, 2012). For example, several women had a clear *Belief in divine assistance*, and religion seemed to help some participants reframe their adversity more positively. Religion can help people make sense of their experiences. The link between spirituality and resilience has been well documented and most of these studies show that religious involvement is associated with better physical and mental health (e.g. Brewer-Smyth & Koenig, 2014; Jones, Simpson, Briggs, & Dorsett, 2016; Kim & Esquivel, 2011; Moreira-Almeida, Neto, & Koenig, 2006; Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Nasello, & Koenig, 2007). Viewing one's life challenges as opportunities for personal growth is another way in which single mothers reframed their adverse experiences and improved their sense of coherence (Hansson & Cederblad, 2004; Walsh, 2012). Resilient families tend to take this transformational view (Walsh, 2012).

Similarly, family routines can be viewed as moments straddled between past injustices and future possibilities. It is thus important how routines are imagined. Framing routines as a vehicle for positive change may encourage parents to maintain them. Some evidence suggests that *optimism* can have an impact on how people approach the world (see Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010). When people are faced with major life stressors, higher levels of optimism

tend to be associated with greater levels of subjective wellbeing and proactive problem solving (Carver et al., 2010). Dispositional optimism has been found to benefit single-mother African American families in that maternal optimism moderated the impact of economic stress and predicted fewer internalising symptoms and better child management (Taylor, Larsen-Rife, Conger, Widaman, & Cutrona, 2010). Likewise, dispositional optimism has been identified as an intrapsychic resource in Mexican-origin mothers who experience economic stress (Taylor et al., 2012).

It is evident that mood can also be improved by wellbeing behaviours. Lewinsohn and Graf (1973) already showed in the 1970s that there is a strong, significant relationship between mood levels and the quantity of enjoyable activities in which people engage, irrespective of their age, sex and type of mental health problem. Regaining old routines and finding new, healthy ones is imperative in recovering from depression and is a key focus area in therapies such as behavioural activation treatment (Hopko, Lejuez, Lepage, Hopko, & McNeil, 2003; Jacobson, Martell, & Dimidjian, 2001). Although cognitive therapy has enjoyed greater focus in research over the last few decades, it seems that there is renewed interest in purely behavioural approaches (Dimidjian et al. 2006). For example, meta-analysis has found activity scheduling (a therapeutic technique in which clients are taught to monitor their mood during daily events and then increase the number of identified enjoyable activities) to be as effective as cognitive therapy at improving depression (Cuijpers, Van Straten, & Warmerdam, 2007). Meta-analysis also shows that behavioural activation therapy (which targets a client's environmental interaction rather than purely intrapsychic processes such as cognition) is as effective as antidepressants in treating severe depression, and significantly more effective than cognitive therapy alone (Dimidjian et al. 2006).

Despite the fact that single mothers often struggle to find time for leisure routines, they nonetheless stressed how helpful these activities were at improving their mood. The correlation between leisure routines and positive mental health outcomes is well documented (Badia, Longo, Orgaz, & Gómez-Vela, 2013; Badia, Orgaz, Verdugo, Ullán, & Martínez, 2013; Brajša-Žganec, Merkaš, & Šverko, 2011; Celen-Demirtas, Konstam, & Tomek, 2015; Fernández-Mayoralas et al., 2015; Liu & Yu, 2015; Trenberth, 2005). A cross-cultural review of studies examining the link between leisure and quality of life found that, in different cultural contexts, leisure activities function as spaces for creating meaning (Iwasaki, 2007). Newman, Tay and Diener (2014) propose five core processes that leisure could trigger to improve subjective wellbeing, namely *detachment-recovery* (e.g. helping a person disconnect from work stress or life pressures and recuperate), *autonomy* (e.g. increasing perceptions of control and freedom in one's life), *mastery* (e.g. engaging in new challenging activities, gaining skills and knowledge, and achieving new success), *meaning* (e.g. gaining something valuable that brings additional life purpose), and *affiliation* (e.g. a sense of belonging and connection). It is thus important for practitioners to encourage single mothers to have enjoyable “me-time” routines that promote these five core processes, while being sensitive to the client's potential practical and financial constraints. Furthermore, several mothers in this study mentioned that a clean and orderly home environment helped them feel better. An ordered, uncluttered, clean environment can have a positive effect on wellbeing. Orderly homes have been linked to an improvement in processing capacity (McMains & Kastner, 2011) and a decrease in depressed mood, with improved diurnal slopes of cortisol (Saxbe & Repetti, 2010). Thus, there may be truth in the colloquial saying that “a clean home is a happy home”.

6.2.2 Build on single mothers' parenting strengths and competencies

The data analysis revealed a range of parenting behaviours that mothers described as important during family routines. Both interview and observational data revealed the parents' extensive range of parenting competencies. The positive parenting behaviours that participants described and displayed (e.g. demonstrating care and affection, fortifying child boundaries, apprenticeship and behaviour modelling, using attentive, gentle communication, and making activities fun and child friendly) are consistent with positive parenting behaviours described in other published works (Holden et al., 2017; Seay et al., 2014). In a review, Seay et al. (2014) provide five defining attributes of positive parenting, namely displays of *caring* (viz. warmth, responsiveness, compassion, affection), *leading* (viz. regulating and shaping the child's behaviour through modelling and setting developmentally appropriate boundaries), *providing* (viz. taking care of basic subsistence needs including food, shelter, safety, and hygiene), *teaching* (viz. engaging the child in developmentally appropriate play and learning activities that stimulate cognitive and socioemotional development), and *communicating* (viz. active listening and giving clear and transparent verbal and non-verbal messages that illustrate respect towards the child).

Observational data revealed that several mothers were highly proficient at engaging children during learning activities. However, the mothers' skill levels seemed to vary because the interviews showed that not everyone felt satisfied with their parenting experiences. Observation data showed that certain environmental distractions (e.g. television or high volumes of people passing through the space) can cause interruptions and diminishing the duration and frequency of mother-infant serve-and-return sequences. These interruptions may have implications for child development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Bronfenbrenner &

Morris, 2006; Evans, 2006). The participants in this present study who were able to find a more secluded, distraction-free area in the home to conduct child-centred activities were able to sustain these sequences for longer. The participants in the present study also mentioned that they often struggled with child misbehaviour and discipline during their routines. Diminished parenting skills such as poor discipline can have a negative impact on child development (e.g. Gershoff, Lansford, Sexton, Davis-Keen, & Sameroff, 2012; Hoeve et al., 2009). Parents' ability to form securely attached relationships with their young children may be compromised in adverse, poverty-stricken environments, especially when mothers are dealing with mental health challenges like stress and depression (Atkinson et al., 2000; Campbell et al., 2004; Martins & Gaffan, 2000). In previous research, the rates of maternal postpartum depression in a Khayelitsha sample (N = 147) was found to be high (34,7%) when compared to populations in developed countries (Cooper et al., 1999). Maternal postpartum depression was linked to compromised mother-infant interactions, with mothers displaying less sensitivity when engaging with their babies (Cooper et al., 1999). In the same sample, both maternal postpartum depression and less responsive parenting were associated with infant attachment insecurity when infants were two months old; and at an 18-month follow-up, poor parenting indicators were again associated with insecure infant attachment (Tomlinson et al., 2005). Over time, there often are bidirectional influences in disordered dyads, and poor parenting and problematic child characteristics combine to perpetuate a cycle of mutual hostility (Dishion & Patterson, 2006; Grant et al., 2006). The data in the present study echoed the notion that child characteristics play a role in the maintenance of family routines and can either hinder or facilitate the execution of activities. When mothers are psychologically vulnerable, child misbehaviour can exacerbate the situation.

Evidence shows that targeted, preventative interventions with pregnant women in Khayelitsha can encourage greater maternal sensitivity and responsiveness to infants, reduce maternal intrusiveness, and increase secure infant attachment (Cooper et al., 2009). Other parenting interventions, including those implemented in low-income environments, have been shown to enhance positive parenting skills, improve parents' ability to use effective, non-physical forms of discipline, and reduce family stress and maternal mental health difficulties (Barlow, Johnston, Kendrick, Polnay, & Stewart-Brown, 2006; Barlow, Smailagic, Huband, Rollof, & Bennet, 2012; Gardner, Burton, & Klimes, 2006; Prinz, Sanders, Shapiro, Whitaker, & Lutzker, 2009; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2010).

6.2.3 Build on women's time management and scheduling skills

Time starvation is a modern-day challenge that concerns many parents, especially low-income and/or single mothers (Anderson, 2012; Koulouglioti et al., 2011; Roy et al., 2004; Tubbs et al., 2005). In previous research I postulated that first-time parents often struggle with *temporal incongruence* and *schedule derailment* (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a, 2016b). Temporal incongruence means that there is incompatibility between the routines parents wish to implement in the home, and the time they have available to do so successfully (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a). Schedule derailment occurs when a scheduled routine cannot take place as desired (because it was interrupted or delayed by unexpected problems), and this disruption sets in motion a chain reaction, "throwing out" the rest of the day's routines and upsetting the balance of the entire timetable (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a). Likewise, the participants in this study confirmed how problematic it was to deal with temporal constraints and schedule derailment. However, participants highlighted several scheduling actions that helped them manage their time better and balance packed schedules. *Schedule design* strategies and

Schedule implementation strategies were not mutually exclusive processes, and these behaviours were not once-off tasks, but ongoing endeavours within the family system.

The concept *Scheduling actions* relates well to concepts one may find in time management literature. Words such as time management, scheduling, project management and task efficiency are words often found in organisational and educational fields, since these soft skills are considered essential for employee and student success. Claessens et al. (2007) point out that a lot of the advice given on time management techniques do not seem to be accompanied by empirical findings. Furthermore, past research that assessed the impact of different time management techniques tended to focus on the academic performance of students or evaluated the impact of time management interventions in the workforce, and thus the body of work on effective time management strategies lacks diversity (Claessens et al., 2007). In my own search I found little *family*-orientated empirical studies that have evaluated the impact of specific scheduling and time management techniques, although there is an abundance of non-peer-reviewed online articles that give parents advice. Thus, some of the literature presented here focuses on the scheduling and time management of students and employees, and one must extrapolate from these findings and hypothesise how they might apply to the family system.

The findings from this study suggest that practitioners who wish to support single mothers' scheduling actions should encourage deliberate and proactive planning. A good schedule seems to require some level of mindfulness and pre-emptive thought. Families should be inspired to increase their awareness of time management issues, such as 1) immediate temporal experiences, 2) time expenditure, and 3) potential timewasters that hinder schedule execution (Claessens et al., 2007). Furthermore, being busy is not the same thing as being productive, and thus a good schedule not only considers efficiency and speed, but also outcomes. The single

mothers in this study emphasised the importance of having a clear future vision for oneself, one's child and one's family, and letting these life goals direct the design and implementation of daily routines (Richards, 1987). It is important that parents are mindful of how their routines are helping them achieve a range of short-term and long-term goals (Claessens et al., 2007). Extensive research has been done on effective goal setting (see Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Although initial goal setting is important, many people who intend to follow through on desired behaviours fail to do so, and practitioners should also be mindful of concepts such as *implementation-intention* (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). *Goal setting* revolves around the end product or final desired outcome (i.e. *what* one wants to achieve), whereas *implementation-intention* helps one to specify the exact steps and sub-processes needed in order to achieve this goal, and the context in which one will perform these said actions (i.e. the *when*, *where* and *how*) (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006).

Like Anderson (2012), the participants in this study also stressed the need to establish balance. When family members have competing needs and desires, and limited resources, the family must try to find an equilibrium between these competing needs by creating to-do lists and prioritising the most important routines (Claessens et al., 2007). Data analysis confirmed that planning in extended households must be collaborative and, ideally, schedules need to be negotiated jointly among multiple adults in the home (Olson et al., 2014), because if scheduling is not a collaborative endeavour other family members may cause negative interference and undermine parenting (De Goede & Greeff, 2016a, 2016b). When mothers experience negative interference from relatives, it will likely increase intrafamilial conflict, parenting stress, and depression (Jones et al., 2007; Taylor, 2015).

In certain settings, time management techniques such as goal setting and prioritising have been associated with increased levels of perceived control of time and decreased levels of stress, somatic tension, and distress (Claessens et al., 2007; Häfner & Stock, 2010; Häfner et al., 2014). Scheduling one's day effectively is also important for unemployed individuals, because unemployed individuals who have a high degree of *time structure* (i.e. feeling that their time use during the day is well organised and purposive) have better psychological wellbeing (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Van Hove & Lootens, 2013; Wanberg et al. 1997). Thus, when needed, practitioners working with single mothers should focus on bolstering the scheduling skills of both employed and unemployed women.

6.2.4 Help single mothers increase interpersonal resources

I have highlighted that it is essential to repeatedly strengthen mothers' feelings of worth and competence by highlighting their unique abilities. From the first clinic visit, unmarried pregnant women should be screened for depression and anxiety. At-risk pregnant women should be assisted by health professionals to accept the more positive role they play in society and destigmatise premarital pregnancies. It is important for unmarried single mothers to view themselves as good, responsible, competent, strong, caring, upstanding citizens, rather than women who have failed. However, women are more likely to see themselves in this positive light if other people around them corroborate and validate these positive identities (Stets & Serpe, 2013). It is thus important for us, as a society, to improve the social standing of single mothers (Stets & Serpe, 2013). We need greater recognition of the single-mother family form as a potentially functional, sufficient, and commendable option, rather than denigrating single parents and viewing this family structure as inherently defective. Various societal systems,

including (but not limited to) the health, employment, and judicial systems, should acknowledge the important and extensive role single mothers play in our South African society.

The importance of obtaining social support from family members, friends and the wider community is a recurring subject in a substantial body of literature (Abramson et al. 2015; Coan, Schaefer, & Davidson, 2006; Davidson & McEwen, 2012; Eisenberger, 2013a, 2013b; Fowler & Christakis, 2008; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010; Ozbay, Fitterling, Charney, & Southwick, 2008; Shim et al., 2014; Sippel, Pietrzak, Charney, Mayes, & Southwick, 2015; Smith & Christakis, 2008; Thoits, 2011). During times of adversity, social support is especially advantageous because of its buffering and restorative potential (Armstrong et al., 2005). Indeed, social support is highlighted as a key component of the resiliency model (McCubbin & McCubbin, 2005) and the resilience framework (Walsh, 2015) mentioned in Chapter 2. Several studies have looked at the social support of single mothers and the important protective role it plays in their psychological wellbeing, especially for vulnerable single-mother subpopulations such as those living in rural areas, those who are income-assisted, and those experiencing high levels of distress (Kim, Jeon, & Jang, 2010; Samuels-Dennis, Ford-Gilboe, Wilk, Avison, & Ray, 2010; Ward & Turner, 2007). Single mothers who feel less socially isolated and excluded have better general health and are at a smaller risk of developing depression (Rousou, Kouta, & Middleton, 2016; Targosz et al., 2003).

It was apparent from the data that most participating mothers were embedded within a network of other adults. But single mothers are not merely passive recipients of social support. Single mothers are actively involved in these networks and need to cultivate relationships with kin and extrafamilial groups. *Connectedness*, a key concept of the resilience framework (Walsh, 2015), mirrors several findings in this study. A prolonged stressor can hinder family cohesion

and incumbent teamwork (Walsh, 2015). The data showed that single mothers see themselves as collaborators within the family system. Single mothers formed mutually beneficial coalitions with other adults in the home, and these coalitions often operated as caregiving teams rather than separate entities. In this study, single mothers and their family members seemed to be committed to tackling problems together and wished to find mutual solutions to weather adversity (Walsh, 2015). By living in multigenerational households, single mothers were able to attenuate the negative consequences of time starvation and financial deprivation. Similarly, Kalil et al. (2014) found that the total caregiving time children receive in multigenerational families is comparable to that of married or cohabiting two-parent families, because in multigenerational households, grandparents also invest their time in caregiving.

To further build kin relationships, participants expressed the importance of communicating love, appreciation, and support. Indeed, the terms communication and relationship are intertwined concepts, and discussing one concept often supposes the other (Sillars & Vangelisti, 2006). A great body of evidence shows how vital positive communication is for successful post-stressor adaptation (Black & Lobo, 2008; McCubbin & McCubbin, 2005; Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, & Williamson, 2004; Schrodt, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008; Simon, Murphy, & Smith, 2005; Ungar, 2005; Walsh, 2015). Yet misunderstandings and conflict can arise easily in times of intense strain, (Walsh, 2012). The data in the present study revealed that, during pregnancy, it was often hard for unwed mothers-to-be to communicate openly and to disclose their pregnancy status to next of kin. Because of cultural and familial expectations, women feared their families' reactions to the pregnancy and thus they aimed to hide the news from loved ones for as long as possible. When the single mothers first disclosed their pregnancies to relatives, the family atmosphere could be volatile. However, over a period of

time, most kin seemed to become receptive to the idea of a new child in the home. The question is: how can we speed up this process and reduce the duration of secrecy and intra-familial conflict during pregnancy? Walsh (2015) underscores the importance of transparent, unambiguous messages, open emotional expression, honesty and truth seeking, and emphatic understanding that accepts diversity and different opinions. Furthermore, in this study, successful conflict resolution was identified by single mothers as a critical resource. Therefore, beyond the typical, supportive conversations that relatives need to engage in on a regular basis, they also need effective conflict management strategies. Walsh (2012) believes that any given stressor could potentially become an opportunity for reconciliation, and family members may use this time to restore fragmented connections and gain new perspectives on old emotional scars. Thus, if managed well, the new pregnancy in the family can become an opportunity for relational repair, rather than increased discord.

Consistent with the resiliency model (McCubbin & McCubbin, 2005), as well as the resilience framework of Walsh (2015), the participants stressed the importance of extrafamilial sources of support from the wider community. In the context of turbulent family and romantic relationships, first-port-of-call practitioners, such as clinic staff, can encourage unmarried pregnant women to expand their networks and seek out alternative caring individuals, such as friends, who will provide reassurance and comfort during pregnancy. Likewise, practitioners should inform clients of the many community-based resources available to them and introduce single mothers to women who have had similar experiences. By expanding their extrafamilial support networks, women's agency can be improved by professions and their prepartum isolation can be reduced.

6.2.5 Improve the relationships between fathers and mothers

As far as possible, single mothers and their kin should be encouraged to forge workable coalitions with fathers and their families. Only a limited number of participants gave exemplary accounts of continued father involvement and support. When fathers were uninvolved in their children's lives, the mothers worried about their children's emotional, cultural, and social development. The narrative told by many women highlighted a potential demand for conflict resolution interventions. At the outset, though, I reiterate that it is important not to depict men as the antiheroes of the narrative.

Father absenteeism can have many causes. On the one hand, women can at times become inflexible gatekeepers, as one of the participants in this study suggested. In more extreme situations, mothers may choose to conceal paternal identity from their children. Concealing paternal identity is not uncommon in South Africa (Denis & Ntsimane, 2006; Nduna & Jewkes, 2011b; 2012; Nduna & Sikweyiya, 2015), with one study showing that a third of their 54 sampled families from a Johannesburg community withheld paternal identity from children (Nduna, Kasese-Hara, Ndebele, Pillay, & Manala, 2011). Not only is paternity at times concealed, but any discussion of the biological father is avoided (Denis & Ntsimane, 2006). Concealment of paternal identity is problematic, because children may think they were abandoned and rejected by their father, or that their mother robbed them of their identity and additional financial and social support (Nduna & Jewkes, 2011a; 2011b; Nduna et al., 2011).

Nduna (2014) argues that concealing paternal identity from children is a phenomenon strongly interwoven with larger socio-cultural and economic hindrances. Mothers tend to conceal true paternal identity if the biological father denied paternity, if the father was married to another woman at the time of conception, and if mothers were unsure of the father's whereabouts

(Nduna, 2014). Qualitative evidence from Nduna's (2014) study also suggest that mothers fear retribution and violence from men if they disclose paternity to their children. This could be violent reprisal, either from the biological father or from the mother's new romantic partner (Nduna, 2014).

Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, and Mphaka (2013) warn that researchers and interventionists should not bestow on absent fathers the labels of "negligent" and "disinterested". Their qualitative evidence suggests that absent South African fathers *do* want to be involved in the lives of their children and are eager to repair broken ties (Eddy et al., 2013; Lesch, & Kelapile, 2016). However, South African fathers may feel limited by economic hindrances (e.g. poverty and unemployment), social obstacles (e.g. antagonistic, conflict-ridden affiliations with their child's mother and her family) and cultural obstacles (e.g. materialist constructions of the father role, and expectations that men should pay damages and maintenance costs even in the context of poverty) (Eddy et al., 2013; Lesch & Kelapile, 2016). Furthermore, Gee and Rhodes's (2003) review on teenage father involvement cautions against the potential gatekeeping role of the child's maternal grandmother, who can deter young fathers from being involved in their children's lives. It is therefore important to consider the role of relatives, and how they either support or hinder father engagement.

Although acknowledging that absent fathers are not "negligent" and "disinterested", interventions are clearly needed to improve paternal involvement. We need to consider several key questions: How do we encourage disengaged men to be more emotionally present in the lives of their children? What can we do to help single mothers foster amicable co-parenting relationships? How can we better equip women to obtain needed financial support from fathers? How can we best improve positive communication strategies between mother and

father households? How do we improve the conflict resolution and mediation techniques in precarious co-parenting situations?

Although the women in this study did not marry their ex-partners, the psychological and relational experiences of the participants during the break-up might be comparable to that of divorcing single mothers. Divorce necessitates a reorganisation of a nuclear family system and typically becomes a binuclear family system, linked by the child. Although there were no legal divorce proceedings, the women in this study had to come to terms with the dissolution of their romantic relationship, and try to establish a new co-parenting partnership with the biological father. As with legally divorcing couples there was thus an emotional divorce, and a renegotiation of association between the ex-partners. There is a paucity of literature on how never-married lone mothers can establish a successful co-parenting partnership with biological fathers. One can, however, draw from the well-investigated divorce literature.

Although non-residential fathers tend to be less involved in their children's lives than married or joint-custody fathers, non-resident fathers' support and involvement still benefit children's self-esteem (Bastaitis, Ponnet, & Mortelmans, 2012). After married parents end their romantic involvement, the quality of the co-parent relationship affects child outcomes. Specifically, exposure to inter-parental conflict has been linked to children's internalising and externalising behaviour problems (Amato, 2014; Lamela & Figueiredo, 2016; Shimkowski & Schrodt, 2012; Teubert & Pinquart, 2010). Some researchers have thus argued that, in hostile co-parenting situations, it is best to reduce children's exposure to conflict by giving sole parental rights to only one parent (for discussion see Cashmore & Parkinson, 2014; Nielsen, 2017). In a critical review, Nielsen (2017) argues that this suggestion springs from an error in understanding social science research. It is not the presence of interparental conflict that is detrimental to children's

functioning, but specifically when children *witness* antagonistic co-parent interactions (Cummings & Davies, 2010). Some combative co-parents still manage to safeguard their children from hostile interactions by keeping their communication civil when children are present. In a review, Amato (2014) emphasised that children are better adjusted when co-parents shield them from clashes about living arrangements, financial support, and visitation arrangements. Likewise, single mothers in this current study mentioned the importance of protecting children from negative mother-father interactions by resolving disputes at appropriate times and remaining respectful towards the father. Furthermore, Hetherington and Elmore (2003) suggest that it is the *type* of inter-parental conflict (physically violent, threatening, or abusive), rather than the frequency of conflict, that affects child adjustment. Nielsen (2017) also argues that the quality of parent-child relationships is more critical for child wellbeing than the quality of co-parenting relationships, because stable parent-child connections mediate the effects of inter-parental conflict. Furthermore, Nielsen (2017) argues that having two involved, but combative, parents is still less detrimental to child wellbeing than having one of the parents completely absent from the child's life. There is empirical evidence to support Nielsen's (2017) stance (Elam, Sandler, Wolchik, & Tein, 2016).

However, the quality of the co-parent relationship cannot be ignored, because greater relational conflict between divorced or never-married mothers and fathers is consistently associated with greater father absenteeism (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Osborne & Ankrum, 2015; Waller & Dwyer Emory, 2014). In terms of causality, an amicable co-parent relationship is a strong predictor of non-resident fathers' future involvement, as opposed to father involvement predicting the quality of co-parenting ties (Carlson et al., 2008). Thus, parents' across-household teamwork capabilities help non-resident fathers get involved and stay connected to their children. Certainly, several participants in this study underscored the value

of open, constructive communication with biological fathers. *Constructive communication* is a valuable resource when engaging with biological fathers (Ganong, Coleman, Feistman, Jamison, & Markham, 2012; Ganong, Coleman, Markham, & Rothrauff, 2011), but fostering these amicable relationships should happen as early as possible.

During the early stages of pregnancy, almost all of the interviewed participants in this study struggled to come to terms with their maternal identity. It was a key psychological task for the women to accept this new role. Over the course of a few months, many women in this study seemed to master this task. However, other people (e.g. nurses, NGO staff, friends, and relatives) often helped women through this process. Maternal role salience *engendered devotion* towards children, increasing mothers' willingness to make needed childrearing sacrifices. Fathers should be given the same opportunities to come to terms with their paternal identity. It is important to look at men's self-classification (Stets & Burke, 2000). Once a person has identified himself as belonging to a specific social category (e.g. "father"), he will likely appropriate the socially constructed meanings and expectations that society associates with that role (Stets & Burke, 2000). When a specific identity becomes activated in a situation, and the individual is committed to that role, he will attempt to fulfil role expectations, coordinate with other role partners, and direct the environmental resources for which that specific role is typically accountable (Stets & Burke, 2000). Unfortunately, South Africans tend to consider childrearing a feminine task, although some of these views may slowly be changing (Richter & Morrell, 2006; Richter et al., 2012). I wonder how often friends, relatives, and professionals who work in community settings reassure fathers and cheer them on. We cannot force fathers to be devoted to their children, but we can be more encouraging, help young men to recognise their own parenting strengths, and build their self-esteem and self-confidence as fathers.

During the pregnancy months, most women in this study continued to be romantically involved with the fathers of their child. The relationship ended either during the pregnancy, or directly after giving birth. When unmarried pregnant women go for their prenatal check-ups, it could be an opportunity to assess the quality of women's relationships with fathers. At-risk mother-father affiliations can be flagged and targeted. During the months of pregnancy, many single mothers in this study experienced extreme conflict with their partners. Stories of male infidelity, abandonment, mistrust, and rejection were powerful. The events that occur within a relationship shape the stories people tell of that relationship, yet the narratives themselves may also shape relationship outcomes (Sillars & Vangelisti, 2006). Individuals who have deeply entrenched negative views of their partner tend to revise past events, highlight unpleasant memories, and talk exclusively about the negative aspects of their shared history (Carrere, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan, & Ruckstuhl, 2000). The stories a single mother tells of her ex-partner may shape how she perceives and responds to that ex-partner's current behaviour (Sillars & Vangelisti, 2006). Interventionists should be aware that each parent's perception of past relationship experiences and patterns can cloud their views of the other parent's post-separation behaviour, and therefore mediators should help shift some of these potentially rigid views (Demby, 2016).

Divorced couples who successfully co-parent after their break-up are proficient at *cognitive reorganisation* (viz. ex-partners learn to think about each other differently now that the romance is over by focusing on child needs rather than on each other), *affective reorganisation* (viz. parents regulate their emotional responses by restraining feelings of anger and resentment, and choosing how, when, and to whom they express feelings), and *behavioural reorganisation* (viz. ex-partners agree on new ways to exchange information, make childrearing decisions, and devise a plan for childcare logistics) (Jamison, Coleman, Ganong, & Feistman, 2014). The

single mothers in this study likewise stressed the need for these types of cognitive, affective, and behavioural reorganisations by trying to communicate constructively and setting emotional boundaries.

In this study, uninvolved fathers often lived in different provinces from their children, although not always. Yet evidence shows that, irrespective of residential proximity, fathers will phone and email their children more frequently when they have an amicable relationship with the mother (Viry, 2014). Thus, again it seems it is important to foster amicable co-parenting partnerships. To further nourish emotional connections, photos and special keepsakes can be powerful ties to significant people in children's lives (Walsh, 2015). When fathers live far away, single mothers could be encouraged by professionals to *fill the father gap* and keep some of these important paternal symbols in the home. This can help children to understand their relational ties to fathers.

However, couples sometimes simply cannot find amicable ways to co-parent. According to Judge Rupert Smith (personal communication, July 20, 2017), who has 25 years of experience working with litigants from Khayelitsha, the South African constitution and judicial system provide women and their children with an array of legal protections and resources, yet more can be done to strengthen families and improve co-parenting skills. In the United States, court-affiliated parenting programmes (Fackrell, Hawkins, & Kay, 2011), and mediation in the form of parenting coordinators (Demby, 2016; Greenberg & Sullivan, 2012; Henry, Fieldstone, Thompson, & Treharne, 2011) or parenting plan consultants (Pickar & Kahn, 2011), can help parents better cooperate with one another, especially in high-conflict co-parenting situations. In South Africa there are no court-mandated parenting programmes that could compel combative parents to improve their interpersonal skills (R. Smith, personal communication,

July 20, 2017). Court-appointed, professionally-trained mental health workers who assist vulnerable litigating families are also in short supply and cannot address the extensive needs of families who enter the court system (R. Smith, personal communication, July 20, 2017). Judge Smith (personal communication, July 20, 2017) believes there is certainly scope here to improve the South African judicial system. Another concern is that not all black mothers are utilising the legal resources and opportunities available to them (R. Smith, personal communication, July 20, 2017). When women apply for a maintenance order, the Department of Justice covers all legal expenses apart from travelling costs. However, filling out legal documents can be a daunting task, and conveniently located, community-based paralegal offices and non-profit organisations in Khayelitsha are helping more women access legal services by helping complainants prepare and submit court documents (R. Smith, personal communication, July 20, 2017). However, some of the participants in this study were apprehensive about the potential ramifications legal action would prompt, thinking that they might lose some of their parental rights, or that the biological father would retaliate violently. Judge Smith (personal communication, July 20, 2017) confirms that fear and intimidation can deter women from taking legal action. Judge Smith (personal communication, July 20, 2017) states that applications for maintenance orders and protection orders typically co-occur, surmising that “maintenance and family violence go hand-in-hand”. These issues again highlight the precarious position many women are in and raise questions about female agency and power in South Africa.

Therefore, we need early preventative interventions that assist unmarried pregnant women and biological fathers to navigate the complicated relational challenges they may face. My data suggests that, even if the couple is still in a relationship during the months of pregnancy, and even if the father has suggested that he will be committed to his child in the future, this may

not turn out to be the case. We thus need effective early-screening tools to help us identify at-risk relationships.

6.2.6 Help women decrease economic risks in tangible ways

Although dispositional optimism seems to benefit economically stressed, marginalised families (Taylor et al., 2010, 2012), poverty creates chronically harsh environments that are spread over generations, and these environments may afford individuals little opportunity for success and mastery (Seligman, 2011; Walsh, 2012). Continuously experiencing failure within this harsh context can eventually lead to a sense of futility and hopelessness (Seligman, 2011). Thus, losing hope may be an expected by-product of the relentless unforgiving conditions in which many South African families live. To say that single mothers should be encouraged to be optimistic and have a positive outlook may place undue responsibility for family success on mothers' mental toughness. Continued transformation is needed in sub-Saharan Africa to improve income levels and reduce inequality (Fosu, 2015). As a country, South Africa needs to provide its citizens with more nurturing socioeconomic environments. Both micro-level and macro-level forces contribute to poverty, but I would argue that the gender dimension of economic inequality is still a major global problem (Perrons, 2015). In developing countries, education improves the physical and mental wellbeing of both mothers and children (see King & Hill, 1997). Schultz (2002) and Klasen (2002) argue that governments should invest in the education of women because it not only benefits individuals, but bolsters human capital and economic growth. However, the participants in this study explained that motherhood can halt maternal educational progress, and this has a knock-on-effect in terms of career and financial stability. Practitioners should encourage pregnant women to continue with their education and avoid dropping out of school. But we should also create an environment in which this is a

realistic possibility. For example, we need to rethink how we structure school and university systems in order to deliver more affordable, convenient, and accessible education to women with maternal responsibilities. Schools and universities that provide subsidised day care or inexpensive distance-learning opportunities may help mothers advance academically. These are long-term development goals that the country should address. Additionally, community-based interventions can help women increase their monthly income by strengthening maternal competencies such as financial planning, effective job-seeking strategies, and entrepreneurial skills (see Aidis, Welter, Smallbone, & Isakova, 2007; Carter, Henry, Cinnéide, & Johnston, 2007; Chamlee-Wright, 2003; Kobeissi, 2010; Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Minniti, 2010; Minniti & Naudé, 2010; Noguera, Alvarez, & Urbano, 2013).

Moreover, the intergenerational transmission of poverty was of concern to the parents. Walker et al. (2007) postulated that, in developing countries, poverty prevented approximately 200 million children (aged zero to five) from reaching their full developmental potential, and inadequate cognitive stimulation was one of four risk factors that required urgent intervention. Although many participants in this study felt happy about their ability to create suitable learning opportunities, some participants worried about their children's school-readiness and cognitive development, and felt frustrated that they did not have the means to create a more stimulating home environment or fulfil a range of basic needs. Economic risks are pervasive, and although single mothers possess many strengths that help to attenuate these risks, there is a great need for multi-systemic interventions that can have a tangible, positive impact on women's financial mobility.

6.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

As with any research project, this study has several inherent limitations and strengths due to the chosen research design and methodological procedures. One limitation was that interviews were only conducted with single mothers, excluding the accounts of biological fathers and next of kin. Some research has considered the experiences of uninvolved, absent fathers (Nduna, 2014), and I believe we need to build on these qualitative findings with larger-scale, longitudinal, quantitative designs that can explore and verify some of the suggested determinants of father absenteeism in South Africa. The personal stories of involved, or semi-involved, biological fathers could add further richness to future resilience research. It would be important to know what motivates involved South African fathers to support their children. We also need to further explore the interpersonal dynamics of single-mother families from the perspective of mothers' relatives. In so doing we may be better able to support families in high-conflict situations during the months of pregnancy. Due to the parameters of this study and the fact that the focus was on the management of family routines, certain subjects (especially *inhlawulo* rituals) could not be explored in greater detail, and additional research needs to be conducted to better understand the norms that maintain these tradition, how these views might be changing, and the corollaries of this ritual (both positive and negative). Because of the non-statistical nature of the data and the non-portability nature of sampling methods, the conceptual models I presented in this chapter (see Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3) are speculative, and the generalisability of results is limited to logical rather than statistical inferences. These conceptual models and propositions provide a theoretical map for future verification studies.

In terms of sampling bias, I must note that the sample consisted only of never-married lone mothers. The findings of this research thus do not reflect the experiences of divorced Xhosa-

speaking single mothers. Nonetheless, participant demographics seemed to be consistent with the wider population in that non-marital childbearing is common in South Africa, and its prevalence may be one of the highest in the world (Department of Social Development, 2013; Hosegood, McGrath, & Moultrie, 2009; Nzimande, 2005).

Despite these limitations, the study also has notable strengths. By basing substantive theories on real-life experiences, researchers may identify new factors or sub-processes that have previously been overlooked in research. For example, my study highlights that various resourceful time management and scheduling techniques (e.g. prioritising, conscious planning, multitasking, balancing, prepping, realistic timetabling) could improve the resilience of single-mother families. Yet in their conceptual model on the strengths and resilience of single-mother families, Taylor and Conger (2017) overlook the potentially positive impact of scheduling strengths. This omission is noteworthy because time starvation has been noted as a substantial problem for single parents (Anderson, 2012).

Furthermore, qualitative research allows researchers to explore the context, complexity, and ambiguity of phenomena. This research highlighted context-specific resilience strategies (i.e. seeing oneself as a hustler) that may be uniquely useful and more relatable for black, low-income, never-married mothers.

Another potential strength of this study was collecting both interview and observational data. One important question to consider is whether the benefits of additional video data outweighed the costs (of time, people, and money). In its defence, a substantial advantage of using video material is the rich complexity and precision it provides the researcher (Griffiths, 2013). Video material is fairly robust in capturing layers of behavioural and contextual evidence, as opposed

to fieldnotes that may neglect important details (Griffiths, 2013). Researchers also have the ability to repeatedly view detailed behaviours and interactions as many times as needed, an advantage that observers using fieldnotes do not have (Griffiths, 2013). Furthermore, information gathered through participant interviews is valuable in that it provides researchers with the participants' interpretations of reality, but the accuracy of research results can also be limited by these interpretations. There could be situational elements that participants are unaware of, or uncomfortable with, and thus interviews may not reveal all the relevant information. Video material can help researchers capture potentially 'missing' pieces of empirical evidence (Griffiths, 2013). On the other hand, video-recorded observational data is always limited to what is physically observable within the camera frame (Griffiths, 2013), and thus it may fail to portray the detailed intrapsychic processes that direct behaviour. In this study, the videos failed to provide any information regarding the complexity of single mothers' relationships with relatives and ex-partners, and the intricacy of women's thoughts and feelings about this life transition. Yet only the observational data revealed how poverty affects the physical space and ergonomic utility of activity settings. The videos also highlighted how environmental distractors affect mother-child interactions. Furthermore, the videos sometimes confirmed interview data in a more palpable way, especially concerning the effectiveness of mother-child serve-and-return responses, or the importance of play during child-centred routines. It therefore still is advisable to cross-verify findings by using more than one source of information.

Morrow (2005) believes that qualitative research should be evaluated on the basis of its ability to achieve social and political change. I believe that this research project was a step towards understanding the experienced inequalities of low-income, Xhosa-speaking single-mother

families. I have integrated some of my research findings into a comic book story (see the draft version of this comic book, entitled *Hustler Queens*, in *Addendum R*), so that the results can be shared with the target population in a more user-friendly way.

6.4 Conclusion

The aim of this current research was to investigate how low-income single mothers with young children effectively manage their family routines. Rich descriptive data showed the profoundly dynamic nature of this management process, highlighting key contextual risks as well as powerful strengths in single-mother families. Morrow (2005) writes that researchers should aim to increase social consciousness by identifying sources of inequality and highlighting the perspectives of those who have been subjugated and silenced. The stories of the participants illustrate how societal inequalities, such as poverty, afflict women, and how these inequalities are amplified by women's nonmarital maternal status. In a post-Apartheid South Africa, black women continue to be side-lined and disregarded. The findings demonstrate that, in order to bolster family routines, everyday parenting and scheduling endeavours are important, but one cannot only focus on the postpartum phases of adaptation. Professionals should consider the events that lead to women's single-parent status, and the impact these experiences have on women's mental health. The stories of the participants also made me appreciate the great effort women make to raise their children successfully under inhospitable socioeconomic conditions, without the social status or financial relief that marriage may bring. In the wake of an unfeasible romantic relationship with the biological father, women contend with practical and emotional setbacks yet display an extensive range of intra- and interpersonal competencies. In the words of Anathi, "A single parent is strong and, for me, there is nothing wrong with being a single parent: It means that you have the capacity to build your own life from scratch".

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ADDENDUM A

KEY TERMS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS

Single mother. According to the Collins English Dictionary, a single parent is “a person who has a dependent child or dependent children and who is widowed, divorced, or unmarried” (Hanks, 2011). This term is demarcated based on the marital status of the parent, meaning that the parent has no spouse. But South African households are often complex and more fluid. Sometimes parents may be unmarried but cohabiting. At other times the biological father is only temporarily absent due to work, but socially and psychologically he is regarded by the mother as a primary co-parent. It was thus most important for the women in this study to identify themselves as having a “single-parent” status, without the fulltime childrearing support of a romantic partner. The mother had to view herself as the primary person taking responsibility for raising her child or children. Because of this phrasing, the single parent may live with other adult relatives. The living arrangements of single parents are considerably diverse (Anderson, 2012). It is likely that a single mother and her child or children are a sub-system within a large, multigenerational extended family household. It should be borne in mind, however, that these other live-in relatives function as the helpers of the single mother but not the primary custodians of her child or children.

Families with young children. The title of this dissertation focuses one’s attention specifically on single mothers *with young children*. *Families with young children* is a specific developmental phase in family life, when an individual or a couple transitions from childlessness to parenthood. Therefore, for the first time in their lives, these young adults move up a generation and take primary responsibility for the care of their own offspring (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012). From the family life-cycle perspective formulated by McGoldrick and

Shibusawa (2012), this phase is one of six consecutive developmental stages that most families will experience at some point during their lifetime. This transitional phase of life necessitates shifts in six family domains, namely each parent's individual functioning and their sense of self; relational dynamics between the mother and father dyad (e.g. the quality of their emotional bond); ties within the larger family network (e.g. grandparents and relatives from the parents' families of origin); the new relationship with the infant; and lastly, extrafamilial forces such as life stress, work stress and social support (Cowan & Cowan, 2012). Thus, the transition to parenthood, although a normative life event, can create uncertainty and major change within a family system (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). The transition requires dynamic coping strategies, and family members must adapt and work together in order to regain functional stability within the system (McCubbin et al., 1996). Usually, after a period of time, the family settles into this new phase and the family system stabilises. Because the study focused on this specific transitional phase, the participants were women who had transitioned from childlessness into parenthood within the five years preceding data collection (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012).

Management. Management is viewed as a complex systemic process of coordinating family members and resources in such a way that desired goals and objectives are consistently and effectively accomplished in spite of various obstacles. This research is situated within the field of family psychology. Family systems aim to maintain homeostasis, which can only be achieved through constantly adjusting and readjusting to circumstances. Family phenomena do not merely exist, but are preserved through action and reaction (i.e. negative and positive feedback loops) (explained in Chapter 2). Consequently, the term management was chosen for the research question, as it speaks to these adjusting and readjusting processes. However, the

term management does not necessarily imply *conscious* or *deliberate* action and reaction. No specific claims about the mindfulness of the management process are being made, as it is expected that some families may be more cognisant of certain behaviours and more instinctual or habitual about other behaviours.

Family routines. Defining what a family routine is, is a cumbersome, complex task. In the English language we use the word *routine* as a noun interchangeably to refer to very different, but related, constructs. Firstly, we talk of a *daily* routine, which is a daily schedule made up of various family activities that are arranged into a timetable. Secondly, we talk of *bath-time*, *dinnertime* or *bedtime* and refer to each of these goal-directed events as a family routine. Each of these episodic events can be broken down into a range of coordinated behavioural sequences or actions performed by various family members. We thus also use the word routine to refer to a more specific behavioural regimen, such as washing your hands before eating, locking the house before going to bed, or clearing the dishes after dinner. In these cases, the term routine is not an elaborately organised and coordinated event with multiple actors, but a short sequence of habitual behaviours. A collection of these short behavioural sequences often make up more intricate family activities, such as a dinnertime event. Due to the interchangeability of the word in everyday speech, psychological theorists have followed suit. Theoretically, *family routine* has been used by some to indicate the entire daily schedule (Weisner, 1984); alternatively, some refer to specific episodes in the day when family members engage in one organised event, such as a bedtime routine (Howe, 2002). Yet other theorists use the term to distinguish between the various behavioural scripts that family members perform during such an episodic event (Fiese et al., 2006). This lack of consistency creates great confusion. The problem is compounded by theorists who make distinctions between the words

ritual and *routine* (Fiese et al., 2002; Rossano, 2012). Some theorists define the family routine as a subcomponent of ritual practices (Wolin & Bennett, 1984), while others see family routines as the antithesis of family rituals (Imber-Black, 2012) or that routines can *become* rituals over time when they become more meaningful (Fiese et al., 2006; Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). For the sake of clarity, I use the concept of family routine to refer to episodic, daily or weekly events (such as bedtime, dinnertime, bath-time and family time). Howe (2002) proposes that routines have a range of broad characteristics that serve to distinguish them from other family phenomena: 1) family routines involve family interactions, 2) they reflect the work of daily living, 3) they are repeated frequently, 4) they have a cyclical period of recurrence, such as once every 24 hours or once every seven days, 5) this cyclical course often progresses parallel to physiological, circadian rhythms such as sleeping cycles or meal cycles, 6) the cyclical character is also influenced by the cyclical nature of extrafamilial forces that suspend family life, such as work and school schedules, 7) they are episodic and usually have an identifiable beginning and end; 8) they are patterned and have internal regularity, implying that family members usually abide by set behavioural scripts or protocols for accomplishing tasks; and 9) each type of routine is guided by a specific common goal and one can differentiate between different types of routines by looking at the different goals they should accomplish (e.g. bath-time for hygiene versus dinnertime for sustenance).

ADDENDUM B

THE CIRCUMPLEX MODEL DIMENSION OF COMMUNICATION

Circumplex model: Dimension of communication

Communicative qualities	Definition
Listening skills	The ability of listeners to display empathic understanding and the extent to which they use attentive listening skills.
Speaker skills	The ability of family members to speak for themselves rather than speaking for others. Thus, individuals allow others to have their own say and are also permitted to have their own voice.
Self-disclosure	Family members are comfortable to discuss their own thoughts and feelings and can also candidly share with others what their experiences are within relationships.
Clarity	Verbal messages are consistent, unambiguous and transparent. There is congruence between verbal and nonverbal messages.
Continuity tracking	Regarding messages there is continuity of content, meaning that what is being conveyed is consistent over time and among family members. Nonverbal messages are facilitative rather than irrelevant or distracting. Topic changes do not have an unduly high frequency, and when they do occur they are relevant.
Respect and regard	Through verbal and non-verbal messages, family members convey their respect for other people's feelings and opinions, as opposed to being condescending and dismissive.

Note: Adapted from "Circumplex model of marital and family systems," by D. H. Olson, 2000, *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22, p. 148. Copyright 2000 by the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice.

ADDENDUM C

A FAMILY MAP ILLUSTRATING HOW A NEVER-MARRIED SINGLE MOTHER EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SYSTEMIC COHESION AND FLEXIBILITY OVER TIME

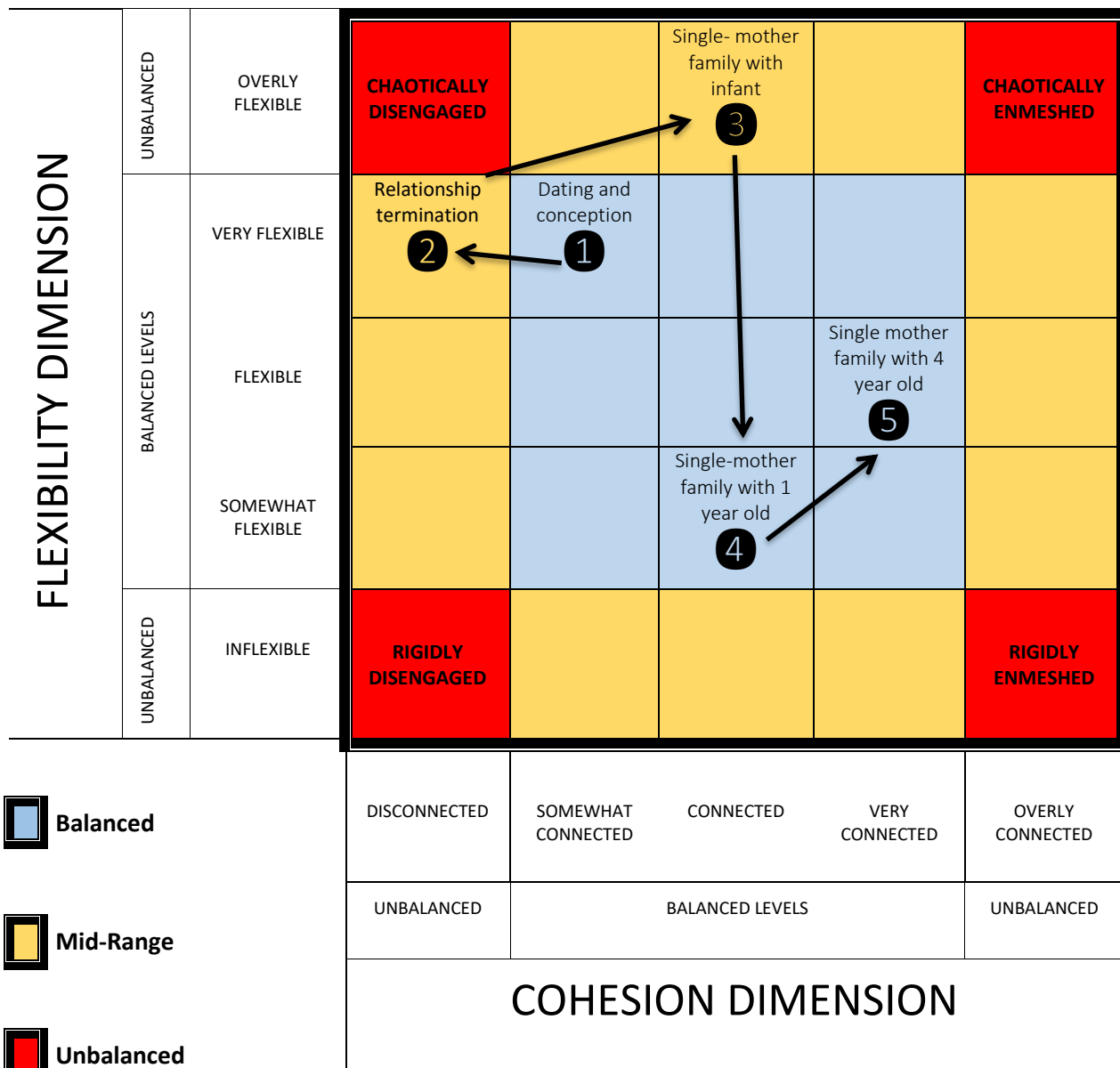


Figure. Transition to parenthood of a single-mother family: Family map. Adapted from “Circumplex model of marital and family systems,” by D. H. Olson, 2000, *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22, p. 155. Copyright 2000 by the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice.

The presented family map is conjecture, and is only one possibility of what a single mother's family map could look like. The figure starts with 1) the somewhat connected dating couple who conceive a child, 2) the disengaged couple who end the relationship during the nine-month pregnancy, 3) the inexperienced single mother trying to juggle the new schedules of an infant, 4) the single mother who has learned to cope by implementing consistent child-related routines, and 5) the single mother who has become very attached to her young four-year-old child.

ADDENDUM D

THE RESILIENCY MODEL'S RHYTHMIC FAMILY TYPOLOGIES

The resiliency model (McCubbin et al., 1996) incorporates four domains of typology, each focusing on different properties deemed important for family coping. One of the four domains focuses on how *rhythmic* a family is (the remaining three domains are *versatility*, *traditionalism* and *regenerative power*, but these go beyond the scope of this research study). To assess rhythmicity, two dimensions are postulated, each dichotomised into high and low, namely: 1) family time and routines; and 2) valuing of family time and routines. The first dimension involves how routinised a family is on a daily basis and is defined as “those family behaviours and practices which families choose to adopt and maintain in an effort to orient and routinize family life into a predictable pattern of living” (McCubbin et al., 1996, p. 74). This dimension is said to promote the importance of family togetherness (McCubbin et al., 1996). The second dimension refers to “the meaning and importance families attach to the value of family time and routines [...] and practices designed to promote family unity and predictability” (McCubbin et al., 1996, p. 32). The two dichotomous dimensions result in four types of family rhythmicity: un-patterned families, intentional families, structuralised families and rhythmic families. The two dichotomous dimensions and the four resulting types are displayed in the figure that follows. The rhythmic type is said to be better equipped to deal with major life stressors (McCubbin et al., 1996).

		Valuing of Family Times and Routines	
		LOW	HIGH
Implementation of Family Times and Routines	LOW	<p><u>Un-patterned families</u> carry on with their lives with little investment in family time or routines and place little or no emphasis on the value of routines and predictability.</p>	<p><u>Intentional families</u> value routines and recognise the importance of routines, but are unable or unwilling to implement them with any degree of regularity.</p>
	HIGH	<p><u>Structuralised families</u> conduct their lives with a heavy investment in regular, systematic activities but fail to cultivate a desire for them or see their value.</p>	<p><u>Rhythmic families</u> promote the development of routines within the family unit and involve relatives; have an added emphasis on valuing routines in an effort to foster a shared sense of purpose and meaning; and promote family togetherness, regularity and predictability.</p>

Figure. Typology of rhythmic families. Reproduced from *Family Assessment: Resiliency, Coping and Adaptation* (p. 74) by H. I. McCubbin, A. I. Thompson, and M. A. McCubbin, 1996, Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Publishers. Copyright 1996 by McCubbin, Thompson, McCubbin and Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin.

ADDENDUM E

THE DEFINING QUALITIES OF THE THREE RITUAL SUBTYPES: CELEBRATIONS, TRADITIONS AND PATTERNED FAMILY INTERACTIONS

Wolin and Bennett (1984) attempted to categorise and define different types of family activities that are repeated over time. I agree with Wolin and Bennett (1984) that the task of distinguishing between different types of patterned family activities (such as *rituals*, *ceremonies*, *traditions*, *celebrations*, *routines* and even *activity settings*) is cumbersome, even arbitrary at times, because the boundaries between these labels are blurred (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Wolin and Bennett (1984) postulate that the concept of *ritual* should be used as an umbrella term that can be subdivided into three subtypes: *celebrations*, *traditions* and *patterned family interactions*. These rituals are seen as symbolic behaviours, enacted by several family members, and reappear in the same form over time because they hold meaning to all involved (Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

However, Wolin and Bennett's (1984) definitions of the three ritual subcomponents are not exact. They maintain that one needs to understand these three terms more on the "cumulative power of examples across a variety of behaviours than through a narrow definition" (Wolin & Bennett, 1984, p. 402). Thus, they attempt to clarify what celebrations, traditions and daily patterned family interactions are by listing examples of activities, rather than presenting a comprehensive description of definitive qualities. The provided list of examples that delineate *daily patterned family interactions* are: dinnertime, bedtime, leisure activities, meal preparations, after-dinner TV watching, homework, Bible study, and preparing school lunches (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Looking at these examples, Wolin and Bennett's (1984) concept of patterned family interactions can be likened to daily and weekly family routines and thus gives

us one of the first theoretical conceptualisations of the family routine construct. To understand how Wolin and Bennett (1984) conceptualise the family routine construct, one must understand what they mean by celebrations and traditions.

Family routines differ from celebrations because celebrations are deemed to be holidays and occasions that are widely practised throughout the family's specific culture (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). These occasions include rites of passage (e.g. weddings, funerals and baptisms), annual religious celebrations (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Passover Seder and Ramadan), and secular holidays (e.g. New Year's Eve, Fourth of July, Mother's Day and Valentine's Day). With these occasions, there is said to exist a standardisation of practice across different families from the same culture, meaning that most families use the same symbols (e.g. a Christmas tree) and behavioural scripts (e.g. opening presents as a family) (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Because of these commonly used symbols and shared meanings across different families, celebrations emphasise explicitly how the family identity reflects the larger group identity (Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

Next, Wolin and Bennett (1984) define traditions as special, family-specific events that are more idiosyncratic than celebrations, have less standardisation across families within a culture, and are only moderately organised. The special way a family decides to honour birthdays or anniversaries or family reunions, for example, falls into this category. Compared to celebrations, the family has more choice over what occasions they will venerate, and how.

Subsequently, Wolin and Bennett (1984) state that, out of the three ritual types, family routines are often the least deliberate and the meanings that are conveyed during these activities are most covert. Unfortunately I tend to disagree with this statement. I suspect it depends on the particular family, as some families might be more proactive and cognisant when designing and

implementing their daily routines. My assertion is based on how McCubbin et al. (1996) define family rhythmicity (described in Addendum D). In essence, I believe that proactive families who are highly rhythmic may put a lot of pre-emptive thought into the design and implementation of their routines because they wish to ensure that their daily routines adequately reflect their values and address specific needs.

One distinguishing factor between routines and the other two types of ritualised practice, which Wolin and Bennett (1984) did not mention but that I would like to point out, is temporal *frequency* and *duration*. Looking at the examples provided by Wolin and Bennett (1984) I deduce that daily and weekly routines tend to be enacted more frequently than traditions and celebrations because they have a shorter cycle. Dinner happens every 24 hours, or a special Sunday lunch with relatives happens every seven days. In contrast, traditions and celebrations usually happen every 12 months (such as Valentine's Day and birthdays), or even once in a lifetime (such as weddings and funerals). Also, I believe routines, as compared to traditions and celebrations, have a short duration in that a dinner may last a maximum of two hours, whereas traditions and celebrations continue for longer periods. For example, there seems to be a build-up of a couple of days (or even months) before a wedding, and the event itself tends to last almost 24 hours. These types of celebrations and traditions also tend to disrupt, halt and alter what we typically do during a normal week because they are occasions that are set aside from the everyday, humdrum tasks we engage in during the rest of the year.

Wolin and Bennett (1984) further emphasise that, compared to celebrations and traditions, daily routines are less standardised and more variable over time. Many features of routines need to be revised every few months or every couple of years because daily routines are highly sensitive to fluctuating intrafamilial (e.g. developing children) and extrafamilial conditions

(such as the current economic climate, public transport availability and work schedules) (De Goede & Greeff, 2016b). Celebrations and traditions are not *as* sensitive to these fluctuations, and although they are modified, these modifications occur incrementally (e.g. the basic structure of wedding or funeral proceedings can be replicated for generations).

ADDENDUM F

INFORMATION GIVEN TO SALESIAN LIFE CHOICES ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT



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INFORMATION CONCERNING THE RESEARCH STUDY

THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY ROUTINES BY SINGLE, XHOSA SPEAKING MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

The research study will be conducted by Christine de Goede, Master of Arts (Psychology) from the Department of Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch. This study forms part of a Doctoral degree in Philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch. The results of this study will contribute to a thesis and a possible research article. Families who will be asked to participate in this study will be single Xhosa speaking mothers with young children aged four or younger. To be more specific, these families will need to fulfil all three of the following criteria:

- a. The mother is the primary caretaker of her biological children and they live under the same roof. This means that neither the biological father, nor a stepfather, nor a romantic partner who is seen as a father figure, resides in the home. However, other family members (for example the mother's adult siblings or grandparents) may reside in the same dwelling.
- b. Xhosa is regarded as the family's home language.
- c. The oldest biological child of the mother is not older than 4 years.
- d. The family is considered to be living in relative poverty. In other words, the total household expenditure per month, divided by the number of household members, must not exceed R470.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how low-income, single, Xhosa speaking mothers with young children, manage healthy family routines.

2. PROCEDURES

If participants volunteer to participate in the study, we would ask them to do the following things:

The mother will have to participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview will take place at a day care centre, a convenient community centre, or else it will be held in the privacy and comfort of participants' own home, at a time that suits them best. During the interview they will be asked questions about their daily routines. There will be a Xhosa interpreter present if the participant wishes to conduct the interview in Xhosa. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. They will also be asked to complete a short, one page biographical questionnaire. After the interview they will be asked if the researcher could observe and video tape one of their important family routines. This is so that the researcher can learn how the family engages with each other during such a family routine. If they do not want to allow the researcher to observe and video record them during a family routine, they can choose to only take part in the interview.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORT

Participation in the study will cause no foreseeable risks, discomforts and inconveniences.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Numerous studies have recognized that healthy, functional family routines hold benefits for the development of every individual within the family, especially the child. Furthermore, it has also been pointed out that having effective family routines may help families cope better when they are confronted by crisis situations.

Participation in this study will give families the opportunity to think about their family's routines; how it impacts on their life; what aspects about their family's routines are important to them; and which areas of their family routines they would like to strengthen or improve.

Furthermore, their participation in this study can help to acquire necessary information about the everyday lives of different South African families. This important information can then inform other similar families about daily routines, and can help them to overcome their own challenges. This knowledge can also be used in the future to develop good intervention programmes for parents that experience problems with managing their routines.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Although the family will not be paid for contributing to the study, the mother will receive a small gift (R50 voucher) after participating in the interview. If the mother decides to also take part in the observation part of the study, she will receive another small token of appreciation (R50 voucher).

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained through this research and that can be identified with participants will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with their permission or as required by the law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing all the gathered information (biographical questionnaire and interview) in a locked cabinet and only the researcher and her study leader will have access to these documents.

If activities are to be audio- or videotaped, they will have the right to review/edit the tapes. Only the researcher and her study leader will have access to the tapes. After 5 years the tapes will be wiped clean and the questionnaires will be destroyed.

When data is written up and published, no recognizable information about participants will ever be used and no names will ever be mentioned.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participants can choose on their own whether to be in this study or not. If they volunteer to be in this study, they may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. They may also refuse to answer specific questions and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw participants from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Christine de Goede, (via email at christine.degoede@gmail.com or via telephone at 082 294 4270) or the study leader, Professor Greeff (via email at apg@sun.ac.za or via telephone at 021 808 3464) or you can go to the Department of Psychology, Van Ryneveld Street, Stellenbosch.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research participants may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without any negative consequences. They are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of their participation in this research study. If they have questions regarding their rights as participant, they can contact the Division for Research Development at the University of Stellenbosch (email essie@sun.ac.za, or telephone 021 808 9184).

10. YOUR ORGANIZATION'S INVOLVEMENT

As a respected organisation within the community we would like to ask your help and support in gaining access to potential participants that make use of your services. The

ADDENDUM G**WRITTEN CONSENT FROM SALESIAN LIFE CHOICES****SIGNATURE OF BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was given and described to SOFIA NEVES [*name of person representing organisation*] by Christine de Goede in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction. I, and the organisation I represent, hereby consent voluntarily to participate in the research study. I have been given a copy of this form.

SOFIA NEVESSALESIAN LIFE CHOICES**Name of Representative****Name of Organisation**

20/09/2013**Signature of Representative****Date****SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I, CHRISTINE DE GOEDE declare that I explained the information given in this document to SOFIA NEVES. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.


20/9/2013**Signature of Investigator****Date**

ADDENDUM H

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS (ENGLISH)



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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILY ROUTINES BY SINGLE, XHOSA SPEAKING MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Christine de Goede, Master of Arts (Psychology) from the Department of Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch. This study forms part of a Doctoral degree in Philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch. The results of this study will contribute to a thesis and a possible research article. You were selected as possible participants in this study because you are a single mother who, during the past four years, became a parent. To be more specific, you fulfil all four of the following criteria:

- a) You are the primary caretaker of your biological children and they live under the same roof with you. This means that neither the biological father, nor a stepfather, nor a romantic partner who is seen as a father figure, resides in the home with you.
- b) Xhosa is regarded as your home language.
- c) Your oldest biological child is not older than 4 years.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how low-income, single, Xhosa speaking mothers with young children, manage healthy family routines.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

You, the mother, will have to participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview will take place at a day care centre, a convenient community centre, or in the privacy and comfort of your own home, at a time that suits you best. During the interview you will be asked questions about your daily routines. There will be a Xhosa interpreter present in case you do not understand something or would like to do the interview in Xhosa. The interview will take approximately 60 min. You will also be asked to complete a biographical questionnaire consisting of one page. After the interview you will be asked if the researcher could observe

and video tape one of your important family routines so that the researcher can learn how you and your family go about a typical day. If you do not want to allow the researcher to observe you and your family, you can choose to only take part in the interview.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts and inconveniences that will be caused by participation in this study.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participation in this study could give you the opportunity to think about your family's routines; how it impacts on your life; what aspects about family routines are important to you; and which areas of your family routines you would like to strengthen or improve.

Furthermore, your participation in this study can help to acquire necessary information about the everyday lives of South Africa families. This important information can then teach other similar families more about family routines and help them to overcome their own challenges.

This knowledge can also be used in the future to develop good intervention programmes for parents who are in similar situations and who need extra help.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Although you will not be paid for participating in the study, your family will receive a small gift (a R50 voucher) when you take part in the interview and also when you take part in the observation. This is a token of appreciation for your participation.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained through this research and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by the law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing all the gathered information (biographical questionnaire, interview recordings, and video recordings) in a locked cabinet. Only the researcher and her study leader will have access to these documents.

If activities are to be audio- or videotaped, you have the right to review/edit the tapes. Only the researcher and her study leader will have access to the recordings. After 5 years the tapes will be wiped clean and the questionnaires will be destroyed.

When data is written up and published, no recognizable information about you or your family will ever be used and no names will ever be mentioned.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose on our own whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study you may withdraw from it at any time without any negative consequences. You may also refuse to answer some questions but still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this study if circumstances arise that make it necessary.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Christine de Goede, (via email at christine.degoede@gmail.com or via telephone at 082 294 4270) or the study leader, Professor Greeff (via email at apg@sun.ac.za or via telephone at 021 808 3464) or you can go to the Department of Psychology, Van Ryneveld Street, Stellenbosch. If you have questions, you can also send a “Please Call Me” to Christine de Goede and she will phone you back.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without any negative consequences. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as research participant, contact the Division for Research Development at the University of Stellenbosch (email essie@sun.ac.za, or telephone 021 808 9184).

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

The information above was given and described to _____ [*name of participant*] by Christine de Goede in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ . He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator

Date

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS (XHOSA)



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IMVUME YOKUTHATHA INXAXHEBA KWIPROJEKHTHI YOPHANDO:

ULAWULO LWEMISEBENZI YESIQHELO YEFEMELI NGOOMAMA ABANGATSHATANGA ABANTETHO ISISIXHOSA ABANABANTWANA ABANCINCI

Uyacelwa ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kwisifundo sophando esenziwa nguChristine de Goede, umfundi owenza isiDanga sobuGqirha osuka kwiSebe leziFundo zeNgqondo eYunivesithi yaseStellenbosch. Esi sifundo siyinxalenye yesidanga sobugqirha kwiFilosofi eYunivesithi yaseStellenbosch. Iziphumo zesi sifundo ziza kuba negalelo kwithisisi nakwinqaku lezophando elinokubakho. Ukhethiwe ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kolu phando kuba ungumama ongatshatanga, oye waba ngumzali kwiminyaka emine edlulileyo. Ukucacisa ngakumbi, uziphumeza zone kwezi ndlela zokugweba zilandelayo:

- d) Ungumama ongatshatanga. Oku kuthetha ukuba ungumnakekeli ophambili wabantwana bakho kwaye bahlala nawe. Oku kukwathetha nokuba utata wabantwana bakho akahlali nawe, kwanotata ongenguye owabantwana bakho, okanye nesinqandamathe sakho.
- e) IsiXhosa sithathwa ukuba lulwimi lwakho lwenkobe
- f) Oyena mntwana wakho mdala ungaphantsi kweminyaka emi-4.

1. IINJONGO ZOLU PHANDO

Injongo yolu phando kukufumana ukuqonda okungcono kokuba ingaba oomama abangatshatanga abantetho isisiXhosa abanabantwana abancinci bayilawula njani imisebenzi yesiqhelo yefemeli.

2. IINKQUBO

Ukuba uyavuma ukuthatha inxaxheba kwesi sifundo, siza kukucela ukuba wenze ezi zinto zilandelayo:

Wena, mama, uza kuthatha inxaxheba kudliwano-ndlebe kunye nomphandi. Olu dliwano-ndlebe luza kwenziwa kwiziko lonakekelo lwasemini, kwiziko loluntu elikufutshane nawe, okanye ekhayeni lakho, ngexesha elikulungele kakuhle. Ngexesha lodliwano-ndlebe uza kubuzwa imibuzo emalunga nemisebenzi yakho yesiqhelo yemihla ngemihla. Kuza kubakho

itoliki ethetha isiXhosa xa kunokubakho into ongayiqondiyo okanye ukuba ufuna ukwenza udliwano-ndlebe ngesiXhosa. Olu dliwano-ndlebe luza kuthatha malunga nemizuzu engama-60. Uza kucelwa ukuba ugqibezele nephapha elinye lemibuzo-mpendulo elimalunga nezinto eziyinyani. Emva kodliwano-ndlebe uza kubuzwa ukuba umphandi angayifota na eminye yemisebenzi yefemeli ebalulekileyo yesiqhelo ngevidiyo ukuze umphandi akwazi ukufunda ukuba ukhangeleka njani na lo msebenzi wesiqhelo efemelini yakho. Le vidiyo iza kuba yiyure ubude bayo, kuxhomekeka ekubeni umde kangakanani lo msebenzi wesiqhelo. Ukuba akufuni ukuba umphandi afote ngevidiyo aze aqwalasele ifemeli yakho, ungakhethe ukuthatha inxaxheba kuphela kudliwano-ndlebe.

3. IINGOZI NOKUNGWABI OKUNOKUBAKHO

Akukho ngozi, kungonwabi kunye neengxaki ezibonwayo ezinokubakho eziza kwenziwa kukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kwesi sifundo.

4. IMBUYEKEZO ENOKUBAKHO KUBATHATHI-NXAXHEBA NAKU/OKANYE KULUNTU

Ukuthatha inxaxheba kwesi sifundo kunokukunika ithuba lokucinga ngemisebenzi yesiqhelo yefemeli yakho, ukuba ibuchaphazela njani ubomi bakho; ukuba zeziphi iindawo zemisebenzi yesiqhelo yefemeli yakho ezibalulekileyo kuwe; kwanokuba zeziphi iziza zemisebenzi yesiqhelo yefemeli yakho ongathanda ukuzomeleza okanye ukuziphucula.

Ukongeza, ukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kwesi sifundo kungasanceda ekuqokeleleni ulwazi olufunekayo olumalunga nobomi bemihla ngemihla beefemeli zaseMzantsi Afrika. Olu lwazi lubalulekileyo lungafundisa ezinye iifemeli ezifanayo ngakumbi ngemisebenzi yesiqhelo yefemeli luze lubancede ekoyiseni ezabo iingxaki.

Olu lwazi lungasetyenziswa kwixesha elizayo ukuze kuqulunqwe iinkqubo ezizizo zongenelelo kubazali abakwiimeko ezifanayo nabafuna uncedo olulolunye.

5. INTLAWULO NGOKUTHATHA INXAXHEBA

Nangona ifemeli yakho ingaz'ukuhlalulwa ngokuthatha inxaxheba kwesi sifundo, iza kufumana isipho esincinane (ivawutsha yama-R50) emva kokuthatha inxaxheba kudliwano-ndlebe. Le vawutsha iza kunikwa emva kodliwano-ndlebe.

Ukuba ugqiba ekubeni uza kufuna ukuthatha inxaxheba nakwicandelo loqwalaselo lesi sifundo uze uvumele umphandi ukuba athathe ifoto yevidiyo yomnye wemisebenzi yefemeli yesiqhelo, ifemeli yakho iza kufumana esinye isipho esincinane (ivawutsha yama-R50). Le vawutsha iza kunikwa ngomhla woqwalaselo.

6. UBUMFIHLO

Naluphi ulwazi olufunyanwa ngenxa yolu phando nolunokuchongwa ngawe luza kuhlala luyimfihlo kwaye luza kuvezwa kuphela ngemvume yakho okanye xa oko kufunwa

ngumthetho. Ubumfihlo buza kugcinwa ngokugcina lonke ulwazi oluqokelelweyo (imibuzo-mpendulo ebonisa inyaniso, ushicilelo lodliwano-ndlebe, kunye noshicilelo lwevidiyo) ekhabhathini etshixwayo. Kuphela yinkokheli yophando kunye nenkokheli yakhe yesifundo abaza kufikelela kula maxwebhu.

Ukuba kufuneka imisebenzi ishicilelwe ngesandi okanye ngevidiyo, unelungelo lokuhlaziya/lokuhlela ezo teyiphu. Kuphela ngumphandi kunye nenkokheli yakhe yesifundo abaza kufikelela kushicilelo. Emva kweminyaka emi-5 ezi teyiphu ziza kucinywa lize iphepha lemibuzo-mpendulo litshatyalaliswe. Xa iinkcukacha zolwazi zibhalwa zize zishicilelwe, akukho lwazi lunokuqondwa ngawe okanye ngefemeli yakho luya kuze lusetyenziswe kwaye akukho magama aya kuze akhankanywe.

7. INTATHO-NXAXHEBA NOKURHOXA

Ungazikhethela ngokwakho ukuba uyafuna na ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando okanye akufuni. Ukuba uyavuma ukuba kwesi sifundo ungarhoxa kuso nanini na ngaphandle kweziphumo ezingalunganga. Usenako ukwala ukuphendula eminye imibuzo kodwa uhlale kwesi sifundo. Umphandi usenokukurhoxisa kwesi sifundo ukuba kuvela iimeko ezenza ukuba kwenzeke oko.

8. UKWAZISWA KWABAPHANDI

Ukuba unemibuzo okanye iinkxalabo ezimalunga nolu phando, ukhululekile ukuba uqhagamshelane nomphandi, uChristine de Goede, (nge-imeyile apha: christine.degoede@gmail.com okanye ngefowuni apha: 082 294 4270) okanye nenkokheli yesifundo, uNjingalwazi Greef (nge-imeyile apha: apg@sun.ac.za okanye ngefowuni apha: 082 294 4270) okanye ungaya kwiSebe leziFundo ngezeNgqondo, eVan Ryneveld Street, eStellenbosch. Ukuba unemibuzo, ungathumela “uPlease Call Me” kuChristine de Goede uza kukufowunela.

9. AMALUNGELO ABATHATHI-NXAXHEBA BOPHANDO

Ungayirhoxisa imvume yakho nangaliphi ixesha uze uyeke ukuthatha inxaxheba ngaphandle kwazo naziphi iziphumo ezingalunganga. Akutyesheli nawaphi amabango ezomthetho, amalungelo okanye unyango ngenxa yokuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kwesi sifundo sophando. Ukuba unemibuzo emalunga namalungelo akho njengomthathi-nxaxheba kuphando, qhagamshelana neCandelo loPhuhliso lwezoPhando eYunivesithi yaseStellenbosch kule imeyile: essie@sun.ac.za, okanye kule fowuni: 021 808 9184.

10. IINKONZO ZENKXASO

Ukuba nangaliphi ixesha lolu phando uva nakuphi na ukungonwabi ngokwasengqondweni okanye ufuna ukuthetha nomntu oyingcali onokukunika inkxaso yemvakalelo, ungaqhagamshelana ne-Lifeline okanye ne-FAMSA, zombini ezi ndawo zenkxaso zinee-ofisi eKhayelitsha.

I-LifeLine ngumbutho ongenzi ngeniso kwaye unenkonz o yengecebiso ngefowuni onokuyitsalela nangaliphi ixesha lemini okanye lobusuku, yonke imihla yonyaka kule nombolo: 021 461 111 okanye kule 086 132 2322. Ugenza nedinga leseshoni yokucetyiswa ubuso ngobuso ezi-ofisini zabo eziseKhayelitsha kule nombolo: 021 361 9197.

I-FAMSA nayo ngumbutho ongenzi ngeniso onika inkonzo eyodwa ekuxhaseni iifemeli nenika iiseshoni zengcebiso kumntu ngamnye. Ukuze wenze idinga ungafikelela kwisebe laseKhayelitsha kule nombolo yefowuni: 021 361 9098. Umanejala kwi-FAMSA eseKhayelitsha nguNtombi Sigonya.

UTYIKITYO LOMTHATHI-NXAXHEBA KUPHANDO
--

Ulwazi olungentla lunikwe lwachazelwa u _____ [igama lomthathi-nxaxheba] nguChristine de Goede ngesiNgesi, kwaye ndiyalwazi olu lwimi. Ndilinikiwe ithuba lokubuza imibuzo kwaye le mibuzo iphendulwe ngokwanelisayo.

Ngoko ke ndivuma ngokuthanda kwam ukuthatha inxaxheba kwesi sifundo. Ndiyini kiwe ikopi yale fom.

Igama lomThathi-nxaxheba

Utyikityo lomThathi-nxaxheba

Umhla

UTYIKITYO LOMPHANDI

Mna, Christine de Goede ndiyazisa ukuba ndilucacisile ulwazi olunikwe kolu xwebhu ku_____. Ukhuthaziwe kwaye wanikwa nexesha elaneleyo lokundibuza imibuzo. Le ncoko yenziwe ngesiNgesi kwaye akukhange kusetyenziswe umguquli wolwimi.

Utyikityo lomPhandi

Umhla

ADDENDUM I**BIORAPHICAL INFORMATION (ENGLISH)**

All information in this questionnaire is strictly confidential and your information will be anonymously processed.
Please answer all the questions.

Today's date:	What is your home language:			
Your name and surname:				
Your age:				
How many children do you have?				
For how long have you been a single mother?				
How did you become a single mother?				
Where does the father of your child/ren live?				
How often does the child/ren's biological father see the child/ren?				
How many other people live in your house <i>besides</i> you and the child/ren?				
Please circle the word if any of these family members live with you:				
Mother	Father	Grandmother	Grandfather	Romantic Partner
Uncles (number _____)	Aunts (number _____)	Sisters(number _____)	Brothers(number _____)	
Cousins (number _____)	Other children who are not your biological children (number _____)			

Please indicate the age and gender of each of <i>your</i> children:			
Child	Age (In years <i>and months</i>)	Gender	Does the child live in the house with you?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

What is the highest level of education you have obtained? (Please mark the appropriate box)	Primary School	High School	Diploma	Degree	None
Are you currently employed?	Are you permanently employed?	Approximately what is your monthly income?			
What is your occupation?					
If you are not earning anything, does anyone else in the house earn an income? YES / NO			How much money do your entire household spend per month?		

ULWAZI OLUYINYANI (XHOSA)

Lonke ulwazi olukweli phepha lemibuzo-mpendulo luyimfihlo engqongqo kwaye ulwazi lwakho luza kuhanjiswa ngokungaziwa ukuba lolukabani na Uyacelwa ukuba uphendule yonke imibuzo.

Umhla wanamhlanje:	Loluphi ulwimi lwakho lweenkobe:			
Igama nefani yakho:				
Iminyaka yakho:				
Unabantwana abangaphi?				
Ube ngumama ongatshatanga ixesha elingakanani?				
Ube ngumama ongatshatanga njani?				
Uhlala phi utata wabantwana bakho?				
Um/babona ixesha elingakanani utata wom/abantwana wa/bakho um/abantwana?				
Bangaphi abanye abantu abahlala endlwini yakho ngaphandle kwabantwana bakho?				
Nceda urhangqe igama ukuba ngaba abanye bala malungu efemeli bahlala nawe. Ukuba bangaphezulu kwesinye bhala ukuba bangaphi kwisithuba esisecaleni kwegama.				
Umama	Utata	Umakhulu	Utatomkhulu	isingandamathe
Oomalume (inani_____)	Oomakazi (inani_____)	oosisi(inani_____)	Oobhuti (inani_____)	
Abazala (inani_____)	Abanye abantwana abangengabo abakho (inani_____)			

Xela iminyaka nesini somntwana ngamnye kubantwana <i>bakho</i> :			
Umntwana	Iminyaka (Ngeminyaka <i>neenyanga</i>)	Isini	Uhlala nawe lo mntwana endlwini?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Ufikelele kweliphi inqanaba eliphezulu lemfundo? (Nceda uphawule ibhokisi efanelekileyo)	Isikolo samabanga asezantsi	Isikolo samabanga aphezulu	Idiploma	Isidanga	Alikho
Uyaphangela?	Uphangela isigxina?		Umalunga namalini umvuzo wakho wenyanga?		
Wenza msebenzi mni?					
Ukuba akufumani mvuzo, ingaba ukhona omnye umntu apha endlwini ofumana umvuzo? EWE / HAYI			Lichitha malini ikhaya lakho liphelele ngenyanga?		

ADDENDUM J

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (ENGLISH)

1. Introduction

Today we are going to talk about you and your family. I am firstly going to ask about what it is like being a parent and specifically, being a single mother. Then I would like to know more about the hopes and dreams you have for your family. And lastly I would like to know more about what a *typical* weekday and weekend looks like for your family. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. What I am most interested in hearing is what *you* have to say about *your* experiences. If there is anything you do not understand please do not be afraid to ask me questions.

2. Setting the Stage: Transition to parenthood and single motherhood.

- a. Tell me about what happened when you first heard that you were pregnant.
 - How did you feel?
 - What did you think then about becoming a parent?
 - How, if at all, has your view changed?
- b. What positive changes have occurred in your life since the birth of your first child?
- c. What negative changes, if any, have occurred since the birth of your first child?
- d. How do you feel about being a single parent?
 - What helps you as a single parent?
 - What challenges, if any does being a single parent cause?

3. Family Ideals, Motives, and Purposes Directing Routines

- a. What are your future dreams/desires/goals for your family [e.g. where do you see your family in 20 years]?
 - What do you think you do every day that will help you achieve these dreams you have for the family?
 - What family activities are you not yet doing, that you would still like to add to your day?
- b. What daily family activities are most important to you / your favourite?
 - Why are _____ [insert specific activities] important to you / your favourite family activities?
 - Are you able to do all of these family activities as much as you would like?
 - If yes, what helps you to be able to do all of these activities?
 - If not, what is holding you back?
 - What do you do to try and overcome _____ [insert mentioned obstacles]?
- c. What is your least liked family activity?
 - Why is _____ your least liked family activity?

- Do you do anything that makes this activity better / easier to get through?

4. The Phenomenon under Investigation: The Family's Daily Routines

- I would like to know more about what a typical weekday looks like for your family. When you take me through your day, please be specific and give as much detail as you can.
 - What happens in the mornings when you first wake up?
 - What happens after your early morning routine?
 - What do you typically do during the afternoon?
 - What do you usually do in the evening?
- The next section of the interview will focus on a typical weekend and what this looks like for your family.
 - What do you usually do on a Friday evening?
 - What do you usually do on a Saturday?
 - What do you usually do on a Sunday?
- Now that I know what a typical day looks like for your family I would like to ask you more specific questions about each of these family activities / routines.
 - Could you tell me what happens during a typical _____ (e.g. dinner) routine?
 - Who is usually involved in a typical routine?
 - Who is in charge during a typical _____ routine?
 - Are there anything you do during a _____ routine that you feel is special and important to you? Why is this important to you?
 - What do you like to teach your child during a typical _____ routine?
 - What difficulties do you sometimes have during your _____ routines?
 - What do you do to deal with these difficulties?
 - What helps you to keep this _____ routine going?
 - Did you ever sit down and decide that you wanted your family to have this type of _____ routine?
 - If yes, how did you decide you wanted _____ routine? What influenced your decision?
 - If not, how do you think you ended up having this _____ routine?
- Is there any specific situation/time that stands out in your mind, when it was particularly difficult to keep your family's routines running smoothly?
 - What happened?
 - What did you do?
 - Was there anything that made it harder?
 - Was there anything that made the situation easier?
- After looking at these experiences, what advice would you give another single mother who is struggling to manage her family's daily activities?
- Is there anything that you would like to add to what we have already discussed?
- Do you have any questions for me?

IMIBUZO YODLIWANO-NDLEBE (XHOSA)

1. Intshayelelo

Namhlanje siza kuthetha ngawe kunye nefemeli yakho. Kuqala ndiza kukubuza ukuba kunjani ukuba ngumzali ingakumbi umama ongatshatanga. Emva koko ndingathanda ukwazi ngakumbi ngamathemba namaphupha onawo ngefemeli. Okokugqibela ndingathanda ukwazi ngakumbi ngokuba lukhangeleka njani usuku *oluqhelekileyo* lweveki kunye nempela-veki efemelini yakho. Khumbula ukuba akukho zimpendulo zilungileyo okanye ezingalunganga. Eyona nto ndinomdla wokuyiva kakhulu kukuba *uza* kuthini ngamava *akho*. Ukuba kukho into ongayiqondiyo, uze ungoyiki ukundibuza imibuzo.

2. Ukuqalisa udliwano-ndlebe: Utshintsho ukuya kumzali nakumama ongatshatanga

- e. Ndixelele ukuba kwenzeka ntoni ngexesha usiva okokuqala ukuba ukhulelwe.
 - Waziva njani?
 - Wacinga ntoni ngelo xesha ngokuba ngumzali?
 - Lwatshintsha njani uluvo lwakho, ukuba lwatshintsha?
- f. Loluphi utshintsho olulungileyo olwenzeka ebomini bakho ukusukela ekuzalweni komntwana wakho wokuqala?
- g. Loluphi utshintsho olungalunganga, ukuba kukhe kwakho oluye lwenzeka ukusukela ekuzalweni komntwana wakho wokuqala?
- h. Uziva njani ngokuba ngumzali ongatshatanga?
 - Uncedwa yintoni njengomzali ongatshatanga?
 - Zeziphi iingxaki, ukuba zikho ezidalwa kukuba ngumzali ongatshatanga?

3. Iindlela zokuziphatha, iinjongo neembophelelo zefemeli ezilawula imisebenzi yesiqhelo

- d. Yintoni amaphupha/iminqweno/iinjongo zakho zexesha elizayo ngefemeli yakho [umzekelo: uyibona indawoni ifemeli yakho kwiminyaka engama-20]?
 - Ucinga ukuba wenza ntoni yonke imihla eza kukunceda ukuba uphumeze la maphupha onawo ngefemeli yakho?
 - Yeyiphi imisebenzi yefemeli ongayenziyo okwangoku, osafuna ukuyongeza kusuku lwakho?
- e. Yeyiphi imisebenzi yemihla ngemihla yefemeli eyeyona ibaluleke kakhulu kuwe / oyithandayo?
 - Kutheni _____ [faka loo misebenzi]] ibalulekile nje kuwe / iyimisebenzi oyithandayo?
 - Uyakwazi ukwenza yonke le misebenzi yefemeli kakhulu kangangoko uthanda?
 - Ukuba uthi ewe, yintoni ekuncedisa ukuba ukwazi ukwenza yonke le misebenzi?
 - Ukuba akunjalo, ubanjwe yintoni?
 - Yintoni oyenzayo ukuzama ukoyisa _____[faka isiphazamisi osixelileyo]?
- f. Ngowuphi umsebenzi wefemeli ongoyena uwuthanda kancinci?
 - Kutheni u _____ kungumsebenzi wefemeli ongowona uwuthanda kancinci?

- Ikhona into oyenzayo eyenza ukuba kube ngcono / lulana ukwenza lo msebenzi?

4. Imisebenzi ephandwayo: Imisebenzi yesiqhelo eyenziwa yifemeli

- h. Ndingathanda ukwazi ngakumbi ngokuba lukhangeleka njani usuku oluqhelekileyo lweveki efemelini yakho. Xa undixelela ngosuku lonke, ndiyacela ukuba ucacise uze undinike iinkcukacha ezininzi kangangoko unako.
- Kwenzeka ntoni kusasa xa uqala ukuvuka?
 - Kwenzeka ntoni emva komsebenzi wakho wokuqala wakusasa wesiqhelo?
 - Uqhele ukwenza ntoni emva kwemini?
 - Uqhele ukwenza ntoni ebusuku?
- i. Iseshoni elandelayo yodliwano-ndlebe iza kugqalisela kwimpela-veki eqhelekileyo kwanokuba ikhangeleka njani kwifemeli yakho.
- Uqhele ukwenza ntoni ebusuku bangoLwesihlanu?
 - Uqhele ukwenza ntoni ngoMgqibelo?
 - Uqhele ukwenza ntoni ngeCawa?
- j. Kuba ngoku ndisazi ukuba lukhangeleka njani usuku lwesiqhelo efemelini yakho ndingathanda ukukubuzisa eminye imibuzo ethile ngomsebenzi ngamnye kule misebenzi yesiqhelo yefemeli. .
- Ungandixelela ukuba kwenzeka ntoni nge _____ (umzekelo: ngedinara) yesiqhelo?
 - Ngubani oqhele ukuba nenxaxheba kwi _____ yesiqhelo?
 - Ngubani olawulayo nge _____ yesiqhelo?
 - Kukho into oyenzayo nge _____ yesiqhelo ova ukuba iyodwa kwaye ibalulekile kuwe? Kutheni ibalulekile nje kuwe?
 - Ufuna ukumfundisa ntoni umntwana wakho nge _____ yesiqhelo?
 - Bobuphi ubunzima oba nabo ngamanye amaxesha ngexesha le _____ yesiqhelo/sesiqhelo?
 - Wenza ntoni ukumelana nobunzima be _____ yesiqhelo?
 - Yintoni ekuncedisa ekuqhubeni le/esii _____ yesiqhelo/sesiqhelo?
 - Ukhe uhlale phantsi wenze isigqibo sokuba ubufuna ukuba ifemeli yakho ibe nolu hlobo loku kwesiqhelo?
 - Ukuba kunjalo, ugqibe njani ukuba ubufuna uku _____ kwesiqhelo? Yintoni eye yanefuthe kwisigqibo sakho?
 - Ukuba akunjalo, ucinga ukuba ufikelele njani kweli xesha loku _____ lesiqhelo?
- k. Ingaba kukho imeko / ixesha elithile elihleli engqondweni yakho, apho kwakunzima nyani ukugcina imisebenzi yesiqhelo yefemeli ihamba kakuhle?
- Kwakwenzeke ntoni?
 - Wawenze ntoni?
 - Kukho into eyenza yaba/laba nzima ngakumbi?
 - Kwakukho into eyenza ukuba imeko ibe lulana noko?
- l. Emva kokuqwalasela la mava. Ungamnika yiphi ingcebiso omnye umama ongatshatanga osokolayo ekuphatheni imisebenzi yemihla ngemihla yefemeli yakhe?
- m. Kukho into ongathanda ukuyongeza kwizinto esele sithethe ngazo?
- n. Unemibuzo ofuna ukundibuza?

ADDENDUM K

AN EXAMPLE OF A CODING MEMO DURING THE INITIAL STAGES OF ANALYSIS

Participant quote:

“No, it’s because I think I am used to it. I’m used to doing it, it’s in my body, it’s my life, that’s how it is to be a mom. You become responsible, you take charge of the situation, actually it’s not a situation, but it’s just the way that things are supposed to be if you’re a caring mom. You can do it.”

MEMO 2: The interplay of beliefs/values/attitudes about “motherhood”

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First she says she is used to it. → This means that with time, things become more familiar. (Easier?)

Then she says "it’s my life, that is how it is to be a mom" → This might indicate acceptance of her role / mother identity.

Also "that is how it is to be a mom" → Reflects beliefs about “parenting” and “motherhood”. Experiences and responsibilities are of “mom”. It may also be a form of rationalisation that helps her accept the situation (e.g. something similar to “it is what it is”).

"...that’s how it is to be a mom. You become responsible" → Belief about cause and effect
1) first you become a mom, then 2) there is a causal link with responsibility. “Become” indicates progression / process.

"you take charge of the situation" → belief about causal link: being a mother makes you more competent and in control.

"It’s just the way that things are supposed to be IF YOU ARE A CARING MOM" --> indicates a value system. Being a CARING MOM will in effect make you more responsible, in control, competent.

"You can do it". --> believing in self... If you are a CARING mom, you become competent.

ADDENDUM L

CODING-LIST OF FACTORS THAT ASSISTED PARTICIPANTS IN MANAGING AND MAINTAINING ROUTINES

Code-Filter: Code Family "ASSISTANCE AND MAINTENANCE"

HU: PHD ANALYSIS

File: [C:\Users\Christine\Desktop\PHD ANALYSIS.hpr7]

Edited by: Super

Date/Time: 2015-06-28 10:25:09

ASS_unsure

ASS_actions taken towards child_adapting approach and routines to be more child-friendly

ASS_actions taken towards child_adapting approach to save time

ASS_actions taken towards child_adapting communication from accommodating to firm

ASS_actions taken towards child_arrange environment as to restrict access to problematic behaviour

ASS_Actions taken towards child_boundaries_

ASS_actions taken towards child_coaxing_reward system

ASS_actions taken towards child_coaxing_reward system_negative reinforcement

ASS_actions taken towards child_communication_mooi verduidelik(apg)

ASS_actions taken towards child_communicative action_coaxing

ASS_actions taken towards child_create boundaries for child

ASS_actions taken towards child_discipline_firm rules

ASS_actions taken towards child_discipline_verbal and physical scolding

ASS_actions taken towards child_gewenste gedrag word versterk

ASS_actions taken towards child_kommunikeer met gedrag_nie verbaal

ASS_actions taken towards child_loving communication

ASS_actions taken towards child_maintain firm control via verbal direction and time keeping

ASS_actions taken towards child_meeting his/her needs

ASS_actions taken towards child_mother moddelling team work to child

ASS_actions taken towards child_sticking to routine

ASS_actions taken towards child_teaching child to be organised

ASS_actions taken towards child_Teaching family messages that maintain routines

ASS_actions taken towards child_teaching the routine

ASS_actions taken towards child_teaching time management

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_conflict management

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_getting support from father

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_give-and-take support

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_open communication with father

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_open communication with live-in fam

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_relying on live-in family

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_seeking emotional support

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_setting boundaries with live-in family

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_supportive communication with live-in fam

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_tagteaming with live-in fam

ASS_actions towards other adults_set boundaries

ASS_Age-related Competence of Child

ASS_age related competencies of child_understanding difficult situation

ASS_attitude_"everything happens for a reason"

ASS_attitude_"we don't have weaklings in our house"

ASS_attitude_acceptance

ASS_attitude_acknowledge limits
ASS_Attitude_beliefs_Making meaning of adversity
ASS_attitude_believe there is support systems to help
ASS_attitude_believing in myself
ASS_attitude_caretaker identity
ASS_attitude_control negative attitudes towards other people
ASS_Attitude_flexible about breaking routine during holiday
ASS_attitude_focus in the "I can" and not the "I cannot"
ASS_attitude_focussing on the "we have" and not the "we don't have"
ASS_attitude_leave work stress at work_facilitates healthy fam relationships
ASS_attitude_mental hardiness
ASS_attitude_motivated to create a better life
ASS_attitude_parental responsibility
ASS_attitude_positiewe ingesteldheid oor ouerskap
ASS_attitude_positive future vision as motivation
ASS_attitude_prioritise family life
ASS_attitude_realism
ASS_attitude_reasлизм_don't be hard on self if not perfect
ASS_attitude_resolute or determined
ASS_attitude_responsability
ASS_attitude_retain individual goals_build old life around child?
ASS_attitude_self-reliance
ASS_bathing routine helps sleep behaviours
ASS_boundaries_limit technology
ASS_boundaries_partners_limit people you introduce
ASS_changing jobs
ASS_Child behaviours_entertain self
ASS_child behaviours_he enjoys routine so he is accommodating
ASS_child behaviours_insisting on sticking to desired routine
ASS_child behaviours_insisting on sticking to special routine
ASS_circumstance_conflict-free family relationships
ASS_circumstance_enjoying work
ASS_circumstance_only having one child
ASS_combining morning "getting ready" routine with enjoyable interaction to accommodate for lack of time
ASS_cultural adaptation_child on back
ASS_don't allow self to be affected by prejudice of others
ASS_drawing on own positive childhood experiences
ASS_ecological adjustments_walk with other people for community safety
ASS_enjoy a personal life
ASS_enjoying activities with children and having fun
ASS_feelings of caring for other family members
ASS_finding balance
ASS_forsaking personal routines for sake of parental responsibility
ASS_idiosyncratic accommodation_make-up during bus ride
ASS_in the moment accomodation_take aways_something has to give
ASS_instilling daily routine that help achieve future goals_family bonding routines=united fmaily life
ASS_instilling daily routines that help achieve future goals_pocket money routine=save money
ASS_instilling dialy routines that help achieve future goals_education=better job
ASS_instilling dialy routines that help achieve future goals_homework=education=better job
ASS_instilling dialy routines that help achieve future goals_individual parent planning routine_problem solving business strategies
ASS_instilling dialy routines that help achieve future goals_locking up routine in evening=boys protect women

ASS_instilling dialy routines that help achieve future goals_moring routineof going to school=education
ASS_instilling dialy routines that help achieve future goals_prayer=assistance from God
ASS_joint family planning/discussion about regularly sticking to routine
ASS_joint prepping routine with other adults
ASS_journalling_emotional expression or strategising
ASS_major accomodation to circumvent external forces
ASS_make time for family time
ASS_managing dating partners
ASS_motivate self_positive self talk
ASS_motivation_"It just has to be done"_duty
ASS_motivation_being a "mother"
ASS_motivation_conflict management
ASS_motivation_family time
ASS_motivation_knowing why you do what you do_for child education
ASS_motivation_knowing why you do what you do_for other family members
ASS_motivation_making other family members happy
ASS_motivation_motivating self-talk_push myself
ASS_motivation_parent-child time together
ASS_motivation_parental love
ASS_motivation_parental love_child feeling loved
ASS_motivation_parental responsibility
ASS_motivation_religious beliefs
ASS_motivation_sense of duty
ASS_motivation_understanding a routine's ecocultural importance
ASS_motivation_understanding that current sacrafice will be rewarded in the future
ASS_multitasking
ASS_multitasking_doing enjoyable activities while doing chores
ASS_multitasking_using any moment to bond with child when time is limited
ASS_not feeling guilt for enjoying a personal life
ASS_parent individual routine_motivation_"me" versus "mother"_desire to fulfill personal needs
ASS_PCA_accommodate desired routines of others
ASS_PCA_apply positive characteristics or behaviours you see from other families in social network
ASS_PCA_balance_as a parent, try and meet personal needs
ASS_PCA_building stronger family relationships
ASS_PCA_desire to build strong family relationships for child as motivation for instilling peace
ASS_PCA_finding a better job
ASS_PCA_follow matriarch's rules/desires/values
ASS_PCA_increase family time
ASS_PCA_negotiate with work so that studies are not neglected
ASS_PCA_prioritise studies_long-term view_to get out of poverty
ASS_PCA_side business to pay for studies
ASS_positive self talk
ASS_pre-emptive actions_conscious planning
ASS_pre-emptive actions_consistency
ASS_pre-emptive actions_prepping the night before
ASS_pre-emptive actions_prioritise
ASS_pre-emptive actions_time management
ASS_pre-emptive actions_trial and error adjustment to routine until one works
ASS_proactive accommodation_prioritise studies
ASS_problem solving
ASS_put personal desires aside for child
ASS_relying on weekends for more time to engage in parent-child bonding activities
ASS_routinised
ASS_routinised child_child knows routine and rules

ASS_safety in numbers
ASS_scheduling
ASS_seek emotional support and advice
ASS_set emotional boundaries_emotional hardiness_not allow conflict with father to affect relationship with child
ASS_specific child routine sets in motion desired consequences
ASS_spending time together
ASS_spiritual connection
ASS_tailor approach to unique situation
ASS_technology_occupies child
ASS_time keepig tools
ASS_time management
ASS_understanding
ASS_understanding own background

ADDENDUM M

REFINING “ASSISTANCE AND MAINTENANCE” CODES BY GROUPING AND ORGANISING PRELIMINARY CODES.

MEMO 10: exploring possible groupings of discrete codes.

Date/Time: 2016-08-15 10:00:00

PARENTING ACTIONS DURING ROUTINES

SETTING FIRM BOUNDARIES

- ASS_actions taken towards child_verbally directing time keeping**
- ASS_actions taken towards child discipline and firm rules**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_verbal and physical scolding**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_adapting communication from accommodating to firm**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_arrange environment as to restrict access to problematic behaviour**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_create boundaries for child**

LOVING COMMUNICATION (verbal and non-verbal?)

- ASS_actions taken towards child_patiently explain**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_communicate via supportive behaviour**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_verbalise love**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_meeting his/her needs**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_child-friendly parental behaviour**

DESIRED BEHAVIOUR IS REINFORCEMENT (Coaxing, reward systems, modelling desired behaviour)

- ASS_actions taken towards child_coaxing through physical rewards**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_coaxing through verbal negotiations**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_mother modelling team work to child**

BEING ROUTINISED AND TEACHING CHILD TO BE ROUTINISED

- ASS_actions taken towards child_sticking to routine**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_teaching child to be organised**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_Teaching family messages that maintain routines**
- ASS_actions taken towards child_teaching time management**
- ASS_specific child routine sets in motion other desired routine consequences**

UNKNOWN GROUPINGS TO EXPLORE FURTHER

- ASS_cultural adaptation_child on back**
- ASS_actions taken towards child adapting approach to save time **[HOW?]****

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ADULTS

MANAGING RELATIONSHIP WITH FATHER

- ASS_actions taken towards other adults_getting support from father**
- ASS_actions taken towards other adults_open communication with father**
- ASS_set emotional boundaries emotional hardiness_not allow conflict with father to affect relationship with child**

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTENDED FAMILY NETWORK (LIVE-IN FAMILY)

ASS_actions taken towards other adults_managing conflict
ASS_actions taken towards other adults_give-and-take support
ASS_actions taken towards other adults_relying on live-in family
ASS_actions taken towards other adults_tag-teaming with live-in fam
ASS_joint prepping routine with other adults
ASS_joint family planning/discussion about regularly sticking to routine
ASS_actions taken towards other adults_openly communicate with live-in fam
ASS_actions taken towards other adults_supportive communications with live-in fam
ASS_actions taken towards other adults_setting boundaries with live-in family
ASS_PCA_accommodate desired routines of others
ASS_PCA_building stronger family relationships
ASS_PCA_increase "family time" for bonding purposes
ASS_PCA_follow matriarch's rules/desires/values
ASS_PCA_Emoional BOUNDARIES

MANAGING PERSONAL EMOTIONS AND ATTITUDES:

NON-GROUPED CODES (THAT RELATE TO PARENTAL EMOTIONS) TO EXPLORE FURTHER

ASS_Adjust
ASS_attitude_acceptance [of what? Circumstances? Parental role?]
ASS_journalling_emotional expression or strategizing
ASS_seek emotional support and advice
ASS_actions taken towards other adults_seeking emotional support

MAKING MEANING OF ADVERSITY

ASS_Attitude_beliefs_Making meaning of adversity
ASS_attitude_"everything happens for a reason"
**ASS_work hard to eventually change circumstance (the cards that have been dealt) [→
??? → Maybe PROACTIVE CONSCIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS TO IMPROVE FUTURE]**
ASS_attitude_focussing on the "we have" and not the "we don't have"
ASS_attitude_realism
**ASS_attitude_motivated to create a better life → connected to daily routines that help
reach future goals**
ASS_attitude_positive future vision as motivation
ASS_motivation_understanding that current sacrifice will be rewarded in the future

NO WEAKLINGS IN OUR HOUSE – Mental hardiness

ASS_attitude_"we don't have weaklings in our house"
ASS_attitude_mental hardiness
ASS_attitude_resolute or determined
ASS_attitude_self-reliance

ATTITUDE ABOUT MY ABILITIES - focus on the "I can" and not the "I cannot" but acknowledge limits

ASS_attitude_believing in myself
ASS_attitude_focus in the "I can" and not the "I cannot"
ASS_positive self talk
ASS_attitude_acknowledge limits
ASS_attitude_realism_don't be hard on self if not perfect
ASS_motivation_motivating self-talk_push myself

ATTITUDE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE

ASS_attitude_believe there is support systems to help
ASS_attitude_control negative attitudes towards other people
ASS_don't allow self to be affected by prejudice of others

INTERNALISING A CARETAKER IDENTITY

ASS_attitude_caretaker identity
ASS_attitude_parental responsibility
ASS_attitude_responsability
ASS_attitude_positiewe ingesteldheid oor ouerskap
ASS_Attitude_flexible about breaking routine during holiday
ASS_attitude_prioritise family life

MOTIVATING SELF - knowing why you do what you do

ASS_motivation_knowing why you do what you do_for child education
ASS_motivation_understanding a routine's ecocultural importance
ASS_motivation_parent-child time together
ASS_motivation_parental love
ASS_motivation_parental love_child feeling loved
ASS_motivation_parental responsibility
ASS_motivation_sense of duty
ASS_motivation_knowing why you do what you do_for other family members
ASS_motivation_making other family members happy

OTHER GROUPINGS

ASSISTANCE FROM CHILD – TRANSACTIONAL MODEL

ASS_Age-related Competence of Child
ASS_age related competencies of child_understanding difficult situation
ASS_Child behaviours_entertain self
ASS_child behaviours_he enjoys routine so he is accommodating
ASSs_child behaviours_insisting on sticking to desired routine
ASSs_child behaviours_insisting on sticking to special routine

FAMILY VALUES

ASS_make time for family time
ASS_motivation_family time
ASS_spending time together
ASS_enjoying activities with children and having fun
ASS_feelings of caring for other family members

MASTERING THE "ME" VERSUS "MOTHER" IDENTITY CONFLICT → [NOTE: try and find balance, build personal goals around child, but set boundaries, sometimes sacrificing personal needs is needed.]

ASS_not feeling guilt for enjoying a personal life
ASS_attitude_retain individual goals_build old life around child
ASS_parent individual routine_motivation "me" versus "mother" desire to fulfil personal needs
ASS_PCA_balance as a parent, try and meet personal needs
ASS_finding balance
ASS_enjoy a personal life
ASS_boundaries_partners_limit people you introduce
ASS_managing dating partners
ASS_Actions taken towards child_boundaries_not informing child of mother's personal relationships

ASS_forsaking personal routines for sake of parental responsibility → antithesis
ASS_put personal desires aside for child → antithesis

PRE-EMPTIVE SCHEDULING ACTIONS – prioritise, consistency, time-management, plan, prep, trial and error adjustments

ASS_pre-emptive actions_conscious planning
ASS_pre-emptive actions_prioritise
ASS_scheduling
ASS_pre-emptive actions_consistency
ASS_routinised
ASS_routinised child_child knows routine and rules
ASS_pre-emptive actions_prepping the night before
ASS_time keepig tools
ASS_time management
ASS_pre-emptive actions_time management
ASS_pre-emptive actions_trial and error adjustment to routine until one works

FINDING TIME

ASS_relying on weekends for more time to engage in parent-child bonding activities

MULTITASKING

ASS_multitasking
ASS_multitasking_doing enjoyable activities while doing chores
ASS_multitasking_using any moment to bond with child when time is limited
ASS_idiosyncratic accommodation_make-up during bus ride
ASS_combining morining "getting ready" routine with enjoyable interaction to accomodate for lack of time

CODES YET TO BE GROUPED OR EXPLORED FURTHER

ASS_problem solving → like what?
ASS_PCA_apply positive characteristics or behaviours you see from other families in social network
ASS_spiritual connection
ASS_tailor approach to unique situation
ASS_understanding → who?
ASS_understanding own background
ASS_motivation_religious beliefs
ASS_circumstance_conflict-free family relationships
ASS_circumstance_enjoying work [PARENT's PERSONAL DESIRES APART FROM "Mother" identity?]
ASS_circumstance_only having one child
ASS_drawing on own positive childhood experiences
ASS_in the moment accomodation_take aways something has to give
ASS_instilling dialy routines that help achieve future goals_prayer=assistance from God
ASS_accommodation_get up earlier and use cheaper transport

ADDENDUM N

MEMO CONCERNING THE MEANING OF THE WORD “ATTITUDE”

MEMO 3: Attitudes versus beliefs versus values

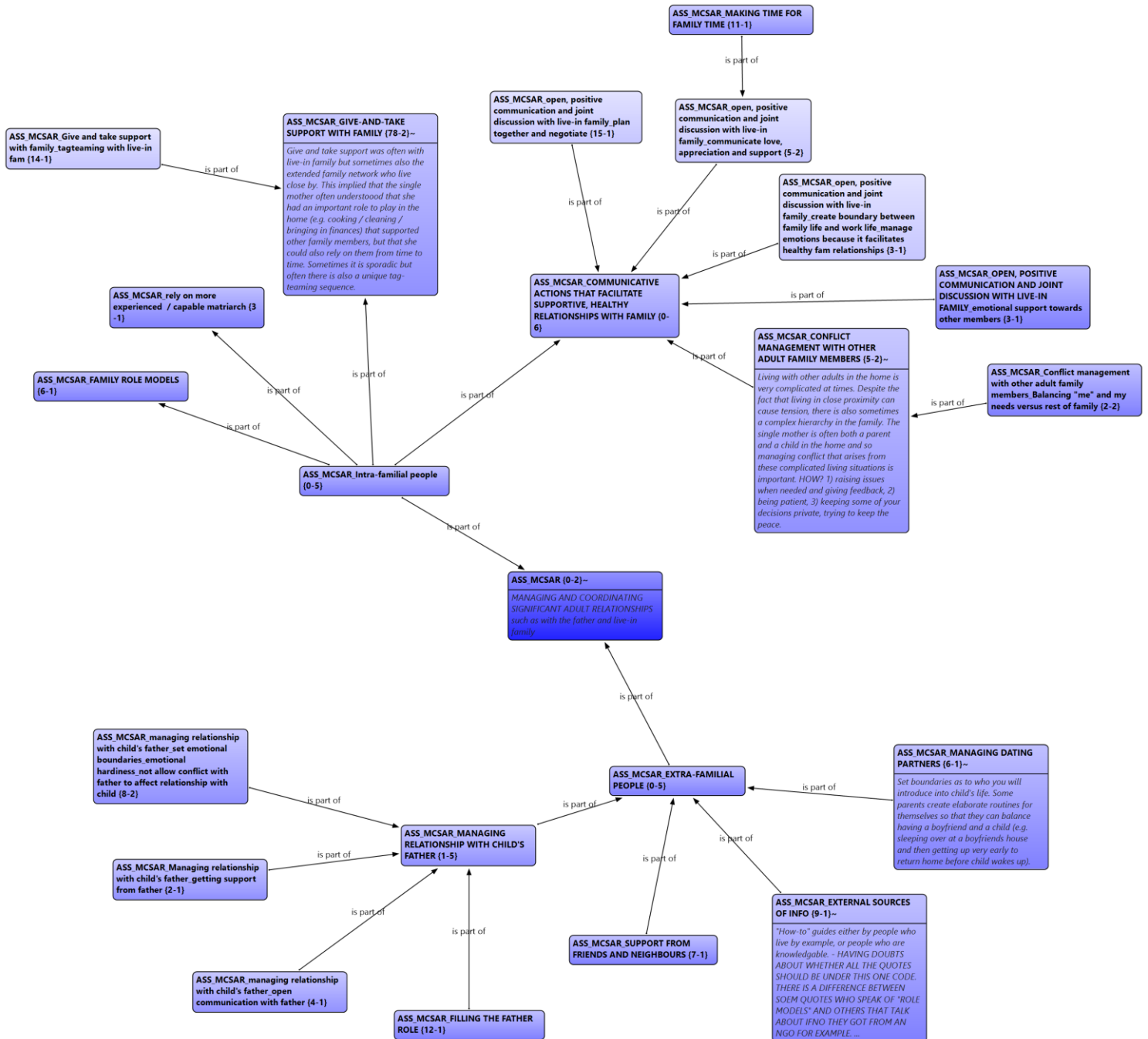
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After meeting with Prof Greeff this week: Different codes that I thought related to "attitude" seem to co-occur (especially when they related to single motherhood). But the problem is with the terminology I use with this label. It is difficult to always decide whether it is really an *attitude* per se, or whether it is a *belief* or perhaps even a *value*, *motivation*, *feeling* etc. These concepts are so interrelated. Sometimes the attitude is expressly evident within the quote, but other times it is only implicit and what one sees are some of these other constructs. He encouraged me to define for myself what a "belief" and a "value" is and how they relate to, or differ from, "attitudes". From our discussion, I gather that an attitude is affected by our belief systems. An attitude is influenced by our *evaluation* of an object (this "object" can be a person, experience, situation, environment, etc.). Attitudes can be positive or negative.

Perhaps I should rather discard the word attitude and focus on more general terms like *cognitions* and *emotions* or combine the two (as they are also interrelated). Cognitive, affective, conative? Perhaps using the terminology, *cognitive and emotional world* or even *intrapsychic processes*? These can serve as umbrella terms which may include the interplay of beliefs, values, attitudes, motivations, and feelings. I don't think it is possible to analyse the interview data to a greater level of specificity.

ADDENDUM O

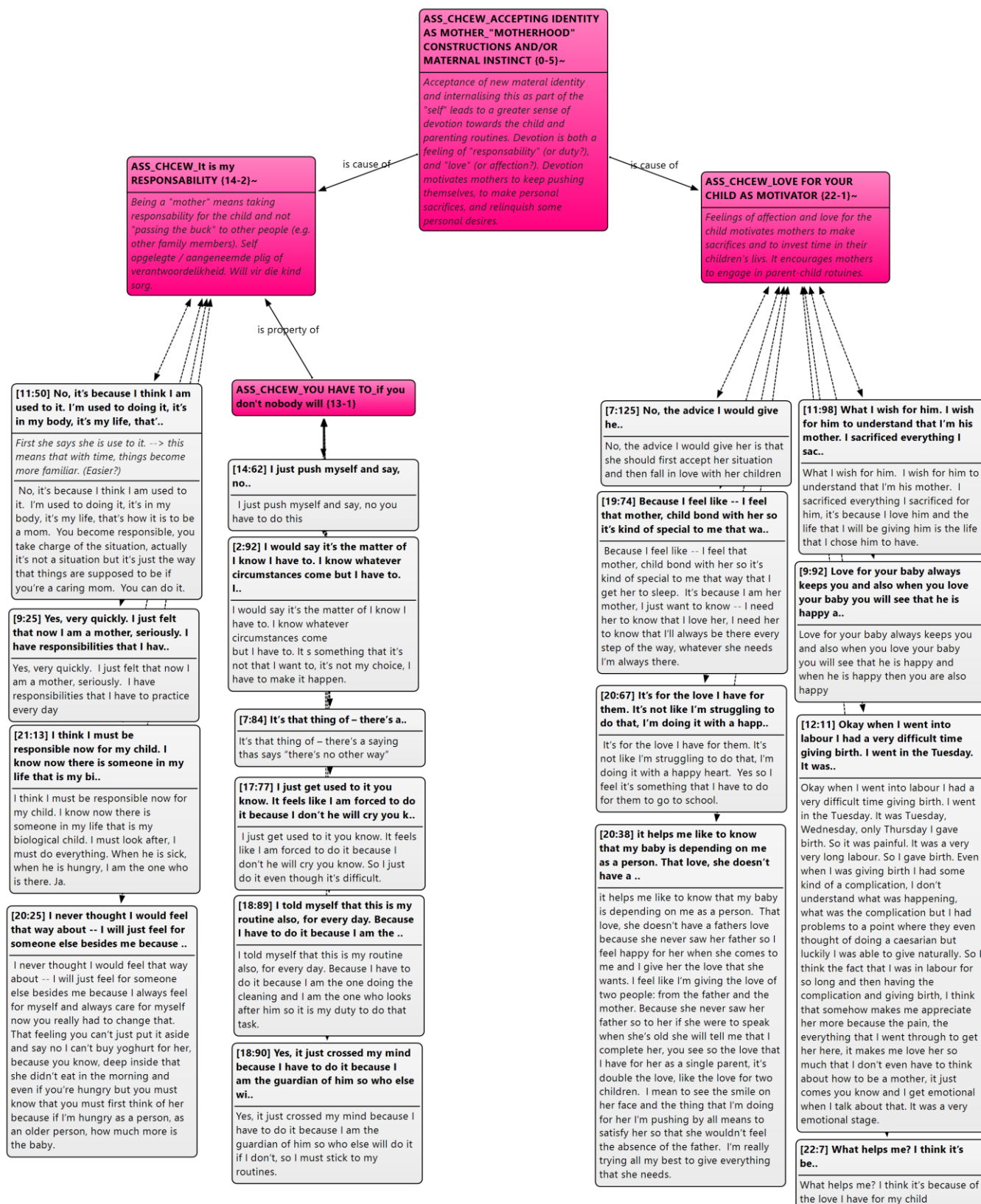
INITIAL NETWORK VIEW OF “MANAGING AND COORDINATING SIGNIFICANT ADULT RELATIONSHIPS”



Network view for "Managing and coordinating significant adult relationships" after focussed coding

ADDENDUM P

NETWORK VIEW ILLUSTRATING FOCUSED CODING AND CLUSTERING OF THEMES: ACCEPTING MATERNAL IDENTITY ENGENDERS 1) A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, AND 2) FEELINGS OF LOVE.



Network view linking "Acceptance of Maternal Identity" with a sense of "Responsibility" and "Love"

ADDENDUM Q

ANALYTIC QUESTIONS THAT AID DATA ANALYSIS OF NATURALISTIC OBSERVATIONS

Charmaz and Mitchell, (*cited in* Charmaz, 2006) p.24):

- a) What is the setting of action? When and how does action take place?
- b) What is going on? What is the overall activity being studied, the relatively long-term behavior about which participants organize themselves? What specific acts comprise this activity?
- c) What is the distribution of participants over space and time in these locales?
- d) How are actors [research participants] organized? What organizations effect, oversee, regulate, or promote this activity?
- e) How are members stratified? Who is ostensibly in charge? Does being in charge vary by activity? How is membership achieved and maintained?
- f) What do actors pay attention to? What is important, preoccupying, critical?
- g) What do they pointedly ignore that other persons might pay attention to?
- h) What symbols do actors invoke to understand their worlds, the participants and processes within them, and the objects and events they encounter? What names do they attach to objects, events, persons, roles, settings, equipment?
- i) What practices, skills, stratagems, methods of operation do actors employ?
- j) Which theories, motives, excuses, justifications or other explanations do actors use in accounting for their participation? How do they explain to each other, not to outside investigators, what they do and why they do it?
- k) What goals do actors seek? When, from their perspective, is an act well or poorly done? How do they judge action-by what standards, developed and applied by whom?
- l) What rewards do various actors gain from their participation?

ADDENDUM R

HUSTLER QUEEN COMIC BOOK

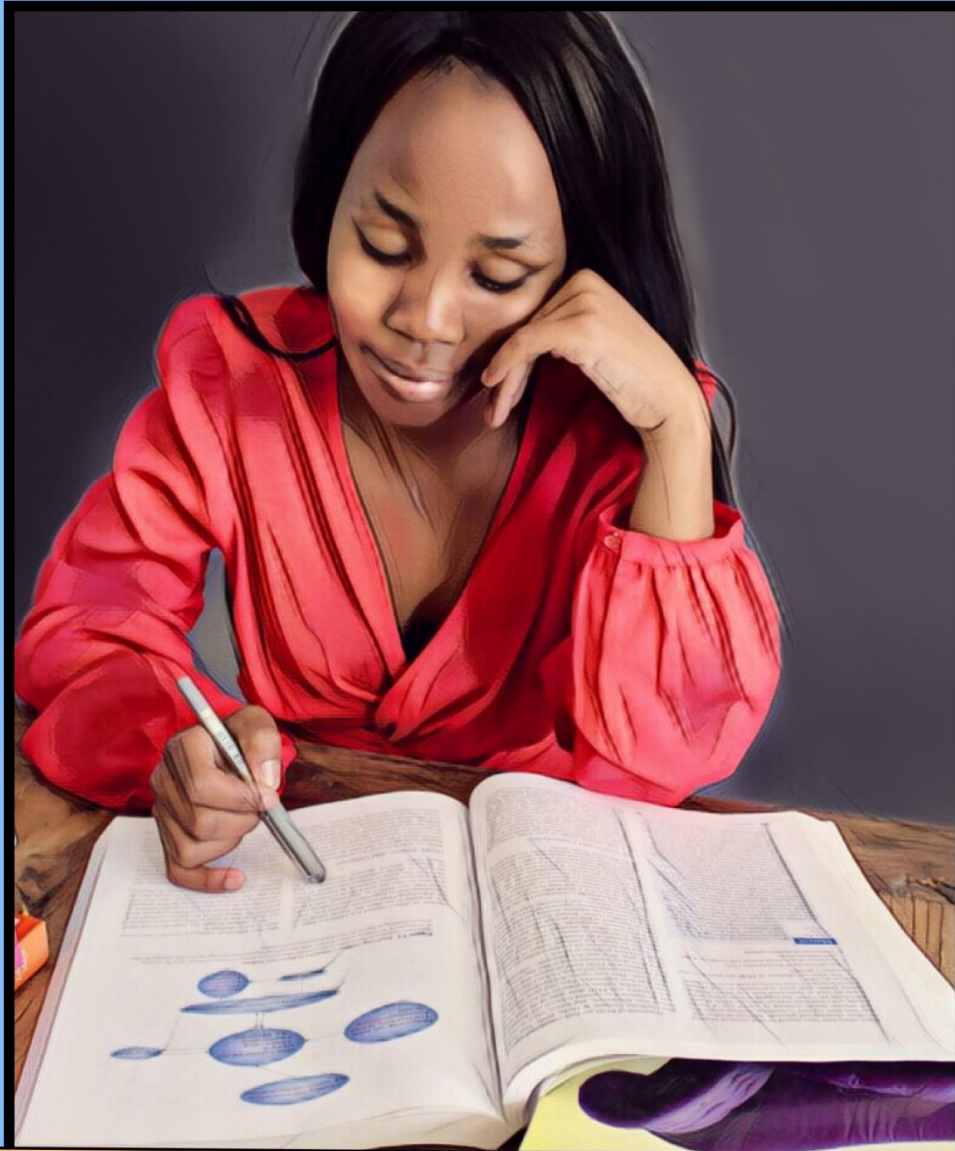




OKAY, I WAS SCARED AND I WAS CONFUSED AND I DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. SO, I WAS GOING THROUGH VARIOUS EMOTIONS I GUESS. I WAS SO SHOCKED, I DID NOT HAVE ANY WORDS, AND I WAS LIKE, OH MY GOD WHAT IS HAPPENING? AND I THOUGHT THAT IF I WAS DEAD, MAYBE THAT WOULD BE BETTER. THERE WERE SO MANY WORRIES THAT I HAD...







SO THE VERY FIRST THING THAT CAME TO MY MIND: MY STUDIES! I WAS SCARED THAT I HAD TO QUIT MY EDUCATION. IF I HAD TO QUIT, MAYBE I WOULD NEVER GET A UNIVERSITY DEGREE. I WAS WONDERING ABOUT MONEY, AND FINDING A JOB. WOULD I HAVE TO GO JOB SEEKING? SOMETIMES THE MONEY YOU HAVE IS WAY TOO LITTLE AND YOU HAVE TO FIGURE OUT A BUDGET. WHEN YOU'RE SEEING YOUR FRIENDS AND THE PEOPLE YOU STUDY WITH, IT CAN BE PAINFUL. MAYBE THEY WILL BE GETTING THEIR TERTIARY AND ONE DAY DRIVING CARS. WHAT ABOUT ME? I WAS WORRIED THAT I WOULD BE STUCK WITH THIS BABY. I WAS SCARED AND I WAS ASHAMED . MY FAMILY WERE LOOKING AT ME TO FINISH MY EDUCATION AND BRING SUCH GOOD THINGS TO THEM... BUT NOW I DISAPPOINTED THEM. SO THAT IS WHY I WAS SO ASHAMED.

THE THING IS, I COME FROM A CULTURE WERE PEOPLE THINK THAT YOU SHOULD NOT GET PREGNANT BEFORE GETTING MARRIED. YOU HAVE TO GET MARRIED FIRST AND THEN YOU CAN HAVE A CHILD. SO OBVIOUSLY PEOPLE HAVE THEIR OPINIONS AND YOU THINK ALL OF SOCIETY WILL JUDGE YOU IF YOU HAVE A CHILD BEFORE MARRIAGE. SO THE SOCIETY CAN MAYBE JUDGE YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE, OR WHAT THEY THINK YOU ARE. BUT THEY DO NOT REALLY KNOW WHO YOU ARE, OR YOUR WORTH...



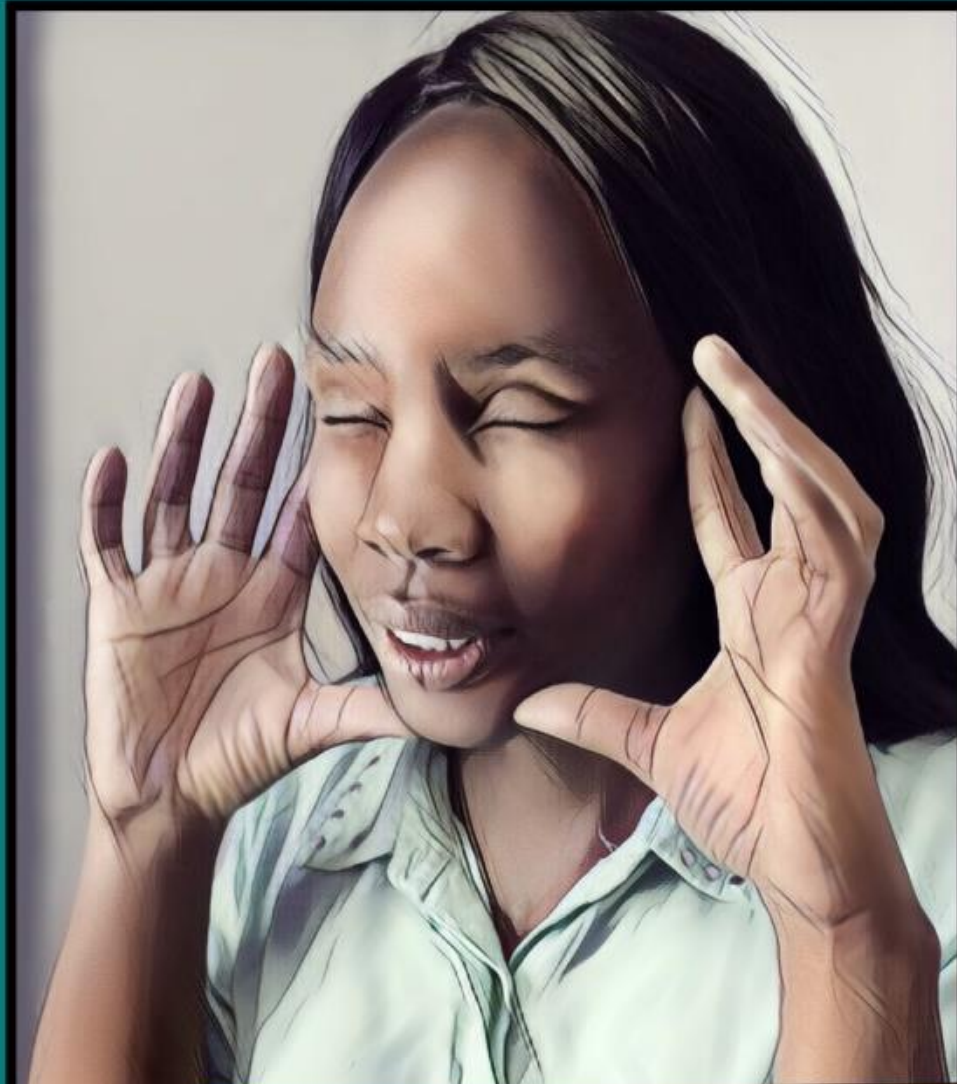
AND MY FAMILY WAS RESPECTED AROUND
HERE. SO YOU CAN IMAGINE! I THOUGHT I
WOULD BE THE DISGRACE IN THE FAMILY. AND
I WAS SCARED THAT PEOPLE WOULD SAY
THAT MY MOTHER SHOULD HAVE BEEN A
BETTER WATCHDOG. SO, THE BLAME WOULD
SHIFT FROM ME TO MY MOTHER.



SO IT FELT LIKE IT WAS THE END OF THE WORLD. YOU KNOW I FELT LIKE I WAS STILL A CHILD MYSELF. I WAS STILL DEPENDING ON MY PARENTS FOR A LOT OF THINGS, AND THEN, HERE I WAS GOING TO HAVE A BABY OF MY OWN. EVEN THOUGH I WAS 20, IT FELT LIKE I WAS STILL YOUNG. I WAS NOT READY FOR A BABY. IT WAS SORT OF TOO MUCH FOR ME.



YOU KNOW, I WAS THINKING: HOW AM I GOING TO TAKE CARE OF THIS BABY? WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME? HOW IS THIS SITUATION GOING TO AFFECT THE REST OF MY LIFE? SO THAT WAS WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH MY MIND AT THAT TIME. IT WAS OVERWHELMING AND THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS I THINK I NEVER HAD THE TIME TO REALLY ENJOY MY PREGNANCY OR TO BOND WITH THE BABY THAT WAS GROWING IN MY STOMACH.



AND IT WAS HELL. IT WAS REALLY HELL. WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT I WAS PREGNANT, IT WAS VERY HARD FOR ME TO TELL MY MOTHER, BECAUSE I WAS HER LITTLE GIRL. I JUST KEPT IT SECRET. I DIDN'T TELL ANYONE. I DID NOT HAVE NO ONE TO TALK TO. WHEN I WAS SIX MONTHS, MY TUMMY BECAME BIGGER. SO, WHEN I WAS SUPPOSED TO WASH MY BODY, I WENT WHEN THERE WAS NOBODY AROUND. I COULDN'T TAKE OFF MY CLOTHES WHEN MY MOTHER OR SISTERS WERE AROUND. I WASHED IN SECRET TO HIDE MY STOMACH. AT SOME POINT I DID TELL A FRIEND THAT I WAS PREGNANT, BUT IT WASN'T EASY TELLING MY MOTHER. IT FELT LIKE I BETRAYED HER BECAUSE I WAS THE OLDEST, AND SHE WAS A SINGLE MOTHER TOO.

SO I REALIZE WHEN I WAS SEVEN MONTHS THAT I STILL CAN'T TELL MY MOTHER. I DIDN'T HAVE THE WORDS. SO I DECIDED I'LL HAVE TO GO AND WASH IN FRONT OF HER, SO THAT SHE CAN SEE FOR HERSELF THAT I WAS PREGNANT. IT'S HARD TO SAY: "MOM, I AM PREGNANT". I FELT LIKE I AM JUST A DISAPPOINTMENT.

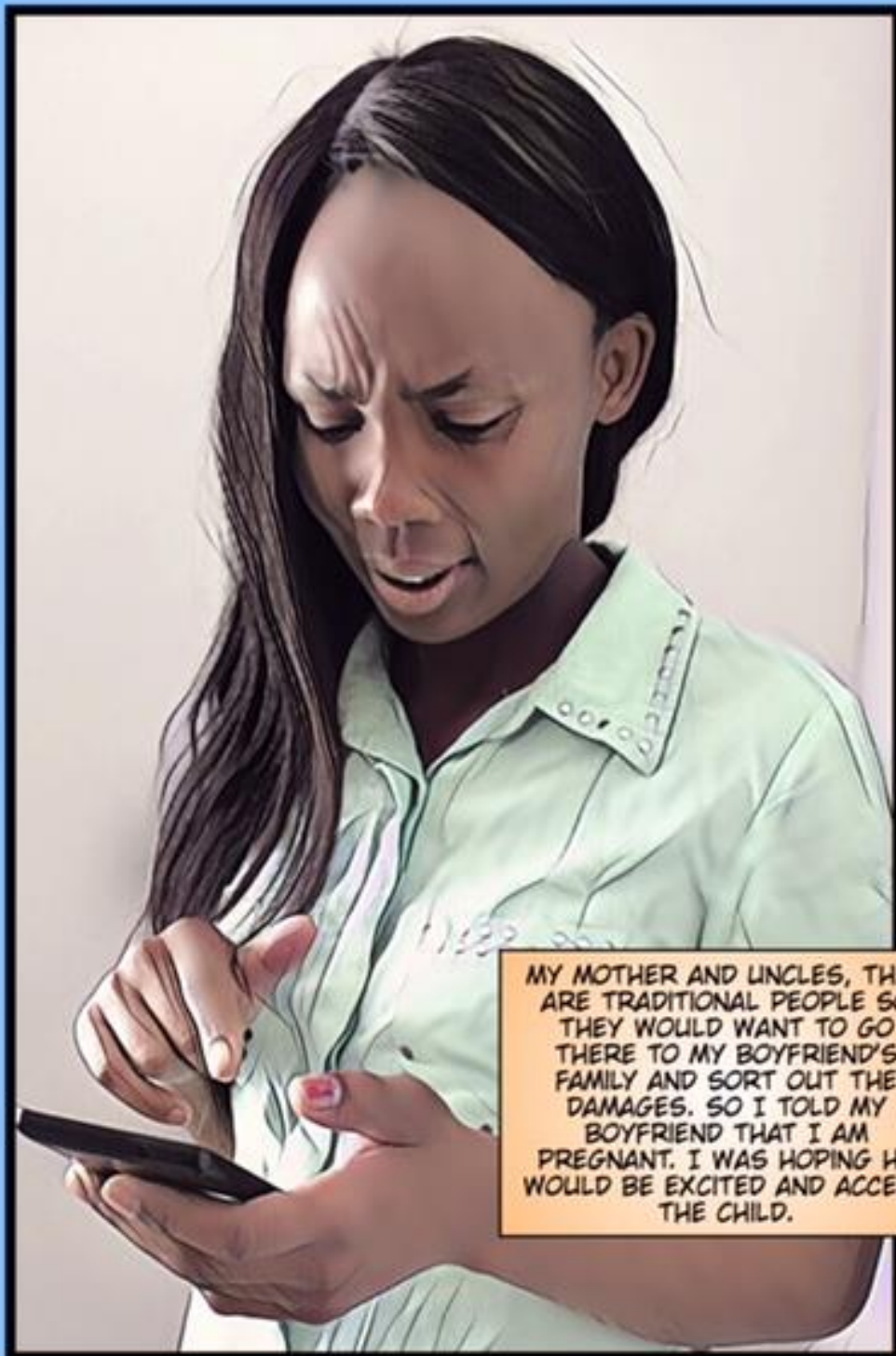


SO MY MOTHER FOUND OUT WHEN I WAS WASHING. MY MOTHER NOTICED THAT MY TUMMY WAS GROWING. THEN SHE STARTED TO ASK LIKE, "WHAT IS HAPPENING?" THEN I SAID NOTHING. SHE LOOKED SO DISAPPOINTED. THEN SHE KEPT ON ASKING: "WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE, WITH YOUR HEALTH? ARE YOU PREGNANT? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR BREASTS? THEY ARE BIGGER! THERE'S SOMETHING HERE. LOOK AT YOUR STOMACH! ARE YOU PREGNANT?" THEN THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD RUN AWAY FROM THE TRUTH BECAUSE IT WAS OUT. SO I TOLD HER... "YES, I'M PREGNANT."



IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT BECAUSE I PERSONALLY FELT LIKE I AM LIKE A POISON TO MY FAMILY. SO THAT WAS FOR ME VERY DEPRESSING AND FROM THAT TIME I THINK I KIND OF RUN AWAY A BIT FROM BONDING WITH MY CHILD. I WAS SPENDING A LOT OF TIME CRYING AND ASKING MYSELF: "WHY DID I DO THIS? I'M SO DISAPPOINTED IN MYSELF. HOW ARE THINGS GOING TO WORK OUT NOW? I WAS VERY FLIPPING LONELY. I WAS SO LONELY.





MY MOTHER AND UNCLES, THEY ARE TRADITIONAL PEOPLE SO THEY WOULD WANT TO GO THERE TO MY BOYFRIEND'S FAMILY AND SORT OUT THE DAMAGES. SO I TOLD MY BOYFRIEND THAT I AM PREGNANT. I WAS HOPING HE WOULD BE EXCITED AND ACCEPT THE CHILD.

BUT THEN HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT READY FOR A CHILD. WE WERE FIGHTING A LOT, AND I SAID SOME THINGS THAT HURT HIM. THEN HE STOPPED TALKING TO ME FROM THEN ON. HE STOPPED TO PHONE ME. HE STOPPED EVERYTHING. AND THEN HE LEFT FOR EASTERN CAPE AND HE NEVER CAME BACK. THERE WAS NO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN US ANYMORE.



I KEPT ON CALLING HIM AND CALLING HIM. I WAS HOPING THAT HE WILL CHANGE HIS MIND OR SOMETHING. BUT EVEN BEFORE THE PREGNANCY OUR RELATIONSHIP ALREADY HAD SOME PROBLEMS. SO, AT THAT TIME I DECIDED TO JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE BECAUSE I WAS VERY HURT.



WHEN I WAS PREGNANT I WAS REALLY HURT AND ANGRY. THE THING IS, MY BABY DADDY, THAT IS WHAT BROKE ME, BECAUSE I WAS SO OBSESSED WITH HIM AT THAT TIME.





WHEN IT COMES TO THE CHILD'S FATHER, SOME MEN WANT TO BE INVOLVED, AND OTHERS DO NOT. SOMETIMES THE FATHER IS SUPPORTIVE, AND HIS FAMILY LOVES THE BABY, BUT SOMETIMES IT IS HARDER. I REALISE NOW THAT I WAS FIGHTING SO MUCH WITH MY BABY'S DADDY. TRY YOUR BEST TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE CHILD'S FATHER. DO NOT CALL HIM NAMES OR SHOUT AT HIM. SOMETIMES YOU ARE ANGRY WITH THE FATHER OF YOUR BABY, AND YOU ARE SO DISAPPOINTED. FOR ME, THE FATHER OF MY BABY WAS SUCH A DISAPPOINTMENT. HE DID NOT FULFILLING HIS PROMISES. AND HE WOULD NEVER CALL ME. IT WAS REALLY HEART-BREAKING. I WAS LITERALLY CRYING EVERY SINGLE NIGHT. BUT IT IS ALSO HARD FOR HIM. WE WERE BOTH UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE.

BUT SOMEBODY KNOCKED SOME SENSE INTO ME. AND A FRIEND OF MINE TOLD ME THAT I HAVE TO PICK MYSELF UP AND DO THIS FOR MY CHILD. DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD GO THROUGH ALL OF THIS BECAUSE IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY THEN YOUR CHILD IS ALSO NOT HAPPY. SO, I SWITCHED AND I WAS LIKE: "OKAY, LET IT BE. I AM HERE. AND I AM GOING TO TRY AND BE RESPECTFUL TO THIS MAN, FOR THE SAKE OF MY BABY."



I WILL TELL YOU, HONESTLY, BEFORE I GAVE BIRTH TO THIS CHILD, I DIDN'T WANT THIS BABY. WHEN I WENT TO THE CLINIC FOR MY CHECKUP I EVEN TELL THE NURSE AT THE CLINIC THAT I DON'T LIKE THIS CHILD, I DON'T WANT THIS BABY. I WANT TO MAKE THIS CHILD GO AWAY. I SAID TO HER: "I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL, I WANT TO GET MY TERTIARY". SHE SAID: "YES YOU WILL GO TO SCHOOL. THE CHILD WILL GROW UP AND YOU WILL GO TO SCHOOL. IT'S STILL EARLY, YOU ARE YOUNG, YOU CAN DO ALL THOSE THINGS, YOU CAN DO THIS."

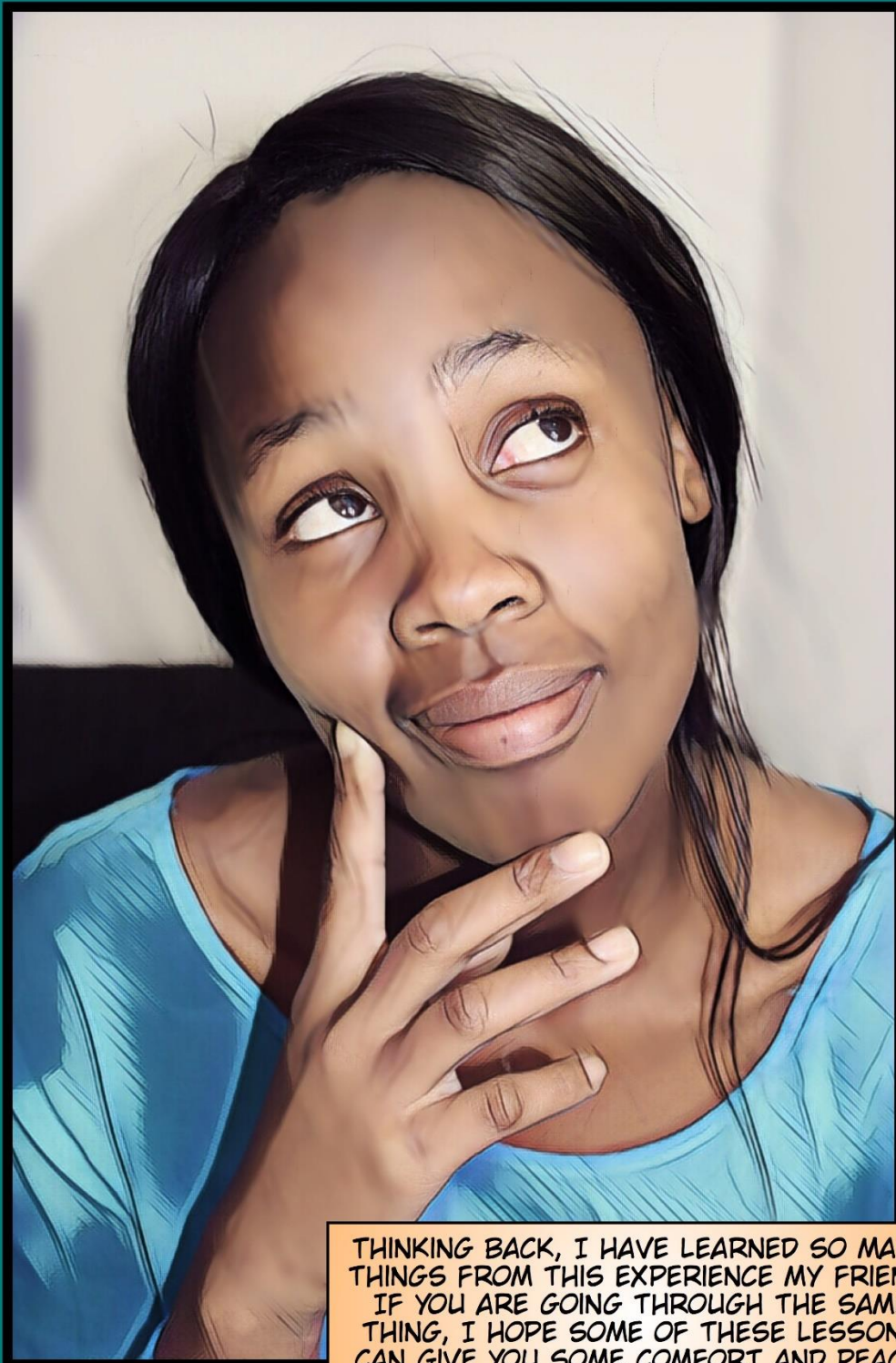


THEN AFTER I VISIT THE NURSE I FELT THE BABY GROWING IN ME. THEN I STARTED TO SAY, OKAY FINE, YOU KNOW WHAT, WHATEVER THE OTHER PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT ME DOESN'T REALLY MATTER. IT'S ME AND MY CHILD AND WHETHER THE FATHER IS THERE, OR THE FATHER IS NOT THERE, I WILL TRY NOT TO WORRY TOO MUCH AT THIS MOMENT, BECAUSE NOW I HAVE A PRECIOUS THING GROWING UP IN MY TUMMY. AND SO IT WAS BEAUTIFUL TO FEEL THE BABY INSIDE MY TUMMY. SO THEN I STARTED TO BOND WITH MY CHILD.





WHILE YOU ARE STILL PREGNANT, YOU ARE STILL IN SHOCK AND THINGS ARE STILL STRANGE. BUT THEN THERE IS THAT MOMENT IN HOSPITAL AFTER YOU'VE JUST GIVEN BIRTH, THEY GIVE YOU YOUR BABY AND TELL YOU: "HERE IS YOUR BABY". THERE IS THAT BOND BETWEEN YOU AND THAT CHILD. WHEN YOU LOOK AT THAT CHILD, YOU THINK: "YES THERE IS MY LITTLE PRECIOUS THING."



THINKING BACK, I HAVE LEARNED SO MANY THINGS FROM THIS EXPERIENCE MY FRIEND. IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH THE SAME THING, I HOPE SOME OF THESE LESSONS CAN GIVE YOU SOME COMFORT AND PEACE. THIS IS WHAT I HAVE LEARNED...



FIRST OF ALL, YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WILL UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE SITUATION EVEN IF IT DOESN'T FEEL THAT WAY NOW. I WOULD ADVISE ANY SINGLE MOTHER JUST TO KEEP IN CONTACT WITH THE FAMILIES BECAUSE THE FAMILIES ARE VERY IMPORTANT. IF IT WASN'T FOR MY FAMILY, I DON'T KNOW HOW I WOULD HAVE HANDLED BEING A SINGLE MOTHER. SO IF YOU CAN JUST CONNECT WITH YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR BABY DADDY'S FAMILY, EVERYTHING WILL GO EASIER ON YOU.

MY FAMILY, THEY ACTUALLY SUPPORT ME A LOT. THEY DID NOT NEGLECT ME. THEY SUPPORTED ME FROM THE FIRST DAY THIS CHILD WAS BORN AND THEY LOVE THE CHILD AND THEY ARE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING FOR THE CHILD. I WOULD SAY, FIND THE SUPPORT. WHEN MY MOTHER FOUND OUT I WAS PREGNANT, FOR THE FIRST TWO WEEKS SHE WAS NOT THE SAME. SHE WAS ANGRY AT ME, SHE DID NOT WANT TO TALK TO ME. BUT SHE CHANGED. ONE DAY SHE JUST SAID TO ME, "OKAY YOU ARE PREGNANT, I ACCEPT YOU AND ALSO THE BABY. JUST LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AND THE BABY AND ALSO PLEASE DO NOT LET THINGS GET TO YOU SO THAT YOU STILL DO WELL WITH YOUR STUDIES."



WHEN I WAS PREGNANT AND FEELING HURT BECAUSE MY BOYFRIEND LEFT, I USED TO WANT TO DO THINGS TO MYSELF, HURT MYSELF. ONCE I EVEN WANTED TO KILL MYSELF. BUT AFTER I SPOKE TO MY MOTHER, SHE TOLD ME THAT IT WAS NOT THE END OF THE WORLD.



I HAVE TO GIVE IT TO MY MOTHER, SHE HAS BEEN THERE FOR ME ALL THE WAY. SHE HAS BEEN MY PILLAR OF STRENGTH. SHE HAS BEEN THERE. FIND YOUR PILLAR OF STRENGTH. YOU ARE NOT ALONE. SO WHENEVER YOU NEED TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING, WHENEVER YOU NEED COUNSELLING, FIND THAT PERSON.



I ALSO LEARNED AN IMPORTANT THING: I DON'T BLAME MYSELF ANYMORE. I'M NOT ANGRY WITH MY BABY FOR BEING HERE ANYMORE. I BLAMED MYSELF ENOUGH DURING MY PREGNANCY AND NOW I DON'T WANT MY CHILD TO FEEL THAT NEGATIVITY. SO I NO LONGER REGRET WHAT HAPPENED AND I NO LONGER HATE MYSELF FOR IT. AND ALSO I THINK ABOUT THE WAY MY PARENTS BROUGHT ME UP AND THE WAY THEY USED TO LOVE ME. WHEN I THINK ABOUT THAT I REALISE MY BABY ALSO DESERVES TO BE BROUGHT UP BY SOMEONE WHO LOVES THEM UNCONDITIONALLY.



YOU KNOW, DAILY I USED TO LOOK DOWN ON MYSELF. I DID NOT REALISE THEN THAT I AM A GOOD PERSON AND THAT I DO GOOD THINGS FOR OTHER PEOPLE. I WAS JUST UNDERMINING MYSELF. BUT NOW I CHANGED. I DON'T HAVE TO UNDERMINE MYSELF. I NEED TO LOOK UP AND SAY, YES, I HAVE MY BABY, AND I KNOW THAT MY CHILD IS HERE FOR A REASON. I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK. I AM A GOOD PERSON.



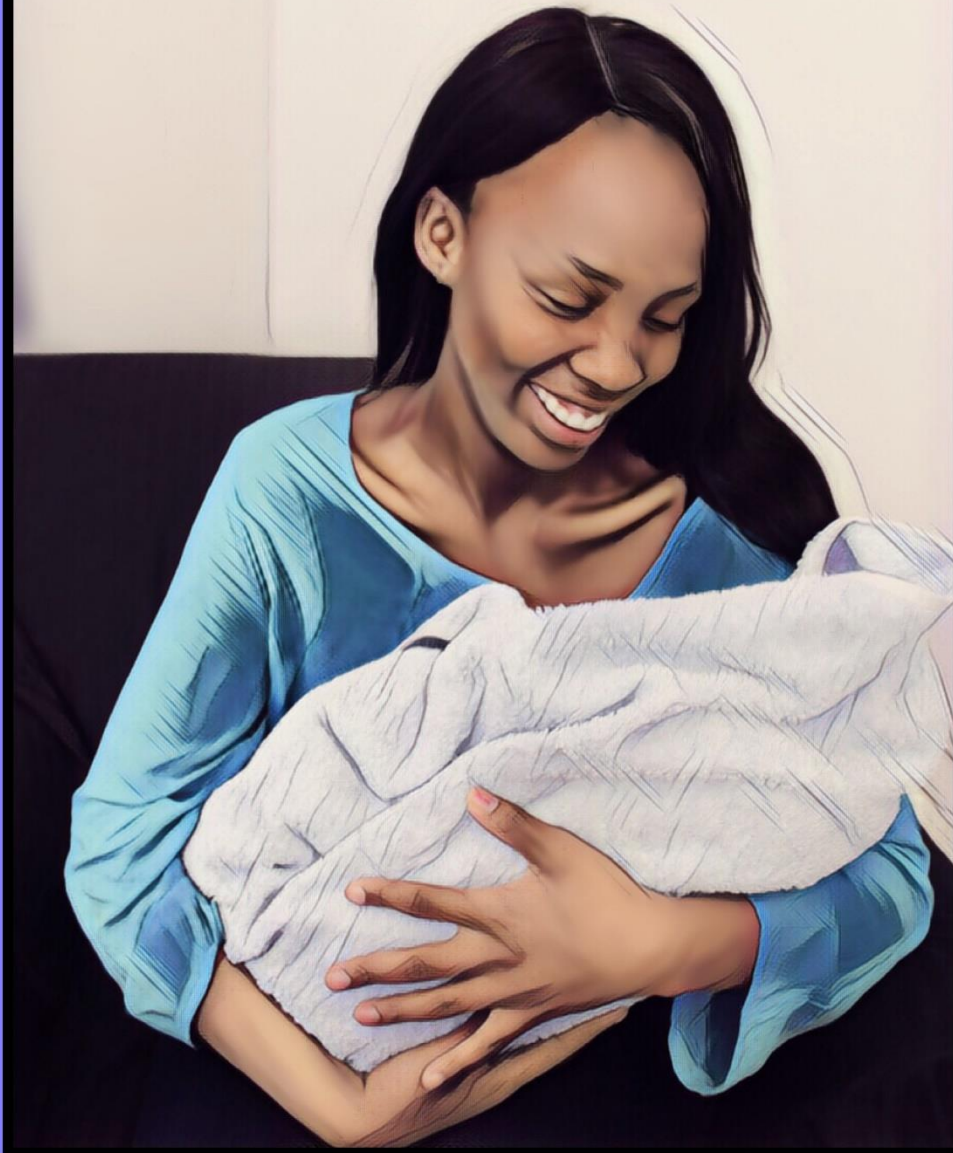
THE ADVICE I WOULD GIVE A NEWLY SINGLE MOTHER IS THAT SHE SHOULD TRY TO ACCEPT HER SITUATION, AND THEN FALL IN LOVE WITH HER CHILD. SHE MUST JUST TRY TO ENJOY THE SITUATION. THERE IS NOTHING ELSE YOU CAN DO NOW. IT HAS HAPPENED. THE ONLY THING I KNOW IS THAT IF YOU KEEP LOOKING AT THE PAST, AND YOU KEEP WISHING THAT YOU HAD DONE THIS OR THAT, THEN YOU'LL JUST BE HOLDING YOURSELF BACK. IF YOU KEEP LOOKING AT THE PAST, YOU WILL CONSTANTLY BE ANGRY AND LIVE WITH REGRET. YOU MUST ALSO LOOK TO THE FUTURE.



AT TIMES IT GETS ROUGH, IT GETS DIFFICULT. YOU REALLY NEED TO HUSTLE ALL THE TIME. I WISH I COULD HAVE TONS OF MONEY, BUT I DON'T HAVE ALL THE MILLIONS. BUT THE ONLY THING I THOUGHT WAS THAT I NEED TO MAKE SURE MY CHILD FEELS MY LOVE. I WANT MY BABY TO KNOW HIS MOTHER IS ALWAYS THERE FOR HIM. I WANT HIM TO KNOW THAT NO MATTER WHAT, I AM HERE, AND I AM HERE TO STAY.



FOR ME, JUST TO BE A MOTHER IT'S ALL ABOUT THE COURAGE, IT'S ALL ABOUT HAVING THAT UNCONDITIONAL LOVE FOR YOUR BABY, AND SHARING THAT LOVE WITH YOUR BABY. NO MATTER WHAT IS HAPPENING, YOU ARE THERE TO STAND UP AND DUST YOURSELF OFF AND LOOK ABOVE AND DO WHAT YOU DO BEST: BEING A MOTHER. THAT'S HOW IT IS TO BE A MOM. YOU BECOME RESPONSIBLE, YOU TAKE CHARGE OF THE SITUATION, IT'S JUST THE WAY THAT THINGS ARE IF YOU'RE A CARING MOM.

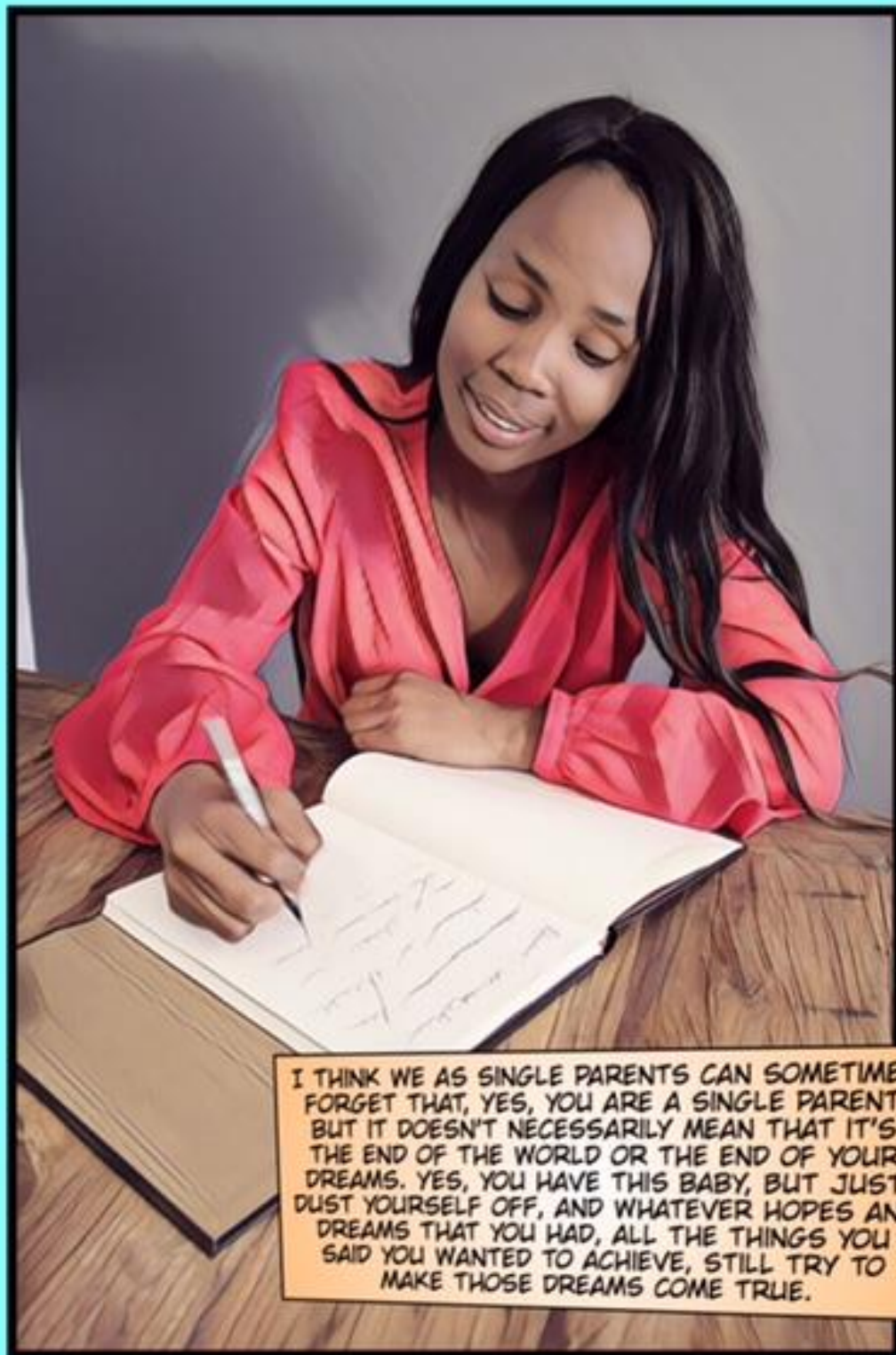


A SINGLE PARENT
IS STRONG AND
FOR ME THERE IS
NOTHING WRONG
WITH BEING A
SINGLE PARENT.
IT MEANS THAT
YOU HAVE THE
CAPACITY TO
BUILD YOUR OWN
LIFE FROM
SCRATCH.

TO BE A SINGLE WOMAN DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU DID SOME NEGATIVE OR BAD STUFF. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU GRABBED ANY MAN IN THE STREET OR SLEPT AROUND EVERYWHERE. IT MEANS THAT YOU ARE BEING INDEPENDENT. YOU ARE INDEPENDENT AND THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH NOT TO HAVING A HUSBAND OR A BOYFRIEND IN YOUR LIFE. YOU HAVE TO MOVE ON TO MAKE A BETTER LIFE.



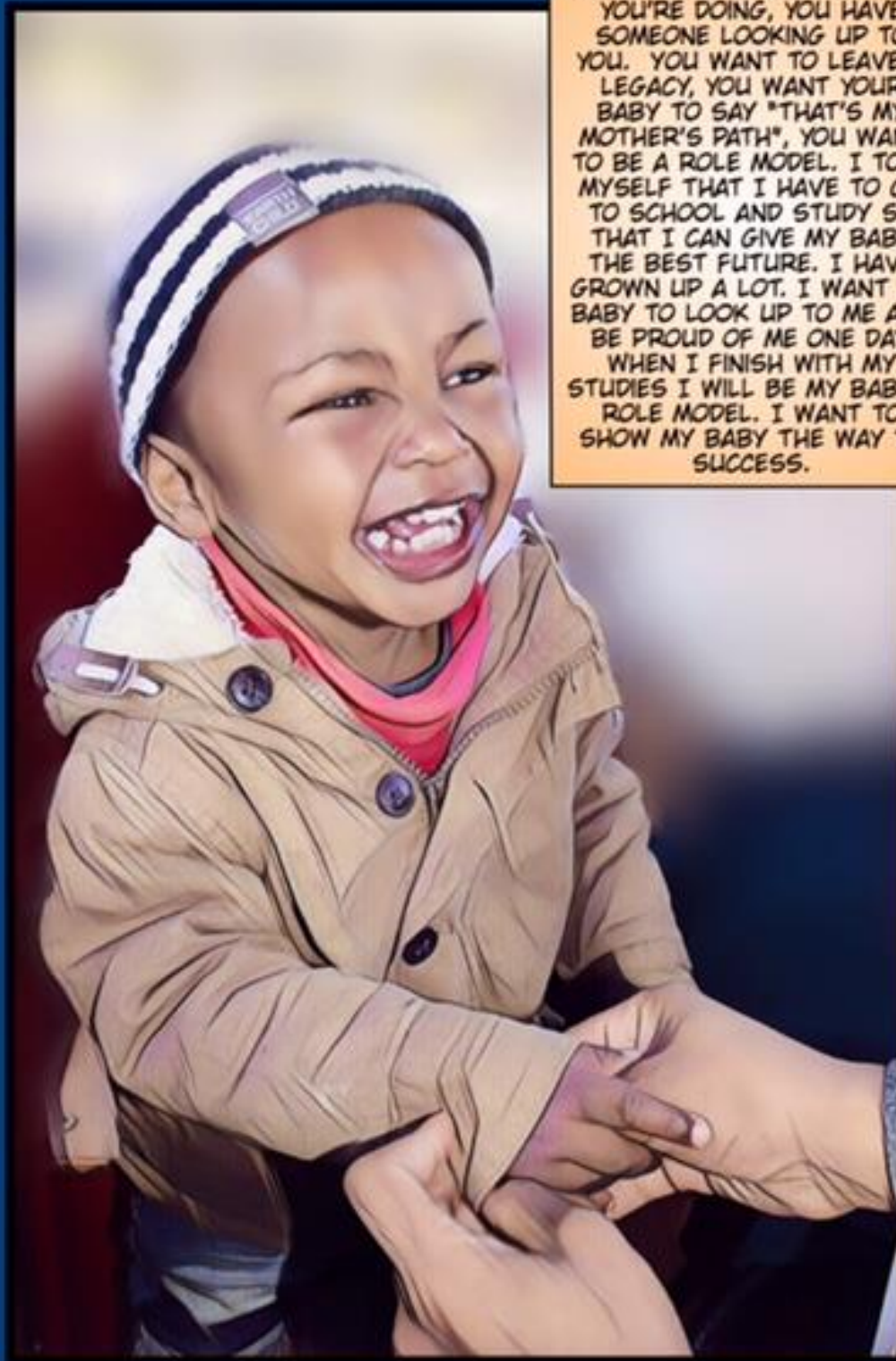




I THINK WE AS SINGLE PARENTS CAN SOMETIMES FORGET THAT, YES, YOU ARE A SINGLE PARENT, BUT IT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN THAT IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD OR THE END OF YOUR DREAMS. YES, YOU HAVE THIS BABY, BUT JUST DUST YOURSELF OFF, AND WHATEVER HOPES AND DREAMS THAT YOU HAD, ALL THE THINGS YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO ACHIEVE, STILL TRY TO MAKE THOSE DREAMS COME TRUE.

SO, YES, YOU MAY SHIFT THE DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE A LITTLE, BUT CONTINUE WITH THE GOALS THAT YOU HAD. MAYBE YOU NOW JUST HAVE TO TRY AND ACHIEVE THEM IN A DIFFERENT MANNER. SO, PLAN YOUR LIFE NOW. EVEN WITH A CHILD, ACHIEVE THE SAME GOALS THAT YOU WANTED BEFORE. TRY AND STRATEGISE VERY WELL. TIME MANAGEMENT IS VERY IMPORTANT. EVERYTHING REVOLVES AROUND TIME.





JUTS KNOW, WHATEVER THAT YOU'RE DOING, YOU HAVE SOMEONE LOOKING UP TO YOU. YOU WANT TO LEAVE A LEGACY, YOU WANT YOUR BABY TO SAY "THAT'S MY MOTHER'S PATH", YOU WANT TO BE A ROLE MODEL. I TOLD MYSELF THAT I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL AND STUDY SO THAT I CAN GIVE MY BABY THE BEST FUTURE. I HAVE GROWN UP A LOT. I WANT MY BABY TO LOOK UP TO ME AND BE PROUD OF ME ONE DAY. WHEN I FINISH WITH MY STUDIES I WILL BE MY BABY'S ROLE MODEL. I WANT TO SHOW MY BABY THE WAY TO SUCCESS.



I WOULD SAY, WHEN MY BABY ARRIVED IN THIS WORLD, IT CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR ME. EVEN THE PREGNANCY, THE ROUGH PATCH THAT I WENT THROUGH, CHANGED SOMETHING IN ME NOW. IT TAUGHT ME TO BE ABLE TO STAND ON MY OWN, NOT TO ALWAYS LEAN ON SOMEONE'S SHOULDER. SO I THINK THROUGH THE WHOLE PROCESS I LEARNT TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF AND TO BE THERE FOR MY OWN SELF. SO I MUST JUST BE MY OWN KING OR QUEEN. SO YEAH....



OKAY SINCE GIVING BIRTH TO MY CHILD I BECAME FOCUSED ON MY STUDIES; THE YEAR I WAS PREGNANT I PASSED WITH FLYING COLOURS. PEOPLE AT HOME COULDN'T BELIEVE IT, I LITERALLY TOOK ALL MY STRESS OUT ON THE BOOKS. I WANTED A BETTER LIFE FOR MY CHILD.



THEN I FOUND A JOB AND THINGS BECAME BETTER. THE BABY MAKES YOU FOCUSED. WHEN YOU HAVE A CHILD YOU BECOME MORE FOCUSED. I COMPARE MY LIFE NOW TO THAT OF MY PEERS WHO DIDN'T HAVE KIDS AT A YOUNG AGE. THEIR LIVES ARE NOT PERFECT, THE DECISIONS THEY MAKE ARE NOT ALWAYS THE BEST. SOME OF THEM ARE UNRULY. SOME ONLY LIVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEMSELVES AND NO ONE ELSE. SO ALL THIS HAS AWAKENED MY MIND. NOW I KNOW WHAT I WANT AND HOW I AM GOING TO GET IT, AND WHEN.

HUSTLE HARD. YOU CAN STILL ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS. MAYBE YOU WANTED TO BE A BEAUTICIAN, LIKE ME. OR MAYBE YOU WANTED TO GO STUDY MARKETING OR SOMETHING. REMEMBER, NO MATTER HOW MANY MISTAKES YOU MAKE, OR HOW SLOWLY YOU PROGRESS, YOU ARE STILL WAY AHEAD OF SOMEONE WHO ISN'T TRYING.



YOUR BABY IS NOT A MISTAKE. YOUR BABY IS HERE FOR A REASON, FOR A PURPOSE. BEING A SINGLE PARENT HAS ITS CHALLENGES BUT YOU JUST HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHY THIS PERSON WAS GIVEN TO YOU. FOR EXAMPLE, YOUR BABY COULD HAVE BEEN ANY OTHER PERSON'S CHILD, BUT WHY EXACTLY WAS THIS BABY GIVEN TO YOU? YOU HAVE TO LIVE FOR YOUR BABY.



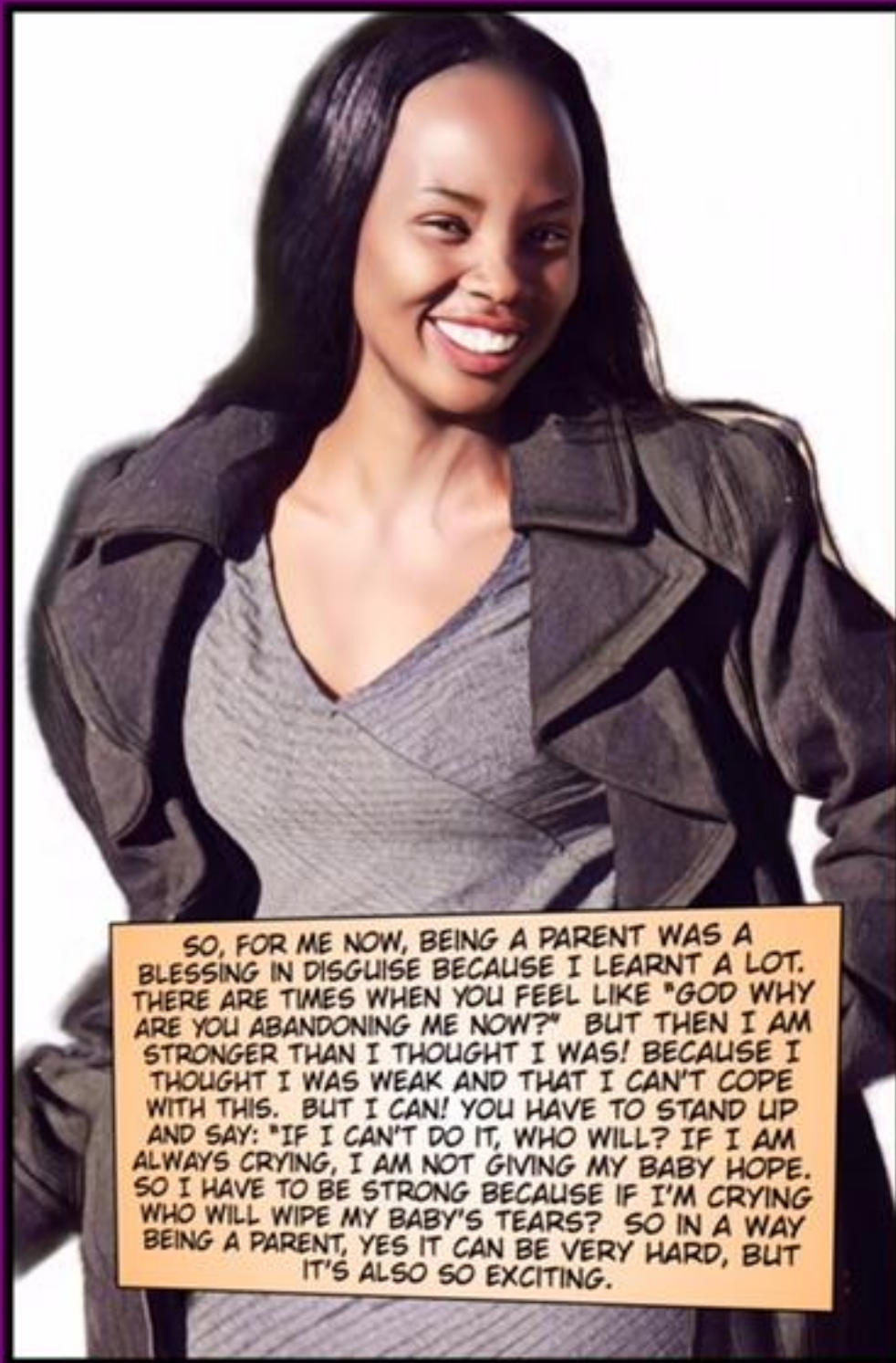
I ALSO LEARNED THAT MY FRIENDS ... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT ... THEY WERE THE ANGELS SENT BY GOD FOR ME BECAUSE FINANCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, THEY SUPPORTED ME ALL THE WAY. THEY WERE LIKE THE FATHERS OF THIS CHILD. I DO FEEL LIKE I AM A PARENT BUT I ALSO DO FEEL LIKE I HAVE THE SUPPORT SYSTEM. SO I AM NOT THE ONLY PARENT TO THE CHILD. SO WITH THE SUPPORT SYSTEM THAT I HAVE THE SPACE OF THE FATHER NOT BEING THERE HAS BEEN FILLED.





YOU MUST REMEMBER TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. HAVE SOME "ME-TIME". GO OUT TO A PLACE THAT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD. MAYBE GO TO CHURCH OR VISIT A FRIEND OR TAKE A NICE WALK ON A SUNNY DAY. WASH YOUR FACE AND SPRING CLEAN THE HOUSE. OR YOU COULD WRITE IN YOUR DIARY LIKE I DID. DO THINGS THAT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL PAMPERED. YOU ARE IMPORTANT.





SO, FOR ME NOW, BEING A PARENT WAS A BLESSING IN DISGUISE BECAUSE I LEARNT A LOT. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE "GOD WHY ARE YOU ABANDONING ME NOW?" BUT THEN I AM STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT I WAS! BECAUSE I THOUGHT I WAS WEAK AND THAT I CAN'T COPE WITH THIS. BUT I CAN! YOU HAVE TO STAND UP AND SAY: "IF I CAN'T DO IT, WHO WILL? IF I AM ALWAYS CRYING, I AM NOT GIVING MY BABY HOPE. SO I HAVE TO BE STRONG BECAUSE IF I'M CRYING WHO WILL WIPE MY BABY'S TEARS? SO IN A WAY BEING A PARENT, YES IT CAN BE VERY HARD, BUT IT'S ALSO SO EXCITING.