An Exploration of the Sustainability of 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-Being' Training in the Out-of-School Sector

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Declaration

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I declare that the writing of this thesis and research contained within is my own work. Any assistance received has been acknowledged where appropriate.

Signed:_____

Lisa Harold

Date:_____

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Abstract

Youth workers require support to develop and enhance their interpersonal skills so that they can appropriately support some of the most vulnerable young people in Irish society. 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training was developed with a view to build capacity among youth workers to appropriately manage the mental and emotional health issues of young people that they meet in their daily work.

The theories examined in the literature were Transformative Learning (TL) Theory, Experiential Learning (EL) Theory, Diffusions of Innovations (DIT) Theory and Sustainability. A plan for sustaining the diffusion of the training was integrated into the training model that included the a) recruitment of experienced facilitators, b) training ethos c) syllabus delivered via the experiential learning (EL) cycle in the affective domain, d) use of an appropriate residential setting for delivery, e) duration of the training f) selection process for the youth workers and their organisations and g) organisational and environmental supports for youth workers.

The youth workers' experience of the training, the factors that influenced their experience and the integration of their learning into their work practice was evaluated. Grounded theory was used to analyse and triangulate data from multiple qualitative sources including: reflective logs, interviews, vox pops and a focus group.

The results showed that youth workers underwent a TL process at a deeply personal level. This learning supported them to integrate the training into their work practice in terms of their capacity to a) self-care with respect to establishing boundaries and managing themselves with colleagues and students, and b) to bring enhanced awareness and facilitation skills to their teaching to the benefit of their students. Environmental supports that aided the diffusion of the training in practice included managerial 'buy in' and the presence of a colleague at the training.

'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training has been shown to be effective to generate TL that can diffuse into practice for the benefit of staff and young people. The findings from this study are relevant to practitioners elsewhere working with vulnerable groups.

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List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASIST	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CTC	Community Training Centre
DIT	Diffusion of Innovations Theory
EDUFAIM	Educating Families to Achieve Independence in Montana
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EL	Experiential Learning
FCSE	Family Communication and Self-Esteem
FDYS	Ferns Diocesan Youth Service
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FPSHP	Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion
HDip	Higher Diploma
HQM	Health Quality Mark
HSE	Health Service Executive
LIFTT	Living for Today and Tomorrow (programme)
MA	Masters of Arts
MAT	Masters of Arts in Teaching
MDN	Men's Development Network
NOSP	National Office for Suicide Prevention

NQSF   National Quality Standards Framework

NSP   National Solidarity Programme

NYCI   National Youth Council of Ireland

P.A.T.H.S   Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes

PDST   Professional Development Service for Teachers

RSE   Relationship and Sexuality Education

RVaSP   Return to Village and Serve Programme

SEED   Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity

SEHB   South-Eastern Health Board

SES   Socio-Economic Status

SHEP   Social Health and Education Project

SPHE   Social, Political and Health Education

STEM   Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

STRIVE   Support and Training Results in Valuable Employees

TL   Transformative Learning

US   United States

WIT   Waterford Institute of Technology

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale to the Research

The partnership between the Health Promotion Department of the former South-Eastern Health Board (SEHB) and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) commenced in 1993 and since then Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) training has developed from an Extra Mural Certificate (1993 – 2007) to a Higher Diploma (HDip), and a Masters of Arts (MA) degree (2007 – 2015) in SPHE. This programme was reconfigured in 2017 to a Postgraduate Diploma and MA in 'Advanced Facilitation Skills for Promoting Health and Well-being'. Given the limited geographical reach of these academic programmes, an 8-day residential training programme in 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-Being' was developed to bring the experience of facilitating SPHE using the experiential learning (EL) methodology at WIT to the youth sector. Youth workers have significant responsibilities in their job roles and this training provides support and skills to assist youth workers in their often-times demanding occupation. The focus of the training is based on facilitation skills carried out through group work and personal development that reflects how youth workers can interact and work with young people. The methodology used is experiential learning (EL) which is transferable to the youth sector and working with young people. EL can be transformative for youth workers which can ultimately impact the young people with whom they work.

The 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being Training' involves partnerships and key representatives who support this type of work. The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is one of the partners and their ethos is to empower young people to develop the skills and confidence needed to fully participate in society. Other partners include Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) who have expertise in the area of research and experiential group work facilitation for promoting health and well-being and the Men's Development Network (MDN), reiterating the importance of working with young males. This training and research was funded by the Health Promotion and Improvement, Health and Well-Being Division within the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP).

The out-of-school youth sector setting comprises of over 40 national youth organisations in Ireland which, in turn, oversee a much larger number of local, community-based projects,

services and groups. In addition, there are 38 Community Training Centres (CTC'S) which provide community based training for early school leavers. Learners in CTC's participate in personal, social and vocational skills training and development (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2013). Youth work is based on dialogue and relationship building and has a strong history of working to identify, build and enhance the assets and strengths of young people, while simultaneously identifying young people's needs. Research has identified that 53.3% of young people participating in youth work organisations are believed to be socially or economically disadvantaged (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2012). Due to the lack of stability in these vulnerable young people's lives, there is significant responsibility on the youth workers who come into contact with them. This is why training, to build youth workers capacity for self-care and support, is vital.

This research matters considerably to Irish society as the youth sector has suffered extensive cuts throughout the economic recession. These cuts have impacted directly on training and the opportunity to develop and up-skill across the sector. The 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being Training' would work to positively help bridge this deficit and reinforce the importance and need for CPD (Continued Professional Development) within the youth sector. It is essential that this training continues to diffuse into practice to influence the young people's experience of training within the youth sector. This is required so that ultimately young people can develop emotional and social intelligence that will support them to make healthier choices and engage fully with society in a healthy and inclusive manner.

1.2 The Research Objectives & Methodological Approach

This study sought to investigate the following research aims:

1) The personal impact of the training on the youth workers.
2) The degree of organisational diffusion achieved, if any, by the training programme.
3) The potential sustainability of the organisational diffusion achieved, if any, by the training programme.

An exploratory research design adopting an interpretivist approach was used for this research. The research design was centred on phenomenology involving a triangulated methodology whereby a combination of research methods from different target groups were used. This will be further expanded on in Chapter 3 The Methodology.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The following thesis will review current literature in relation to transformational learning (TL), experimental learning (EL), diffusion and sustainability of training programmes (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 details the methodology used to achieve the research aims. The results are presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5. Conclusions drawn from the thesis are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The way in which we teach has shifted significantly over the last number of years as it is argued that conventional teaching, in which the teachers method is didactic and the pupil regurgitates information without deeper involvement, is a very ineffective form of learning (Freire, 1993). We now know that learning is more powerful and long-lasting when the learner is at the centre of the learning, converting their lived experiences into knowledge and using this to gain new knowledge (Beard & Wilson, 2002; Chan, 2012; Freire, 1993). As this occurs, the learner can become empowered which can bring complexities within itself (Ingles, 1997). Many theories of learning exist and have influenced current teaching practices. It is not possible, however, to review all of these here. Given the relationship between Transformative Learning (TL) theory and Experiential Learning (EL) theory and the training that is the subject of this thesis (see section 2.9.1), this review will focus specifically on these theories alone.

Throughout this review the term 'learner' denotes the person participating in the learning and the term 'facilitator' denotes the person supporting the learners' knowledge and growth.

2.2 Transformative Learning (TL) Theory

Transformational learning (TL) theory was founded by Jack Mezirow, an American psychologist, almost four decades ago and has been evolving ever since (Taylor, 2008). TL is an educational theory which explains how self-awareness and empowerment are increased amongst adult learners as they create new and challenge previously imbedded interpretations of the world, focusing on the real meaning behind an experience which occurs to guide future action (Christopher, Dunnagan, Duncan, & Lynn, 2001; Taylor, 2008). As humans, it is important for some of us to understand and make sense of the meaning behind our experiences and to integrate it with what we know. We learn through our environment, which starts with the family and then, as we grow, are exposed to wider environments, from which we learn. The learning attained in these environments provides us with a frame of reference. However, when a deep shift in this frame of reference occurs, this provides one with an opportunity for increasing self-awareness and becoming empowered. TL is an educational theory that explains this process from the shift to increased awareness and empowerment (Mezirow, 2000).

TL theory is considered more appropriate for the adult population as it requires an interpretation of feelings and experiences; the learning becomes meaningful through the felt experience (Mezirow, 1997). For this to happen, maturity and the capacity to deal with uncomfortable feelings, should they arise, is required which is often not apparent amongst younger learners. This is due to their lack of capacity to critically think and reflect and their lack of life experience to examine their frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow (2000) states that although adolescents can learn to critically reflect the assumptions of others, when it comes to critically reflecting their own assumptions it appears that it is much more likely to occur in adulthood. However not all adults will experience a transformation and Meziorw's theory of TL is complex as transformation is subjective and there is a reliance on the learners awareness in relation to their own transformations (Howie & Bagnall, 2013).

In 1978, Mezirow carried out a qualitative study of women in the US returning to education or back to work programmes after an extended period of absence (Mezirow, 2000). Focusing on 12 re-entry college programmes with 83 women, the purpose of the study was to identify factors that inhibited or facilitated women's progress on these programmes. The findings revealed that the women had undergone a personal transformation and 11 phases of TL, that many of the women may have experienced, were identified:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame.
3. A critical assessment of knowledge, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions.
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change.
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions.
6. Planning of a course of action.
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans.
8. Provisional trying of new roles.
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective.
11. Altering present relationships and forging new relationships

TL begins by examining ones' expectations that construct ones views and influences their thinking, beliefs and actions. There are a number of terms used to describe this such as; a

deep shift in a frame of reference, a disorientating dilemma (Mezirow, 2000) and a paradigmatic shift (Taylor, 2008). For the purpose of this research, the term 'disorientating dilemma' will be used. A disorientating dilemma describes an experience a person encounters that perhaps results in them questioning their understandings and frames of reference. For example, embarking upon a new course in college may make a person critically examine their own ideas from a variety of unfamiliar perspectives in which they could question their beliefs, assumptions and values. A stressful or life altering situation can also trigger this shift such as job loss, bereavement, a natural disaster or retirement. These experiences can cause a person to significantly question the core of their existence (Taylor, 2008). Being faced with a potentially disorientating dilemma can led to self-examination of past behaviours and experiences as the learner starts to analyse themselves and the life they previously led and are perhaps still living. This can uncover a range of feelings such as guilt or shame as the learner comes to terms with previous experiences they may have had or possible regrets about aspects of their life up until up to this point.

The third stage focuses on how the learner examines their role in society which potentially is a period of critical self-reflection that may prove difficult as feelings from the previous stage are more than likely still present. Questions are put to learners in the TL process as learners generate their assumptions and knowledge relevant to the topic that is being discussed, with further questions being asked for learners to expand and reflect on their feelings (Cranton, 2002). The type of questions being asked and the deep reflection required may surface feelings of guilt and shame. Reflective journals can be used for learners to document their reflections and experiences.

The learner may then move to the fourth stage as they recognise that they are not alone, in that others have negotiated transformations also which can be very reassuring for the learner. Perhaps other learners in the group have discussed aspects of their transformations and what it was like for them to go through this experience, meaning other learners feel more open to discuss their experiences. The next stage of exploring new roles describes how the learner examines options for change and then plans a course of action to decide how they will achieve this. This stage can be particularly difficult for the learner as they are faced with options they may not have known were available to them before. Roleplays can be supportive in this instance as the learner may not feel as pressurized in examining and accepting alternatives to their own lives but see it from the perspective of someone else (Cranton,

2002). The sixth stage occurs as the learner plans their course of action in preparation for putting their awareness into meaningful action.

The seventh stage is about the learner developing the knowledge and skills to carry out their desired plan of action, for example returning to education to strengthen their career prospects and to potentially gain future employment, which leads to the learner experimenting with their new-found roles, knowledge and skills. This again can be a difficult and frightening prospect for the learner so the support of the facilitator and group is important here. The learner then tries to build on these qualities and the new roles they have created for themselves, resulting in the final stage of the learner potentially improving their life based on the possible transformation they have gone through (Taylor, 2001). In 1991, several years after this initial theory was proposed, Mezirow added another phase to the original 10. Stage 11 is called 'altering present relationships and forging new relationships' which describes how a learners' meaning of their TL experience becomes significant through interaction and communication with others. This influences both current and potentially new relationships with others (Kitchenham, 2008). Whilst the stages are presented in a linear format, it is worth noting that they do not necessarily occur in this order and that every learner does not automatically go through all stages. Some learners may start the process of TL and decide, at any stage, that they may not be ready or open to exploring certain aspects of their lives or just do not want to continue with the TL process.

Mezirow states that every person has perspectives of the world and they have the potential to be transformed when they are not in harmony with their experiences. They perhaps feel restless and are looking for ways to find more of a balance in their lives and this generally occurs around the time of a life crisis (Jarvis, 1995).

Mezirow was highly influenced by another leader in the field of education, Paulo Freire who set the foundations for pedagogy; the theory and practice of education (Kitchenham, 2008). Freire (1993) outlined that 'banking education' was occurring in schools in which students were filled with knowledge by the teacher without any personal input or critical thinking from the student. This, he stated, minimized students' creative power, ability to think for themselves and therefore would have negative effects on many aspects of their lives. He determined that it was significantly more beneficial for teachers to conduct 'problem-posing education' in which students are taught to identify a challenge, relate it to other issues going on in their life and therefore try and solve the problem critically themselves (Freire, 1993).

Freires' educational philosophy is echoed in the theory of TL through interpreting and reflecting on ones' experiences which generates beliefs and opinions that guide action. This is in keeping with problem-posing education (Addleman, Nava, Cevallos, Brazo, & Dixon, 2014). It is apparent that both Freire and Mezirow have a similar educational philosophy. They both regard education as a therapeutic and powerful force and examine the social constructs placed on learning and how this can be changed (Jarvis, 1995). Mezirow's application of Freire's ideas is individualized, while using group processes.

However, there are critiques to Mezirow's theory as not everyone may go through the process of TL. Jarvis (1995), states that the sequence to the stages of TL is unclear and it is also dependent on the learner. This echoes Newman (2012) argument that TL is a complex process and the struggle to accurately measure TL experiences if they can 'only be verified by the learner themselves' (Newman, 2012, p. 39). TL is not a reality for some learners as they may not want to or are not ready to question their established beliefs and this is the corner stone of TL. People with different learning styles, cognitive styles and personality traits will create and reconstruct frames of reference in different ways (Cranton, 2002). Our cultural backgrounds, knowledge we have acquired, our moral and spiritual beliefs and our own psychological make-up all influence how we interpret and make meaning out of our experiences. This in turn can influence and affect the learning process for the learner. Therefore, it is difficult to measure a person's TL experiences but Mezirow's phases of TL provide a framework to interpret where the learner is at in terms of their potential transformation.

2.3 Experiential Learning (EL)

Experiential learning (EL) can be described as a holistic, lifelong process that examines the important connections between education, work and personal development (Kolb, 2015). It is about applying knowledge to experience, active learning and awareness through the connection of mind, body, spirit and emotions (Lindsay & Orton, 2014). Schwartz (n.d.) also supports this by stating that the learner is engaged in an experience whereby reflection is encouraged, and as a result, new skills, attitudes and ways of thinking can be developed. According to Moon (2004) there are many ways in which the term EL is used, for example, EL could mean; learning from day to day experiences; learning through critical reflection; examining previous experiences to challenge the present or learning by doing. These interpretations are used in a variety of fields such as adult education, nursing, outdoor

education, personal development groups (including Gestalt therapy and co-counselling), workplace learning and management (Heron, 1999; Moon, 2004).

Heron (1999) argued that in EL the power dynamic between the teacher and learner needs to change so that the learner participates in self-directed learning in a holistic way, focusing on linking the 'cognitive, emotional, intuitive, imaginative, embodied, psychic and spiritual' (McCormack, 2011, p. 1) facets of the learner.

2.3.1 Cycles of EL

There are many cycles of EL (Lewin, Piaget, Heron, Dewey, Kolb), all of which espouse that the experiential process involves a 'here-and-now experience' followed by a reflective process about that experience. They also state that the learner then analyses and draws conclusions which give the learner the opportunity to modify or change. John Dewey and David A. Kolb models are represented in figure 2.1. While the language and terminology used is different in both models, the meaning behind each stage is very similar. This is supported by the EL cycle that The Department of Education and Skills (2013) and National Council for Curriculum and Assessment refer to in resources for teachers. The cycle referred to also has four stages (experiencing, processing, generalising and applying) similar to Dewey and Kolb.
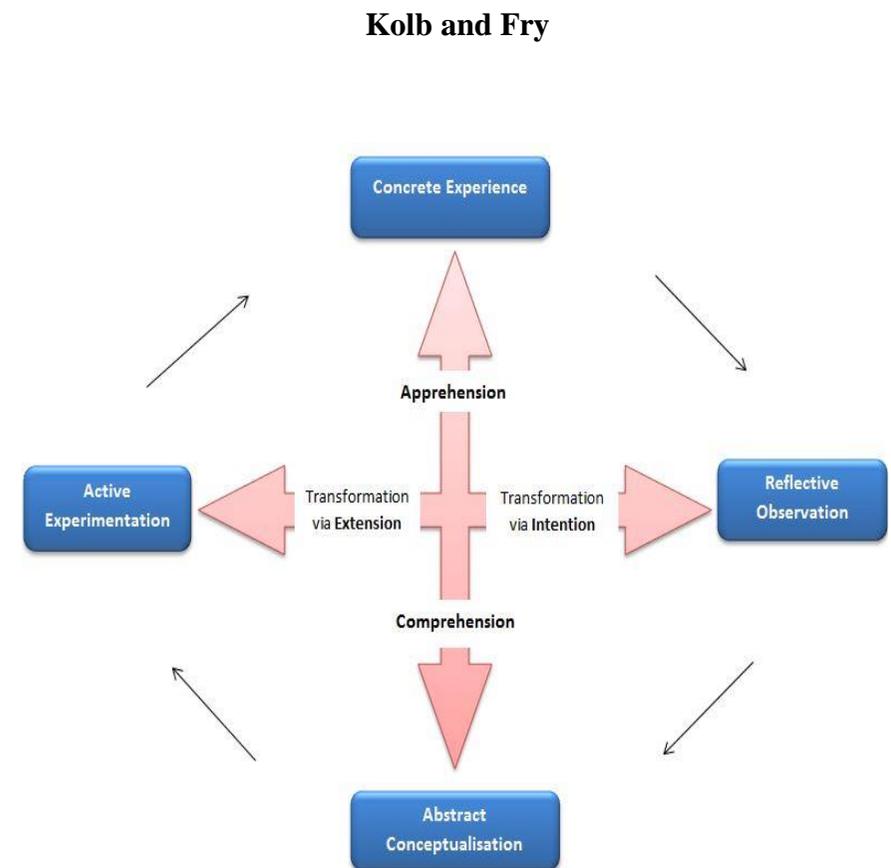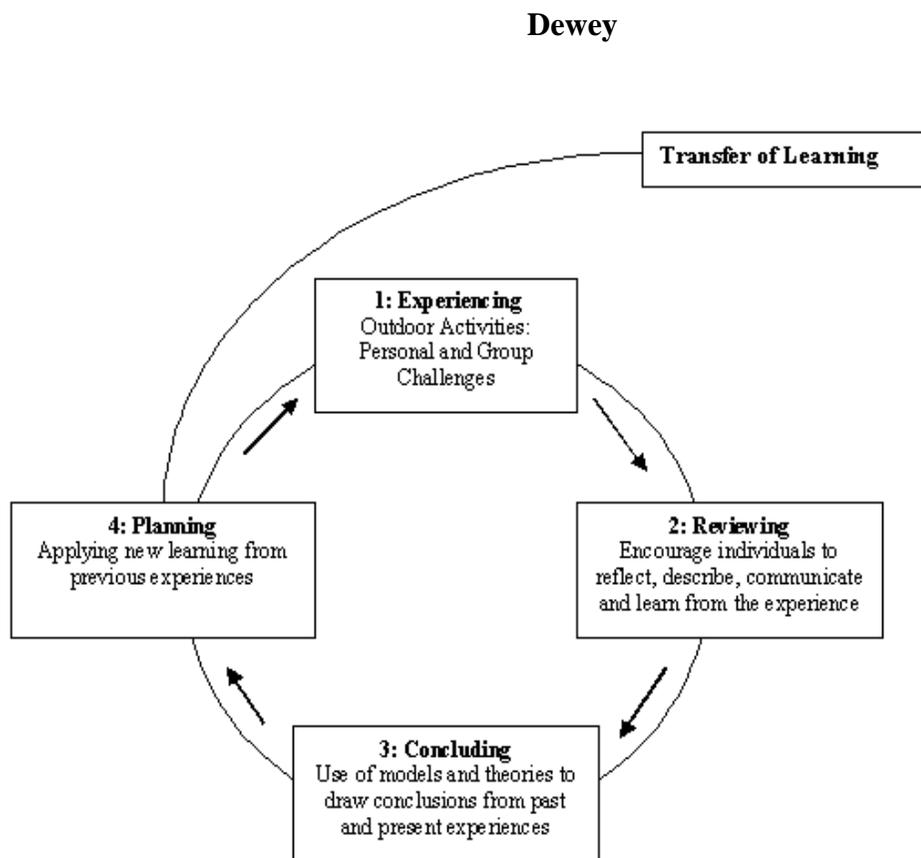
Dewey   **Kolb and Fry**

Figure 2.1: Dewey's Model of Reflective Thought and Action and Kolb and Fry's EL Cycle (Kolb, 1984; Ord, 2012)

Stage 1: Experience

Dewey refers to this stage as experiencing and Kolb and Fry refer to it as concrete experience. In this stage the learner is provided with the opportunity to take part in an experience which can involve activities which are individual, interpersonal or group exercises (Dorr, 2011). The learner has to be there in person to go through the experience, actively participating and attaining the learning outcomes (Lam, 2011). This stage is about the learner generating ideas and observing things from different perspectives (Smith, 2001, 2010) and focuses on the affective domain (felt experience). This stage also involves the psychomotor domain as learners are sometimes provided with an experience which engages their motor skills such as art work, taking part in drama, miming, sketches and energizers incorporating movement (Kennedy, 2007).

The affective domain focuses on the emotional part of learning from an experience a learner engages in and there are five stages of the domain: receiving, responding, valuing, organisation and characterisation (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). Dewey put emphasis on the quality of the experience for the learner; it was not just simply about going through the experience. He also stated that thoughts and ideas have to be experiential if they are to be meaningful (Ord, 2012). Dewey noted that the experience provided to learners does not have to be an experiential activity necessarily, EL can still occur for a learner through providing knowledge or information (Miettinen, 2000). Similarly to Dewey, Kolb and Fry emphasise the role experience plays in learning (Smith, 2001, 2010).

Stage 2: Processing

Dewey refers to this stage as reviewing and Kolb and Fry refer to it as reflective observation. This stage involves reflection, be it individually, in small groups or in larger groups. According to Guthrie and Bertrand-Jones (2012), reflection is about looking at things in a different way and understanding the meanings behind experience, for example, a roleplay on stereotypes in which the learner may question how they potentially stereotype people and perhaps may change their views as a result of this reflection. Dewey describes reflection as fundamental to the EL process and cycle but does not emphasise this stage as much as the experience stage as he thinks reflecting is a passive, natural process (Fowler, 2007). Perhaps he didn't place emphasis on reflection because, in his cycle, every phase is interconnected and he associated experience with reflection (Miettinen, 2000). Kolb and Fry's perception of reflection differs from Dewey's as they state that reflection is a much more active process

and they regard every stage of their cycle to have equal importance and the learner is required to execute all four stages for effective learning to occur (Smith, 2001, 2010).

Reflection can be completed through different forms such as journaling, artwork, dialogue, processing and/or sharing in the group or in smaller groups. Moon (2004) states that taking a step back from the event and examining it, whilst there is internal dialogue (self-questioning), is beneficial. In addition, challenging a persons' own frames of reference through reflecting is very important and links into Mezirow (2000) stages of TL theory particularly the stages of disorientating dilemma, acquisitions of new information and reviewing ideas and the effect of time passing. The learner also has an awareness that they are reflecting and about their own ability to reflect. Schwartz (n.d.) reiterates how crucial reflection is to the EL process and the importance for the learners to understand what this process entails and the ways to utilise it to deepen their learning.

Stage 3: Generalising

Dewey refers to the third stage as 'concluding' whereas Kolb and Fry refer to this stage as 'abstract conceptualization'. The cognitive domain of learning is a feature in this stage which can range from recalling facts or information and problem solving to synthesising new ideas in a creative way (Krathwohl et al., 1964).

In this stage the learner analyses ideas and tries to intellectually understand a situation, for example, reading or taking a class on a particular topic and examining their own personal experience with this topic through the experience being provided (Guthrie & Bertrand-Jones, 2012). The learner attempts to integrate the experience into a theory and also their own lives that they can relate to (Bohn & Schmidt, 2008). The learner has a concrete experience, which they reflect on and then tries to understand the experience they have gone through and perhaps relate it to other experiences in their life.

Stage 4: Applying

Dewey refers to the final stage in his EL cycle as 'planning' in which new learning is applied from previous experiences. Kolb and Fry call this 'active experimentation' in which the experience gone through is actively tested out, perhaps in turn, creating new experiences (Smith, 2001, 2010). In this stage the learner assesses and potentially applies the theory in different stages. The learner takes action, perhaps risk-taking and stepping outside of their comfort zones (Guthrie & Bertrand-Jones, 2012). There seems to be less literature on this

particular stage of the EL cycle, perhaps as it is up to the learner themselves to take action on the experience and this individualistic factor might be hard to capture.

These four stages are cyclical in nature and feature in both Dewey and Kolb and Fry's cycles of EL. Andresen, Boud, and Cohen (2000) state that Kolb and Fry's cycle focuses on the felt experience. The cycle is also described as an ongoing process, with its origins in experience. Kolb states that EL is a holistic model and needs to encompass all four elements of the cycle (Lam, 2011). The learner can enter the cycle at any point and it is best when they go through all four phases (Guthrie & Bertrand-Jones, 2012).

It is worth noting that Kolb and Fry's EL cycle identify two dimensions underlying the process of EL. These are prehension and transformation. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) describe prehension as the act of taking hold or grasping and is based on understanding via 'apprehension' or 'comprehension'. Apprehension describes how a learner understands the nuances of an experience, which includes feelings and the ability to recreate experiences. Comprehension is more analytical and refers to the knowledge gained by a learner through a more abstract and verbal way (Kolb, 1984). As the learner understands the experience, they give themselves the opportunity to transform i.e. change. Kolb (1984) transformation processes are intention and extension as intention represents the reflective transformation and extension represents the active experimentation which also relates to the TL process referred to in section 2.2. According to Kolb, learning occurs when the conflict is resolved between prehension and transformation (Fowler, 2007).

Even though there are many variations of the EL cycle using different terminology, they were clearly presenting similar messages: a) the EL cycle describes how, the learner engages with and experiences what is going on, thinks about or reflects on it, perhaps altering this and then testing the experience before coming to a conclusion about a general principle of behaviour (Lindsay and Orton (2014). b) There is a focus on the felt experience (Andresen et al., 2000). c) The cycle is as an ongoing process, with its origins in experience. d) The learning cycle can start at any of the four stages and should be cyclical in nature and e) it is a holistic model and needs to encompass all four elements of the cycle (Lam, 2011). While there are similarities in the varying models there are limitations to EL also.

2.3.2 Limitations of Experiential Learning (EL)

There are criticisms of Kolb and Frys' cycle in which Smith (2001, 2010) outlines the simplistic format of the cycle which is describing something that is quite complex and the

stages are presented in a cyclical format but the learner may not necessarily go through all stages in that way.

EL is subjective and the ways in which each person interprets and reflects on the experience can vary considerably. Dewey, described experience as a 'weasel word' in which an event might occur with a number of people but the process might be very different and therefore no two people experience an event the same way (Beard & Wilson, 2002). EL is complex, as an experience itself can be difficult to explain, and in addition to this, previous experiences can change the meaning of an event for someone and therefore the actual experience itself. Beard and Wilson (2002) state that it is almost impossible to analyse an EL experience for a learner because by analysing it, it could perhaps alter the experience and then in turn alter the learning as a result. EL can also be time consuming, challenging and can perhaps bring difficulties to the facilitator. A facilitator who has not gone through their own EL experience may struggle to identify with the process itself and therefore it can become very difficult for them to facilitate that experience with the learner (Furman & Sibthorp, 2013).

Due to the use of real life experiences, EL activities are often seen as impractical and potentially difficult to carry out (Bohn & Schmidt, 2008). According to (Andresen et al. (2000); Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993)), every experience has the potential to be an opportunity for learning and new experiences have meaning only if they are linked to previous experiences. Time is also a factor as it may take years for the learning to become apparent to the learner and although the experience might not change, the learning can potentially grow with transformed meanings and altered effects. Reflecting on the learning is important too. It should be noted that providing an experience does not always result in learning for an individual (Beard & Wilson, 2002).

Another limitation of EL relates to reflective processes such as writing and group discussions that learners engage with during EL (Boud et al., 1993). There are issues around ethical implications such as the learners' readiness for EL especially when it is not necessarily voluntary, for example, as part of a set curriculum. The experience may bring unwanted, distressing, or uncomfortable feelings to the learners' attention and the onus is then on the facilitator and how they support the learner through this. There is a fine line between providing experiences to assist the learners growth and to potentially do more harm than good (Andresen et al., 2000).

Despite the limitations and complexity of EL, it has the potential to be empowering because the learner takes control of their own learning and therefore is taking control of their own lives and becoming independent (Moon, 2004). The holistic nature of EL acknowledges the connections between education, work and personal development and that learning is not just individualistic; there are other influences such as society and relationships which need to be integrated into the learning experience (Kolb, 2015; Puay-I, 2015). EL must be continually challenged to understand its diverse meanings. The limitations of EL can be addressed through factors such as the facilitators, the group and the environment in which EL is potentially experienced. These factors play a pivotal role on the learners' engagement with the EL cycle.

2.4 Factors influencing the translation of TL and EL into Practice

Transformative Learning (TL) and Experiential Learning (EL) are significantly associated with the potential for empowerment (Benson, 2001; Chen, 2012; Shellman, 2014). Benson (2001) highlights three assumptions that are made about the learner in relation to empowerment. Firstly, optimum learning happens in the group **when the learners are personally involved** in the learning experience. This requires the facilitator to provide an experience whereby the learners get the opportunity to be personally involved which includes the appropriate environment for the learner to engage and it also requires the learner being motivated to engage. The second assumption states that for the learning to make sense and mean something to the learners, **they need to acquire the knowledge themselves**. This requires the facilitator being skilled in providing space for the learner to come to their own understanding and it also requires the learner to have a certain capacity to be able to engage in this process. The final assumption is learners **setting their own goals and having a commitment to learning.** Once again, the facilitator needs to guide the learner rather than determine the path for them.

It is evident from these assumptions that a number of interdependent factors such as, the openness of the learner; the experience of the facilitator; the dynamic of the group and the learning environment will influence the translation of TL and EL into practice. Three factors that will be discussed in more detail are:

1. The Learner
2. The Facilitator
3. Programme Design and Ethos

2.4.1 The Learner

In this research, the 'learner' refers to the person who is the participant on the training i.e. the one who is given the opportunity to engage in the EL and TL processes in a group setting. It is worth noting that not every learner in a group may go through the EL cycle or experience a transformation. The learner requires self-confidence and belief in themselves that they can engage with the experience as the way in which they interpret the experience is personally linked to how they see themselves (Andresen et al., 2000). Each person and their experiences are unique and various factors of age, gender and marginalised groups may influence the learners' engagement with EL and TL.

A. Age

TL theory is based on an experience occurring in someone's life, their understanding of this experience, their openness to emotionally change and their willingness to reflect on their experience (Affolter et al., 2009). Across the lifespan the human being goes through many changes. These experiences of change and transition give opportunity for learning, growth and transformation. However, age may be a determinant of a learner's capacity to engage with EL and TL.

An adult is commonly defined as someone of a suitable age who is responsible for their own acts (Mezirow, 1997). From reviewing the literature, the majority of participants who engaged in the TL process are adults (Freire, 1993; Kitchenham, 2008; Mayo, 2012; Mezirow, 1990). It was also apparent that some of the literature used EL with adults (Collins & Roccos, 2015; Hauck, Fisher, Byrne, & Bayes, 2016). This type of learning is conductive for this population as it requires an interpretation of feelings and experiences; the learning becomes meaningful through the felt experience. Maturity and the capacity to deal with uncomfortable feelings, should they arise, is required. Belenky and Stanton (2000) opinion was that the majority of adults have not developed the skills to express and analyse the meaning behind their own thoughts, nor the thoughts of others and perhaps have not had experiences in reflecting either. If this is the case for adults, it is unlikely that a child or teenager would be able to grasp these concepts. In adulthood, we can perhaps understand our experiences more clearly when we know under what conditions an expressed idea is true or justified. King and Kitchener (1994) state that, it is in adulthood that we develop the practices needed for TL such as critical reflection and the process of taking part in important dialogue with ourselves and others to understand the reasons behind our judgements and challenge our beliefs (Mezirow, 2000).

Adolescents

There are some studies involving TL and EL in which teenagers (on average aged 16 years and over) and college students were participants (Bohn & Schmidt, 2008; Cowart, 2010; Leveritt, Ball, & Desbrow, 2013; Whalley, 1995). Whalley (1995) carried out a study amongst Canadian and Japanese high school students aged 17-19 years, who took part in a student exchange programme and were assessed to determine if they went through a TL process. Students kept reflective logs to record their experience throughout the programme. The results showed that these students did experience a change in their knowledge but not a change in their attitudes and so are unlikely to critically reflect on their behaviour based on the experiences they went through. This may be a result of a number of factors, including lack of follow-up with learners when they returned to their home countries, the programme design and learner readiness.

Mezirow (2000) argues that TL requires an interpretation of feelings and experiences and a young persons' (under the age of 16) social and emotional intelligence is not fully formed to be able to make full sense of and go through the experience of TL. A younger person will perhaps not yet have the skills required to challenge their previous learning. Mezirow (2000) states that although adolescents can learn to critically reflect the assumptions of others, the process of critically reflecting on their own assumptions is more difficult. More specifically, in the TL process, the learners are required to critically reflect on their experiences and challenge their previous traditions of learning. Interestingly, Kanoy, Stein, and Book (2013) states that emotional intelligence (EI) can be understood and improved at any age. In their book 'Emotional Intelligence and Your Academic Personal Success', the authors outline a range of emotional learning activities that can be carried out with young people and break down EI into a variety of themes such as emotional awareness, emotional self-expression, self-actualisation, empathy and assertiveness, amongst others. Since Mezirows publication in 2000, significant research has taken place in the last 17 years and Kanoy et al. (2013) probably reflects this shift.

There is plenty of literature demonstrating how EL is utilized with younger learners. For example, Bohn and Schmidt (2008) study on EL activities in a food science and human nutrition course with college students showed that EL activities can be successfully carried out with this population and resulted in greater learning for the students. The majority of students successfully went through the stages of Kolb's EL cycle as they were provided with

a concrete experience, reflected on this through questionnaires, conceptualized what they were learning about and actively experimented as many students changed their behaviours in relation to food safety. Results also showed that significant time and dedication was required by educators to design and carry out EL activities with large-lecture style courses.

Leveritt et al. (2013) research on students' perceptions of an EL activity designed to develop knowledge of food and food preparation methods was also based on Kolb's EL cycle. Many of the students went through the EL cycle and found this way of learning very beneficial for improving their knowledge but some did find the EL activities challenging. EL also enhanced students' social skills in relation to building rapport and providing meaningful advice to future patients. They also reported developing greater empathy with patients as students had gone through the experience themselves. This demonstrated the importance of engaging in EL activities.

EL is a key process in youth work through outdoor pursuits (Deane & Harre, 2014) and other activities such as art work, mindfulness and group sharing. Personal skills are developed and empowerment and support is emphasised (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2013). This, in turn, assists in building social and emotional intelligences. EL recognises and actively uses all of the learners life and learning experiences (Andresen et al., 2000). Early childhood provides an ideal time for active learning and its interpretation as children are susceptible to new ways of learning (French, 2007). Maria Montessori, who was an Italian educator, provided EL experiences for children through creating an environment in which they were facilitated to think independently by understanding their first-hand experiences and how these can further influence their adolescent and adult education experiences in later life (Andresen et al., 2000). First-hand learning experiences support children's early learning and development (French, 2007).

In Irish schools, EL and its cycle are also a fundamental part of SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and RSE (Relationship and Sexuality Education) amongst young people. The Department of Education and Skills (2013) state the significance of introducing younger learners to this holistic way of learning and the empowerment of learners being actively involved in their own learning at a young age. As part of the SPHE Inspectorate Report, students were asked about their learning experiences in which they stated that they preferred when they were given the opportunity to participate actively in a variety of tasks and

therefore have more control over their own learning (Department of Education and Skills, 2013).

Upon reviewing the literature, it is evident that TL is more commonly associated with adults between the ages of 18-55 than children or adolescents. The topic of TL and age has not been explored in-depth and therefore more analysis is required to understand if this theory can influence other age groups. The EL cycle is a teaching methodology that a facilitator adopts and is evidently used by educators across the lifespan. Whilst learners are being provided with an experience through 'learning by doing' there is some evidence to suggest that the act of critical reflection is not highlighted as much amongst younger age groups (Department of Education and Skills, 2013; Northern Illinois University, n.d.). Educators have a responsibility to provide opportunities for all, and especially young people, to develop their social-emotional intelligence and critical reflection skills. The facilitator needs to have the capacity to work at an appropriate level with the young people and not necessarily force a process where there is not one.

B. Gender

Mezirow (2000) founded his theory of TL based on his initial study of women re-entering education or the workforce as he knew there were potential barriers for this gender given their role in society in 1970's America. Although his initial study focused on women, Mezirow does not specify that TL can only be used with this gender. From the TL literature reviewed, studies featured more male than female learners (Addleman et al., 2014; Christopher et al., 2001). One study focused predominantly on female learners and was called the Living for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) programme which was an EL programme derived from another similar and successful programme involving male learners called Support and Training Results in Valuable Employees (STRIVE) (Meyer, 2009). Both programmes had positive impacts on learners as it assisted them in becoming more independent economically and to have less reliance on the state welfare system.

The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan was a programme that was significant for female learners (465), even though more males (54%) took part. NSP was about enabling women to become active participants of change in their communities and to integrate into society which can be very difficult as women's rights are not always recognised or encouraged in Afghanistan (Affolter et al., 2009). Members of the community were against women being involved in the decision-making process with regards to public and village

issues. However, through the NSP programme, the women did get involved, became well-educated and embraced the opportunities and freedom they were given to interact with each other, come up with a plan and take action. This programme had a TL effect on some of the women involved as they were able to become more assertive as a result.

Similar to TL, EL programmes also had a mixture of both male and female learners. The Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes (P.A.T.H.S) was a youth development programme that used EL approaches with teachers and social care workers and featured more females learners (Lam, 2011) whilst another EL programme with teachers called Team Trek had significantly more males as the ratio was 10:2 in comparison to females (Seed, 2008). A number of EL programmes did not specify the gender of the learners who took part (Bohn & Schmidt, 2008; Cowart, 2010; Leveritt et al., 2013). The mixture of both males and females taking part in EL programmes with the potential for TL demonstrates that both genders have the capacity to engage in these learning processes.

TL and EL can feature in many professions such as youth work, social work, teaching and nursing which can be gender stereotyped in that women are more predisposed to EL and TL that focuses on the affective domain or the 'emotional' part of learning. One of the reasons for this could potentially be to do with how this type of 'caring' work is perceived and the feminisation of certain caring professions (Baker, K., Cantillon, & Walsh, 2004). Males who work in these 'caring professions' are at risk of being stereotyped and possibly seen in a negative context and are therefore hesitant to enter these professions as a result. It can be very challenging for a male to work in a female-dominated profession and it can also challenge a man's masculinity as a result (Manchester, 2013). Work was acknowledged as a central factor to a man's identity and the work itself can be implicated if the man does not feel comfortable in his occupation which in turn can implicate the delivery of work also (Shen-Miller & Smiler, 2015). According to Shen-Miller and Smiler (2015), further research is required in relation to men working in female-dominated roles and if men can understand and explore the challenges associated to their masculinity in the workplace, perhaps this would encourage them to explore their own TL process.

There is a need for this type of learning for both genders as young men, for example, have been identified as a priority group for the development of emotional intelligence and mental well-being according to the 'Young Men and Suicide Project' (Richardson, Clarke, & Fowler, 2013). The issue of masculinity is highly valued and men have a tendency to avoid

this type of therapeutic, self-awareness work which encompasses facilitation, EL and TL (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). The 'Engage' training programme also notes the importance of training front line service providers in relation to men's health and well-being and the gender stereotypes which can result in men trying to conform to values and behaviours that are associated with masculinity (Men's Health Forum, 2017).

C. Marginalized Groups

The origins of TL began with marginalized groups and were highly influenced by Freire in his first study with empowering illiterate and underprivileged adults to integrate better into society (Freire, 1993). Research has also shown that certain minority groups who enter non-traditional forms of work have the most to gain from EL, for example women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related careers (Schwartz, n.d.).

The Return to Village and Serve Programme (RVaSP) featured learners who were initially deemed marginalized but through the programme and TL process they became empowered and acquired the knowledge and skills to become facilitators and progress to help other marginalized people (Chen, 2012). The learners, who were college students from Taiwan, came from a place of stigmatization and feeling ostracized in their communities to having a sense of belonging and assisted others to integrate. Programmes like RVaSP provide the space for those who experience marginalisation to share about their experience and according to Chen (2012, p. 164), 'a sharing network establishes interpersonal bonds and relationships in minority groups and develops strategies to cope with stigmas'.

Another interesting study described learners that took part in the MAT (Masters of Arts in Teaching) programme and travelled abroad to gain teaching experience as a minority group and immersed themselves in a new culture (Addleman et al., 2014). While initially, the learners did not consider themselves marginalised they did feel ostracized after taking part in the programme. The learners did not speak the language and were not familiar with the culture in which they were working. It was through immersing themselves and integrating with others that they overcame these obstacles and it was reported that some learners went through a TL process. The learners in this programme became aware of their lack of integration in new cultures and the difficulties this brings which is almost the opposite of the previous studies in which marginalized people became empowered. It is worth noting that there was a constructed and limited timeframe for these learners (3 weeks) in which they were exposed to marginalisation for a short period of time as opposed to continually living in

marginalisation. It is possible for learners from marginalized groups to go through the TL process however it can be difficult for some because their focus may be on meeting their most basic needs such as food, shelter and consequently they may be less likely to engage in the processes of EL and TL.

In relation to EL and marginalized groups, the learners in a range of studies Seed (2008), Bohn and Schmidt (2008), Leveritt et al. (2013) and Cundiff, Zawadzki, Danube, and Shields (2014), are either in employment or college students indicating that marginalized groups are not necessarily targeted like they seemed to be in TL programmes. In the P.A.T.H.S programme however, it was stated that teachers were taking part in an EL programme to assist the at-risk youths that they work with (Shek & Wai, 2008). For these studies, it is possible that it is the people the learners will work with that could potentially be marginalized rather than the learners themselves.

The three factors of; age, gender and marginalized groups influence the learners' readiness to engage with TL and EL. Individualistic, humanist educational approaches depend on the individual's capacity to be self-directed. The learners' openness and whether they understand the merit of TL and EL at the initial stages is significant. As previously stated, the learners engagement with the experience is vital for learning to occur as is their willingness to explore their own beliefs and expectations (Andresen et al., 2000). The learner can also be influenced by factors outside of themselves, for example socio-cultural aspects, peers and the facilitator. Fowler (2007), states that an experience is reliant on how involved the learner is in the experience itself. The interaction between experience and reflection requires a significant amount of personal energy and, as previously mentioned, if a person is struggling to function at a survival level, this is where all of their personal energy will be, with little left to go through the EL cycle.

In summary, the learner is a key figure in the EL and TL process. Demographics such as age, gender and marginalised groups are strong determinants of optimum engagement in the EL and TL processes. The majority of the learners for TL were aged 18-55, males and from marginalized groups, however in relation to EL the age parameters are wider and gender and social class aspects were not as obvious.

2.4.2 The Facilitator

The facilitator of a group is of significant importance as they serve as a powerful and prominent role model, demonstrating a willingness to learn from and with the group (Giles &

Alderson, 2008). This person plays a key role in the development of TL and EL within the group or with the individual. The facilitator is required to establish genuine, meaningful relationships with learners and therefore a real connection can then be made (Heron, 1999). The facilitator needs to encompass certain characteristics and skills to comprehensively facilitate groups and to nurture the EL and TL experience. These characteristics include self-confidence and self-reassurance, active listening, the ability to cope with resistance whilst also being empathetic, caring, patient and sincere (Christopher et al., 2001). Facilitators also rely on themselves and their own best judgement when assisting groups and should be significantly informed and experienced in group dynamics (Mezirow, 1990).

For the purposes of this research the term 'facilitator' will be used to describe the person facilitating, supporting and overseeing the groups. The facilitator aids in the development of the TL and EL processes through the following factors; the facilitator-learner relationship, the environment they create to support the TL and EL processes, including styles of facilitation and the important aspect of self-awareness of the facilitator.

A. The Facilitator-Learner Relationship

In order for the facilitator to engage the learner in EL and provide the environment for possible TL to occur, both the learner and the facilitator have to be open and willing to engage with the process. It is through this trusting relationship that it is possible for the learner to develop the required openness and confidence to understand and manage their learning, essential components for EL and the transformative process. The facilitators capacity to dialogue with the learner is vital for deep and reflective learning that, supports learners to critically reflect on their assumptions and beliefs (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Mezirow, 2000). This means that the learners' emotions and feelings can be safely explored in the group setting because without this dialogue, is very difficult to engage in critical reflection (Mezirow, 2000). Mayo (2012) also reiterated the importance of dialogue and highlighted how facilitators are being taught by the learner through their stories and reflections. Giles and Alderson (2008) carried out a study which examined the TL experience of learners in a family literacy project, in which learners took part in a transition programme for adults entering a third level institution for the first time. Results showed that the role of the facilitator was vital for learners and their possible TL experience.

Whilst facilitators develop relationships with the group and group members, there is also a professional boundary surrounding the nature of this relationship. There may be times when

the facilitator wants the transformation or learning to happen with the learner more than the learner wants it themselves and are required to refrain from trying to influence or manage the expectations of others. The facilitator needs to understand that the learning needs to come from the learner. According to The Department of Education and Skills (2013), the Inspectorate Report on SPHE in schools noted that in some cases teachers did not give students the opportunity to draw conclusions for themselves and that there was not enough emphasis on the latter stages of the EL cycle such as processing and generalising of information. This links in to the findings from the SPHE Inspectorate report on students' perceptions of the effectiveness of SPHE. This showed that SPHE lessons are successful in supporting students to attain knowledge but are less successful in assisting the development of some other skills such as positive self-image, dealing with feelings and enhancing coping skills (Department of Education and Skills, 2013). Additional time is required for learners to discuss their feelings around experiences to allow the facilitator the opportunity to support the learner and give further clarification if needed.

There are significant challenges for facilitators throughout the group process including transference, confidentiality and ethical considerations. Other challenges include the facilitators' personal feelings and how they implement self-caring strategies to address issues such as stress and fatigue. Facilitators need to implement supportive structures such as supervision so they can share and work through any concerns they may have. They also need to establish and work within a clear code of ethics when working with groups e.g. outlining ground rules with learners in the first group session (Mezirow, 2000).

Furthermore, the facilitator needs to have clarity about their role and what the job position entails because there can be similarities between facilitation and counselling/psychotherapy. Facilitators assist learners to gain greater clarity about their experiences and perhaps bring to light things that have been implicit (Mezirow, 1990). Powerful memories and experiences could possibly be brought to the surface that can be challenging for many people. In Meyer (2009) study, on the LIFTT programme, which assisted marginalized women to become more economically independent, the facilitator was very aware from the outset that she was not a psychotherapist or counsellor for the group and kept within the boundaries of her position as a facilitator. She stated that it was very important to have systems in place to provide additional services and support to learners as the group setting may unlock some powerful memories and experiences and therefore the facilitator needs to be aware about leaving learners unprotected. DeSalvo (1999) mentions that learners writing about their experiences,

in which painful feelings may arise, must be strongly supported in their efforts by facilitators as some are exposing their inner feelings, which can be emotionally draining and therefore need a support system in place and encouragement from facilitators to continue on this path of self-discovery.

B. The Learning Environment & Styles of Facilitation

Facilitators need to provide a learning environment where learners can support each other and develop sincere and fair relationships which is essential for EL and TL (Mezirow, 2000). By promoting interactions where experiences and ideas are shared, and by developing the idea of a caring environment, learners are more likely to foster support and trust with each other (Giles & Alderson, 2008).

This was evident in the LIFTT programme as the majority of female learners had trust issues, having been abused in previous relationships. It was therefore crucial that the facilitator established a safe and supportive environment from the onset, such as creating ground rules about confidentially and having support structures in place should the learner require further support outside of the group setting. By doing this, the women felt more at ease and they were more likely to be open to reflection and sharing of experiences which is part of the TL process (Meyer, 2009). Whilst the facilitator needs to create supportive and safe environments, it is also essential that they are capable of managing disruptive environments in relation to disorderly group members or disagreements in the group. According to Benson (2001), naming the disruption in the group and exploring it with the learners can also be useful and hopefully bring the group back into harmony.

There are many different styles of facilitation. The facilitator is required to assist the group in reaching its objectives and in order to do this, they must be aware of what is going on in the group and when to intervene or not (Davis, 2003). Trevor Bentley (1994) describes the 'facilitation spectrum' whereby the facilitator needs to decide the most appropriate intervention which ranges from gentle interventions e.g. listening in an open and inviting way, to more directive interventions e.g. if a group are stuck, suggesting ideas about what they might do next.

An interesting aspect in relation to 'styles of facilitation' is the role of learner and how this role can support one to fulfil the role of facilitator. This was evident in the RVaSP study carried out by Chen (2012), which involved providing training courses to indigenous students

in organisational and leadership skills, while developing interpersonal connections. These courses were run by an executive team and group facilitators and after one-month, some learners (5 out of the 17) were selected to be in the team or as group facilitators to run the RVaSP the following year. This training approach has benefits because these facilitators (former learners) would be able to empathise with the new groups, having gone through the TL process themselves and being familiar with the difficulties of this particular group such as racism and stigmatization.

C. Self-Awareness of the Facilitator

The facilitator-learner relationship and the learning environment and styles of facilitation are dependent and determined by how much work the facilitator has completed on their own self-awareness.

The effectiveness of the facilitator will be determined by their belief structure around TL and EL. It will also be influenced by their own experience as a facilitator and as a participant in EL/TL groups. Good facilitation requires the facilitator to be open to their own personal learning and to be willing to continually learn from group members whilst also engaging in their own reflective practice (Benson, 2001). According to Heron (1999), the autonomy of the facilitator is an important part of the creation of a facilitation style. The more personal development work a facilitator engages in, increases the likelihood that they will be flexible and open, trustworthy, resilient and responsive. In addition, it is possible that the self-awareness of the facilitator may also assist in restricting 'counter-transference' because the facilitator (with a solid sense of their own self) is less likely to project their own distresses and insecurities onto the group, possibly effecting interventions (Heron, 1999).

In summary, the learner-facilitator relationship, the environment facilitators create, and the styles of facilitation are crucial in the EL and TL processes. It starts with building the foundations of the learner-facilitator relationship to how the environment is created and how comfortable they are with the dynamics of the group. All of this is dependent upon the nature of how the facilitator manages themselves in this i.e. self-awareness. Learners and facilitators openness to the process of TL and EL is crucial for meaningful learning to take place with another vital component being the nature of the programme that is being delivered.

2.4.3 Programme Design and Ethos

How EL is integrated into programmes may determine how a learner experiences the programme and whether there is potential for transformation and change. There are factors that influence this process and these are outlined below.

A. Structure and Content of Programmes

The structure and content of EL programmes can vary greatly and do not have a definitive design or layout because they tend to be humanistic in nature; focusing on the learner and responding to their needs as well as the groups. There are many health and well-being packs and resources available for workers to use e.g. I Belong Resource Pack, Mind Matters and Mindout. Typically, training is provided to support the worker in using the resource e.g. Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and resource packs provide a lot of content and structure. However, there are some resource packs that can be obtained without having to engage in training resulting in the possible focus on content over process. Considering the general purpose of EL programmes is to enhance personal growth and development as well as self-actualization, it is important that there is a focus both on content (what) and on the process (how). A well designed programme is vital for learners self-development and to encourage and keep their interest (Shek & Chak, 2011). The content of programmes should be designed based on the needs of the learner and relevance to them as this creates the basis for significant learning to take place (Lam, 2011).

An important aspect of any experiential group work programme is the establishment of the group and the creation of a safe environment. Both of which, can be considered process more so than content. The facilitator plays a very important role in setting this up. As discussed in section 2.4.2 facilitators are the 'crucial navigators' for EL programmes (Lam, 2011, p. 308). According to Benson (2001), safety is created in the group through establishing a routine with how the programme will be delivered and the group members' familiarity with the 'structure' each week. This structure is developed by the facilitator and would generally begin with creating a space to establish ground rules with the group, including addressing issues such as confidentiality, fears and anxieties and hopes and expectations (which are also very important considering the theory of TL). Other aspects of EL programmes involve the facilitator creating space for regular routines including check-ins, activities, breaks and reviews for the learners as 'the group cannot evolve to its next stage of development until its basic needs have been met' (Benson, 2001, p. 102). It is vital that the facilitator is able to respond to the needs of the group as they go through the different stages of group

development and also has a degree of flexibility in relation to the content and structure of the programme. The principles of EL directed the design of the curriculum in Shek and Wai (2008) study as the content was designed specifically based on how relevant it would be to the learner and the effort to actively involve them.

Along with creating space for group process, programmes must also have a clear structure whereby appropriate experiences are provided and the group are strategically brought through the various stages of the EL cycle. It is important for facilitators to plan structured EL activities for their groups and have clarity regarding the objectives of the session as this guides the selection of the experience and the way the stages of EL will be used (Dorr, 2011).

Reading the description of EL programmes (Addleman et al., 2014; Lam, 2011; Leveritt et al., 2013; Seed, 2008; Shek & Chak, 2011; Shek & Wai, 2008) or reading through their resources (Department of Education and Skills, 2013; The Social and Health Education Project, 2010) does not demonstrate how facilitators bring learners through a programme. For example, in the Department of Education and Skills (2013) resources for SPHE, the information about the EL cycle is at the start of the manual and the workshop designs outline the various ways learners are guided through the experience and sharing, the types of questions asked in processing and the subsequent follow through questions. This reiterates the point about the interdependent nature of the various factors i.e. the structure and content of EL programmes are influenced by the facilitator and how the facilitator interprets the material and subsequently how they interact with the group.

When one is reviewing content and structure of EL programmes, it is crucial that the methods of teaching/facilitation meets the needs of the target group and are in-keeping with the ethos of EL.

B. Methodologies & Techniques

Facilitators adopt a variety of methodologies when working with a group. For EL to be effective, the facilitator needs to adopt methodologies that give learners an opportunity to have an experience whereby they have a felt response and are then enabled to reflect on this felt response. For example, a facilitator may incorporate an activity in the group such as a role-play as it puts the focus on the learners previously held behaviours and encourages them to re-examine their beliefs about themselves and these behaviours. The facilitator guides the learner to experience the 'feelings, actions and reactions' of the person/scenario they are roleplaying (Lam, 2011, p. 306). This type of activity can put learners at ease as it does not

single one of them out in the group, it encourages participation among group members and can strengthen group cohesion; however, it can also bring up other feelings and potentially push people outside of their comfort zones. This type of activity helps in examining and challenging beliefs and behaviours (Mezirow, 1990).

There are many methodologies facilitators can use. Prendiville (2008) and Department of Education and Skills (2013) lists these such as; brainstorming, roleplays, collages, miming, drama and sketches and group member observation. Examples of activities for the 'experience' are an art activity which may involve drawing, painting or working with clay and other materials or perhaps audio-visual equipment is used (Benson, 2001). The Educating Families to Achieve Independence in Montana (EDUFAIM) programme was focused on the learners needs as some had low academic skills therefore audio visual equipment was used (Christopher et al., 2001). Teambuilding, communication and leadership games also provide fun elements in an EL programme and engages the learner in the workshops (Lam, 2011). According to Benson (2001) these methods can be valuable in helping learners explore their feelings in ways which are difficult to speak about verbally to the group. Some activities can be difficult for learners as they may feel they are not skilled or artistic enough, depending on the activity. If there is reluctance or objection from the learners, there may be underlying issues such as embarrassment, trust and confidentiality. Participation is voluntary and if a learner decides to not partake in a task, this can also indicate something. In this instance again, the skill of the facilitator to guide the learner through possible ambiguity is important.

Another technique that is important is the use of small group sharing, which Dorr (2011, p. 127) describes as 'interpersonal engagement'. Dorr (2011), states that at certain stages in the group, group members can 'directly relate with one another through expressing their feelings, challenging their behaviour, making demands or requests'. In this instance, group members also have the opportunity to share their feelings about others and challenge others which has the potential to cause confrontation which the facilitator needs to manage (Dorr, 2011).

Having a distinct structure, being clear about content and adopting methodologies in-keeping with EL/TL ethos are very important factors for programmes. Another vitally important factor is reflection and how this is embedded within the programmes.

C. Reflective Practice
Reflective practice was evident in research by Addleman et al. (2014), the LIFTT programme, the PATHS programme and Team Trek programme. The LIFTT programme

included a mixture of coaching-based experiential workshops and journaling that worked cohesively with one another. The journaling helped the female learners to reflect on their past experiences and they also found it to be a very powerful task as a significant number of learners reported that they could connect to the words they were writing about in their own lives and that they understood the 'felt experience'. Journaling assisted the learners to regain power in their lives as the influence of their own written words helped to make their experiences real and valid. There was a significant link between writing the journals and the women feeling that their lives were more real, to how isolated and removed they felt from being a part of society (Meyer, 2009).

Similarly, in the Addleman et al. (2014) study, learners were encouraged to keep weekly journals based on their cultural immersion experiences, and this assisted them in expressing their feelings around the isolation and disorienting events they experienced being in a different country.

A further example of an EL programme that is highly focused on reflective practice is the P.A.T.H.S. to adulthood (A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme) programme which was a holistic, positive, youth development programme that used experiential and reflective learning approaches. There were 15,000 teachers and social care workers, who had significant experience working with young people, involved in the training from 2005-2008. The programme trusted in the learners' ability to reflect in the training and in practice. The results of the evaluation showed that both EL and self-reflection were the two areas that learners got the most out of and they acknowledged the benefits of these. Learners stated that the programme prompted self-reflection and this enabled them to understand and integrate theory to practice. Team Trek was another programme where reflecting on experiences was a vital element of the course as reflection was supported with every activity learners took part in and was shown to be an effective aspect of the learning cycle (Seed, 2008).

EL and self-reflection are essential in training programmes however there are some instances when these processes are not suitable. Examples include unresolved issues or trauma amongst the learners and/or facilitators and a challenging work environment which would make it difficult to support this type of work (Lam, 2011). The Department of Education and Skills (2013) Inspectorate Report also stated that teachers were not engaging with the reflective process properly in SPHE and RSE classes as they were providing the answers to students

rather than letting students discover the answers for themselves. It outlined that teaching strategies are required to guide students through the stages of EL.

The structure, content, methods and reflective practice of programmes will be further affected by the duration of the programme.

D. Duration of the Programmes

The duration of programmes is also an important factor to note in EL programmes and this varied throughout the literature. Timelines of the programmes were wide-ranging; from 1-3 weeks (Addleman et al., 2014) to potentially 5 years (Seed, 2008). For example, in Addleman et al. (2014) research on the Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programme, the learners travelled abroad to gain teaching experience as a minority group and immersed themselves in a new culture. There was a lot of personal involvement, practice and reflections with facilitators in the countries abroad and also two focus groups took place with learners once they returned home. The MAT programme was 2 years in duration and the paper focused specifically on one aspect which was a 3-week intense experience. It is unclear how long after the programme the focus groups took place (Addleman et al., 2014).

The LIFIT programme was 9 weeks in duration, in which the research stated that 75% of the learners had reached their desired goal of beginning or re-joining education or the workforce (Meyer, 2009). However, there was no clear follow-up with these learners afterwards to determine if they continued in education or remained employed. Similarly in the Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) (Hicks, Smith, Winton, & Wood, 2008) and the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan studies (Affolter et al., 2009), the duration is unclear and if there was an evaluation of the programme or follow-up with the learners. The Return to Village and Serve (RVaSP) project is estimated to be about 1 month long but this was hard to decipher also. According to learners in the Team Trek programme, which was a 4 day EL programme to develop recruitment and retention through reinvention of teacher education (3 R's), the most important part of the course was the residential aspect and being three hours away from their college campus. This supported learners to interact with one another at a deeper level, build on cohorts and create an atmosphere for potential TL (Seed, 2008).

According to Shek and Wai (2008), training programmes should have a minimum of 1-2 day workshops with follow-up days and should be process rather than outcome focused. In relation to Mezirow's theory of TL, changing frames of reference requires time and it is

probable that this is related to the impact a programme has on an individual. In light of these points what is the optimum duration for an EL programme in order for TL to occur? The length of a programme could be determined by the needs of the learners being facilitated, some might take more time than others to grasp the concept of EL and for possible transformation to occur. Some learners might never experience TL so it is therefore difficult to put a specific and ideal timeframe on a programme.

There are a range of interdependent factors that influence how TL and EL is integrated into the learners' life; the readiness of the learner; the experience of the facilitator; the learning environment and the programme ethos and design will influence this translation into practice.

In training professionals, it is worth considering how EL and TL can 'ripple' beyond the individual to experience and effect a far greater change. For example, changing the lives of workers and the vulnerable populations or communities they work with to changing the culture within organisations. There are a range of elements needed for this diffusion to take place.

2.5 Organisational Diffusion and Institutionalisation

Organisational integration of a new idea or behaviour requires diffusion to occur firstly at an individual level. Individual diffusion can translate to organisational diffusion via 'bottom up' (staff driven) or 'top down' (management driven) approaches or a combination of both. Diffusion is quite a 'passive process, where a programme, skill or attribute is gradually adopted by a community, at a variable speed, depending upon local awareness and interest (Bauman & Nutbeam, 2014, p. 112). Everett Rogers (1995) describes this diffusion via the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DIT) and the main elements of this are:

1) The Innovation
2) The Communication Channels
3) Time
4) The Social System

DIT is versatile and has been used in multiple disciplines such as marketing, management, nursing, education and medical technology. The theory describes how innovative ideas and practices are dispersed within and between populations (Valente & Myers, 2010). These new ideas and practices are referred to as innovations and if this is perceived as new by an individual or another unit of adoption the result leads to potential diffusion (Rogers, 1995).

Valente (2002) state that DIT is one of the most frequently used theories of behaviour change and classifies it as a theory of human behaviour.

There are four main elements in DIT (Rogers, 1995) and are detailed in sections 2.5.1- 2.5.4.

2.5.1 The Innovation

A new idea or behaviour gains momentum and starts to spread through a specific population. The result of the diffusion is that the population, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea or behaviour. This adoption means they are doing something different than what they had previously done. In order to adopt new behaviours, the population must see the behaviour as new or innovative for diffusion to occur. For example, a way of teaching and/or communicating which is new and creative to engage a target population.

2.5.2 Communication Channels

Choosing the right communication channels can have a significant influence on how successfully an innovation is diffused. There are the usual mass media channels such as radio, television and newspapers, however an interesting concept in relation to group communication and diffusion is homophily, which is the degree to which individuals, particularly a pair, communicate on a similar level. Similarities such as beliefs, education, socio-economic status (SES) and communication are more effective when individuals share common meanings and beliefs. The more communication there is between this dyad, the more they are likely to be homophilous and the more effective the communication will be and so on. An example of this can be found in the Team Trek programme, which was a four day EL programme for teachers, partly focused on building cohorts so that teachers in larger universities could build relationships with one another and therefore not feel as isolated. By being in a cohort, the learners contributed to increasing their critical thinking skills, motivation to learn and also reported improvements in self-development and social skills (Seed, 2008). This programme resulted in creating a community of learners in the University of Memphis which demonstrates how human interaction and connection can support diffusion.

However, there is an argument that homophily could halt diffusion as it is rare that the people most willing to adopt (innovators), interact with the least willing people (laggards) therefore if innovators are sticking together and communicating just amongst each other, the potential for diffusion to flow down becomes diminished. This can cause new ideas to spread horizontally rather than vertically.

Communality i.e. audience similarity, is also necessary to support diffusion. Pearce et al. (2012) advocates communicating messages to audiences that are similar as they found that diffusion was limited when people at different occupation levels were exposed to the same message. Notably, segmentation is a feature of diffusing innovations in the marketing sector and splits audiences into specific groups to modify messages for each group. Valente and Myers (2010) identify a type of segmentation called sociometric which can occur when messages are aimed at specific groups within networks.

2.5.3 Time

Time is a significant factor in the diffusion process as it can take a substantial length of time for an innovation to catch on, in which there is the possibility of learners and organisations becoming impatient, especially if funding is an issue. People or organisations may want to speed up the rate of diffusion of an innovation. The time it takes for an innovation to permeate varies greatly as there can be an extensive time period between the earliest and the latest adopters (Valente & Myers, 2010). As learning occurs over time, it may take many years to become apparent, depending on the individual. The experience itself may not change but the learning can grow leading to transformed meanings and altered effects (Boud et al., 1993).

In experiential and transformative group work, it can take a significant amount of time for the learning to filter to the individual and then for this to permeate into their organisation. Therefore, it is vital that the innovation is clearly understood from the outset. Training programmes ideally should have 1-2 day workshops with follow-up days and should be process rather than just outcome focused (Shek & Wai, 2008).

2.5.4 A Social System

Culture, the local environment and individuals play an important role in diffusion. The rate at which a new idea or behaviour is adopted varies and does not happen for everyone simultaneously; some people adopt quicker than others (adopters) and some do not adopt at all (laggards).

According to Rogers (1995), there are five 'adopter' categories. The first are *gatekeepers* and these are the people most interested in new ideas and willing to take risks as they bring the innovation from outside the systems boundaries into the system or organisation. Gatekeepers have also been referred to in the literature as 'programme champions' (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Steckler & Goodman, 1989) and 'programme drivers' (Gruen et al., 2008). This

is the ideal population to have on a training programme and where potential diffusion back into the organisations would be highest. Gatekeepers may exist at a managerial and/or lower level, however, Steckler and Goodman (1989) identified 'programme champions' at a senior administrative level as an essential factor for diffusion. Individuals in such a position of power can act as an ambassador and are willing to be directly involved in all aspects of the training.

The next group are *early adopters* who are aware of the need to change and therefore embrace and feel comfortable adopting new behaviours. They are considered the person to check with before going ahead with a new idea. The third category are *early majority* who require evidence of success of previous innovations before they will adopt a new idea or behaviour and they make up one third of the social system (Valente & Myers, 2010). The fourth group are the *late majority* who will only adopt an idea or behaviour after it has been tried and tested by the majority, as they need evidence to prove that it was successful before trying it themselves. The final category are *laggards* who are the hardest group to elicit change as they are very sceptical and are used to doing things the traditional, conservative way. In order to change they require statistics, fear appeals and pressure from other people in the other adopter groups (Valente & Myers, 2010).

As there are different adopter categories for individuals, there are also different factors required for a person to potentially adopt an innovation and for diffusion to take place. These factors include awareness of the need of an innovation, the decision to accept or reject the innovation, testing the innovation initially and continually using the innovation. This can also be summed up into knowledge, persuasion, decision, trial and adoption (Valente & Myers, 2010). Valente and Myers (2010), state that diffusion generally happens through personal networks which are influenced by socio-economic status (SES), ethnicity and location. The result means the rate of diffusion may also be different, for example, the higher the SES, the faster the rate of diffusion as there are likely to be more resources at their disposal such as funding, time and people. This varies greatly in organisations with some having more resources at their disposal than others. Staff turnover will also affect diffusion: Pearce et al. (2012) reported that diffusion and sustainability were difficult to guarantee due to the lack of retention of staff after they had been trained.

An important feature of the 'Youth Studies Certificate' programme in the City University of New York was that youth workers were recruited as a cohort to 'create a community of

practice' (Shockley & Thompson, 2012, p. 737). In order to prepare youth workers effectively and increase retention, forming cohorts or groups through EL practices has shown to be a possible strategy (Seed, 2008). This generates a community of learners in which they can support and network with one another, decrease feelings of isolation, build relationships and learn from one another. Building cohorts was a predominant feature in the Team Trek programme (Seed, 2008) which was described previously, and by the end of the programme, learners had significantly connected with one another.

Valente (2002) outlines limitations of DIT with the first being the classification of whether this theory is also a theory of behaviour change. There are differences in the two in that diffusion is about trying to adopt a healthy behaviour, whereas behaviour change tends to be about stopping a negative behaviour. Valente (2002) argues that the individual has to be aware of an innovation before they can adopt it and therefore other stages of behaviour change do not matter if awareness is not achieved first and foremost. One of the stages in behaviour change is pre-contemplation in which the individual is unaware of the issue and has little to no intention of changing it (Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) which is not suitable for diffusion to take place. Another limitation of DIT is that people are different and unique and there could be variations on the number of adopters in a programme which could affect the impact of diffusion at an organisational level. The diffusion process cannot begin if there are too few adopters and if there are too many adopters this shows that they have, more than likely, already adopted the innovation and therefore will not be much more of a difference in relation to their behaviour change (Rogers, 1995).

Sustaining the diffusion of an innovation initiates at an individual level in which emphasis is on individual change in knowledge, behaviour and attitudes with a short-term time-frame for implementation. While diffusion is a quiet a passive process underpinned by the 4 elements outlined above, institutionalising an innovation in an organisation involves systematic planning to ensure the innovation becomes integrated into organisational policies and routine practices. Several authors have described the critical factors required for institutionalising an innovation within systems and these are outlined in figure 2.5 below.
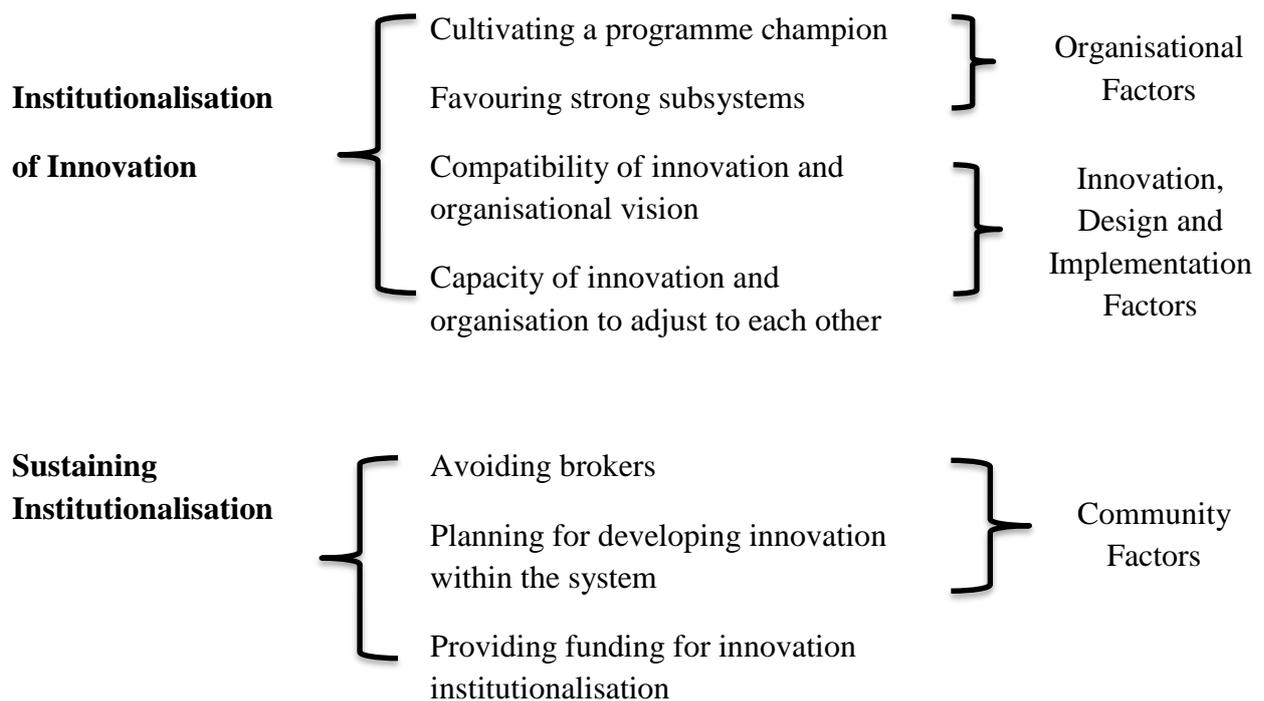
Figure 2.5: An overview of the factors that underpin institutionalising an innovation and sustaining the institutionalisation of the innovation within a system (based upon evidence from (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Steckler & Goodman, 1989).

According to Steckler and Goodman (1989) 6 ecologic levels, that address both institutionalising the innovation and sustaining that institutionalisation, need to be considered when planning for institutionalising an innovation within a system. These are consistent with Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) conceptual framework for planning for sustainability that include factors at the organisational level, community level and innovation design and implementation factors. While that framework is specific to community based health promotion programmes, it has been previously adapted for use in training models to influence practice within organisations (Lefkowich, Richardson, Brennan, Lambe, & Carroll, 2016; Osborne, 2016) as per Table 2.5 above.

As described earlier cultivating a programme champion at a senior administrative level and 'gatekeepers' at other levels is essential for institutionalisation. Strong subsystems that are mature, stable and widespread are favourable. The innovation being diffused and the organisation in which this is happening need to be able to adapt to each other with older organisations usually having well developed sub-systems that give a strong organisational base for new training programmes (Steckler & Goodman, 1989). Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone

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(1998) refer to this as 'institutional strength'. The next concept which Steckler and Goodman (1989) outline is how the training fits with the organisations mission and what is required between the innovation and the organisation for successful diffusion. The training should be compatible with the organisations goals, values and norms. According to Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) once an innovation is diffused into an organisation, both the innovation and the organisation are required to adjust to one another. Gruen et al. (2008) states that strong innovation design needs to adapt and change over time to suit the populations' needs and the needs of the organisation. The innovation eventually joins and becomes a part of the actions of the organisation and the focus then moves to the sustainability of this change and keeping the innovation alive.

Avoiding brokers (e.g. intermediary organisations) is the next concept in Steckler and Goodman (1989) model and can cause confusion as it is common to give funding to broker agencies that do not implement the training directly but use the funding to influence the development of training in another local organisation. They do not have to diffuse the training and its practices therefore it must adapt to two organisations (the broker and the implementer). The champion piece may also get lost as the broker is passing on their responsibility to another organisation. A further concept is establishing appropriate funding periods as new training programmes require bigger investments in relation to time, money, people and other resources before diffusion is achieved. Funding is a significant factor as this potentially influences how and when training is carried out and its duration. The correct distribution of resources is vital and local funding should be obtained as reliance on international funding is difficult to sustain (Gruen et al., 2008). In an AIDS prevention study, the duration of funding and ability to locate additional funds were significant factors in sustainability, more so than other obvious challenges to a programme like this such as sourcing the population to help (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998).

Funding existing programmes is the final concept which Steckler and Goodman (1989) outline as they state that funders should examine current training programmes that require further funding and development rather than just investing in new programmes. It is much easier to determine the factors that were hindering the development of established training programmes whereas with new programmes, the problems are mostly unknown. A good example of this can be found in a programme examining the effectiveness of educational and behaviour interventions in improving blood pressure care and control with African-American

people in the US (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998). The programme was initially supported by a national institute, then later through local resources and grants and it was noted that utilizing existing community resources was important. The community directed the programme and there was a partnership between the community, health care providers and staff from the local hospital. Together they planned, directed and evaluated the programme and also had a programme champion who advocated for it. Planning for sustainability happened early on in the project (the 1st year) with the community being involved in the programme and decision-making from the start (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998).

Diffusion and sustainability of health and well-being innovations are important in all settings. Building capacity to diffuse the innovation can be achieved via training programmes. Despite the stage the individual is at (adopter vs laggard), if a system or organisation is not supportive to an individual, then sustainable diffusion at an individual level and institutionalisation at an organisational level will be limited. The innovation and movement of this innovation via diffusion at a horizontal and vertical level in an organisation is required and thereafter, institutionalisation requires planning to ensure the innovation remains alive within organisational policy and practice. A valid question can be asked about the transferability of training into work practice across all settings. One such setting whereby health promotion training plays an important role in the service provider's work is the Youth Sector.

2.6 The Youth Sector

In Ireland, youth work has been supporting young people for the last 100 years, working with those aged 10-25 from all nationalities and social classes, including economically and socially disadvantaged young people (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017). Indecon's research on the Economic Value of Youth Work in Ireland identified that 53.3% of young people participating in youth work organisations are believed to be socially or economically disadvantaged (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2012). Youth work can occur in a number of different settings such as day centres, after-school clubs, summer camps and residential facilities (Shockley & Thompson, 2012). According to the National Youth Council of Ireland (2017), the aims of youth work in Ireland are:

- Developing and enhancing young people's personal and social development, including building self-esteem and self-confidence and the ability to manage relationships, both personal and social.
- Assisting young people in gaining knowledge and developing new skills.

- Supporting young people to take responsibility for their actions and make informed decisions.
- Empowering and helping young people to become active citizens in their communities.
- Paying attention to what young people are saying and listening to their opinions and feedback.

Youth work achieves these aims through a range of programmes and activities which include life skills such as; communication, problem solving, teamwork and initiative, critical, creative and reflective thinking, with other activities including sports and recreation, arts, drama and music, social action and voluntary work.

As young people are active partners in youth work, their own interests and ambitions are considered when designing programmes and activities and they have the choice to participate of their own volition. Youth work significantly benefits young people in developing confidence, providing new experiences and creating a sense of belonging (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2013). It also has positive effects on communities and society as it involves adults and young people actively working together to develop their communities and attempts to address disadvantage also (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2017).

In Ireland, the youth sector comprises over 40 national youth organisations which in turn oversee a much larger number of local, community-based projects, services and groups. Youthreach is one such example of a government run programme for youths aged 15-20 who are early school leavers. Similar to its equivalent elsewhere (Shockley & Thompson, 2012) it provides a space for young people to gain education, training, work experience and life skills acquiring potential certification such as FETAC and state examinations like the Junior and Leaving Certificates. Youthreach is holistic in its approach as the focus is not only on the cognitive but also on psychomotor skills (recreational activities, woodwork, cooking, and mechanics) and learning in the affective domain (Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), and restorative practice). The programmes vary in the different centres and as of 2014 there were 110 Youthreach centres across Ireland (Youthreach, 2014). In addition, there are 38 Community Training Centres (CTC's) in Ireland which provide community-based training for early school leavers. Learners in CTC's participate in personal, social and vocational skills training and development with emphasis on EL methods. CTC's are owned and managed by local community groups and have highly skilled staff and facilities (Irish Association of Community Training Organisations, 2017).

The role of the youth workers can be highly significant in the lives of early school leavers who are after experiencing a number of social issues and come from marginalised communities. According to Shockley and Thompson (2012) youth workers relationship with young people is vital in determining how successful the youth work will be, particularly as the ages of 10-25 years have been described as a crucial time in relation to the development of a young person's life (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017). The youth worker-young person relationship needs to be built on a strong foundation of mutual trust and respect as many young people feel these qualities are lacking in their other relationships with adults (Bowden & Lanigan, 2011). Youth workers also need to empower and engage young people and give them a say in decisions being made, reinforcing the partnership element and equal distribution of power between the youth worker and young person (National Youth Agency, 2017).

Similar to the traits of a facilitator as previously described in section 2.4.2, youth workers are required to have skills and qualities such as communication, active listening, empathy, patience and a non-judgemental attitude in order to foster a positive relationship with young people with whom they work. They also need to have a high level of confidence and self-awareness and continually be advancing their personal development as their job requires continuous interpersonal interventions with young people that can be both personally and professionally challenging (Henry, Morgan, & Hammond, 2010).

As youth workers require a high level of personal development and self-awareness for their demanding profession, training and support is needed to dialogue and build relationships with vulnerable young people who access their services. Training provided to youth workers should match the core features of youth work practice of knowledge, skills and values and should focus on the 'person-centred approach' which emphasises self-awareness through reflective journaling, EL and opportunities to practice (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2013). Youth workers need to be continually developing and enhancing their interpersonal skills (Henry et al., 2010).

The youth sector has a high staff turnover and providing youth workers with education and training which is supported by their organisation, in addition to confidence in their own capabilities, is linked to long-term retention in the youth sector (Shockley & Thompson, 2012). Better outcomes for young people have been associated with the quality of the people who surround them and youth organisations are instrumental in supporting and engaging the

young person to 'feel part of their community and create stability in their lives' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p. 68).

The youth sector has been identified as an important setting for health promotion and, through health-related policies, the significance of promoting health amongst young people has also been recognised (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2013). Many of these policies state that youth workers require support to effectively work with young people in relation to mental health and emotional issues. One such policy is the Healthy Ireland Framework (2013-2025) which identifies several actions that will be implemented through the Health and Well-Being programme in the Department of Health.

The Health Promotion Strategic Framework (HSE, 2011) is another policy to support youth workers to effectively work with young people. The policy is aimed at training people who are involved in education, training and development of staff in community, voluntary and other sectors. This framework notes that it is essential that youth workers have access to continuing professional development to integrate confidence in their work practice and are able to address complex issues and develop positive, supportive relationships with young people. Furthermore, in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the government recognises that the youth sector is a setting for early intervention and prevention with at-risk youths. They have committed to:

> *'train and upskill professionals across formal and non-formal educational settings to be in a position to identify potential child welfare and mental health issues and to provide preventative and early intervention support'.*

(Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p. 30).

According to the Children Growing up in Ireland survey in 2009, 15-20% of children demonstrated significant levels of emotional and behavioural problems (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014). At-risk youth are more likely to have developmental issues such as substance abuse, mental health issues, juvenile delinquency, unemployment and economic disadvantage, all of which are concerning for the youths themselves and the community in which they live. Whilst there are a number of programmes aimed at preventing these issues amongst youths, there are few focusing on training those who work with at-risk youth (Shek & Wai, 2008). The following section attempts to begin to fill that gap in some way, outlining training programmes for youth workers.

2.6.1 Programmes Training Youth Workers

The need to support youth workers in relation to promoting health and well-being, and in particular their mental and emotional health, has been identified. The National Youth Coucil of Ireland (2016) provides various training and continuing professional development programmes (CPD's) aimed at youth sector workers in areas such as youth health, youth arts, development education, equality and inter-culturalism and child protection. A significant part of the NYCI'S training programme is the National Youth Health Programme which involves the partnership of the NYCI, HSE and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The programme provides health promotion-based education, training and support to youth organisations and those working in the out-of-school sector. Programmes are developed specifically for and with youth organisations in which youth workers and volunteers are continually trained and supported as they implement the programmes themselves in their organisations. Training in this programme all contain aspects of health and well-being, in particular, the training programme which is the subject of this thesis; 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-Being. Further programmes provided by the NYCI include:

- The Specialist Certificate in Youth Health Promotion, which addresses the health needs of young people.
- NYCI Certificate in Youth Arts
- ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)
- Tackling Racism, Homophobia and Sexism
- Delay/b4udecide- Good Practice in Sexual Health Promotion
- Let's Beat Bullying
- Websafety in Youthwork
- Mindfulness and Mindout- Mental Health Promotion Programmes

In relation to the Specialist Certificate in Youth Health Promotion, a youth worker or an organisation have the opportunity to complete this cert and obtain the Health Quality Mark (HQM) which recognises and acknowledges quality health promotion in youth organisations. This is the first quality assessment system for health within the youth sector and is supported under the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2013). In order to apply for the HQM, organisations must have a health promoter who has completed the Specialist Certificate, have taken part in a HQM workshop and developed a close, working relationship with the NYCI. The application process is rigorous with criteria including health promotion policy, youth participation structures and a training

plan for staff, volunteers and management. Organisations can obtain gold, silver or bronze HQM and it is a good initiative for youth organisations to aim for as it recognises 'good practice and a high standard of quality in all aspects of health promotion in the successful organisations' (National Youth Health Programme, 2011, p. 2).

Professional development programmes can not only enhance youth workers performance, learning and well-being, they can also have a positive effect on the young people that they work with. Youth workers need to feel confident within themselves and have reassurance that they can implement new programmes or add onto already existing programmes and integrate learnings into current work practices (Shek & Chak, 2011). With this confidence, comes greater assurance in their work practice, benefitting the young people they work with. The vulnerability of the young people also needs to be taken into account and the capacity of youth workers to provide emotional well-being to the young people and to also provide this for themselves.

2.7 Conclusion

This review discussed how EL, in the affective domain via Kolbs' EL cycle offers the learner an opportunity for TL. A number of factors influence the TL process such as the learners' willingness to learn and engage in the TL process, the facilitator and the training syllabus. These factors, among others, were integrated into the training model that is the subject of this thesis to ensure sustainable diffusion of the training within the youth work organisations (see Figure 2.7).

Supporting the health and well-being of our young people and in particular their mental well-being, has been prioritised across government policies (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014; Department of Health, 2013; HSE, 2011). Front line youth workers require support when working with this vulnerable population and in response to this need, a training programme called 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' was developed. The training provided a dedicated space to youth workers, working across community training centers and Youthreach organisations who currently deliver on Life Skills modules to develop confident workers capable of addressing complex issues and developing positive, supportive relationships with young people. The following section describes the training model of 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being'.

2.7.1 Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being: The Training Model

The aim of the training programme was to up-skill workers in the youth sector setting, enhancing their practical application of EL. Specifically the outcomes were for youth workers to:

- Have the capacity to use the EL cycle as the main tool through which the learning will be achieved thus acquiring the skills to facilitate learners in processing, generalising and applying their learning to support all stages of the EL cycle.

- Understand the significance of one's own personal development as a key factor in effective facilitation.

- Have acquired the skills to work with young males in a gender sensitive manner.

- Have the capacity to deliver sessions in such a way as to support the learners to access their own knowledge.

- Have explored questioning techniques that support the potential for optimum learning for the learner.

- Explore resistance and work with it in a way that supports the learner.

- Acquire the skills to design workshops appropriate to the needs of their target group.

Group work and facilitation are the core components of activity and delivery within the youth sector therefore, through this training, youth workers were provided with the opportunity to build their capacity and skill set and network with colleagues working across the sector.

An overview of the training model is outlined in Figure 2.7 below. In keeping with Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) conceptual framework, the training model was adapted to include; project design and implementation factors such as the partnership formation between the members of the project team and the facilitators of the training who together selected the youth work participants and decided on the duration of the training, the residential aspect, and the methods and syllabus used in the training. The organisational environment itself was also a key factor, including getting buy-in from managers and other staff members within the organisations selected for potential diffusion and sustainability of the training. Factors within the broader community environment were developing a community of trained youth workers in the area of 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being.
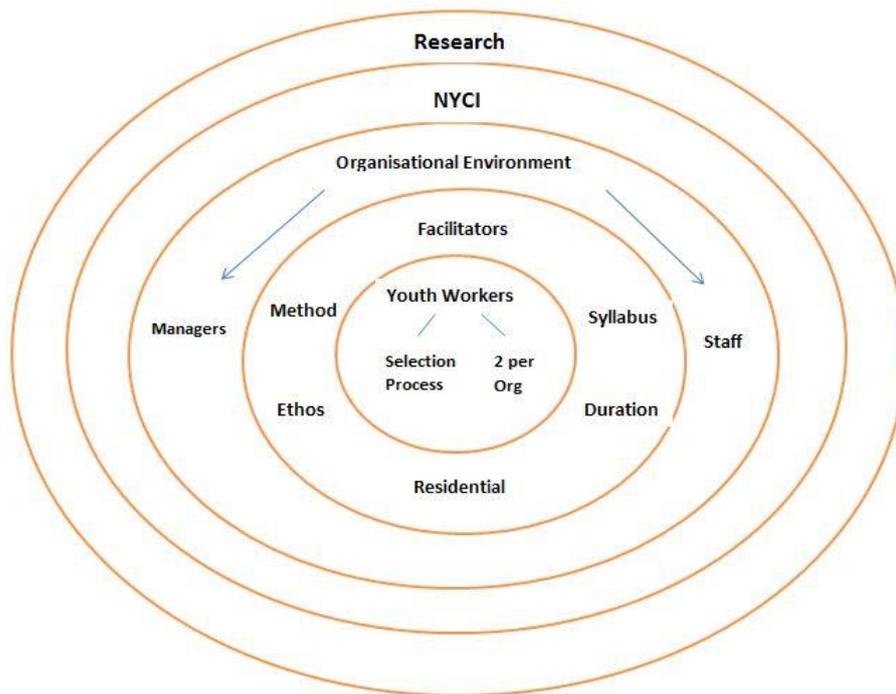
Figure 2.7.1: An overview of the training model adopted for the 'facilitation skills for health and well-being' training programme

The training model was developed by **the project team** that was made up of an independent Gestalt psychotherapist, two representatives from Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), one representative from the Men's Development Network (MDN) and one representative from the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). All had experience of designing and delivering TL training using EL methodologies in a group setting and collectively had considerable knowledge and skill in the area of youth work, mental health and training. The representative from the NYCI championed the training within the youth sector and advertised the training to youth organisations.

The training **facilitators** were part of the project team; the Gestalt psychotherapist and one representative from WIT and each brought considerable experience and skill to the training.

The **training syllabus** was adapted from previous trainings designed and delivered by members of the project team, such as Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) HDip (Higher Diploma) and MA (Masters of Arts) at WIT (Waterford Institute of Technology, 2017), Family Communication and Self-Esteem (FCSE) (Fanning, 2009), ENGAGE, Ireland's national men's health training programme (Lefkowich et al., 2016) and Osbourne 2016 and the Social, Health and Education Project (SHEP) (The Social and Health Education Project, 2010). The programme syllabus was delivered using EL methodologies, with a focus on learning in the affective domain, whereby the youth worker was the learner experiencing

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the syllabus rather than being taught how to deliver it to the young people with whom they worked. As the training progressed, opportunities arose to explore the various ways of using this method with young people (refer to appendix 8 for an overview of the training topics).

The training was delivered in a **residential setting** as it was believed the residential aspect would offer a warm, friendly and relaxed atmosphere which could create safety and support for youth workers as they embarked on this training. The setting provided a space for potential reflection and a boundary from youth workers daily lives.

The **duration** of the training consisted of (a) 4 2-day blocks (8 days), (b) 1 staff day within each of the organisations selected (8 days), (c) 1 managers' day and (d) 1 refresher day for youth workers that attended the 8 residential days.

The training was underpinned by an **ethos** of Gestalt psychotherapy and was holistic in its approach focusing on the individual and their felt experiences. The training was focused on process and input with an emphasis on the youth workers personal development.

Applicant youth workers were **selected for the training programme** based on their openness to personal development and their readiness for this type of in-depth learning. It was also a vital component of the training to have two youth workers from each organisation as this generated peer support and assisted to integrate and sustain youth workers learning outside of the training.

The training incorporated **organisational and environmental support** to promote diffusion and sustainability. The managers and colleagues of the youth workers were provided with training to support the diffusion and sustainability of the training within the organisations and further supporting youth workers to integrate their learning. Managers had to formally sign up to all aspects of the training and research before their staff were recruited to the training.

2.7.2 Aim of the Thesis

The specific aims of the research are to investigate:

1) The personal impact of the training on the youth workers.
2) The degree of organisational diffusion achieved, if any, by the training programme.
3) The potential sustainability of the organisational diffusion achieved, if any, by the training programme.

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Chapter 3 details the methodology used to achieve the research aims using an interpretivist approach. The results are presented in Chapter 4 through a serious of journal entries, interviews, vox pops and focus on 3 case studies. The results are discussed in Chapter 5 and conclusions drawn from the thesis are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study was approved by WIT's Research Ethics Committee (Ref: 15/Dept-HSES/14) and informed consent was given by all participants. This chapter will describe the research design, the participants of this research, the data collection procedures, the data analysis and ethical considerations. The research concepts underpinning the research design will be elaborated in section 3.2.1. The research aims and questions were outlined in the previous chapter.

3.2 Research Design

An exploratory research design adopting an interpretivist approach was used for this research. The research design was centred on phenomenology involving a triangulated methodology whereby a combination of research methods from different target groups were used (Figure 3.1).

Data Collection Tool	Research Question (RQ)	Timeline
4 Interviews & 1 Reflective Log	RQ. 3	June 2015- January 2016
1 Focus Group	RQ. 1,2,3	September 2016
Facilitators: 6 In-Training Reflective Logs	RQ.2,3	September 2015-March 2016
8 Interviews	RQ. 1,2,3	April-June 2016
54 Reflective Logs	RQ.1, 2	September 2015-March 2016
3 follow-up Interviews	RQ. 1,2,3	September- October 2016
52 Vox Pops	RQ. 2, 3	April-June 2016

Figure 3.1: Data collection methods for each target group

The rationale for this research was an interpretivist approach as the researcher was open and there was no agenda prior to the project commencing. Interpretivism centres on the distinctiveness of a situation, contributing to the pursuit of contextual depth. There is consideration on the meaningful nature of peoples character and participation in both social and cultural life (Chowdhury, 2014). As a result, there are queries in relation to the reliability and validity of interpretivism. To address this, the research was validated by using multiple data sources which were triangulated (see section 3.5.1). This meant the data had greater reliability and credibility. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants as they had experience relating to the phenomenon to be researched. Interpretivism was appropriate for this research as the researcher interacted with the participants of the research and examined the specific ways relationships manifested as a result of the 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training programme.

3.2.1 Research Concepts

According to Groenewald (2004), in the late 19th century, Franz Brentano provided the basis for phenomenology and a number of other theorists used his initial work to make sense of and define phenomenology further. Two of these theorists are the German philosophers Heidegger and Husserl. They stated that phenomenology is about reality, which is made up of events (phenomena) as they are understood in the human consciousness (Groenewald, 2004). This research is about making sense of the social and psychological phenomena from the viewpoints of the participants i.e. the lived experiences of the training and subsequent integration into work practice. An interpretivist approach was adopted using phenomenological methods to ascertain the lived experiences to answer the research questions posed which are outlined below. In descriptive-based phenomenological methodologies, the objective is to describe, comprehend and clarify human experiences (Sousa, 2014). The concepts explored are derived from the research questions:

1. Experience at a Personal Level

Experience at a personal level means the youth workers own personal experience of the training and how this has influenced their everyday lives and their work practices. Two theories that were utilized in the analysis of this concept were Transformative Learning (TL) and Experiential Learning (EL). For example, EL in the affective domain (framed by the EL cycle) was the methodology used throughout the training by the facilitators through providing the youth workers with experiences to reflect on, conceptualise and then perhaps take action in their own lives. Learning in the affective domain has the potential for transformation on a

personal level. The interpretivist approach worked well here as this methodology focuses on how people make sense of their reality and attempt to make meaning from it, which is similar to TL. The persons world and their surroundings are explored as opposed to just themselves individually

2. Diffusion

Diffusion can be defined as a structure to guide the application of change and describes how a new idea or behaviour is adopted or spread through people and organisations (Fox, 2013). In this research, diffusion was examined by obtaining participants perceptions of the extent to which this training had spread within the organisations and to identify specific factors that aided this diffusion. Again, this compliments the phenomenologist and interpretive approach describing the meanings of lived experiences. See section 2.5 for a fuller description.

3. Potential Sustainability

In relation to this research, sustainability described the likelihood of this training being continued and lasting within the organisation once the training had finished. Potential sustainability was examined by obtaining youth workers perceptions of the factors they needed to continue to integrate this training into their work practice and also identifying specific factors from organisations to integrate and develop this training into their practice. See section 2.5 for a fuller description.

3.3 Participants

Training participants were recruited through purposive sampling which can be described as a sample of respondents selected through a conscious method, so therefore the sample were selected for the purpose of the research (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, & Lowden, 2011). The sample had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched i.e. they were participants of the training under investigation (Groenewald, 2004). Seventy-six participants representing 8 organisations consented to participate in this study and all were adults who worked in youth organisations. An overview of participants and data collection methods used to answer the research questions is detailed in figure 3.1.

The recruitment process for the youth organisations was considerable:

- All youth organisations in the Republic of Ireland were invited to participate in the training and research. Information detailing the training methods and model were sent to 36 organisations that participated in the Health Quality Mark (HQM).

- Applications were sought from youth workers directly and a minimum of 2 per organisation were recruited.

- In total, 18 individuals representing 9 organisations applied for the training and all applications were reviewed by a panel of 3 members of the project team (NYCI representative and two facilitators) who selected the participants for this process. Selection was based on the following criteria:

1. Applicants' awareness and readiness for this type of personal development and their openness to their own self-exploration.

2. Managerial support; all managers were contacted to ensure that they were supportive of the training model and research project, including commitment to attend a 1-day managers' day.

3. The ethos of the organisation itself, their commitment to the Health Quality Mark and this type of experiential work.

4. Applicants interest in this kind of experiential work and their previous knowledge and experience in EL.

5. Two staff willing to complete the training from each organisation.

In certain cases, contact was made with applicants to ensure they fully understood the personal development nature of the training as an addition to the application.

3.3.1 Youth Workers

Sixteen youth workers from 8 organisations were chosen to participate. Table 3.3 details the successful applicants and their organisations.

Table 3.3: Details of Organisations and Youth Workers Recruited

Organisation	Location	Participants Role
Arklow Springboard	Wicklow	• Project Worker. • Project Worker.
Youthreach	Macroom, Co. Cork	• Teacher. • Teacher.
FDYS (Ferns Diocesan Youth Service) Gorey Youth Project/ FDYS Enniscorthy	Gorey/Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford	• Youth Worker. • Senior Youth Worker.
Youthreach	Galway City/ Galway & Roscommon	• Resource Person. • Teacher.
Tipperary Regional Youth Services	Thurles, Tipperary	• Community Youth Worker. • Youth Information and Participation.
Sligo Community Training Centre (CTC)	Sligo	• Tutor. • CTC Tutor.
Carlow Regional Youth Service	Carlow	• Youth Worker in a Youth at Risk Project. • Youth Worker.
Swan Youth Service	Dublin City	• Youth Worker. • Youth Activity Worker.

3.3.2 Managers

Line managers from 7 of the organisations participated in the managers day (1 day) that was part of the training model (n=9: 3 people from one organisation attended), while all 8 were available to participate in the research.

3.3.3 Colleagues

In all 8 organisations, 70 colleagues of the youth workers attended the one day staff day that was part of the training model and 53 of them participated in the research.

3.3.4 The Project Team

All members of the project team (n=5), see section 2.7.1, participated in this research.

3.3.5 The Facilitators

The facilitators (see section 2.7.1) co-facilitated all aspects of the training model with the exception of the one-day training (n=8 days) to all staff in each organisation which was facilitated by the Gestalt therapist alone. Both facilitators were participants in this research.

3.4 Data Collection

Data was collected from many sources for triangulation that included; reflective logs (n=60), interviews (n=14), focus groups (n= 1) and vox pops (n=52).

3.4.1 Reflective Logs

Structured reflective logs or 'structured diaries' were a vital way of capturing the participants' feelings and experiences around the training. In practitioner-based research, this typically non-conventional method of data collection is suitable as it would be difficult to obtain through other conventional and quantitative methods such as questionnaires (Menter et al., 2011). Reflective logs are an important research tool to comprehend and internalise knowledge, whilst also supporting engagement with the material and concepts. Active reflection on an experience is required to deepen learning. This is a key factor in qualitative research as participants go through the process of observation (Rich, 2015). Both youth workers and facilitators provided reflective logs. Feedback was not provided on reflective logs by the researcher due to practicality reasons and time constraints.

A. Youth Workers

The questions posed in the reflective logs were informed by EL, TL, Diffusion and Sustainability theory and were designed to answer the research questions. Questions were posed at the end of each block. Youth workers completed reflective logs (n=4) after each residential training block. The questions in the first reflective journal focused on youth workers motivation to attend the training and addressed issues around the first stage of TL theory; a disorientating dilemma, examining if any challenges arose and what impacts occurred during this block of training (Appendix 1(a)). The second journal focused on EL and how this had impacted youth workers and which factors had supported them and also blocked them from engaging. Youth workers were also asked about being in a group setting which is a vital factor for EL (Appendix 1(b)). The third journal asked questions around the factors which supported the youth workers personally and also their way of learning and how the training was influencing work practice (diffusion) (Appendix 1(c)). The final journal asked questions about the youth workers experience of the training, what specific learnings they had obtained, the factors that enabled their learning and how this will be implemented in their organisations. There was also emphasis here on diffusion and potential sustainability as participants were asked what factors would support them to carry out this work within their organisation when the training was over (Appendix 1(d)). Questions based around group

dynamics and feelings about being in the group setting were also integrated across all four journals.

The youth workers were required to send the researcher their reflective logs after each block of training from September 2015-March 2016 when each of the residential training blocks had finished. They had the option to email their responses to the researcher or handwrite responses in notebooks provided at the training and post to the researcher. During the first day of training, the youth workers were informed about confidentiality and that pseudonyms would be used when analysing and publishing data. Feedback was not provided by the researcher for participants reflective logs due to practicality reasons and time constraints.

To obtain reflective logs, an email was sent by the researcher to the youth workers two weeks after the initial training block took place outlining the benefits of the reflective process and the supportive research element of the project. One week later a further email was sent to those whose logs were not received and a further week later a text message was sent. Lastly a phone call was made to the remaining youth workers whose logs had not been received. Table 3.4 illustrates the number of logs received after each of the four-day training blocks. Pseudonyms were used to protect the youth workers identity.

Table 3.4: Youth Workers Reflective Logs Received over 4 Blocks of Training

	September	November	January	March	Total
Alice	1	1	0	1	3
Aoife	1	1	1	1	4
Ava	1	1	1	1	4
Beth	1	1	1	1	4
Brook	1	1	1	1	4
Charlotte	1	1	1	1	4
Claire	1	0	0	0	1
Emily	1	0	1	1	3
Emma	1	0	1	0	2
Gillian	1	1	1	1	4
Grace	1	0	1	1	3
Laura	1	1	1	1	4
Liz	1	1	1	1	4
Lucy	1	1	1	1	4
Stacey	1	1	1	1	4
Suzanne	1	1	1	1	4
Total	**16**	**12**	**14**	**14**	**56**

A total of 56 out of a potential 64 reflective logs were received from youth workers over the 4 blocks of training demonstrating an 87.5% response rate, with 69% of youth workers providing all 4 reflective logs.

B. Facilitators

Facilitators engaged in an unstructured reflective dialogue that was logged after each residential block in which a topic guide was not provided. After each training block, the two facilitators recorded their reflections using a digital Dictaphone and sent the audio file to the researcher. A total of four reflections were received (one after each block of training) from September 2015-March 2016. The facilitators also recorded their reflections based on the Managers day which took place in February 2016. Common themes addressed were reviews of the training, how it was received with youth workers, reviews of each youth worker and any concerns or growths observed.

In addition, one facilitator provided a reflective log based on the recruitment process of organisations in which any queries members of the group had were addressed and criteria for selection of organisations and participants were noted.

3.4.2 Interviews

Groenewald (2004, p. 13) describes informal interviews as 'a conscious attempt by the researcher to find out more information about the setting of the person'. The researcher and the participant are engaged in dialogue in which the researcher tries to understand the participants view-point and meaning behind their experiences. In this research, semi-structured interviews were carried out with; (a) members of the project team (n=3) and focused on the selection process, (b) the line managers (n=8) and (c) selected youth workers (n=3).

Memoing was carried out by the researcher after each interview in which notes were made about participants' body language and reactions to certain questions as recommended by Groenewald (2004). The researcher also kept a reflective log of the experience of the interviews. It was important to do this as it acted as another layer of research and assisted the researcher to de-brief from the interviews. The memos were dated to correlate with the data. Birks and Mills (2015) also reiterate the importance of reflecting and memoing after interviews and thus continuing to develop and enhance interview techniques and getting the most out of the data.

All interviews were recorded on a Sony Digital Voice Recorder (model: ICD-BX140) and transcribed verbatim.

A. Project Team

Semi-structured interviews (n=3, 15-25 minutes) were carried out with the NYCI representative at their Dublin location in November 2015 and with one facilitator in Waterford Institute of Technology in October 2015. Interviews were based on the selection process of the organisations and participants for the training, including their criteria for selection and any stand out moments from the process of selection. A guided reflection piece was carried out with both participants as it had been a number of months since the selection process had taken place. The topic guides differed slightly as one member of the project team had direct access to participants and organisations and therefore some questions were asked based on this (Appendix 4). The representative from the Men's Development Network emailed the researcher their observations from the selection process in January 2016 and a phone interview was also carried out with the representative to add additional information to the points which were emailed to the researcher previously.

B. Managers

Semi structured interviews (n=8, 11-55 minutes) with managers of the organisations took place at the whole staff days in each of the 8 organisation locations (Sligo, Wicklow, Wexford, Cork, Tipperary, Galway, Dublin and Carlow) from April-June 2016. This topic guide was emailed to the managers prior to the interview process (Appendix 2) and was based on research aims 2 & 3 which relate to diffusion and sustainability. The researcher wanted to gain the managers knowledge and insights around how this type of training would be supported within the organisations to continue and to support the youth workers when the training was over.

C. Youth Workers

To further explore the experience of the training, youth workers were contacted for an in-depth interview. All 16 youth workers were contacted by email and informed that based on data already received and due to practicality reasons, only 3 participants would be selected to interview (43-50 minutes). Purposive sampling was used for the selection of youth workers for interviews. Candidates were selected based on the following criteria;

(a) Participant 1 was the 'optimum model' having reported experiencing a significant personal transformation (as noted in their reflective logs), in addition to having a supportive work environment to continue this transformation.

(b) Participant 2 also experienced a significant personal transformation (as noted in their reflective logs) but did not have a supportive work environment and it was questioned whether her transformation could continue without the support of her work environment.

(c) Participant 3 had a limited personal transformation (as noted by the facilitators of the training) with a very unsupportive work environment and it was questioned if her limited transformation could continue within a work environment that was opposed to this training.

The three cases were deemed a good representation of the entire group as each participant had a personal transformation, although at different levels, and the support from their work environments also differed. These differences were evident across the whole group but the 3 cases above stood out due to their reflective logs and subsequent support and participation at the staff days.

Once the 3 youth workers were selected, a follow-up phone call was made and interviews were carried out in their locations between September-October 2016, 5 months post-training. Questions for the topic guide were based on their transformational process and how this influenced their work practice and the themes that emerged from the analysis of their reflective logs (Appendix 3). Sustainability and diffusion factors were assessed through asking participants about the nature of support within their workplace to integrate the training.

3.4.3 Focus Group

A focus group can be described as an interaction and discussion amongst a small group of people (4-12) with similar characteristics to obtain their experiences, views and attitudes related to a particular topic. There is a facilitator/interviewer present to ask questions and guide the group interaction with the aim of gathering information and insights. The facilitator however says very little and lets the participants engage in conversation as much as possible. This lack of structure means they can talk at ease and therefore data is more honest (Birks & Mills, 2015). Focus groups initially were a feature in market research but quickly spread into other fields such as education and social science research (Menter et al., 2011). A focus group was well suited to this type of exploratory research and added to the triangulation aspect.

A focus group was carried out with the project team and was the best method to use for data collection to further explore and clarify themes which emerged during the research as 'one person's responses may provoke responses from others in the group' which would not happen in one-to-one interviews (Menter et al., 2011, p. 150).

There are challenges to conducting a focus group as it can be difficult to record what is being said and differentiate between participants in a bigger group and amongst people the researcher is unfamiliar with. There is also the issue of one or more members taking over the group and/or being disruptive but usually if they have participated of their own volition and are in some way interested in furthering the research, there is less of a disruption. The success of conducting a focus group is based on the dynamics of the group and how skilled the facilitator/interviewer is (Birks & Mills, 2015).

A focus group took place with four members of the project team in September 2016, once all training dates had finished. It lasted 60 minutes and was recorded on a Sony Digital Voice Recorder (model: ICD-BX140) and transcribed verbatim. The focus group explored the project teams' experience of the training from creation to implementation, their insights after the training had been completed and their thoughts about the future of this training. Questions were also based on themes emerging from the data and focused on the second and third research aims of diffusion and sustainability of the training. The topic guide for the focus group can be viewed in Appendix 5.

3.4.4 Vox Pop

A vox pop is a quick, informal conversation, conducted in a relaxed setting, usually consisting of 1-3 questions. This method can be used for both light and more in-depth subject matters and open-ended questions are asked to gain the maximum response from participants (Chantler & Stewart, 2009).

A vox pop was carried out with the colleagues of the youth workers (n=52) on the whole staff training days. After each staff day, colleagues in each organisation were asked to participate in the vox pops. Some colleagues did not want to take part or left the training before the vox pops had taken place. The vox pops lasted roughly 1-5 minutes each and were recorded on a Sony Digital Voice Recorder (model: ICD-BX140) and transcribed verbatim. Three questions were asked about the days training including any learnings the colleagues got from the whole staff training day and there were two further questions related to the diffusion and potential

sustainability research questions (Appendix 6). The following table shows the number of colleagues in each organisation that took part in the vox pops.

Table 3.4.4 Vox Pops Received During Staff Days Per Organisation

Organisation	Number of Vox Pops
Arklow Springboard	2
Youthreach Macroom	3
FDYS (Ferns Diocesan Youth Service) Gorey Youth Project/ FDYS Enniscorthy	8
Youthreach Galway & Roscommon	7
Tipperary Regional Youth Services	10
Sligo Community Training Centre (CTC)	9
Carlow Regional Youth Service	6
Swan Youth Service Dublin	7
Total:	**52**

3.5 Data Analysis

A phenomenological approach using thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data (reflective logs, interviews, vox pops and a focus group).

Transcripts were coded iteratively using open and comparative coding techniques by the researcher. Predetermined codes were not assigned; this research was phenomenological, and in order to fully understand the essence of a phenomenon (learning experience) by examining the views of people who have experienced that phenomenon, it was important that the themes emerged organically.

Charmaz (2006) approach was used to analyse the data and the coding of this data required 3 stages:

- Open coding was used which is the initial coding stage; sentences were summarized into one or two words.
- Focused coding was then used to synthesise similar codes
- Axial coding was used to compare codes and for triangulation

In relation to the reflective logs, the themes that emerged from the data were reviewed firstly by each of the 4 blocks of training. Once this had been completed, the themes were then compared across all 4 blocks. Individuals were also examined (3 in-depth) across the whole training to determine if transformation can be tracked at an individual level.

A 'framework analysis' approach describes the themes that emerged from the narrative accounts (reflective logs) that were gathered by the researcher. This process has five stages:

1) **Familiarization**

Reading the transcripts

2) **Identifying a thematic framework**

The use of open and focused codes

3) **Indexing**

Generating themes through open coding and comparing these

4) **Charting**

Focused coding

5) **Mapping and Interpretation**

Once coding was completed on all qualitative data, emerging themes were developed and compared. Themes were grouped into primary and sub themes, and theme memos and conceptual maps were used to track evolving relationships between themes. Techniques were used to group quotes as the themes emerged. This coding procedure was put in place to provide rigor to the analysis process. Multiple analyses were used to allow for the forensic dissection of quotes from text to form themes.

Nvivo was used to store, manage, arrange and re-arrange the qualitative data. It was determined by the researcher that themes and codes might get misinterpreted if relying on Nvivo completely, therefore themes and codes were also handwritten and highlighters were used. The transcripts were uploaded to Nvivo with the codes and subsequent themes put in manually. Nvivo was used for rigor and organisation of data rather than to solely analyse the data.

During the early stages of data analysis, the researcher came up with all codes whilst one supervisor (who was not part of the project team and therefore independent) checked that the codes were indicated by the data. This supervisor had access to the raw data, whilst the other two supervisors (and members of the project team) did not have access to the raw data. Once

the researcher started to form codes and themes, they worked with the two supervisors (who were members of the project team) and revised the codes to tell the story of the data.

3.5.1 Triangulation

Data was collected from different participants (facilitators, youth workers, managers, colleagues and the project team) for the purpose of triangulation, in which the data was compared, contrasted and validated to determine similar findings (Groenewald, 2004). Facilitator, manager, colleague and the other youth workers data was triangulated to the 3 Cases (a, b and c) which were detailed in section 3.4.2 (c).

Case 1 detailed a participant's TL process which featured their reflective logs and interview data with supporting data from the residential participants reflective logs, the facilitators logs and manager interviews. When moving into sustainable factors in the workplace, Case 1's reflective logs and interviews were triangulated with colleagues' vox pops from all organisations, facilitators' reflective logs and manager interviews.

Case 2 and Case 3 featured the participant's reflective logs and interview data triangulated with the managers' interview and colleague vox pops, specific to this organisation. Data from the facilitators' reflective logs was also used.

Validity and reliability were accounted for in the data through the research procedures including the methodological steps used in the research processes, such as the research question, sample of participants and the rigour used for data collection and analysis.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

3.6.1 Consent

As per the guidelines of getting ethical approval (Ref: 15/Dept-HSES/14), informed consent was explained to youth workers at their first training block on the 21st September 2015. Youth workers were informed about: the purpose of the research, the nature of participation, confidentiality procedures, access to the data, the option to not participate and to withdraw from the study and the researcher and supervisors' contact details. Youth workers were given consent forms (Appendix 7 (c)) and 14 out of 16 signed them on the day. Two of the youth workers posted their consent forms a couple of weeks afterwards to the researcher, having obtained approval from their manager. Consent forms were photocopied and a copy was given to youth workers to keep for their own records.

Consent forms were also given to the project team, managers and colleagues before data collection took place (Appendix 7 (a) (b) (d)).

3.6.2 Anonymity

Participants in this research disclosed sensitive information with respect to their employment demographics, their working practices and personal learnings from their experience of the 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-Being' training. It was imperative that participants were assured that the information they gave was held in the strictest of confidence.

With respect to the anonymity of the participants in this research:

1. The Project team consisted of a small team from Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) (n=2), The Men's' Development Network (MDN) (n=1), an Independent Gestalt therapist (n=1) and a representative from the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) (n=1). The facilitators consisted of a representative from WIT and the Gestalt therapist. This team designed the training model and the representatives from WIT, MDN and the Gestalt therapist designed the training content, two of whom delivered it. In an effort to reduce the probability of identifying any member of the Project team in the findings, pseudonyms were used when presenting this data. Quotes were presented as they are, so to speak.

2. The participants who received the intervention (youth workers, their line managers and colleagues) consisted of individuals from a range of organisations. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of youth workers, managers and colleagues.

3. All participants were assigned a code to protect their identity. The participant database with identifiable codes was only accessible by the researcher and an electronic copy of this database was password protected. All data collection paperwork was stored in a locked filing cabinet that only the researcher had access to.

All the information obtained was treated as confidential. No information was provided to any other party without written consent from the participant. Information was used anonymously in the preparation of the project dissertation and other reports for dissemination or in refereed publication. The research team adhered to the 2014 Freedom of Information Act,

) and informed participants of the same.

Youth workers were informed of the anonymity of their reflective logs and interviews by stating that their names would be changed to pseudonyms once obtained and only the researcher would have access to this information. In addition, if an issue emerged in the journals and it was deemed that emotional support was required this was brought to the attention of the facilitators of the training.

3.6.3 Withdrawal from the study

Although there were no physical risks to participating in this project, participants were asked some personal questions. Participants were free to refrain from answering any question or to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence and were informed of this by the researcher at the first block of training in September 2015 and at the staff training days. However as previously mentioned, all data was treated with the utmost respect and sensitivity and was held in the strictest confidence, stored appropriately and reported anonymously.

3.6.4 Integrity

The supervisors, project team and facilitators of this project kept a boundary by bringing in a third supervisor, who was not a member of the project team or involved in the delivery of the training. The third supervisor assisted the researcher with queries regarding youth workers reflective journals, data analysis and any issues effecting rigor or potential ethical implications.

A. Practitioner Researchers

It should be noted that while the researcher is independent and had no role in the delivery of the training programme, two of the co-supervisors were involved in the design of the training model and content and one supervisor was involved it its delivery. As 'practitioner-researchers' both supervisors had given the ethical implications of this considerable thought. Practitioner research is a growing and, the supervisors believe, an essential research field. Advantages and disadvantages to practitioner research have been identified and the advantages of such research, as opposed to external research, includes the fact that the practitioner researcher:

'...will know the most relevant and meaningful questions to ask, that the research is undertaken by somebody who understands the field, that the research is sympathetic towards values within specific practices and the research benefits practice and promotes change'.

(Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010, p. 5)

Practitioners generally want to obtain and contribute to their own professional knowledge therefore it is essential that they are impartial and not looking for any particular findings, simply just to carry out good quality research. There are also ethical issues in relation to practitioner research, particularly their dual role as practitioner with clients and colleagues and then as researchers. To address this, ideally any ethical issues should be identified and worked through before the project starts, however issues can arise throughout the research process so it is recommended that any issues are communicated and a decision be made about whether to continue the study, depending on the severity of the concerns (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010).

B. The Researcher

In relation to the researchers' integrity, as some of the youth workers' journals were quite emotionally in-depth, the researcher decided to seek support to assist in understanding her own feelings around the journals and the potential of the journals bringing up feelings in their own personal life. The researcher attended counselling with the Student Counsellor in WIT for six sessions. The researcher kept a boundary by attending counselling to de-brief from the youth workers' journals making data analysis cleaner. Also, any issues regarding the youth workers journals were addressed anonymously with the facilitators of the training. In addition, the researcher took part in a personal development workshop involving group work to learn more about what it is like for the participants in the group setting and also for their own personal development. The researcher kept a reflective journal throughout the research project. This journal tracked and reflected on experiences such as data collection and analysis, participant interaction, personal experiences in relation to the journals and also how the project developed over the two years.

3.6.5 Data Storage

Most of the qualitative data was collected using an electronic Dictaphone and transcribed verbatim as soon as possible after collection. Other data was sent by email or obtained through phone conversations. Audio files were destroyed and the word file with the original transcription that would identify participants was password protected and accessible only by

the researcher and her supervisors. All data was stored on a password protected cloud data storage area. It was recommended in the WIT Authorship and Data Retention Policy that data be retained for a minimum of five years from date of publication and these recommendations will be adhered to.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the data collected from participants in this research, i.e. the youth workers, their managers and colleagues and the project team (including the programme facilitators), as described in the previous chapter. The findings are presented through 3 case studies: Lucy (Section 4.2), Suzanne (Section 4.3) and Gillian (Section 4.4). Where appropriate, reflective logs and case studies are identified. Specifically, Lucy's story outlines the transformation process that includes, (a) questions being raised, (b) increased awareness and potential for change and (c) moving from awareness to meaningful action. The key elements of the training that contributed to the transformation are; (a) the facilitators (b) the experiential learning (EL) cycle as a framework for training delivery (c) the residential component and setting (d) the training syllabus (e) the power of the group effect and (f) youth workers openness for self-exploration and reflection. Lucy's story shows the impact that a transformation and supportive environment can have if a transformation is nourished in the workplace. Suzanne's story describes a transformation with limited support in her work environment to integrate her learning into practice. Gillian's story describes limited transformation when compared to Lucy and Suzanne and the impact of this in combination with an unsupportive work environment on her capacity to integrate her learning into practice.

4.2 Lucy's Story

"I have started the process of reclaiming myself".

Lucy began the training feeling lost, unsure of herself and lacking confidence in both her personal and professional life. After the first session, her awareness was heightened to the intense and fast pace at which she had lived her life. She realised that she could not sustain this and it was of no benefit to herself or others. As the sessions progressed her awareness grew that she needed to practice self-care and find a greater balance in her life but she was not integrating this and questioned why that was the case.

Throughout the training Lucy uncovered aspects of her relationship with herself including the reasons why she was blocking herself from participating in the group. She connected this to when she was younger in school and her fear of being judged and laughed at if she spoke in class. She also uncovered the difficulties that were going on in her home life and found it hard at times to focus her attention and energy solely on herself and the training. As she

uncovered these aspects, Lucy began to realise that she had choices available to her that could change aspects of her personal and professional life.

As Lucy began to move from awareness into meaningful action, she started to manage herself better in work and create healthy boundaries. She took a step back in relation to supporting staff and being the 'unofficial counsellor' in her workplace. She realised that she could not take on the burden of everyone else's issues, particularly with her own intense and stressful job. So she created a boundary, distancing herself from the issues and problems of other staff members and began to focus on her own self-care. Through this action, the dynamics between her and other staff in the workplace changed and resulted in some tension. However, she continued to maintain her boundary and this enhanced her role in the centre.

The key elements of the training that contributed to Lucy's personal transformation were firstly, the facilitators. They were a significant influence on Lucy throughout the training, particularly when she felt hesitant about contributing to the group. Facilitator 1 had picked up on this and Lucy was taken aback by their intuition and the messages they provided in relation to finding a balance in life. The EL cycle used in the training was another element which had an influence on Lucy as she had the opportunity to reflect and process the exercises provided. The residential component and setting contributed to Lucy's transformation also as it gave her the opportunity to engage in deep reflection which would not have been possible if the training was not residential due to her hectic home life. The training syllabus gave Lucy the opportunity to learn through creative methods which she felt enabled her learning, with the ethos of affective learning supporting her learning through difficult and sad times.

In relation to the group, Lucy initially found it quite challenging and held back from contributing at times as she felt what she had to say was not valuable or worthwhile. As the sessions went on, she noticed how others were being open and honest. She felt there was group support to participate initially and then felt supported when she did participate. She found great empathy, openness and interest in the group which made it a very safe place to share. She also felt like she had really been listened to and what she had to say had been valued, something which was important for her.

Finally, Lucy's openness for self-exploration and reflection also contributed to her personal transformation. She initially held back in the group due to her lack of confidence but as the training went on she found her voice and realised once she was open to the process and

willing to embrace the experience, she could gain a lot for herself. Trust and safety was generated from the group and facilitators too.

Furthermore, Lucy had gained more confidence in herself and her own abilities in her work practice and with this brought renewed enthusiasm and energy. She improved the relationship she had with the young people she worked with and she had more confidence delivering workshops. This was particularly evident in relation to art work as Lucy uncovered her dislike for art activities, stemming from a bad experience in school where she felt belittled. She had carried this with her throughout her life but, as a result of the training, was prepared to explore this further. As she explored this, she was able to work through her own issues and began to enjoy the art activities with her group in the centre. She saw how much she and the young people benefitted as a result.

Lucy also gained significant insights about her gender preferences and how she worked with young girls in her centre. She noted how she expected resistance from them and was able to link this to the resistance within herself which she used as a 'form of protection and security as a child'. She protected herself by choosing to not participate as she was afraid of being judged if she got something wrong. As a result of her discoveries she had developed more empathy and patience for the young girls that she worked with. All of this meant that Lucy's confidence had increased to the point where she had integrated and actioned the facilitation skills she had learned in the training and improved her work practice with the young people.

Lucy's work environment was a supportive setting for her as both her manager and work colleague (who also took part in the training) encouraged and perhaps assisted Lucy's transformation. She had a very strong relationship with her colleague and the training made their 'working relationship much closer'. Lucy also found support from her manager as he gave her the freedom to run workshops that she felt were suitable for the young people in her organisation. He trusted Lucy and her colleague to the extent that he did not question them if they decided to run new workshops or initiatives in the centre. The level of trust and support that Lucy felt in her organisation added to her confidence which positively influenced her work practice.

The themes identified in Lucy's story will be elaborated in the next section with supporting evidence from the reflective logs provided by the 16 youth workers, the two other case study interviews and data from facilitators, managers and colleagues will also be included, i.e. noticing any transformation of youth workers new way of being in the training or in work.

4.2.1 The Personal Transformation of Youth Workers

"I have greatly transformed my way of being and living".

Transformation can be defined as a change between what a person has always assumed to be true and what has just been experienced, heard or read (Mezirow, 2000). Beginning with a disorientating dilemma, a person is provided with an experience and as a result begins to critically examine themselves which leads to self-reflection and questioning aspects of their lives. As they begin this analysis, they start to notice how they were previously and develop knowledge and skills as a result of their new experiences, with the potential for change. They set out a plan of action, whilst experimenting or trying out this new way of being in their lives.

Whilst the stages of transformation are generally presented in a linear format, it is worth noting that they do not necessarily occur in this order and that everyone does not automatically go through all stages or only move in one direction. Transformational learning (TL) is a complex process as individuals attempt to move from self-examination and reflection to action and it is a lifelong journey.

It is evident from the data that many youth workers underwent a transformational process as a result of the training. Many questioned, and critically examined themselves (4.2.1 (a)), increased their awareness and recognition for the potential of change in their lives (4.2.1 (b)) and many integrated their learnings into meaningful action on both a personal and professional level (4.2.1 (c)). These three themes will be discussed in the following sections.

(a) A Critical Examination of Oneself

"Am I fake?"

The training prompted some of the youth workers to critically examine and question their sense of themselves, as some asked questions they had not really considered before. This provoked their curiosity as they began to self-reflect. This occurred early on in the training. Emily was questioning how she presented herself to others and whether or not she was being real, and if she was being real, was this who she really wanted to be? The questions the training had prompted her to ask raised a lot of uncertainty for Emily and she was keen to explore her feelings further as she wanted to address this uncertainty going forward:

"…the big impact for me is self-doubt… is this what I project to people or am I fake? So is the projected me the one I want to be in my positive self?...can you create a new self or is that just a mask? I have lots of questions". Emily

Throughout the training, youth workers also explored their feelings at an in-depth level which some had not done previously. The training had made Suzanne examine her feelings in detail, possibly for the first time, which resulted in her questioning her difficulty in identifying feelings and the realisation that she was not fully in contact with them:

"A huge thing that came out of the course was asking 'what is the feeling behind it?'. I found that difficult in the beginning… I was very heady". Suzanne (Case Study)

Another example of self-examination was when an activity had made Grace question her feelings and responses around an interaction with someone who was indifferent to what she had to say. Grace questioned herself and the different aspects to the training:

"Questions were being asked that I hadn't much considered before… in the communication activity my partner was clearly acting disinterested in what I was saying and I was asked how did it make you feel? I hadn't really given much time to this if it happened before". Grace

Grace was intrigued to find out where it would lead to, how her experiences would progress and also how this would integrate into her professional life:

"I am curious about whether this personal journey will be explored further and how that will sit with me…". Grace

As a result of questions being asked in the training, youth workers began to critically examine themselves to self-reflect and to explore their feelings. They were beginning to become aware of how their experiences on the programme were filtering through them.

(b) Increased Awareness and Recognition of Potential for Change

"…this training has trickled positively down within me and it's only now really that it is starting to happen."

An increase in awareness occurred in a number of ways for many of the youth workers. They started to notice the pace they lived their lives at, they developed a deeper understanding of

their relationship with themselves and others and they also started to realise the array of choices available to them. With these choices came the potential for change.

- **Realising How Pace Facilitates Self-care**

"*I am still living with the awareness of needing to operate at a different pace*".

Many of the youth workers noticed how they sped up to meet the demands of life as they were rushing to get things done and had little time left in the day to practice self-care. As they became increasingly aware of their fast pace, some discovered how they had compromised themselves as individuals and their well-being:

> *"I don't give myself time to sit and think or reflect".* Emily

> *"I am lost. I have gotten so caught up in the necessities of life that I have no time left for me".* Lucy

> *"Work, time and life demands speed me up and make me rush to get things done and I forget to notice how I am doing or feeling".* Ava

> *"I had not realised until I participated in this training how it would impact my well-being. I had been running on empty".* Stacey

> *"I had allowed myself to get too busy and lose sight. I had forgotten to stay in the present and just be…"* Suzanne

The facilitators of the training also recognised how some of the youth workers were not taking care of themselves and how their constant caring for others was draining their energy:

> *"… they* (the youth workers) *are just there for people all the time …they are so unused to any kind of luxury for themselves…this constant giving and keeping up with is just exhausting…it was really palpable in the room…".* Facilitator 2

Gillian recognised the sacrifices she had made by living at this fast pace and how it had affected her relationship with her family:

> *"I had not realised how little time I was giving to myself and other people".* Gillian (Case Study)

Lucy also noticed the impact of the fast pace on her health and well-being and her realisation that all her focus and time spent being busy, compromising her self-care and doing things for

other people, was not only affecting her negatively but was of no benefit to those around her either:

> *"...the more I do, it still doesn't make it ok for everyone and it makes me unwell".* Lucy (Case Study)

As their awareness was raised, a number of youth workers began to notice that they had the option to change this fast pace. They expressed the potential benefits of slowing down their pace, including greater self-care and the ability to cope with demanding circumstances:

> *"In taking time to examine and become fully aware of yourself, your likes and dislikes...we can learn how to live and cope in stressful and emotionally challenging situations".* Ava

> *"It's ok to think of myself more, and if I do, in turn I can mind myself more to be better able and ready for what life throws at me".* Liz

Adapting the pace of one's life, however, was not straightforward as articulated by Lucy. While she was aware of the need and benefits of slowing down the fast pace of her life and focusing more on herself, 5 months post-training however she was still struggling to change. She questioned why she did not make time for self-care in her life even though she knew it was a necessity:

> *"I am aware of but find it very difficult to do. Why? That is a question I am struggling with".* Lucy

Lucy's ongoing struggle of moving from awareness to action is important to note as it highlights the reality of how challenging it can be to change old and learned behaviours. This also sheds light on the complexities of human transformation in that it is an individual, non-linear experience whereby action may be achieved in one area of the person's life while one struggles to change in another.

Awareness was raised for many of the youth workers in relation to compromising their self-care through their fast-paced lifestyles. They became aware of the need to change, which had the potential to positively impact both themselves and others.

- **The Uncovering of Their Relationship with Themselves and Others**

"*I have remembered who I am, I have got back in touch with my authentic self*".

Throughout the training many youth workers uncovered previously blocked or hidden feelings such as anger, fear and grief. Some were surprised and eager to explore these feelings further whilst others did not feel ready to explore them. By uncovering these feelings, however, youth workers gained significant insights about themselves and their relationships with others.

Feelings of anger featured frequently amongst many of the youth workers. Claire identified the ways she had blocked her feelings of anger as she initially tried to push them away but once the anger came to the surface, she wanted to examine it further and the reasons why she felt this way:

> *"...few days later I am still exploring those feelings* (anger), *trying to make sense of where they come from".* Claire

Aoife also uncovered how she used anger to block her feelings of sadness, particularly when she was presented with an activity in the group that she did not like such as drawing or artwork. She noticed how she became frustrated and held back because she was resistant to the activity and consequently she stopped herself from fully participating in the group which caused her sadness. This behaviour also emerged when she was unable to identify her positive qualities and again she became angry. She noticed how she held back in the group which again resulted in her sadness. She discovered that she used anger to mask her feelings of hurt:

> *"I found it upsetting to realise how hard I find it to see what is good about me...I was extremely resistant and found myself getting quite angry".* Aoife

Alice also uncovered her feelings of anger and recognised the degree to which she had been blocking them out. She masked her anger by using the term 'frustrated' however unlike Claire and Aoife, she did not feel ready to explore these feelings further due to a difficult situation that had happened in her life at that point of the training:

> *"I am blocking a lot of them* (emotions) *out as a means of survival at the moment...I sometimes just don't want to think about how I am feeling".* Alice

Alice's resistance to exploring feelings highlights the difficulty and complexity of human transformation and again reiterates that transformation is unique and does not happen for everyone.

Whilst some youth workers uncovered their feelings of anger, others uncovered different feelings and reactions such as Lucy who examined how she was blocking herself in the group. She attributed it to a time when she was younger in school and her fear of being judged and belittled if she spoke up. She blocked her feelings of fear with choosing to not participate in class in order to stop the potential embarrassment she might have experienced:

> *"In order to protect myself I choose not to participate in case I got things wrong and be laughed at or judged".* Lucy

Stacey gained insights into the grief she had experienced since the death of her father, with whom she was very close. She was not managing this grief in a healthy way for herself or those around her and realised that she needed to change:

> *"It was not until I challenged myself with this workshop that I could finally come to terms with my innermost conflicts"* (her grief of her father's passing). Stacey

Beth became aware of her reactions to situations, which were sometimes abrupt, emotional and judgemental. This led to her noticing the judge within herself which perhaps she then projected onto others:

> *"Recognising how I am reacting to a situation allows me the opportunity to make different choices…I need to question why I may be judging someone negatively, and that this can be something in myself that I am not facing up to".* Beth

As many of the youth workers uncovered feelings within themselves, this supported the development of self-knowledge and skill that underpins one's potential for change, with respect to how they are in situations and relationships with others.

Ava gained self-knowledge which resulted in tracking her own process about a relationship that was difficult in her life. She had realised the effect this unhealthy relationship was having on her as it became more and more strained. She found it very difficult to relate to the person and seemed to be slowly detaching herself from the relationship:

> *"…her negativity, manipulation and constant worrying is bringing me down…I am finding it hard to communicate with her and rationalise…it is hurting me to become more distant in my thoughts from her".* Ava

As Gillian uncovered features around her anger and anxiety she also noticed aspects of her partners' anxiety, which she felt were similar to her own. She had linked the anxiety to the guilt and pressure they both felt to be continuously busy and constantly achieving something:

> *"...he was going around like I was, anxious and asking why am I feeling like this and not happy...I would have been the same...".* Gillian (Case Study)

Lucy's insight into her relationship with others was more challenging as difficulties in her home life were brought to the forefront:

> *"I came to realise how much pressure I am under at home...dealing with a very difficult situation almost to the point of despair".* Lucy

It is clear that youth workers uncovered some very powerful feelings within themselves and as a result gained insights into their relationship with themselves. They also gained insights into their relationship with others and developed a new awareness about how they were in particular situations. These insights create opportunities for growth and change.

- **The Realisation of Having Choices in One's Life**

"...*with awareness comes the possibility of reclaiming myself*".

With increasing awareness, self-knowledge and skill, many youth workers became aware of the choices available to them i.e. maintaining the status quo or going against the norm. However, many acknowledged the challenge of not 'playing it safe'. Suzanne had realised the sacrifices she had placed on herself to please others and recognised that she had the option to continue this way of being and living or create changes in her life and was aware of the enormity of this decision:

> *"I could stay on the same path and play safe but there is a huge sense that this is the time for me to make the last big change in my life".* Suzanne

Beth also became aware of her choices and the limitations she had placed on herself. As a result of being aware of options in her life, she had developed confidence to choose:

> *"...(The training) sparked in me a desire to take a step into the unknown and not be held back by a lack of confidence...I now want to explore why I have placed limitations on myself and that I can make changes if I want to".* Beth

As a result of the workshops on identity, facilitator 1 noticed how Brook began to realise the choices available to her and her ownership around this:

> *"...(the collage)* was hanging out of her *(Brook's)* hand...she said "what will I do with this then?"... I said "God I don't know it's your life" and she said "oh it's my life, I better mind it then"...it seemed whatever that did for her, it's like the doors were open, she absolutely had turned herself around".* Facilitator 1

Furthermore, facilitator 2 commented that some of the youth workers realised they had choices in relation to listening to others and the potential benefits of not listening to everything that was presented to them:

> *"...the penny had dropped and them kind of going "maybe I should just stop listening, it's ok to not listen all the time" ...if that's all they get from this entire thing, that would be enough for those people, especially in the line of work that they are in".* Facilitator 2

The realisation that one had choices in life produced strong emotions, particularly for Lucy who realised how much she had deprived herself of time and self-care resulting in feelings of loss and sadness. However, she was not deterred by these feelings and was prepared to take action on her new-found awareness. Throughout the training this intention for action progressed to where Lucy seriously questioned her role in her organisation for the first time in 12 years and was considering leaving her job:

> *"...maybe there are other things I might do...I am more open to the possibilities of what else is outside of here* (work*)".* Lucy (Case Study)

The realisation of having choices gave youth workers a lot to contemplate and produced many strong emotions for some. With choice comes the potential for meaningful action which is critical for human transformation. However, change is not easy to do, especially when it involves undoing a learned behaviour.

(c) Moving from Awareness to Meaningful Action

"…*it's happening by itself*".

This theme describes how many of the youth workers translated the insights they had gained in the training into meaningful action (through making changes) in their personal and professional lives.

- **The Personal Influence of the Training on Youth Workers Through Re-evaluating Their Relationship with Themselves and with Others**

"*I now have empathy for me*".

The training created meaningful action in some of the youth workers' personal lives, assisting them to re-evaluate their relationships with themselves, which in turn re-evaluated and impacted the relationships they had with others. There is also some evidence of the training positively influencing the lives of other people with whom the youth workers had a relationship.

Arising from the awareness in relation to the fast pace of living and its consequences, many youth workers began to allow more space for themselves in their own lives. They noticed the benefits this had on them such as improvements in self-care and self-acceptance. As they integrated self-reflection in their lives, they became more aware of their behaviours, paused and contemplated before responding to situations as opposed to reacting emotionally. The benefits of slowing down and not re-acting as hastily to situations meant that youth workers had lower stress levels, were more confident, were better able to cope with feelings of anxiety and had greater balance in their lives. Beth had previously noticed that she had been quick to react and judge in situations and now, as a result of the training, created more peace and assertiveness in her life:

> "*My way of being in the world is changing…I am operating more on a level where I am calmer, clearer and in control*". Beth

As a result of slowing down and becoming more aware of behaviours and feelings, the youth workers relationship with themselves had changed as they accepted how they felt and no longer pushed away feelings they deemed uncomfortable such as anger and fear. Once these feelings had been accepted, youth workers found that they dealt with, and looked for alternative ways to express them. With this acceptance came reminders of how they treated themselves in the past as Grace, for example, used to criticise herself for feeling a certain way but changed her reactions as a result of the training:

> *"I used to push aside feelings…now though I'd say no it's ok to feel this way or that way and allow myself to sit with it for a moment before moving on".* Grace

Whilst this self-acceptance was continuing amongst some of the youth workers, Beth was surprised at how easily she was integrating this in her life:

> *"I had written down self-acceptance in my diary at the end of the first session…I had forgotten this but in fact it is happening by itself".* Beth

With this self-acceptance, confidence was also gained. Brook felt her confidence was increased due to improvements in her self-awareness and how this positively benefitted both her personal and professional life:

> *"…my well-being and self-awareness has improved that I feel far more confident dealing with my daily duties in work and in my personal life".* Brook

As a result of slowing down, developing greater awareness and factoring self-care and self-acceptance into their lives, some youth workers created healthier boundaries. As Stacey became more self-aware, she realised she had choices and factored a healthier boundary into her life:

> *"I have started to be mindful of my gut instinct in relation to personal and professional situations… I am now practicing when to take a step back".* Stacey

Gillian also created a healthier boundary in her life as she became more assertive and noticed how beneficial this was:

> *"…it has made me think about situations that I don't need to put myself in and saying no is ok…my personal life is already better".* Gillian (Case Study)

Similarly, for Laura, she had developed empathy for herself and made changes that benefitted her as she created boundaries and as a result felt happier and more in control of her life:

> *"…to manage what I can let go of and what I cannot…I feel more empowered within my personal life as I make changes which are beneficial to me…I am happier and as such my relationships are improving".* Laura

As youth workers created boundaries, they noticed how they re-evaluated their relationships with other people, most notably, becoming more assertive. They were not meeting others'

expectations of them and this change was felt by others in their life. Liz had greater patience and awareness of how she was with others:

> *"…(I am) more aware of my interaction with others; tone, words, body language, ways of helping etc. I have greatly transformed my way of being and living".* Liz

:

Liz also noticed her assertiveness and how she was not concerned with other people's expectations or judgements. She continued to do what she felt was right for her:

> *"…now when I say no there is a look of confusion towards me… this was initially a difficult approach…however I feel that it has benefitted me greatly".* Liz

As many of the youth workers became more assertive, they saw the benefits this made in their lives such as being happier and not feeling as drained from taking on other people's problems or expectations. They decided to put themselves first and focus on their own self-care as they created a balance in their lives. Laura was able to separate herself from her work life and no longer felt the burden of her demanding job:

> *"I am not as resentful and neither am I as tired so that which I do take on is better managed".* Laura

The training had also influenced and impacted others in the youth workers' lives. Suzanne used some of the techniques from the training (sitting in a circle and processing questions) with her family when a disagreement occurred which had a positive influence and resolved the argument:

> *"I would advocate the process stuff with them* (her family)*…I even did the 'let's sit around in a circle'… as we were arguing one day at something…it was very powerful but it ended up with my kids hugging at the end of it".* Suzanne (Case Study)

In addition, Gillian had learned to manage her own anxiety better as a result of the training and consequently helped others who were experiencing anxiety also, including her partner. Her own experiences in the sessions resulted in her slowing down in her everyday life as she became more mindful and modelled behaviour which she observed her partner adopting. This resulted in her exploring how he was examining and questioning the reasons behind his own anxiety and linking this to an unhealthy relationship in his younger life resulting in him exploring the choices available to him:

> *"...he* (her partner) *has started to question things and has agreed to go and do some CBT".* Gillian (Case Study)

In their personal lives, many of the youth workers re-evaluated their relationship with themselves through slowing down their pace and becoming more assertive, confident and factoring self-care into their lives. This led to positive changes with themselves and trying out this new way of being with others in their lives also. Integrating awareness gained on the training was not, however, limited to the personal lives of youth workers as they also integrated their learning into their professional lives with significant benefit.

- **The Professional Influence of the Training on Youth Workers**

"…this is not about changing my work load or content, it is about changing how I do my work".

The second theme of meaningful action focuses on how youth workers integrated their learning into their professional practice and managed themselves in work. Youth workers created healthier boundaries and became more assertive which impacted on their practice with the young people, including developing greater empathy and an awareness of their gender preferences.

- **Managing Themselves in Work**

As a result of the training, some of the youth workers recognised how they were operating in an unhealthy way in their workplace and decided to make changes. As per their personal lives, they created boundaries in their working relationships in order to take care of themselves and in turn, give their full attention and focus to the young people with whom they worked.

Laura learned to detach from the issues in her workplace that she could not control or change, such as the responsibility she felt for the negative situations the young people she worked with found themselves in. This was difficult for her initially as her job as a youth worker came with many demands. However, in order to look after herself, she created a boundary between her own personal and professional lives:

> *"...(I) no longer feel the burden of guilt that I cannot remove them* (young people) *from horrible circumstances or fix what has happened to them previously… I am better able to leave it behind me when I finish work".* Laura

Lucy also created a boundary in her workplace as she changed how she was with other staff members. She perceived herself to have taken on the unofficial role of 'staff counsellor' as she was constantly listening, supporting and encouraging staff in her organisation. As a result of the training, she came to realise that she could no longer do this as it was affecting her well-being. She pulled back from this role which changed the dynamics within her workplace and created tension. However, Lucy continued to hold this boundary and saw the benefits it had on her well-being:

> *"I am actively staying away from things that I had involved myself in before…this realisation has taken an enormous amount of pressure off".* Lucy (Case Study)

Suzanne created a boundary in her workplace in relation to her manager. She experienced the atmosphere her manager created as 'toxic' due to her negative energy. She believed this affected her work and hence the young people who used the service. By detaching herself from it, she was able to develop empathy for her manager. Consequently, the relationship improved and her work life was better:

> *"I have detached from her negative energy and things have become so much better…it completely changed the way I was at work".* Suzanne (Case Study)

One of the facilitators was also curious about how Suzanne would manage herself in her workplace given the knowledge of Suzanne's comments about her relationship with her manager:

> *"Her* (Suzanne) *work environment sounds very challenging and I am just curious about whether she can translate this new knowledge, or let's say this old knowledge about remembering herself into looking after herself in her workplace…"* Facilitator 2

Interestingly, Alice had a different take on her boundaries which changed over time. She had previously created an unhealthy boundary as she deemed her personal life private and never to be mixed with her work life. However, whilst taking part in the training she realised that her personal and professional life were interlinked and dependent on each other:

> *"I wear two caps, one professional the other personal and not mix the two. I now realise that the two are mixed and need to be".* Alice

As a result of Alice creating a healthier boundary, her manager noted how this was positively impacting Alice's work practice and her colleagues:

"It gave them (Alice and Stacey) *the opportunity to process some of their own life experiences and in doing that it also impacts on their understanding on the work we have with families, the importance of being in tune with self in order to be in tune with what is happening for those we are working with".* Sandra

Other managers became aware of how some of the youth workers were integrating self-care in their lives through the creation of healthy boundaries with themselves and also the young people with whom they worked:

"Beth came to me last year and wanted to pull back...she'd taken on too much .... she was actually more able to ask for what she wanted and what she needed". Julie

"A student needed a lift to the centre and she (Ava) *was going to bring her in the car... she said: "this person had asked me and before if someone had asked me I'd say yeah I'll do it but I said no and I got that from the course so before I say yes to everything I think about it".* Katie

In addition to creating healthy boundaries in their work life, some of the youth workers also commented on how they trusted themselves more and gained reassurance in the way they had worked previously which led to them being more assertive in the workplace. Gillian became more assertive as she slowed down, was more direct in what she needed and stood up for herself through saying no:

"I never slowed down enough to say "no" really but now I do say "no" and say why I cannot do a certain thing". Gillian (Case Study)

As a result, she felt that she communicated with the young people in a better way which had a positive impact in her workplace:

"...it is about changing how I do my work so I just do it differently, speak differently...as a facilitator and youth worker I have better calming communication skills". Gillian (Case Study)

Charlotte's manager also noticed how her assertiveness and confidence had increased in relation to her work practice, her flexibility with work tasks and how she could potentially integrate this flexibility with her colleagues:

"I see a huge confidence boost in her (Charlotte)… (she) *is more comfortable to go with the flow…Charlotte can show that actually it is ok, we planned to do a, b and c but now it's this…some people are less comfortable when it deviates off the plan but then they haven't got that training".* Diane

Other managers commented on the increase in confidence amongst a number of the youth workers and the positive impact this had on their work practice:

"Claire and Liz have benefitted greatly from it (the training). *They are more effective because they have more confidence and have more self-esteem".* Max

"...it (the training) *has had a very positive effect on those two individuals* (Lucy and Brook)*; it has reaffirmed what they are doing".* Stephen

As a result of the confidence and assertiveness many of the youth workers had gained, facilitator 2 noted how Emily was integrating this in relation to her manager:

"...she (Emily) *was able to go into her line manager and say "well it wasn't ok that that happened in the way that it happened"….there's real evidence there that she is soaking up what she is discovering…"* Facilitator 2

Some managers also commented on how the youth workers were managing themselves in work through integrating aspects of the training with their colleagues and the way in which the training was filtering into other parts of their organisation also such as staff meetings and new programmes being rolled out:

"They (Liz and Claire) *are using the techniques in their everyday work..... it has given them great confidence because they are now familiar with a new technique and concept…it has improved their skills…it is being built into their plans".* Max

"It (the training) *has been very positive for Charlotte and Aoife both personally and professionally…that will knock on positively to some of the team who are more open and who would gravitate to Charlotte…"* Diane

"…(the training) has impacted on our staff meeting that they are able to ground themselves in what we are doing and also it has impacted around reflective practice, to be able to reflect on the work we are doing and to slow down". Sandra

> *"...it* (the training) *maybe has contributed to that* (new programme they are rolling out) *...It might have them thinking differently about how they might implement a part of that programme..."* Amanda

As a result of the training, many youth workers managed themselves better in work through the creation of healthy boundaries and adopting self-care practices. They also trusted themselves more and gained reassurance, becoming more assertive in their practice. This could have led to their ease in integrating what they had learned on the training into different areas of their work practice.

- **Improvement in Work Practice with the Young People**

As the youth workers began to manage themselves better in work, they noticed how their work practice with the young people was improving as a result. Youth workers started to factor the insights and learnings they had gained in the training into their own lives and facilitate these learnings with the young people with whom they worked. For example, through doing her own work on herself and learning to express her emotions freely, Beth learned that young people's social and emotional intelligence was something that she could help nurture:

> *"This process will allow them* (the young people) *to have a better understanding of themselves and gives them the opportunity to apply their learning in their own life if they choose".* Beth

Lucy also realised that by parking her preconceived ideas and notions around her own resistance to activities and the expectations she placed on the groups she was working with, she could fully give herself to the group she was facilitating, which benefitted everyone:

> *"...the more connected and engaged I am with the Trainees the better the learning experience is for them and for me. The greatest gift I can give the young people is to be more fully present and engaged".* Lucy (Case Study)

Furthermore, some youth workers noticed that they had greater empathy for the young people they worked with and began integrating this in their workplaces. Throughout the training, youth workers went through a number of experiences which conjured up very strong feelings and emotions and, as they were discussed at a very in-depth level, feelings of discomfort arose as a result of being in this group setting. Youth workers came to realise that the young people they facilitated in their groups, who had possible behaviour, learning and/or

attendance issues, may have experienced the discomfort they went through at a greater level due to their young age and vulnerability. With this knowledge, youth workers thought they could support and empower the young people going forward:

"I now realise how groups of young people would feel about being put on the spot and speaking in a group". Brook

"...an awareness of how different exercises can really trigger high emotions for young people…the awareness in myself and that awareness I am bringing to my work is really helping to support young people engaging in the group work process". Charlotte

In addition to developing greater empathy, Beth and Laura's manager noticed how they had improved their work practice with the young people through changing their pace in work and becoming more laid back, which had a positive effect on the young people:

"...they (Beth and Laura) *have both become more relaxed… they had started to slow down…not worry quite so much about being a perfectionist around what they do... that has improved the relationships with the students as well to some extent"*. Julie

Other managers commented on how the youth workers were more aware of the influence of their approach and being more present with the young people:

"...it (the training) *has made them* (Lucy and Brook) *more aware of the impact that they can have and their approach can have on young people…"* Stephen

"...they (Aoife and Charlotte) *were both strong on how it* (the training) *affects you when you are really being present with the young people in the groups"*. Diane

In the training, youth workers were also given the chance to explore their experiences of working with young men and young women in their workplaces. They became aware of how they interacted with different genders, with many previously unaware of how they acted or that they had a preference for working with a specific gender. Aoife identified her challenge in working with young men, particularly when they were using overtly sexual language. As she became conscious of this issue, she began to find ways to improve her relationship with young men:

> *"Now that I am more conscious of it* (how I work with young men) *I can work out new ways to challenge it".* Aoife

Similarly, Beth noted her preferences in relation to working with young women as opposed to working with young men. She found working with young men more challenging and said this awareness had informed her work practice as she had found ways to challenge her preferences:

> *"...in future I will check myself when there is an opportunity to develop a relationship with boys in the group, giving more time and attention to them, without judgement or prejudice".* Beth

As a result of the training, youth workers work practice with the young people improved as they had greater awareness of their reactions and interactions with them and developed greater empathy for them.

4.2.2 The Key Elements of the Training that Underpinned its Impact
"The information, guidance and delivery methods are things that will stay with me for my whole life".

Many factors of the training appealed to the youth workers and were identified as contributing factors to the transformation process experienced. The key elements of the training that emerged from the analysis of the data were; (a) the facilitators, (b) the use of the experiential learning (EL) cycle, (c) the residential component and setting, (d) content of the training, (e) the group effect and (f) youth workers openness for self-exploration and reflection. Although all elements function synchronistically, each element will be discussed

Figure 4.2: The Training Components

(a) The Facilitators

"*…the facilitators were powerful, they created such a safe space for everyone to share*".

The facilitators played a significant role in contributing to the transformational process by providing a safe and supportive environment for the group during the training. Many of the youth workers described the facilitator's skills and qualities and their influential nature.

From the beginning of the training, the facilitators intentionally created a slow and relaxed pace within the group. Some youth workers noted the calm nature of the facilitators which assisted the group to engage and share at their own pace. Some youth workers were pleasantly surprised as they felt this pace suited the intensity of the training:

> *"...we are completely immersed and it is quite full on...we get a lot done while at the same time moving at a very deliberate slow pace".* Laura

The slow pace enabled many of the youth workers to really tune into and become aware of their feelings which became more obvious to them as the sessions and slow pace continued.

Whilst some youth workers really enjoyed the slow pace others struggled with the differences between this and the faster pace of their everyday lives. Some felt frustrated and anxious as they were not used to this pace and their lack of control over knowing what was happening next in the training. Ava had her own awareness about why she felt the pace to be 'unusual and frustrating':

> *"...this is due to society's expectation for us to be the human-doing as opposed to the human-being especially in the work setting. I kind of felt like I was dossing!".* Ava

Ava was so used to constantly being busy all the time that she felt the slow pace of the training and taking time for herself meant that she was somehow slacking off and not working.

As the facilitators accepted people for where they were at in the group, many of the youth workers felt they had the option to share as much or as little as they wanted which created a safe, non-threatening environment. The combination of the slow pace and safety created meant youth workers felt supported and found it easier to share and discuss their feelings in the group at an in-depth level:

> *"...they* (the facilitators) *let you take things at your own pace. You aren't pushed to share things that you are not comfortable with".* Aoife

> *"I am overwhelmed by the support given by them* (the facilitators) *and the knowledge shared".* Liz

The project team also commented on the importance of safety in the group that was generated by the facilitators:

> *"Safety in the work and how that safety needs to be created in order for the work to happen because if it's not there the participants will close up".* Project Team Member

> *"Transformation isn't necessarily an easy process, it requires safety and support constantly on offer and there is incredible attention to detail, even making sure everyone knows what they need to know to avoid confusion so all that really matters*

so that people feel safe enough for the challenge that does come with the work". Project Team Member

"If we shy away from the challenging bit nothing happens, it is in that, that transformation happens and they cannot take the challenge unless they feel trust and supported which is a crucial piece". Project Team Member

Throughout the training the group also noticed how skilful the facilitators were in relation to their knowledge around facilitation and their interactions with group members. The facilitators could recognise how youth workers were feeling and provided feedback around analysing what the youth workers were feeling. They were very intuitive as Lucy commented that they had noticed her energy and eagerness to speak in the group even though she had not verbalised this:

> *"I found it amazing that* [facilitator 1] *had picked up on what was going on for me without saying anything".* Lucy

They also assisted youth workers to work through what they were feeling and had good listening and probing skills as they supported the youth workers to explore their thoughts and feelings further. This was particularly evident for Gillian who experienced resistance at the beginning and, at times, throughout the training. Her interactions with the facilitators had brought awareness to her and this resistance began to diminish:

> *"...the more honest I could be with* [facilitator 1], *she could be just as honest with me back and probe me with questions...it is definitely something you have to let happen".* Gillian

Whilst the facilitators' skills were evident throughout the training, they also influenced and provided learnings for many of the youth workers outside of the training. This was clear as some youth workers had integrated certain aspects of what they had learned from the facilitators into their work practice and everyday lives. Emma was influenced by facilitator 1's saying of; 'it's none of my business' and used this to support herself to set up boundaries and look after herself in both her personal and professional life. Similarly, Ava noticed how she started to look after herself by taking a step back from her instant reactions and pausing

before approaching an issue. It was clear that she was highly influenced by the facilitators also:

> *"I sometimes ask myself what would* [facilitator 1] *say or do in this situation".* Ava

The impact and influence the facilitators had on most of the youth workers was obvious as many stated how the information, guidance and delivery methods provided by them were significant and long-lasting. In addition, the facilitator's qualities were also a significant influence on the group as several of the youth workers noticed their empathy and calmness, which was transferred to the group. Stacey noted the calm influence facilitator 1 had on her in the group:

> *"*[Facilitator 1] *makes it very easy to engage with the group...she has a calmness that is infectious...nothing is rushed".* Stacey

The project team also commented on the importance of the facilitators:

> *"The facilitators are key in all that we do and having a Gestalt therapist and when you are going to use that form of methodology* (EL) *and create that kind of environment and address those particular topics that the lead facilitator is absolutely up for that level of work. The co-facilitator also needs a lot of experience too having done their own work and have facilitated groups. The relationship between the two facilitators is really important and that they do their work as a team which is separate to the group".* Project Team Member

The delicate combination of the slow pace, group safety and the skills and personal qualities of facilitators was key to creating the environment in which a transformational process could occur.

(b) The Experiential Learning (EL) Cycle as a Framework for Training Delivery

"*…not just telling us how it's done but allowing us the opportunities to experience experiential learning for ourselves*".

The EL cycle used in the training was framed around Kolb's cycle, with emphasis on the affective domain. Kolb's cycle has four stages; concrete experience, reflective observation, active conceptualisation and active experimentation (see section 2.3.1) and this cycle was used to deliver the syllabus which allowed for sharing and the creation of safety.

EL in the affective domain is subjective and individualistic to the learner and does not happen for everyone simultaneously or at all in some cases. EL requires the 'whole person' to be actively involved in the learning and the ideal environment for this to flourish is in a personal development group setting:

> *"People never learn anything by being told, they have to find out for themselves…*(It is*) so important that any individual is encouraged to directly involve themselves in the experience".* Stacey

In the training youth workers were provided with an EL methodology e.g. roleplay, guided meditation and were given the opportunity to have an experience that could generate an affective response. The exploration of this response provided the potential for learning. Learning could be shared in small and/or large groups which provided opportunities for deepening the learning via reflection, discussion and guided exploration with facilitators.

Suzanne saw the benefits of reflecting as she felt she was given the time and space for significant reflection of her experiences, firstly on her own and then through sharing in the small groups. This process created safety which made her more likely to open up and have meaningful reflections:

> *"We got time to reflect or process the material first and then small groups or pairs where it was safe to share".* Suzanne

Furthermore, some youth workers noted the importance of ongoing reflection of their experiences on the training beyond the formal group setting:

> *"...the processing of the exercises is crucial, that is where the real learning takes place".* Lucy

> *"...things I have thought about, drawn or discussed are still being processed and helping me to have a personal awareness of who I am".* Beth

As the training was over 4 blocks, youth workers got the opportunity to experiment with and test out their new learnings in the group and/or in their lives. They could then come back into the group and share their experiences in this safe setting, continuing the ongoing, reflective and cyclic process of EL.

Youth workers found the EL methodology beneficial and were surprised by how much they had covered and explored within themselves in such a short space of time. Some of the youth workers also found the format inclusive as it catered for creative learners who had the opportunity to express themselves through drawing, artwork and other methods:

> *"I enjoyed the opportunity to learn through creative methods. It allowed me to visually portray my feelings and to explore the inner self".* Charlotte

In the training, youth workers were brought through the EL cycle of experiencing, reflecting, conceptualising and experimentation. It's evident that EL in the affective domain via Kolbs EL cycle framework appealed to youth workers as a mechanism for self-exploration in a safe environment.

(c) The Residential Component and Setting

"I feel completely removed from the outside world".
The physical setting coupled with the residential component were identified as essential contributors to the training. The training setting was a holistic education centre which was formerly an old convent set in private grounds. The centre had a retreat like atmosphere and feel; it was peaceful and tranquil. Youth workers could avail of the beautiful gardens, on-site relaxation room and were nourished with beautiful, wholesome food. It was an ideal location to carry out this type of experiential training and specifically the self-reflection required for TL.

Some of the youth workers also commented on how the residential aspect aided their learning:

> *"The fact the training is onsite has definitely enabled the learning…*(I) *can give myself wholly to the training without guilt or distraction".* Laura

> *"…being able to just immerse myself in each of the blocks has really enabled me to give my full attention to the training".* Aoife

> *"I am getting the time to process it and discuss the sessions which is helping the way I'm learning".* Grace

The residential component allowed youth workers to continue their reflections in the evenings and interact with others in the group also, outside of the training room.

The setting itself facilitated the slow pace of the training as youth workers were removed from the fast pace of their everyday lives and were completely immersed in this setting. It provided the appropriate environment for youth workers to focus on themselves fully in the training:

> *"I was on a journey to a lovely, peaceful place and the setting really made me look forward to going to the training. It was like a re-charge for me and to re-focus".* Alice

> *"I feel completely removed from the outside world".* Laura

Project team also commented on the importance of the residential component of the training:

> *"The residential component is also key where they are wrapped and this aids this work to happen and that leads back to the safety that is being created and that is the foundations for the group as well".* Project Team Member

> *"The location, environment that they are in, we have experience of this facility so we knew what was there and what was on offer. I believe that place really supports that kind of space for growth and transformation to happen".* Project Team Member

> *"The participants also talked about the food on Teach Bhride and it is part of that thing of being looked after and minded".* Project Team Member

Furthermore, a number of youth workers used the residential setting as a support mechanism for themselves (see section 4.2.2 (f)).

The atmosphere of the training setting, coupled with the residential component of the training, were factors that contributed to youth workers TL. Both elements gave the youth workers the space and time to really focus on themselves and their learning without distraction from their daily lives.

(d) The Training Syllabus

"I had a fire in my gut, it definitely brought something up for me that took some time to let go off".

The training syllabus was varied and included content on bullying, fear, projection, transference, and aptitudes and passions amongst others (see Appendix 8 for an overview of

the training topics). Some of the topics brought up strong emotions for a number of the youth workers.

The topic of bullying generated a lot of reactions and feelings for many of the youth workers as some came to the realisation that they had the capacity to be a bully themselves, even those who had been bullied previously. Gillian gained significant insights around her ability to be a bully by pushing people away when stressed by time pressure. Instead of being open with others, she would react hastily by distancing herself from people. She had compromised herself in a way that was unhealthy for her and those around her:

> *"I was feeling under pressure at times to give people my time that I just didn't have…rather than saying that I acted in a way that would push them away".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian gave an example of this in the workshop in regard to her relationship with her mother and exploring her ability to bully her:

> *"She* (Gillian) *knew from the get go that she had the capacity to bully her mother and the subtly at which she was doing it… and this was the opportunity to explore it and she did, my goodness wholeheartedly and she felt it".* Facilitator 2

Facilitator 2 also commented on the influence of the bullying workshop on Laura and her relationship with her children:

> *"…by the time she* (Laura) *finished leaving us she could articulate about how she believes she bullies her children and how she just isn't ok with that…"* Facilitator 2

Stacey also gained meaningful insights as she had been previously bullied and was able to link that experience to the positive place she was in her life at present. She also noted her capacity to be a bully despite the fact that she had been the victim of bullying previously:

> *"I could never have seen myself as a bully until this exercise but it made me realise bullying has many forms and we are all capable of doing it".* Stacey

Furthermore, the topic of projection also generated reactions and meaningful experiences, as outlined by Ava. She examined her feelings and realised that she had previously been very quick to react to situations and did not give herself the opportunity or time to really slow down and assess things. Once Ava decided to do this, she discovered aspects about herself

she had not realised before and was taken aback to realise that as she picked out positive qualities in others, this meant that she had to have these qualities within herself.

> *"I was really affected by this* (workshop) *as I selected my grandmother as the person who had a great influence on me and was shocked to discover how alike we were".* Ava

Beth was similarly taken aback by this experience in the projection workshop:

> *"Coming to the realisation that these* (qualities) *have to be in me in order to recognise them in someone else was a surprising and reaffirming experience. I found this empowering and positive.* Beth

Whilst Ava and Beth welcomed the topic of projection, this was not the case for everyone. Laura was resistant to the concept of projection as this made her realise her own anger around taking on other's faults as hers and she was not happy as a result:

> *"…the concept that which we dislike in others is simply a reflection of that which already exists within yourself…I find this very difficult to internalise…I feel quite aggrieved that other's faults are to be taken on by me as mine too".* Laura

The content of the training also brought out strong emotions for a number of the youth workers such as sadness as they realised how little emphasis they had placed on caring for themselves. During the exercise on identity, Suzanne became upset as she realised that she spent so much time focusing and looking after others that she had lost her own identity:

> *"…this* (workshop) *made me very sad, I couldn't identify one thing that was me or represented who I was".* Suzanne

As a result of the content of the training, Brook also realised she needed avenues for self-care. Through one of the workshops (passions and aptitudes), she began to link her passions for being with family, people and nature in providing her with energy for her demanding occupation and how as a result of time spent doing those things she had accounted for her own self-care:

> *"I looked at what makes me 'me' and why I love what I do".* Brook

It is evident that youth workers were provided with a meaningful syllabus delivered by experienced facilitators. They were given time to reflect on specific topics which prompted

insights for many of the youth workers. It is evident that the syllabus delivered contributed to the learning experience as it offered youth workers an opportunity to explore sensitive issues that promoted deep reflection.

(e) The Power of the Group Effect

"It can be illuminating as people come to their own realisations they bring me to mine".
The group setting is another important factor that contributed to the transformational process experienced by youth workers. At the start of the training most of the youth workers were cautious sharing in the group. While the facilitators were the initial architects of the group safety, over time, members of the group built upon that safety via their honest sharing. Some were inspired by the honesty of their peers to share themselves. Often members related to their peer's story which facilitated both their learning and level of sharing as they learned they were not alone in their experience. There was an evolution in the group dynamic as the training unfolded, as youth workers shared at a deep level and group safety and trust deepened.

When the group first came together they were in the 'forming' stage as youth workers outlined their fears about the depths the training might go into and their challenges in being open in the group. They were reluctant to share in the beginning as some described how they felt self-conscious and were uncomfortable with so much focus on the self, which is normal in the initial stages of group formation. The training challenged the youth workers to be more open about their feelings which Alice found difficult, particularly in front of her colleague, as she liked professional boundaries. In the beginning, the training made her feel exposed and perhaps she did not participate as much as she would have liked to:

> *"I struggled with going through these experiences with my work colleague & possibly held back a little because of this".* Alice

Grace also found it difficult to be open in the group as she described herself as a private person who never went too deep with her emotions and feelings:

> *"I found it quite uncomfortable focusing so much on myself...especially in front of a group of strangers...I felt vulnerable and exposed which I normally don't allow myself to feel".* Grace

As some of the youth workers struggled with their uncomfortableness in the group, the facilitators became aware of the movement in the room amongst many of the youth workers, which disrupted the whole group:

> *"I have never ever sat in a group with that much movement going on, even during processing, people just getting up and doing something…I was agitated in myself around that kind of activity and that misunderstanding about what permission had been given about movement..."* Facilitator 2

However, this disruption and movement had settled down by the second block of the training, perhaps as the group got more comfortable with one another:

> *"I did notice this time round….an awful lot less movement in the room… it just wasn't evident…."* Facilitator 2

As the group continued to explore in-depth feelings and became more open with one another, they moved into the 'storming' phase. Ava noticed, early in the training, how some really embraced the exposure the training had brought whilst others held back, perhaps to protect themselves in the group. She felt annoyed as a result of these differences and felt it impacted the group negatively:

> *"...some are only dipping their toe in and others are under the water…it takes away from the overall experience".* Ava

Gillian noted how essential it was to have the right people in the group to create safety and assist this learning:

> *"…it is so important that the group is right…if you had one person that wasn't right it could really ruin the learning for a lot of people".* Gillian

Whilst Gillian noted the importance and influence of individual group membership, the facilitators commented that Gillian's anger in one of the training blocks had the potential to negatively impact the group. Gillian's reluctance to acknowledge her feelings and her subsequent difficult behaviour in the group as a result of her anger created a negative atmosphere in the group:

> *"...she* (Gillian) *didn't have the capacity to kind of even know anything had happened in the group...no acknowledgement or concept that the tantrum had a ripple effect in the group".* Facilitator 2

This is significant as it highlights the importance of the group dynamic that is affected by individual participation. Non-participation by even one group member may create an unsafe environment and inhibit participation by all. Therefore the selection process of youth workers for this group was vital to ensure all are open to self-exploration and create optimum opportunity for learning and growth.

Whilst there was disruption in the group at times, the facilitators were also aware of the positive influences of particular group members and the potential for others in the group to relate to them also:

> *"...she* (Alice) *is hugely important in the group even though she actually doesn't say an awful lot but the bits she does say are just gold and for others to hear...it's like they sit up and listen".* Facilitator 1

Safety began to generate in the group as they moved to the 'norming' stage as youth workers noticed other people being more open and honest as the training blocks continued. This provided reassurance and made them feel more at ease to share. The previous feelings of discomfort seemed to reduce and the atmosphere in the group became safer as trust was being built:

> *"...as time went on, I discovered that people were being themselves and were sharing honestly. This allowed me to relax and I did not resist the reflecting and sharing...".* Beth

> *"...the openness and honesty which participants have displayed in the group is remarkable. This definitely encourages me to participate to the best of my ability...it feels like a very safe place to share".* Lucy

> *"...(I) appreciated other people's openness and honesty so I felt I owed it to them to be as open as I could".* Grace

As members of the group started to feel more comfortable with one another, they found that they could relate to others in the group too. Other people's willingness to let down their guards and express their feelings made it easier for those in the group to engage and share

their experiences. Youth workers did not experience judgement of their contributions and they felt reassured when they saw others going through similar issues and emotions. They did not feel alone in their uncertainty and struggles:

> *"...to hear other people experiencing the same emotions and difficulties as me, it is very comforting".* Emma

> *"I would have never dug out as much stuff as I did unless I heard other people's stories".* Gillian

> *"I learned more from listening to the other participants than I would have if I had been just processing things on my own...we were all building on each other's experiences".* Suzanne

The deep sharing and exploration that was required of this training meant a high level of support was needed in the group setting. Many of the youth workers became more open and could relate to one another and therefore it was clear that the group dynamics were very strong due to the support and safety created by the group for its members. Youth workers felt they were able to share and discuss topics at a very profound level:

> *"...it is a safe space so I know I'm not going to be judged on what I say which is allowing me to dig deeper in my exploration of my learning and enhancing and deepening that experience".* Grace

> *"The group is very supportive which enables me to experience a level of comfort during the experiential work...I feel listened to which is imperative in this type of training".* Liz

> *"I felt very comfortable and safe in the circle. This allowed me to truly discuss how I was feeling".* Charlotte

As the training went on, the group became very close and noticed their progression as they shared their inner most thoughts with each other. It was clear that this group formed a close bond over the blocks of the training:

> *"We started off as complete strangers... I never in a million years thought I would open up my inner most thoughts to a group of strangers but here I am doing so".* Stacey

It is evident that the group developed to the 'performing' stage as the group purpose and training objectives were achieved.

> *"I think the term 'Community of Practice' is great to describe this because there is something about the community of the 16 participants and for each of them at day 1 I would have hoped that they would feel like they are part of a community that have shared this experience together".* Project Team Member

The group was a significant factor that contributed to youth workers personal transformations as a positive group dynamic was created which resulted in an exploration of feelings at a very deep level. The group went through the stages of group development; forming, storming, norming and performing. The group dynamic would not have been as successful if youth workers had not been ready to explore themselves at an individual level. Therefore youth workers openness for self-exploration and reflection played a key role in both the group development and in their individual transformational process.

(f) Youth Workers Openness for Self-exploration and Reflection

"…*when I give myself over to it, I learned something about myself*".

Youth workers willingness to be open to the process of self-exploration and reflection was also a contributing factor to their personal transformations. In the first training block, Beth found the group challenging due to her quiet and reserved nature and felt this was not going to be accepted and, as a consequence, felt threatened. These feelings resulted in her becoming resistant and closed off to sharing in the group for fear that she would be judged by others which perhaps resulted in her not getting as much out of the experience for herself in the beginning:

> *"...it was the sharing that bothered me. I don't like people judging me, so I struggled with this in my mind".* Beth

As the training went on, Beth noticed that her struggles started to diminish as she was becoming more open for self-exploration and reflection and this was supporting her to overcome her initial struggles:

> *"The reflecting alone, sharing with others and then looking at what I have discovered about myself is a gradual way of discovering things about myself. I become braver in what I will share".* Beth

Lucy also experienced resistance in the group initially and held back from contributing due to her lack of confidence and fears that what she had to say was not valuable to the group. However as the training blocks went on, Lucy realised that once she was open and willing to embrace the experience, she could gain a lot for herself:

> *"...when I give myself over to it, I learned something about myself...I took something from every single session".* Lucy

The facilitators of the training also noticed how many of the youth workers were open for self-exploration and reflection, particularly in relation to exploring their resistance and aggression. For example, Aoife clearly identified her resistance in the group which resulted in her willingness to be open:

> *"...she* (Aoife) *described herself as the resistant one but she named her resistance all the time...*(she) *was able to say just exactly where she was at even when others were in a totally different place".* Facilitator 1

As a result of her willingness to be open in the training, Suzanne had the opportunity to explore her feelings around her aggression:

> *"..I loved her* (Suzanne) *energy when she wanted to go all the way over to aggression... she was like no no I am too passive I need to do a bit more of this* (work on aggression)..." Facilitator 2

The facilitators were taken aback by the willingness of many of the youth workers to explore their feelings openly, particularly in relation to challenging workshops such as bullying:

> *"they* (the youth workers) *were all set to explore a bully out there, not themselves but also to explore how they have been bullied... they absolutely embraced it and I didn't have any sense of anybody resisting or trying to deny that".* Facilitator 1

However not all of the youth workers were open to the idea of self-exploration as the facilitators noted how Ava was initially defensive in the group:

> *"...her* (Ava) *defence was so clear and she was totally unconscious of that ...will she access the formula or something for the melting?...she has hardened herself against herself...".* Facilitator 1

However, Ava's defensive demeanour did begin to reduce by the last block of training and she began to be more open, perhaps as a result of being part of the group:

> *"I've really met a softness in Ava and I was really impacted with how she heard the comments that people were making to her about how they experienced her on the training…. she was met with love and she was really overwhelmed".* Facilitator 2

A project team member also emphasised the importance of openness for self-exploration and reflection that went into the selection process of youth workers for the training:

> *"There was quite a recruitment process to select these 8 organisations and the NYCI went back and checked to see if people were open for this so we had a good handle on the degree of openness amongst participants in the room and how much they were up for the challenge".* Project Team Member

Furthermore, the residential element of the training also had an impact on some of the youth workers' openness to self-exploration and reflection. The residential setting offered opportunities for oneself which both Aoife and Charlotte took:

> *"When I am stressed out I know that I have a time out coming when I go to a block of training".* Aoife

> *"...having the opportunity to go away from my daily life and come into the space...allows me to switch off...I will now be making more time for myself to get away".* Charlotte

Youth workers willingness to be open to self-exploration was significant as some found they struggled initially due to their lack of readiness for this type of training. Others noticed that if they were open and willing to embrace the experience they could gain significant insights for themselves.

4.2.3 Factors That Supported Integration in the Workplace

The personal transformation of youth workers and the key elements of the training that underpinned this impact have been addressed. Now the focus is on whether a TL experience alone is enough to integrate this training into practice or if workplace support is also required. During the staff training days, many of the colleagues in the organisations mentioned the importance of a 'whole organisational approach' which would involve support from all levels for the training's implementation i.e. staff training and managerial buy-in. In the findings this

'whole organisational approach' or 'workplace support' can be identified under two areas; the importance of managerial buy-in and strength in numbers, both of which will be discussed.

(a) Importance of Managerial Buy-in

The importance of managerial buy-in was a key component in the training as managers had significant influence in relation to whether the training would be integrated into their organisations and whether managers would enable further staff training. Stephen was one such manager who was eager for further staff training and was willing to fund it:

> *"...for all of the staff to go through it* (the training) *because it benefits them as a person… if we need people to go on more training, we will find the money".* Stephen

Some of the colleagues in the organisations were also eager for further training:

> *"...the feedback and everything coming back from it* (the training) *is ultra-positive....we are just hoping that the course will be rolled out so perhaps two more of us at some point can avail of it".* Sligo Colleague

> *"Maybe we could approach it on a whole school basis…so at least for management down to staff that we'd all know what was happening, if we were to move it further on. So it's not just a couple of staff knowing what it is… we'd be familiar with the techniques and the value of it".* Galway Colleague

Another part of managerial buy-in was encouraging the implementation of the training:

> *"...if we are encouraged to apply it* (the training), *we will apply it....it needs to be supported and it needs to be something that the rest of the organisation are kind of facilitating and they are encouraging and using. If we are supported to do it I am sure we will do it".* Wexford Colleague

> *"We have very supportive management and staff that would be on board to try it out so I think it* (the training) *would work very well in our centre. We are always open for new challenges…".* Sligo Colleague

> *"Our CO would be very supportive…I think she would back it… hopefully she'll take that* (the training) *on board and implement it into our work plan".* Tipperary Colleagues

"I am sure our manager would give us that space and time to reflect so that we can be better ourselves, we can then be ok to go and impact on other people". Sligo Colleague

"[The manager] recognises the value of this type of work, he is extremely supportive and trusts Brook (her colleague) *and myself enough to know that he wouldn't question us".* Lucy (Case Study)

Lucy felt trusted and given the freedom to run programmes in her organisation:

"I had thought of a programme I wanted to do but had never ran in the centre before and I said will we give it a go? The management said yeah so that's the level of support here". Lucy (Case Study)

"....the good thing about working here is that, as my skills have changed, I have been allowed to do different things in the centre". Lucy (Case Study)

Some colleagues talked about specific ways the training could be implemented in their organisations through building it into staff meetings and in peer groups, which management would be responsible for:

"...there needs to be something more concrete done to support it (the training), *it's something that is built into supervision sessions or it's built into staff meetings. There definitely needs to be more of a structure. When you see there is such a positive vibe about today, you actually do want it to be used and kept going".* Tipperary Colleague

"We are supposed to have peer groups, we haven't had them in a while but it is something I would like to go back to, around the time of our staff meetings would be good so you could give people the time to discuss issues like boundaries and qualities, give them a safe space....We have just started a group supervision process which is very new for us". Tipperary Colleagues

As previously noted in section 4.2, Lucy went through a significant transformational process and also had a very supportive organisation which aided her personal transformation. Lucy had substantial workplace support as her manager Stephen was very aware of his role in the

organisation in relation to supporting staff and it was clear that there was support from the 'top down' with the Board of Directors and good links with the NYCI:

> *"...the first job I have here is to support the staff...my management style would be to try and bring people with me rather than force things on people".* Stephen

> *"... they* (Board of Directors) *would be very supportive because they know that it* (the training) *benefits the learner and the calibre of the learner that we get here".* Stephen

> *"We work very closely with the National Youth Council in all of our training anyway and I hope they take it* (the training) *on board and that we can work with it here".* Sligo Colleague

The facilitators also commented on Lucy's supportive work environment, particularly in relation to her manager:

> *"...anytime I think of her* (Lucy) *and Brook, and Stephen* (their manager) *is somewhere behind the scenes, they are just so phenomenally supported in their workplace to bring their own personal, transformative piece back into their work".* Facilitator 2

> *"...it's like he's* (Stephen) *creating the space for that* (transformation) *to be enhanced with the work that we did with the two of them* (Lucy and Brook)*... there was a space already there just waiting to get the next piece, that transformation".* Facilitator 1

Although not every staff member in the organisation felt that level of support from management which can impact on how the training is potentially diffused and sustained:

> *"I am delighted he* (manager) *was beside her* (Facilitator 1) *to hear all of this* (self-care for the youth workers) *because he is the very man that says move, move, move, get them out, do what you have to do, so it's nice to hear someone is thinking beyond that".* Sligo Colleague

As a result of the training, there was the potential of culture change within this organisation:

> *"...it* (the training) *isn't something that just fades out...hopefully it might be something that becomes the culture of the place".* Sligo Colleague

The high level of support Lucy felt from her organisation in relation to this training, and in general, meant that there was also a positive impact on the young people who attended their centre, as the manager saw the benefits of the training for the young people in the organisation:

> *"I would be very open to trying to support the staff to what makes their job better, easier… in a roundabout way that helps the trainees get where they want to get to…"* Stephen

During the design process of the training, the project team put a lot of time and effort into how youth workers could be further supported when they brought this training back into their organisations. A main factor of this was support from management and the project team were very aware of the importance of managerial buy-in for the potential diffusion and sustainability of the training programme:

> *"I see them* (managers) *as being an enabler or dis-enable…".* Project Team Member

Project team members also noted the difference in support from managers in the organisations:

> *"…some managers are not at all tolerant of this, others are tolerant and others embrace…".* Project Team Member

> *"in terms of expectations for them* (youth workers) *now is that they can somehow hold onto what they got for themselves personally and that they can bring that into their workplace as best they can…this will vary dramatically across the 8 organisations due to the level of support or lack of support that they are getting within those organisations, particularly from management".* Project Team Member

And the impact of managerial buy-in on the young people:

> *"it is really important that the workers are supported in filling up their vessel and capacity of self-care which will ultimately benefit those that they work with and for* (young people)*".* Project Team Member

Some of the project team members commented on what they have learned going forward in relation to managerial buy-in and support for this training:

> *"... the lessons learned would be how important it is for managers to support their workers, it is crucial...we didn't really suss out their managers, it was enough that they were releasing them for the four blocks... I think expectations have to be realistic in relation to the environment that they are going back into".* Project Team Member

> *"...the selection of the organisations and managers needs further consideration as it is very difficult on staff getting all this amazing stuff and then going back into an unsupportive workplace, perhaps vetting managers in some way".* Project Team Member

The importance of managerial buy-in was an obvious factor in this training and the importance of managers' to enable further staff training, encouraging implementation of the training, the potential for cultural change and manager seeing the benefits to the young people. Without this support it would be very difficult to diffuse or sustain the training within an organisation.

(b) Strength in Numbers

The relationship between the two work colleagues who attended the residential training was also noted as an important factor in workplace support. Lucy had a very strong relationship with her colleague Brook, who was also involved in the training. Their relationship was built on significant trust and support:

> *"...it was very brave of her to trust me and come with me* (to the training)... *she* (Brook) *would have no experience being a part of that type of setting...it* (the training) *has actually made our working relationship much closer".* Lucy (Case Study)

> *"we travelled together for every session* (of the training) *which gave us great time to mull over things and in the weeks following the training. It was great to have someone who knew what you were on about".* Lucy (Case Study)

> *"She* (Brook) *is very encouraging and supportive too because if I said I am thinking about trying out a mindfulness class with the group she would say yeah give it a go".* Lucy (Case Study)

Brook also noted the strong relationship she had with Lucy:

"My colleague Lucy is my rock solid support". Brook

Lucy and Brooks' colleagues further commented on their strong relationship in relation to keeping the training going and how approachable they were for other colleagues in the organisation in relation to the training:

"Lucy and Brook will keep us on our toes to make sure that what they put into it is not just going to be a course done and a box ticked…they (Lucy and Brook) *are great candidates for keeping the ball rolling with things….they would be our go to people on it* (the training)*".* Sligo Colleagues

Colleagues in other organisations also noted the impact the two workers who took part in the residential training had in their organisations and the ripple effect this had on them:

"I think the 2 (Beth and Laura) *that did the training will bring a lot to the place".* Galway Colleague

"…having feedback from Charlotte and seeing how she will implement it (the training) *in her groups and maybe how the rest of us can maybe do it as well* (to continue with the training)*".* Dublin Colleague

"I think there is support there because Grace and Emily came back really positive". Tipperary Colleague

"Emma in particular would be very into self-care and reflective practice and Gillian is a strong advocate for it now as well so having two people driving it and championing it for us will definitely drive it forward. I think we will start doing it more and start looking out more for each other as well". Carlow Colleague

"The two from each organisation was really important and that came from previous trainings of how important it was to have that peer support…it has been a real plus for how this has unfolded by way of support". Project Team Members

"I think the key is the two people from the organisation as with one there is isolation but two can talk to each other and discuss stuff, they can explore ideas and bounce off each other about things they might like to explore with young people". Project Team Member

Lucy's workplace was considered to be the optimum environment for the training to be diffused and sustained as the whole organisation (Board of Directors, manager and colleagues) were in-sync with the importance and benefits of the training. There was clear and definite managerial buy-in and she also had strength in numbers through her very strong and trusting relationship with her colleague Brook and the ripple effect this had on other colleagues in her organisation. This all led to a positive impact on the young people in her organisation.

4.3 Suzanne's Story

"I have experienced a dramatic change in the way I am responding to my co-ordinator…the course cut the link between me and her".

Like Lucy, Suzanne also experienced a personal transformation and integrated this into her work practice in a variety of ways however, unlike Lucy, Suzanne's workplace was not a supportive environment to facilitate this integration.

Initially, in the training, Suzanne struggled to identify her feelings and felt she was always putting others above herself. After the first block it was clear a transformation was beginning as the collage exercise had raised a lot of questions for her about her own personal preferences for things such as food, clothes, television programmes etcetera and her sadness around her lack of awareness about her identity. She was willing to explore these feelings further and remained open to the process of the training.

Over halfway through the training, Suzanne commented that she was experiencing upheaval and pressure in her life but did not go into specifics. She noted that things were difficult for her but was optimistic that her reactions and responses to difficult and pressurised situations had improved as a result of the training as she felt better able to cope. By the end of the four blocks of training, Suzanne felt she cut the negative cycle of worrying and over-thinking and had a greater awareness of her feelings. She noticed improvements in her relationship with her husband and children as she began to advocate the process work she had learned in the training with them and was more open and honest about her feelings. This training gave Suanne the opportunity to 'remember who she was' as she previously had an awareness of this but buried it with being busy.

In relation to her work environment, Suzanne felt that something needed to change with respect to her relationship with her manager. In the training she noted that she was

frustrated with a work situation and had identified that this was a result of her 'lack of assertiveness'. As one of the workshops in the training was based on assertiveness, Suzanne felt like she had the opportunity to explore her feelings about the work situation which was frustrating her and allow the emotions surrounding it to rise to the surface. This supported her to work through her feelings and look for a solution. She also planned how she would tackle this difficult situation when she got back to her workplace.

After the training Suzanne saw her work situation differently as she had experienced a 'dramatic change' in the way she responded to her manager. Suzanne noticed how her reactions to her managers' behaviour were changing, even though her manager was not changing her own behaviour. She detached from her managers' negativity and things became much better in Suzanne's workplace. The course 'cut the link' between her previous feelings of being frustrated to gaining empathy for her manager and it changed the way she was at work for the better. She understood the threat to her job as her manager had disagreements with other staff members which resulted in them subsequently leaving the organisation but Suzanne was no longer afraid of this. She felt the training had supported her to develop her assertiveness and acceptance of a situation she could not change.

Sometime after the training, Suzanne changed jobs and began working in an organisation with adult learners. To mark her 11 years working with her organisation, Suzanne's former manager wanted to organise a lunch for her yet did not contact her to arrange this. Suzanne was undecided about contacting her previous manager but as she experienced a change in how she dealt with behaviours and reactions that were unhealthy for her, she decided to call into her old workplace and chat with her manager about the lunch. This was a big step for Suzanne.

Suzanne had come a long way as a result of the training and was really excited and looking forward to integrating what she had learned with her new group of learners in her new workplace. She had the confidence and belief in herself to make this happen. Management in her new organisation were open to the way of learning incorporated in the training but there was no direct support or supervision for Suzanne which she accepted. She felt she had enough confidence, passion and motivation within herself to continue her learning.

Suanne had very clearly linked how her increase in awareness and knowledge about herself had changed the way she was in both her personal and professional lives.

The transformational journey experienced by the youth workers has already been detailed in section 4.2.1. As stated previously, this case study will focus on the integration of Suzanne's learning in practice with limited managerial support as opposed to Lucy who had clear and strong managerial support. However, similarly to Lucy, Suzanne did have a good relationship with her colleague who took part in the training with her, using this as a support mechanism in work when needed.

4.3.1 Workplace Integration with Limited Environmental Support

As mentioned previously, Suzanne commented that her relationship with her manager was difficult and although she experienced a significant transformation, integrating her learnings in practice in an unsupportive work environment was challenging. Initially there was support from Suzanne's manager Katie as Suzanne had expressed an interest in wanting to do the training and her manager agreed and allocated time for her to do it:

> *"… she* (Katie) *did allow me 3 days off from work to attend* (the training) *and I could not have gone without her permission".* Suzanne (Case Study)

Katie was also supportive in relation to her awareness that both herself and other members of staff in the organisation required more training:

> *"I need training and the staff need more training… I consider that* (further training) *really important because I need to know and have a clear knowledge in terms of this* (training), *what it is about and then I will run with it".* Katie

> *"The main reason I went up* (to the managers day) *is because I have asked Suzanne and Ava to go on this course and I am following through on this and attending it because it is the right thing to do".* Katie

Facilitator 2 also noted Katie's support of the training:

> *"I was quite impressed by Katie… she even said that she would be open and willing to come to the two day manager days and pay for it herself and really wanted to see how the training could be translated…"* Facilitator 2

A colleague in this organisation also noted Katie's support for the training:

> *"Katie is hugely supportive of all of these types of approaches so I've full confidence that the training will be something that we regularly touch on again in staff meetings and revisit it and see how it's going for people and are they using it".* Cork Colleague

It was clear that Katie was supportive of the training however she was uncomfortable with certain aspects of it, which came to light on the staff day in her organisation:

> *"I don't like being in a big circle and I was delighted today because Facilitator 1 said I don't have to share in the big circle…".*Katie

As a result of this, she realised how young people might feel when in a large group:

> *"…. that* (awareness of her uncomfortableness) *is good because then you are aware of what is it like for the student".* Katie

Facilitator 1 also noticed Katie's initial discomfort during the manager's day but, as the day went on, she seemed to change:

> *"Katie initially seemed anxious and out of touch with what it* (managers day) *was about and sort of half way through something else different had happened within her and she was on board and was enthusiastic…her energy changed and then there was another woman".* Facilitator 1

In the workplace, Suzanne also noticed her managers' discomfort, particularly when Suzanne would come back from the residential training as she had greater awareness of her feelings and was becoming more assertive:

> *"… she* (Katie) *chose to avoid me because I was asking her how she was feeling and she just couldn't cope with that. So this training does affect managers".* Suzanne (Case Study)

> *"My boss* (Katie) *has commented on the change* (her assertiveness) *and I was totally honest with her about my efforts to be more assertive…not sure if she thinks that's a good thing though!".* Suzanne

Katie's discomfort with some parts of the training contrasted with Suzanne's openness and willingness for the training and for her own self-exploration. Facilitator 2 gave their thoughts as to why there could be tension in relation to Katie and some of her staff:

"...there is a very soft, human side to her (Katie) *that possibly her staff don't meet very often…"*. Facilitator 2

As Suzanne felt a lack of support from her manager, she used other mechanisms for support in her workplace such as her colleague Ava. Suzanne and Ava had a good relationship and, as with Lucy, having a colleague present within an organisation was supportive and particularly relevant in an organisation with limited managerial support:

"I found it good to have another colleague on the training….it makes it easier to implement, it is easier to talk about things…it is lovely to have someone to bounce ideas off of". Suzanne (Case Study)

Also similarly to Lucy, Suzanne used the support of her colleague when trying to integrate the training in her organisation and in dealing with management and other colleagues and in her organisation also:

"In terms of dealing with colleagues and management, it is obviously easier if there is two of ye, that you are not just the lone ranger". Suzanne (Case Study)

After the training Suzanne moved organisations and job roles. Before leaving, Suzanne managed to achieve a significant amount in her organisation as she integrated the training, despite her unsupportive manager. Her work with the young people had improved, as did her relationship with her manager, she was open and accepting of her move to a new role in a different organisation and was willing and eager to continue her learning. The intensity of Suzanne's personal transformation supported her to leave her unsupportive work environment. She felt supported within herself to take her transformation into her new workplace and her passion for this way of working and her determination to continue this transformation in her life was clear:

"I don't think I will lose this (training) *on my own because now I will be doing this training with other people* (in her new workplace) *and continuing the awareness because even if I facilitate it, I am still a participant and it will mean that it will become more natural and everyday in my life. Because of the course, I started on this journey and I am not coming off now, I am staying with it"*. Suzanne (Case Study)

Suzanne did not feel that she required the support from management to continue to use this training in her workplace:

> *"It would be great if managers bought into the whole thing, it makes it easier but they don't have to love or agree with it as long as they are willing to release their staff because once staff are doing it then the change will happen itself anyway".* Suzanne (Case Study)

Suzanne had limited support from her manager to integrate this training however she did use the support from her colleague who also took part in the training. This, in addition to Suzanne's strong transformation and her personal passion for this way of working, as a result of her transformative experience, meant she was able to support herself when changing job roles and was eager to continue on her learning in her new workplace.

4.4 Gillian's Story

"I am strong enough to keep this within me and use it in my whole life but managers have influence on it".

As a result of the training, Gillian stated that she experienced a transformation which she integrated into her work practice. The initial block of training created a lot of awareness for her in relation to her feelings around anxiety, anger, sadness and fear. She stated that she gained significant insights in relation to the pressure she felt to give people time she did not have and she began to emphasise and action self-care more in her life. She felt calmer and less stressed with fewer arguments in her home life as a result and improvement in relationships with both her partner and daughter.

Gillian's work environment was very stressful, disruptive and unsupportive. After the manager's day, Gillian was 'livid' as her manager did not have a good experience and from then on her manager heavily criticized and mocked the training within the organisation. Gillian brought this anger to the group and did not express or process her anger in a healthy way. She did not acknowledge the impact her anger potentially had on the group dynamic. This presented a possible clash between Gillian and the facilitators' perspectives of her transformation and could be useful in highlighting the limitation of transformation.

Whilst her manager was very unsupportive, Gillian did find support initially in her colleague who was also a part of the residential training. However, after the managers' negative reaction to the training, the support from Gillian's colleague diminished as she withdrew from the training leaving Gillian to attend alone. Gillian noted how she gravitated towards colleagues in her organisation who liked to work experientially and those who had an

interest and were involved in health promotion programmes and soft skills in the organisation. She used these colleagues as a mechanism for support.

Gillian stated the difficulty of trying to implement a training programme in an organisation in which a manager berates the training. However, despite this, Gillian did implement aspects of the training within her organisation in a subtle way. As a result of the training, she devised an initiative and carried it out in her organisation. Gillian demonstrated leadership qualities in sports teams throughout her life and clearly extended this to her work environment as she took charge of and implemented an initiative she knew her manager would not support if it was linked to the training.

Gillian had a limited personal transformation with no environmental, managerial or colleague support to integrate the training within her organisation. Her manager was destructive as she mocked and was overly negative about the training and simply did not want the training in her organisation. Gillian tried to gain some support from her colleagues which was difficult, considering the strong influence of her manager. She tried covertly to integrate certain aspects of the training within new programmes she was carrying out, without attracting attention from her manager.

4.4.1 Workplace Integration with No Environment Support

The lack of support Gillian received from her manager, Amanda, in relation to the training perhaps was a result of the confusion her manager felt about the training and during the managers' day. Amanda displayed a high level of resistance and did not feel that the training matched with her organisation and she seemed to take offense about how certain questions were asked on the managers' day. Gillian commented that there was some managerial support in her organisation in relation to her being allowed to attend the training:

> *"she* (manager) *does support me to go to the training…but it is for me, not her. She understands that and if it makes your work better then grand and there is support in that way".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian's manager Amanda also commented on the support she believed was present in her organisation:

> *"...we always have a big commitment to continuous professional development; we have supervision and support for staff".* Amanda

The managers' day proved to be a crucial factor in relation to how Amanda perceived the training and its integration (or lack of) within her organisation. Amanda felt confused on the managers' day about what the training entailed for herself and her workers and queried the relevance of it to her organisation:

> *"It* (managers' day) *was all about what are the barriers to you rolling this* (training) *out in your service… I came away from it not really knowing what they wanted to roll out…. were they trying to achieve that everyone in the whole centre provided an SPHE* (Social, Personal Health Education) *service? I didn't really get an answer to that".* Amanda

Amanda felt that her staff were capable of integrating this training and seemed to take offence when the facilitators discussed what barriers there might be in relation to integrating the training:

> *"I don't think there is anything from stopping us rolling it out* (the training)…*they* (the staff) *don't see any barriers here…I don't understand why we keep getting asked about it* (barriers to rolling out the training)". Amanda

> *"There was no recognition of prior learning or prior experience or where we were currently at…"* Amanda

She was also uncomfortable with the slow pace of the managers' day:

> *"I'd rather a mix of methodologies and approaches in a service than slowing everyone down…it's quite frustrating for some people to be in that sphere and it doesn't suit everybody".* Amanda

It was clear that she did not want to continue on with the training:

> *"…it* (the training) *wasn't right for us…I feel that it is trying to be very transformational where maybe it doesn't need to be… I wouldn't get involved* (in further training)*".* Amanda

Facilitator 1 also noted Amanda's resistance to the training:

> *"Amanda remained caught in an anxiety about what this* (the training) *was and that she had boxes to tick and that this* (training) *didn't tick any box".* Facilitator 1

As a result of Amanda's perceived negative experience on the managers' day, this had a damaging effect on the rest of Gillian's experience of the training. It was very difficult for Gillian as she experienced ridicule and criticism from her manager in relation to the training:

> *"the manager was nearly ringing from the car when she got out of the managers' day which was so unprofessional and childish and get a life…there is a lot of giving out about something for the sake of it here ".* Gillian (Case Study)

> *"She* (manager) *was going around the organisation saying that it* (the training) *is rubbish and 'you are not doing anymore of that stuff"…that is what I was hearing".* Gillian (Case Study)

> *"….it is now in my office, my manager berating the training".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian had a lot of anger in relation to the managers' day which she expressed in the residential group setting. She felt disheartened about the effort she had put into the training as she knew how difficult it would be to integrate the training into her work practice now the manager was completely against it:

> *"I was really angry because it* (the managers' day) *just wasn't a right fit for her* (manager)*, it was like they were all forced to go and they felt like they had to buy into it…"* Gillian (Case Study)

> *"I felt she* (manager) *had undermined every piece of work and time I had put into it* (the training)*".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian felt hurt and undermined that her manger was berating the training and felt she had to ignore the negativity that was present in her organisation. Unlike Lucy and Suzanne, Gillian's colleague abandoned her as she stopped going to the training, further adding to her lack of support within her organisation and to her feelings of hurt:

> *"…*(Emma) *just totally withdrew from the whole process the minute that happened* (managers' day) *and she hasn't attended* (the training) *since then".* Gillian (Case Study)

> *"A three way conversation would come into my office with the manager and Emma* (her colleague)*…I continue to work at my desk and just ignore it".* Gillian (Case Study)

> *"If people don't get it* (the training) *or they are not in the right place all of your stuff gets really undermined and you feel like an idiot".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian continued to attend the training despite Emma's withdrawal and her managers berating which meant something was pulling Gillian back to the training.

Once Gillian had worked through her anger and despite the lack of support within her organisation, she wanted to continue her personal transformation and integrate what she had learned in the training:

> *"The lack of support from my manager doesn't affect how I am integrating this training, I don't think they have to support you in it…*Gillian (Case Study)

> *"I do always have this training inside me and there are things that are just imbedded in me now and don't leave me".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian discovered a way to subtly integrate the training within her organisation without suffering the repercussions from her manager:

> *"The manager is supportive of the new initiative* (being carried out in the organisation) *but I would never say to her it is because of the training because she wouldn't get it. I am still doing the work that I want to do and getting the benefits from it for me and the organisation. I just don't go there with her, I stay away".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian also found support from other colleagues who she knows have an interest and buy-in to the training:

> *"One of my colleagues who did the MA in SPHE in WIT, we would always chat together becasue she is so passionate about SPHE and that type of work".* Gillian (Case Study)

Although Gillian's manager Amanda was not interested in continuing with the training, she did comment that she was in favour of the training in certain circumstances, particularly at an individual level:

> *"…if I had somebody who I felt was operating flat out and was in danger of burn out I would consider sending them on it* (the training) *so that they would look at their own*

self-care…rather than the organisation needs to be transformed, which is where I thought this was coming from…". Amanda

Amanda sees the value of the training for self-care which is what Gillian is doing in how she managed to stay on the training and use it covertly in her organisation. However, it is clear that Amanda has no intention of supporting this training to be diffused or sustained and is completely resistant to any kind of change in her organisation. Amanda's perception of the 'organisational transformation' demonstrates that she feels the training is suitable for colleagues who require support but her organisation, and by extension, herself, do not need support, therefore she completely rejected the training. Her berating and mocking of the training is significant as it shows she was highly resistant to transformation coming anywhere close to her. It seemed that as long as Amanda was not asked to be a part of the training, she approved of similar training to be carried out in her organisation. Certain training was seen as 'acceptable' despite being very similar to the 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-Being' Training. There was a lack of understanding perhaps on Amanda's part:

> *"There was a staff day for resilience training* (in the organisation) *and there was a lot of mindfulness in it and looking after yourself. It is not the same thing as the training* (facilitation skills for health and well-being) *but they* (management) *don't see it like it is from the same page, just because it has a different name on it or different types of facilitation or different wording".* Gillian (Case Study)

Gillian faces significant challenges to integrate the training and is operating covertly and seeking support from other colleagues in the organisation who have experience with similar trainings. This is admirable as it demonstrates a commitment to what she has learned and the value she places on this learning. In the absence of further training support and personal transformation in the long-term, Gillian may struggle to keep her learning alive under such negative environmental circumstances. From the facilitators feedback, Gillian is not as far down the road of her transformation as she thinks she is and while Gillian has gained a tremendous amount from the experience, it will be very difficult for her to continue to progress her transformation to a level within a work environment that berates the training. Interestingly none of the colleagues in this organisation commented on managerial support in the organisation which again shows that there is no managerial support for this training within this organisation.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings through 3 case studies with each identifying their individual transformations, the key elements of the training which contributed to these transformations and the environmental support or lack of support to integrate these transformations into practice.

The training prompted youth workers to critically examine and question their sense of themselves, exploring their feelings at an in-depth level. Their awareness increased through noticing the fast pace at which they lived their lives at as they developed a deeper understanding of their relationship with themselves and others and realised the array of choices available to them. With these choices came the potential for change. Many of the youth workers then translated the insights they had gained in the training into meaningful action as they made changes in both their personal lives and work practice.

There were six key elements of the training that underpinned its impact which connected with one another. They were the facilitators, the use of the experiential learning (EL) cycle, the residential component and setting, content of the training, the group effect and youth workers openness for self-exploration and reflection.

Factors that supported youth workers' transformations and integration in the workplace were the importance of managerial buy-in and strength in numbers which involved the relationship between the two colleagues who attended the residential training and the ripple effect this had on other colleagues in the organisation. The findings show the importance of environmental support to diffuse and sustain training, particularly if the TL experience is limited, as was evident in case study 3.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This study sought to investigate the following research aims:

4) The personal impact of the training on the youth workers.

5) The degree of organisational diffusion achieved, if any, by the training programme.

6) The sustainability of the organisational diffusion achieved, if any, by the training programme.

The following discussion outlines whether those aims were achieved with focus on three key areas; a) the transformational impact of the training on the youth workers, b) the training factors that contributed to that transformation and c) the diffusion of the training into the youth workers' organisations.

5.2 Youth Workers' Transformation

It is evident from Lucy, Suzanne and Gillian's case studies and the corroborating evidence that varying degrees of transformation occurred within the youth workers. Within the context of the training programme in this study, transformational learning (TL) describes the process that supports youth workers to challenge previously imbedded interpretations of the world, enhance their self-awareness and focus on the real meaning behind an experience that empowers them for future action (Christopher et al., 2001; Taylor, 2008). This process, from a shift in thinking leading to increased awareness and empowerment, has been represented in Mezirow (2000) 11 stages of TL. The findings in this study illustrate the impact the training had on the youth workers both personally and professionally. This impact (i.e. transformation) manifested in the workers by the way they were questioning themselves (section 5.2.1) and their greater awareness of how they were operating in the world around them (section 5.2.2). The impact was also demonstrated by the translation of their insights into action (section 5.2.3). The three stages identified in this study mirror some of Mezirow (2000) stages which will be discussed.

5.2.1 Questioning

It is clear that the first three stages of Mezirow (2000) model are represented in the 'questioning' data of this study. The stages from Mezirow are a 'disorientating dilemma; 'a self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame'; and 'a critical assessment of knowledge, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions.

Mezirow (2000) first stage in the TL process is a 'disorientating dilemma' which describes an experience a person encounters that perhaps results in them questioning their understandings and frames of reference. Taylor (2008) states that this can cause a person to really question the core of their existence. This was evident in the early stages of the training as some of the youth workers started to question themselves, expressed their uncertainties and self-doubts they had about the training, their work and themselves. For example, during the initial stage of the training the slow pace resulted in many of the youth workers feeling uncomfortable, anxious and frustrated for two main reasons. Firstly, they were not used to this pace and secondly, they did not have control over knowing what was happening next in the training. Some struggled to settle into the slow pace of the training in contrast to the fast pace they lived their everyday lives at. One youth worker commented that they felt it was to do with societies expectation to be constantly busy and 'on the go' and that she felt the slow pace of the training and taking time for herself meant that she was somehow slacking off and not working.

The training also prompted many of the youth workers to ask themselves questions they had not considered before as some felt the pace of the training was not what they were used to "*I kind of felt like I was dossing*". It is clear from this example that this disorientation did not involve simple self-questioning but also involved the examination of feelings arising from it which concurs with Mezirows second stage 'self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame'. This involves the examination of past behaviours and experiences. It is clear that the youth workers began to examine the pace of the training and how it was 'serving them well' resulting in further self-examination of the pace of how they live their own lives. As a result of this self-examination many began to explore their feelings of anger, sadness and grief around dilemmas such as difficult relationships with others and their lack of self-care.

During the training, youth workers were given the opportunity to deeply reflect on their assumptions and knowledge about themselves and their practice. Following the examination of their feelings of anger, sadness and grief some realised how little they had cared for themselves over the years and devoted most of their time to others in both their personal and professional lives. These findings corroborate with stage 3 of the TL process which is a 'critical assessment of knowledge, sociocultural or psychic assumptions'. Mezirow (2000) stated that this stage focuses on how the learner examines their role in society and it could be inferred that the youth workers' examination was about their role in their work or how they

did not want to be seen as the counsellor or 'fixer' anymore. This also involved the youth workers assessing their assumption about the role they take up in their personal lives e.g. the caregiver and mothering role, always there for others and putting others before themselves.

With regards to this stage, Mezirow also pointed out how the period of critical self-reflection may be difficult as feelings (fear, anger and sadness) from the earlier stages are more than likely still present. It could pose difficulties for the learner if they are unable to deal with and move past the difficult feelings that arose as a result. Two points to note from this study were firstly, despite the uncomfortable and unfamiliar feelings arising for many of the youth workers as a result of the disorientating dilemma, they were intrigued to discover where the training would bring them and were willing to explore their feelings in detail which is essential for TL. Secondly, it is important that the providers of the training are aware of the challenge and take into consideration the openness and readiness of any learner who is embarking on a training programme that involves a process such as this. Within this research, openness to self-discovery (see section 5.3.6 for further detail) was part of the selection process for youth workers on the training.

As a result of questions being asked in the training, youth workers began to critically examine themselves, to self-reflect and to explore their feelings. They became aware of how their experiences on the programme were filtering through them. The findings in relation to questioning support existing literature as they were corroborated through Mezirow (2000) first 3 stages of the TL process. One can deduce that the data presented about 'awareness' mirror some more stages of the Mezirow TL process.

5.2.2 Awareness

Data from the 'awareness' theme of this research aligns with Mezirow (2000) stage 4 and 5 of the TL process. These two stages are the 'recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change' and the 'exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions'.

Stage 4 is clearly mirrored in the findings of this research whereby there is an increase in awareness for many of the youth workers about the pace they lived their lives at. This increase in awareness (pace they lived their lives) did result in recognition of discontent. For example, awareness was raised for youth workers when they began to realise the fast-pace they lived their everyday lives at had compromised their self-care and in some cases, affected

relationships negatively. It is apparent that this 'recognition' is not just from a cognitive level but also from an affective domain which is reflective of the earlier TL stages and the depth that the youth workers went to within themselves. The depth of this process possibly enabled them to move into other phases of the transformational process, giving them optimum opportunity for change. It is also worth noting that stage 4 of Mezirows' model also states that the process of transformation is shared and that others have negotiated a similar change. Many of the youth workers became aware of and found support and reassurance in the group setting to continue their transformations and could relate to other's experiences (section 5.3.5 provides further discussion on the group effect).

The support and safety generated in the group set up youth workers for stage 5 of TL to 'explore options for new roles, relationships and actions' (Mezirow, 2000). For example, youth workers expressed the potential benefits of slowing down their pace, having greater self-care and a greater ability to cope with demanding circumstances. In addition to pace, many youth workers explored their relationship with themselves and others as a result of their awareness being raised also. Youth workers also realised the choices available to them as they had the option to maintain the status quo e.g. *"I could stay on the same path and play safe"* or go against the norm e.g. "*the training sparked a desire in me to step into the unknown and not be held back by a lack of confidence*". To be more specific, Suzanne gained awareness of the sacrifices she had placed on herself to please others and recognised she had the option to change this. The realisation of having choices gave youth workers a lot to contemplate and produced many strong emotions for some which links in with stage 5 of Mezirow (2000) TL process. With choice comes the potential for meaningful action which is critical for human transformation. However, change is not easy to do, especially when it involves undoing a learned behaviour thus highlighting the complexity of human transformation.

Exploring options for change can be difficult for the learner as they are faced with possibilities they may not have known were available to them before and with this might come feelings of fear, anger or sadness. For example, Lucy's awareness grew about her need to practice self-care and find a greater balance in her life. She was also aware that she was not integrating this and questioned why that was the case. She was still struggling to change, 5 months post-training and move from awareness to action which highlights the challenge of

human transformation. This demonstrates again how complex TL is and how challenging some learners might find the process.

As the youth workers moved from awareness to meaningful action, it is fair to say that stage 6 of Mezirow (2000) TL process of 'planning a course of action' more than likely occurred, although was not explicitly outlined in the results.

5.2.3 Meaningful Action

Data from the 'moving from awareness to meaningful action' phase of this research aligns with the remaining stages of Mezirow (2000) model of TL: stage 7; acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing ones plans', stage 8; 'provision of trying new roles' , stage 9; 'building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships', stage 10; 'a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective' and stage 11; 'altering present relationships and forging new relationships'. It is important to note that in this discussion there are three stages which are parallel to one another; stages 7, 8 and 9 as learning in action reinforces and builds upon previous stages. However in the interest of clarity these stages, along with the others will be presented a linear format.

As the youth workers moved from awareness into meaningful action it was apparent that Stage 7 of Mezirow (2000) TL process of 'acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing ones plans' was occurring. As their awareness about the pace of their lives grew, many of the youth workers began to allow more space for themselves in their own lives and noticed the benefits of slowing down and not re-acting as hastily to situations as they had lower stress levels, were more confident, were better able to cope with feelings of anxiety and had greater balance in their lives. For example, Beth noticed that she had been quick to react and judge in situations and, because of the training, she put into practice not reacting and developed her assertiveness skills as she no longer pushed away feelings she deemed uncomfortable. This resulted in creating more peace, calmness and control in her life.

Along with skill acquisition some youth workers reviewed their role in work which centred on the creation of healthier boundaries in their lives both personally and professionally. This somewhat resembles stage 8 of Mezirow's TL theory which is the 'provision of trying new roles' as youth workers reviewed the perception of their roles. For example, Laura reviewed her role with the young people with whom she worked as she became aware of how she was possibly over-involved in aspects of their lives that she had no control over. As a result of this

insight she reviewed her role and learned to detach herself from instances in her workplace that she could not control such as the negative situations the young people she worked with found themselves in. Another example is when Suzanne said she created healthier boundaries with her manager by detaching from her managers negativity. Because of reviewing their roles and creating healthier boundaries, many youth workers felt that they managed themselves better in work and adopted self-care practices leading to the build-up of confidence to integrate learning into work practice.

This confidence coincides with stage 9 of the TL process of 'building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships'. Youth workers trusted themselves more, were more self-reassured in the way they had worked previously which led to them being more assertive in the workplace as they built their competence in relation to assertiveness. Gillian was more assertive as she said 'no' more often and as a result of her self-care practices, she felt she communicated with the young people in a better way. Charlotte's manager noticed an increase in her assertiveness and confidence in relation to her work practice and flexibility with work and colleagues in her organisation. Other managers also commented on an increase in confidence amongst youth workers and the positive impact this had on their work practice. This demonstrates that the transformation was noticed not only by the workers but their manager also.

As the youth workers built their confidence, assertiveness and trusted themselves more, this led to integrating what they had learned back into their lives for a possible positive outcome which describes stage 10 of the TL process of 'reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective'. Youth workers felt they created healthier boundaries and noticed how they re-evaluated their relationship with other people. They were not meeting others' expectations of them and this change was felt by others in their lives also, for example Liz had greater patience and awareness of how she was with others. As many of the youth workers integrated what they had learned into their lives, they saw the benefits of such as being happier and not feeling as drained from taking on other people's problems or expectations.

The training had also influenced and impacted the youth workers relationships with themselves and others which concurs with the final stage in the TL process of 'altering present relationships and forging new relationships'. For example, in her personal life,

Suzanne used some of the techniques from the training (sitting in a circle and processing questions) with her family when a disagreement occurred which had a positive influence and resolved the argument. The training also resulted in some the youth workers changing their approach with the young people with whom they worked. For example Beth realised by working through some of her own emotions from the training, she found she could help nurture young people's emotions also. Lucy had awareness around her own resistance and preconceived ideas and expectations she placed on her groups of young people which altered her relationships with the young people and meant that she could give herself fully to the group she was teaching. Youth workers also had greater empathy for young people and related more to how a young person might feel when going through their own TL process. With this knowledge, youth workers felt they could support and empower young people going forward.

Over the course of the training it is clear that a transformation occurred for the residential youth workers and this transformation mirrored Mezirows 11 stages. Youth workers integrated their learnings into their personal and professional lives in a number of ways; through slowing down the pace of their lives, creating healthier boundaries, re-evaluating the relationship with themselves and others and as a result gained a number of benefits such as lower stress levels, greater assertiveness, confidence and more self-reassurance. It is important to note that TL is a very complex process and is specific to each learner. In the training not every learner went through all stages of TL process at the same time and it does not necessarily mean all workers went through all of Meziorws stages either. There are many important factors that contributed to youth workers transformation which will be discussed in the next section.

5.3 The Training Factors That Contributed to Youth Workers Transformation

As previously described in section 2.7.1, a specific training model was developed and a number of findings emerged about this specifically. The components which feature in the original training model are; a) the facilitators, b) the ethos (which encompasses the methodology and the syllabus), c) the residential aspect, d) the duration of the training and e) the selection of youth workers. It is evident from the findings that these factors and environmental supports were identified as key components that contributed to the TL experienced by the youth workers. Notably the duration of the training was not identified as being a significant factor.

The factors that contributed to youth workers transformation were; the facilitators, the experiential learning (EL) cycle as a framework for training delivery, the residential component and physical setting, the training syllabus, the power of the group effect and youth worker's openness for self-exploration and reflection. These factors are inextricably linked but for the purposes of this discussion, these factors will be discussed separately.

5.3.1 The Facilitators

The results from this research clearly demonstrate how the youth workers perceived the facilitators playing a pivotal role in their learning experience and subsequent transformation. This is supported by Mezirow (2000) when he discussed the facilitator-learner relationship. Mezirow (2000) also states that this relationship requires support, trust, openness and confidence in and within the learner, for personal transformation. This is supported in the findings of this study, where many of the youth workers commented that they felt safe and supported in the group to explore their feelings at a deep level and the facilitators played a key role in creating this safety. DeSalvo (1999) also reiterates the need for facilitators to have the ability to support learners going through the TL process as it can be very emotionally challenging for some. In this study, the facilitators established a safe and supportive group environment, which was required to explore and deliver an emotive syllabus at a deep level (Lam, 2011). It is worth noting that the Project Team reported the importance of having the 'right facilitator' also. For example, one of the facilitators was a Gestalt psychotherapist and this was a safety measure given the nature of the syllabus and EL cycle in the affective domain. It is imperative that the right facilitators are selected for this kind of work as they are key to creating the environment for learning and guiding the group through the TL process. Defining the 'right' kind of facilitator is difficult to prescribe but it is evident from the literature and this research that certain characteristics (qualities and skills) of facilitators are critical to creating this safe environment.

Qualities that emerged from this study involved the facilitators' ability to show empathy to learners and to be calm within themselves when working with the group. Youth workers noted these qualities and how this positively influenced the group to become calmer, making it easier to engage. These findings concur with existing literature that found that facilitators would ideally encompass qualities such as empathy, calmness and patience (Christopher et al., 2001). It is worth noting that qualities such as self-confidence, self-reassurance, and being sincere are also ideal for a facilitator to possess (Christopher et al., 2001) and these terms did not emerge explicitly within this study. Considering the broader context of the comments the

youth workers had about the facilitators on this training, one could infer that these facilitators may encompass these qualities. For the qualities of 'self-confidence' and self-reassurance' it is possible that learners were focused on what they got from the facilitators rather than describing what qualities the facilitators had i.e. they didn't necessarily consider the 'self' perspective of the facilitator.

In addition to qualities, the facilitator also requires qualifications and experience in facilitation and soft skills including communication and patience. In this training programme it was the intention of the facilitators to create a slow and relaxed pace within the group. The data shows how the youth workers mirrored this pace and tuned into the experiences they were going through and how they were feeling. Some embraced the slow pace whilst others felt uncomfortable due to the significant difference between this pace and the fast pace of their everyday lives. The facilitators accepted youth workers at their different levels of TL and provided a safe, non-threatening environment for them to share. The combination of the slow pace and the safety created meant that youth workers felt supported and found it easier to share in the group at an in-depth level and learn in the affective domain, which is required for TL.

Other skills facilitators should encompass include active listening, probing skills to explore learners thoughts and feelings further, good judgement, be significantly informed and experienced in group dynamics (Mezirow, 1990) and have the ability to form good relationships with learners in the group (Giles & Alderson, 2008). These skills are evident in these findings as youth workers noted the positive relationship and influence facilitators had on them and how they used some of their sayings in their everyday lives such as 'it is none of my business'.

Furthermore facilitators are also required to have a deep knowledge of facilitation and group work, be open to their own personal development and engage in reflective practice (Heron, 1999). In this study, the training was co-facilitated by an experienced Gestalt therapist who was chosen to lead the facilitation and another experienced facilitator. It is worth noting that a Gestalt therapist engages in supervision and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and the co-facilitator engages in CPD also. Youth workers also recognised the abilities of the facilitators to pick up on nuances in the group and recognise how youth workers were feeling without them necessarily verbalising it. Another notable skill, is the facilitators' ability to manage disruptive environments (Benson, 2001). It was evident in the data the skill level of

the facilitators due to the management of Gillian's strong resistance in the group and how they supported her in relation to her anger around the managers' day and trying to minimize the effect of her anger on the group dynamic.

It is clear in both the literature and the findings the influence and impact facilitators can have on learners in a group and the skills and qualities they require to guide the group through the TL process. In the literature and the findings, facilitators' skills feature far more than their qualities and further research is required in relation to facilitators' qualities.

5.3.2 The EL Cycle as a Framework for Training Delivery

The methodology used in the training was based on Kolb's EL cycle, with emphasis on the affective domain. The programme session plans (see Appendix 8 for an overview of the training topics) showed that youth workers were guided through the EL cycle of experiencing, processing, generalising and applying as outlined in the literature (Kolb, 2015). The EL cycle catered to the youth workers needs as it supported them to have an experience in the affective domain.

In the literature, Dewey emphasised the quality of the experience in the EL cycle (Ord, 2012) and, in this training, the youth workers were provided with experiences in which they were actively involved such as roleplays, guided meditations and artwork. This had the potential to generate an affective response and the exploration of this response provided the possibility for learning. The variety of methodologies that were used in the study catered to the different needs of learners. This was also evident in the Educating Families to Achieve Independence in Montana (EDUFAIM) programme as education materials catered to the learners needs as visual and audio equipment was used as well as 'hands-on' activities based on food preparation, household cleaning, repairs, and roleplays and mock interviews for future employment roles (Christopher et al., 2001).

Once youth workers engaged with the experience, they were encouraged to process and reflect on this through small group sharing and larger group processing which deepened their learning further. The data in this study clearly evidenced how youth workers noted the importance of these reflective processes. Some of the youth workers further commented on the importance of small group sharing as they noted this setting to feeling safe to share and reflect on their experiences. This is echoed in the literature as Dorr (2011) stated that at certain stages in the group, group members can relate to one another and have the opportunity to share their feelings about others, usually in the small group setting. As the training went

on, youth workers got the opportunity to experiment and test out their new learnings in the larger group also and share their experiences. Even though the reflective logs after each block of the training were primarily for the purpose of the data collection, it was evident that the youth workers saw the value in continuing the reflections beyond the group setting.

According to Kolb (2015) as learners reflect on their experiences, they also attempt to understand the experience they are going through and relate it to other aspects of their life. This occurred in the study in relation to how youth workers were able to relate the topics covered in the training to areas of their lives and explore their feelings around this. Once a training block had ended, experiences were still being processed and generating awareness amongst the youth workers which was required for TL. Training programmes in the literature (Addleman et al., 2014; Meyer, 2009; Seed, 2008) also noted the importance of reflective practice as learners were asked to keep journals which aided their expression of feelings and helped to make their experiences feel more valid. Moon (2004) and Schwartz (n.d.) also reiterated the importance of reflecting on an experience. It is worth considering embedding reflective journals in future training programmes.

As a result of the EL cycle over the 4 blocks, youth workers got the opportunity to experiment with new learnings, bring the learnings back to the group and share their experience which represents the ongoing, cyclic process of EL. The application stage of the EL cycle is applicable to TL process which is detailed in section 2.3.1. While action in the real world happened outside of the group, part of the process of the facilitators was to challenge learners as to how they may begin to explore and action their learnings in the group setting.

The methodology of the training was to generate affective responses and it is evident that this EL framework appealed to youth workers supporting their self-exploration and transformations.

5.3.3 The Residential Component and Physical Setting

Longest (2014, p. 281) states that the physical setting of a programme can 'support or hinder its overall success'. The author also commented on the importance of accessibility to the training location as well as a welcoming physical environment, including friendly and welcoming staff (Longest, 2014). In this study, the physical qualities of the setting, which aided youth workers' transformations, were its retreat like atmosphere and the comforting and wholesome food provided. Other factors which may have appealed to the youth workers

and supported them in relation to this setting were the tranquil and beautiful gardens surrounding the setting and the on-site relaxation room.

In the literature, learners in the Team Trek programme stated that the most important part of the course was the residential aspect and being 3 hours away from their college campus. This supported learners to interact with one another at a deeper level, build on cohorts and create an atmosphere for potential TL (Seed, 2008). Excluding this study, to the best of the authors' knowledge, currently there is very little evidence pertaining to residential training as opposed to non-residential training. In the current study, both the residential component and the physical setting of the training were identified as key factors that contributed to the learning of the youth workers and their self-reflection. Youth workers were removed from the fast-pace of their everyday lives into a peaceful and relaxed setting and could give themselves fully to the training. They did not have outside distractions that they would usually encounter in their everyday lives such as family and work commitments. This aided their learning to focus on themselves and the experiences they went through as part of the training.

The residential component of the training also provided time and space for the youth workers to process their learning as they had the opportunity to continue their reflections in the evenings and they could also interact with others, outside of the training room, furthering their learning and transformations. Youth workers noted the positives of the residential setting and were excited to go back to this setting to continue their learning. Members of the project team had experiences of this physical setting and knew the benefits of a residential component to assist learning and support potential transformation to happen.

As the residential component and setting factors were not very evident in the literature reviewed, it is worth pursuing further evidence in relation to this as it was deemed one of the key contributing factors to youth workers transformations.

5.3.4 The Training Syllabus

A well-designed programme and its syllabus is vital for learners self-development and to encourage and keep their interest (Shek & Chak, 2011). The syllabus of programmes should be designed based on the needs of the learner and relevance to them as this creates the basis for significant learning to take place (Lam, 2011). Whilst the training syllabus itself was not discussed in detail in this study, a number of topics were identified as being significant to the youth workers' learning which included; bullying, fear, projection, transference and aptitudes and passions (an overview of the training topics can be found in Appendix 8). Topics were

designed to stimulate self-discovery and transformation, underpinned by an affective experience. The data clearly demonstrates how the youth workers were interested by the content and it also appropriately challenged them to consider their own actions, behaviours and feelings. While not directly syllabus specific, the overarching tone and pace of the course was meeting the workers need to 'slow down', consider their own needs, self-care and engage in reflective practice.

In the literature, it is clear the programme syllabi focused on the learners' needs as was outlined in the Living for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) (Meyer, 2009) and Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) (Hicks et al., 2008) programmes. In the LIFTT programme learners were mostly unemployed, non-educated women who had poor self-esteem and confidence and there was significant emphasis on the learners' ability to identify their own skills and areas they personally needed to work on. This was similar in the findings in relation to the workshop based on 'Identity' and 'Passions and Aptitudes' which generated strong emotions with the youth workers as they noted the areas they needed to work on, particularly in relation to their self-care. Both Suzanne and Beth realised how little they had prioritised their own self-care and their awareness that this needed to change.

In the LIFFT programme, learners had the opportunity to openly discuss their achievements and challenges over the course of the training through group discussions and group coaching (Meyer, 2009). This syllabus supported learners to build their confidence and self-empowerment slowly and give them a sense of achievement, further supporting their TL process. This mirrors aspects of the 'Projection' workshop in the findings, as youth workers also felt empowered when they slowed down and really tuned into their felt experiences, becoming aware of their feelings as a result which supported their TL process. It is worth noting that one youth worker, Laura, became resistant and angry as a result of this workshop as she felt she was taking on others faults as her own when the group were asked to think about what they dislike in others and how this is a reflection of what exists in themselves. Perhaps this was a disorientating dilemma for Laura and she wasn't in a place to be 'ready' to explore this. Her resistance might also be to do with the challenging syllabus. There is a requirement and challenge to develop a syllabus for a diverse audience as not everyone will be ready for the challenge the syllabus presents. While Laura was resistant to this particular exercise, she was open and named her learning from other topics which shows that TL can still occur but possibly, for Laura, not in this area.

In the literature, the SEED programme involved educators who worked in a multicultural school district who had the opportunity to examine the strategies they used with the diverse pupils they teach (Meyer, 2009). The programme was based on group sharing and processing and the syllabus included challenging topics on conflict resolution, racism and sexuality. Educators used what they had learned as part of the syllabus with their students as, for example, one learner noticed her reactions to a new Hispanic pupil who entered her class and her realisation that she was lowering the expectations of this pupil based on her ethnicity and knew this was not right (Hicks et al., 2008). Similarly, in the findings, many of the youth workers had the opportunity to explore challenging topics such as 'Bullying' and gained significant learning as a result. They had the opportunity to explore this topic in-depth through how they may have experienced being bullied and their ability to potentially bully others. Many youth workers were shocked that they had the ability to bully others in their lives, despite having been bullied themselves previously. Similarly with the learners in the SEED programme, once this awareness was brought to youth workers attention, they had the opportunity to transform. Both programmes demonstrate the ability of the learners to explore challenging topics which can generate awareness and the opportunity to transform.

From the literature reviewed it is clear that there was more focus on how programmes were carried out as opposed to the programme syllabus. This may be due to many EL and TL programmes not providing a definitive syllabus in the literature as perhaps the syllabus changed over time as EL and TL programmes tend to focus on the learner and respond to their needs as well as the groups.

In summary, the core focus of the syllabus resulting in an affective response needs to be about identifying strengths and discovering areas for growth. It is clear the topics covered in the training contributed to youth workers' transformations as they generated awareness, strong emotions and therefore supported transformation to happen. This data adds to existing literature on the syllabus of training programmes but further research is required on how programme syllabus contributes to TL as opposed to focusing solely on how programmes are carried out.

5.3.5 The Group Effect

Mezirow (2000) developed his theory of TL from a study based on a group of women returning to education or the workforce. Although the theory itself focuses on the individual and their experience, from the literature reviewed, all studies featured groups of learners. The

group is a significant and necessary component in regards to TL and normalising the learning is vital in this setting and this can only happen in a group environment i.e. relating to others in the sense that it is not only them who feels that way or does that, etcetera. The importance of the group is imbedded throughout the literature and features primarily under the headings of TL and EL, the facilitator and programme design and ethos. In this study, the group was a significant contributing factor to youth workers' transformations as they went through the stages of group development; forming, storming, norming and performing.

Initially in the training, youth workers were reluctant to share and felt self-conscious being open in a group of their peers. The training challenged them to be more open and as the training went on, they became more comfortable and trusting with one another and began to open up and share in the group. As group members expressed their feelings, they had the option to share with and challenge others also in the group, which Dorr (2011) states can lead to confrontation. This was apparent in the study as Ava noticed who was embracing the training and who was holding back which she felt angry about. This demonstrates how essential it is to have the right people in a group and why the selection process of youth workers for this training was essential.

As youth workers began to feel more comfortable with one another in the group, they related and trusted one another which generated safety and support to explore their feelings at a deep level. They were able to share their feelings more freely and felt reassured that they were not alone in what they were going through. This supported their transformation and the deep learning required in the training. These findings concur with existing literature as the Return to Village and Serve Programme (RVaSP) focused on marginalized learners who had the opportunity to share their experiences with others who were similar to them, which gave them a sense of belonging and assisted them to relate and integrate with one another (Chen, 2012). This demonstrates the power of the group effect.

In the findings, the group had reached the performing stage which supported their learning. Haynes (2012) outlines the factors for a performing group which the group in this study displayed such as; participation by group members with little resistance, a deep level of sharing thoughts and feelings, openness to receiving feedback, deep self-reflection and learning things about themselves from others. There was a clear unity in this group as they went from being mostly strangers in the beginning to forming a very close bond and

becoming a unified group. This performing group was significant for learning and the TL process.

One of the factors in the Team Trek programme was building relationships amongst teachers from large universities to reduce isolation. The learners formed cohorts which improved their self-development and social skills (Seed, 2008). The Return to Village and Serve Programme (RVaSP) (Chen, 2012) resulted in creating a community of learners which concurs with this research as a member of the Project Team emphasised the importance of creating a community of learners or 'community of practice' amongst youth workers. It was clear that this group of youth workers had built relationships with each other and were forming a cohort.

There was a clear progression amongst the group in this training. Youth workers went from feeling uncomfortable and resistant to sharing, particularly in front of their peers, to forming a very close bond in which they supported and trusted one another and could significantly relate to their peers in the group. This resulted in youth workers sharing at a very in-depth level which was required for TL. A very strong group dynamic was evident in this training as was the close bond the youth workers formed over the 4 blocks of the training as they reached the performing stage in the group.

5.3.6 Youth Workers Openness for Self-Exploration and Reflection

The learners' openness at the initial stages of a training programme played an important role in contributing to TL. Openness for self-exploration and reflection is required to go through the TL process, with a strong emphasis on the affective domain. The literature concurs with this as Andresen et al. (2000) states that the learners' willingness to explore their own beliefs and expectations is vital for learning to occur and is also required to go through the TL process.

Learners' openness was one of the factors in the design and selection process of the training. The importance of openness for self-exploration and reflection was evident in the advertisement, recruitment and selection process of this training. For example, openness to self-discovery was clearly outlined in the advertisement for the training, one of the Project Team members also explained this with a follow-up phone call to the organisations once applicants were selected and there was a process whereby the manager had to sign off on the candidates' suitability.

In the literature Freire (1993) noted the importance of reflecting on experiences to guide action and self-reflection. Reflecting on experiences also features significantly in Kolb (1984) EL cycle and Mezirow (1990) stages of TL which was previously discussed in section 5.2. Engagement in reflective practice requires commitment and openness and it is evident from section 5.2 that the youth workers were engaged in these processes, which reiterates the importance of recruitment and selection. As the training progressed, many of the youth workers began to be more open and used the support provided by the group and facilitators to explore their feelings further. They gained significant learnings which increased the potential of TL. Facilitators also commented on how many of the youth workers were willing to explore topics such as resistance, aggression and bullying as they identified their feelings around these topics and were willing to explore their feelings and reactions around this.

The importance of self-reflection was outlined in the literature in the Living for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) programme, the Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social (P.A.T.H.S.) programme, Masters of Art and Teaching (MAT) and Team Trek programmes. In each of these programmes learners were encouraged to reflect on their 'felt experiences' through journaling and other forms of reflective practice. All programmes noted the importance of self-reflection for learning and supported the learners' experiences to feel more realistic. In the MAT programme learners were open to self-exploration as they immersed themselves in a new culture when they travelled abroad and worked (Addleman et al., 2014). Learners were encouraged to keep weekly journals based on their cultural immersion experiences which supported them to reflect and express their feelings around the isolation they felt being in a different country. Youth workers had the opportunity to explore feelings through reflective journals (for the purpose of research) after each training block in this study.

The training factors that contributed to youth workers' transformation were all evident in the training model except the duration of the training. It was suggested that further research is required in relation to the residential component of training, the qualities of the facilitator and greater focus on how programmes are carried out as opposed to just focusing on the programme syllabus.

5.4 Diffusion into the Organisation

Many factors were incorporated into the training model to aid diffusion of the training into practice within the organisations from which youth workers came. Specifically these factors included; a) the recruitment process to ensure youth workers' openness to personal development and their readiness for this type of learning, b) the recruitment of two colleagues from each organisation so that they could support one another, c) the inclusion of the manager's training day so that they could be supported to understand how the training could be diffused in their organisation and d) the inclusion of an all-staff training day in each organisation so that the youth workers' peers could have an opportunity to experience the training which may motivate them to support their peers to diffuse it within their organisation.

Providing youth workers with education and training which is supported by their organisation is vital to prevent staff turnover, which is high in the youth work sector (Shockley & Thompson, 2012). Factors associated with staff turnover include supervision and support from management, peer support, perceived stress and having a sense of belonging in the workplace. According to Curry, McCarragher, and Dellmann-Jenkins (2005, p. 935) "training is one of the most frequently cited interventions used to combat the turnover problem in the child welfare field" and staff turnover can negatively impact diffusion of a programme also. Pidd (2004) states that the time immediately following the training is a critical period for the effective transfer of training and it is probable that learners need support post-training to diffuse training within their organisations. If training is to be diffused successfully in the workplace, the focus of training effectiveness needs to examine the whole organisations' system.

The factors that supported the diffusion of the training in this study were; a) the youth workers capacity to self-support upon returning to their organisation and b) environmental supports within the organisation itself (managerial buy-in and support and peer support from colleagues). These will be discussed in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 below.

5.4.1 Youth Workers Capacity to Self-support upon Returning to Their Organisation
As detailed in section 5.3.6, the learners willingness to explore their own beliefs and expectations is vital for learning to occur and is also required to go through the TL process (Andresen et al., 2000). Mezirow (2000) and Freire (1993) also noted the importance of the learners' openness to facilitate learning and this was recognised in the training model in this

study as youth workers were chosen post-application based on their openness and willingness to learn about themselves. This was also followed up with a phone call by a Project Team member to ensure all clearly understood the focus of the training would be self-discovery and were open to embrace this focus and the process through which the learning would occur (experiential learning in the affective domain). Youth workers' capacity to self-support upon returning to their work organisation can be broken down into two factors; a) the capacity to self-support and b) the adopter categories for youth workers, both of which will be discussed below.

(a) Capacity to Self-support

Ford and Weissbein (1997) identified personality factors that play a part in training transfer as they contribute to the persons' motivation to learn, acquisition of skills and ultimately training transfer and whether or not they can adapt to the training. These include openness, conscientiousness, being outgoing, emotionally stable, amicable and their ability to support themselves through intense training. It is also evident from the current study that the readiness of the youth workers to integrate the training upon returning to their organisation was directly related to their capacity to self-support. This capacity was underpinned by the transformation experienced; via the TL process. Many youth workers gained a very high level of learning both in terms of practical skills (knowledge of using the experiential learning cycle) and developmentally (assertiveness to do things differently). Consequently, youth workers had the capacity to integrate aspects of their learning into their work practice which is essential for wider organisational diffusion.

While all were open to learning at the beginning, naturally, variations existed within the group and the depth of learning and transformation reflected this. It is evident from the case studies that both Lucy and Suzanne had developed a sophisticated capacity to support themselves via their transformational process that was a considerable aid to them when challenged with diffusing the training upon returning to their organisation. Lucy had the capacity to establish clearer boundaries that supported her to do her work more effectively. She went back to her organisation with a greater knowledge of herself and confidence in her abilities to be able to say that she was no longer willing to be the unofficial 'staff counsellor' in her organisation, taking on everyone's issues and leaving no time for her self-care. Throughout the training she had learned how important self-care was and was not willing to compromise it this way in her workplace any longer. She was willing to put up with the potential negative fallout from her work colleagues as a result of this.

Suzanne used the training as a support mechanism and changed her relationship with her manager as a result. She went from being frustrated and angry with her to gaining empathy for her manager. She also used this self-support when she moved job roles after working many years in her organisation. Suzanne had gained greater knowledge in the training about her relationship with her manager and her capacity to change the way she saw her which was evident as she went from being angry and frustrated with her to gaining empathy for her.

Ilkiw-Lavalle, Grenyer, and Graham (2002) conducted a study based on aggression management training amongst mental health staff in Australia. The benefits this type of training had for participants included an increase in knowledge, confidence and skills in managing aggressive situations and decreasing fear, anxiety and negative attitudes. Participants felt they could support themselves better when they went back into their work practice. The INTACT Aggression Management programme was shown to promote feelings of safety and confidence in staff.

This demonstrates that both Lucy and Suzanne left the training with a high level of learning (skill acquisition and developmentally) which, in turn, supported the diffusion of the training in their organisations. Gillian, however, did not leave the training with the same capacity for self-support and consequently, it's probable that she faced a greater personal challenge to integrate the training into her work practice, irrespective of her manager's view of the training.

(b) The Adopter Categories for Youth Workers

The 'adopter category' which youth workers aligned to pre-training was also a factor in their capacity to integrate the training upon returning to their organisation. Rogers (1995) identifies 5 adopter categories for diffusion from the most willing to adopt to the least which are; gatekeepers, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. Gatekeepers are the ideal population to have on a training programme as they are very eager and willing to adopt an innovation and really drive a programme within an organisation. Early adopters are those who embrace and are comfortable with an innovation and new ideas, whilst early majority require evidence of previous programmes and innovations to feel comfortable to adopt them. Late majority will only adopt an innovation after it has been tried and tested and require evidence to prove that it was successful. Finally laggards are the hardest group to elicit change as they are very sceptical and need significant pressure and statistics from others in the adopter groups to change (Valente & Myers, 2010).

In the findings, Lucy was considered to be the gatekeeper as she was very open to the training process and was strongly willing to implement it in her organisation. Her colleague Brook was an early adopter as she embraced the training and was willing to step outside of her comfort zone to attend and take part. These two adopter categories work well together as the gatekeeper can encourage the early adopter and the early adopter is open enough that they can be encouraged to integrate the innovation. Lucy and Brook were a good example of a very strong dyad in a supportive organisation. It is significant if a non-gatekeeper is converted to a gatekeeper in the training and this effect on other colleagues in the organisation. Perhaps other colleagues will be able to relate as they have seen how someone can move from having an interest and enrolling themselves in a programme to then becoming a champion for it within their organisation.

It is imperative in a training programme that at least one person is the gatekeeper as they need to drive the programme within an organisation for diffusion to occur and be approachable to other colleagues for support in relation to this (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Steckler & Goodman, 1989). However, having another colleague who is a late majority or laggard also works well with a gatekeeper as they can support diffusion from a horizontal level. Convincing a laggard or late adopter may help to move others in the organisation in a similar position towards 'adoption'. This can be seen from Suzanne and Avas' relationship. Prior to the training, Suzanne was a clear gatekeeper and Ava was a late majority, as she had limited experience with personal development programmes and some resistance to the training. Rogers (1995), states that learners can move within adopter categories and as Ava began to embrace the training, she perhaps converted from late majority to the adopter category. Subsequently other colleagues in the organisation may have moved towards adoption of the training also as they related to Ava and her initial resistance.

Getting the balance of adopters right in a training programme is significant. If there are too few the training will not be diffused in the organisation and if there are too many there probably is no need for the training to be diffused in the first place (Rogers, 1995). This was why the selection process of youth workers was so important for the training, making sure that all were open in some way to self-exploration.

It is clear from the literature and the findings that youth workers' capacity to self-support upon returning to their organisation was vital for diffusion of the training to occur. Adopter categories need to be considered at the recruitment process stage and at least one learner

needs to be an adopter as they can potentially influence the other learners to 'adopt' the training.

5.4.2 Environmental Support Factors

The higher the motivation levels of the learner, the more likely they are to utilize their newly developed skills. However their effectiveness in relation to transferring the training is influenced by additional factors that the trainee may not have a say in, such as environmental support factors of managerial and colleague support (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010).

Systematic planning is required for a training programme to be integrated and subsequently diffused in an organisation. This can be referred to as a 'whole organisation approach' which involves support from all levels for the trainings' implementation. Social support in the workplace from both managers and colleagues is crucial for training transfer (Curry et al., 2005). Pidd (2004) states that if the worker identifies highly with their workplace in relation to feeling like they belong and have social support from managers, colleagues and the overall organisation, this will improve training transfer. It is notable that in the family therapy training programme conducted by Wright and Fraser (1987), that all levels of the organisation were willingly involved in the planning and delivery of the training.

As stated in the literature, organisational diffusion can occur through 'bottom up' (staff driven) and 'top down' (management driven) approaches. Training is also required to fit with the organisation's goals, values and norms, therefore having 'institutional strength'. The following is a list of all the factors that encompass the whole organisational approach to transferring training; a) social support, b) identification with and feeling of belonging to the organisation c) bottom-up mechanisms d) top-down mechanisms and e) training adding to the institutional strength of the organisation.

These factors will be discussed in greater detail in the context of the findings of this study that demonstrated the need for managerial buy in and support (section 5.4.2 (a)) and support from colleagues (5.4.2 (b)).

(a) Managerial Buy-in and Support

The literature clearly states how imperative managerial buy-in for training is as Clarke (2002) notes that it is 'critical' in the social service industry that workers get support from managers to implement newly trained behaviours and receive feedback on their performance. Wright and Fraser (1987) evaluated the effectiveness of family therapy training and stated that the

specific involvement of managers in the design process of the programme and in the planning for staff to implement the training in their practice, contributed to the trainings effectiveness.

Managerial buy-in is a key component in training programmes and Clarke (2002) found that a lack of support from management was a significant barrier to the transfer of training. Substantial thought and time was put into the design process of the training by the Project Team in relation to how youth workers could be further supported to bring this training back into their organisations. A vital factor was managerial support and buy-in for the diffusion and sustainability of this training and there was a requirement that managers had to sign off on the whole training model prior to releasing staff, which was required to be considered for this training. The Project Team dedicated a specific managers' day to provide information to managers about what the training entailed and providing support to their staff to encourage the implementation of the training. A number of authors in the literature (Gruen et al., 2008; Rogers, 1995; Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Steckler & Goodman, 1989) have highlighted managerial support and have identified this in a variety of ways such as 'programme champions', 'programme drivers' 'gatekeepers' and 'organisational support'. In the Foundation Programme for Sexual Health Promotion (FPSHP), applicants were asked about the level of managerial support they had for their application to the training as the facilitators of the training knew this was a strong requirement for training support and diffusion (Higgins et al., 2013).

Managerial support is not just about releasing staff to attend training but providing the time and space to integrate it into their work practice. Managers have an influence and responsibility in relation to how training can be implemented in their organisations and endorsing work practice changes (Clarke, 2002), for example in staff meetings, peer groups, and in classes with the young people. Managers can develop and implement organisational policy such as prioritising self-care (e.g a mindfulness meditation on Friday afternoons before work finishes so workers are relaxed leaving work for the weekend or trialling new teaching methods in relation to experiential workshops such as Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)). Managers also require training and resources to provide appropriate support to maximise training transfer (Clarke, 2002) which was the case in the 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training. In the findings, colleagues commented that they would implement the training in their work practice if they were supported to do so which infers that if managers were encouraging and supportive of the training, the youth workers would be likely to implement it and integrate it into their work practice.

Steckler and Goodman (1989) identified 'programme champions' at a senior managerial level (decision makers and fund holders) as an essential factor for diffusion as they can act as an ambassador for the training programme and are willing to be directly involved in all aspects of the training. In this study, it was clear which managers were the most willing to adopt and support the training and which were not and the two managers who stood out in relation to this were Stephen and Amanda. Stephen was very supportive of the training and its implementation within his organisation whilst Amanda was very resistant and did not want the training to be a part of her organisation.

The findings showed that Stephen encompassed four factors required for training support; 1) valuing the training, 2) trusting staff, 3) creating space to integrate the training, and 4) funding training. Stephen was very supportive of the training from the beginning. He had a clear awareness of his role in his organisation in relation to supporting his staff and bought into the 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training as he knew the benefits of this for his staff and also the young people attending the organisation. He was also willing to enable further staff training and source the funding himself from his own budget.

Stephen had a trusting and supportive relationship with his staff and provided space to integrate the training in the organisation, which is essential for training transfer. It was clear that Stephen really valued this training and encouraged its implementation within his organisation. This can be demonstrated with Lucy as she felt supported and trusted to start new programmes in her organisation and was given the opportunity to organise and implement different programmes and classes as her skills evolved throughout the years. Stephen's organisation itself was also supported from the 'top down' through their Board of Directors and their strong links with the NYCI. The two residential youth workers and colleagues in Stephen's organisation, in addition to the facilitators all corroborated Stephen's support for his staff and the training. He was a 'programme champion' and having that at a senior administration level in an organisation and as noted above, is essential for institutionalisation (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Steckler & Goodman, 1989). However, it is important to note that not every colleague in Stephens's organisation had the same opinions of their manager. During the staff training day one colleague noted the fast pace and pressure he felt the manager required to get things done and was pleased that, during the staff day, the facilitator talked about working at a slower pace and was hopeful this would influence Stephen to slow down. This demonstrates that managers do not have to embody the

training themselves but they do have to support others to use the training in order for diffusion to occur.

Whilst most of the managers were supportive of the training, Amanda was not. She had a bad experience on the managers' day where she was confused about the training and was offended that her organisation was not given enough credit in relation to its experiential programmes (e.g. Social, Personal and Health Education- SPHE). She was uncomfortable with the slow pace and TL process on the managers' day and perhaps she personally was not ready for this kind of learning and therefore did not want it happening in her organisation either. Amanda's high level of resistance meant she fell into the 'laggard' category as identified in the literature (Valente & Myers, 2010) which describes the people least willing to adopt an innovation (the training). She was clear that she was not supportive of this training in her organisation and while she did permit her two staff members to attend the training and have the colleagues' day in her organisation, unlike all the other managers she did not take part in the latter.

Notably after the managers' day Amanda heavily criticised the training within her organisation. Her evident resistance and public berating of the training made it extremely difficult for her two staff members (Gillian and Emma) to continue to attend and ultimately, Emma neither attended the training after the manager's day nor the subsequent colleagues' day. Naturally, in such a hostile environment, opportunities for implementation were severely hindered. This demonstrates the power managers can have in organisations and the importance of self-care amongst staff to perhaps not go against the manager and, for example, attend training.

Amanda's lack of support for the training had a damaging effect on Gillian and how this training could be diffused in the organisation. The affect this lack of support had on Gillian was significant as Amanda berated the training in the workplace in front of others, belittled the time and effort Gillian had spent on it and her colleague abandoned her (which will be discussed in the next section 5.4.2 (b)). The importance of managerial buy-in is imperative as if managers do not recognise the benefits of the training for the worker they more than likely will feel unsupported to integrate the training into their work practice. Despite the stage an individual is at in relation to adopter or laggard, if an organisation is not supportive to an individual, then sustainable diffusion at an individual level and institutionalisation at an organisational level will be limited (Rogers, 1995). This demonstrates that both top down and

bottom up approaches are required for sustainable diffusion. The Project Team also noted the influence of managers and their ability to be an 'enabler or dis-enabler' of the training and how crucial their support was for colleagues to continue their TL processes. Despite her managers' lack of support, Gillian attempted to subtly integrate the training within her organisation without suffering the repercussions from her manager. She attempted to work covertly to integrate certain aspects of the training within new programmes she was carrying out, without attracting attention from her manager and finding support from other colleagues in her organisation who bought into this way of working (see section 5.2.4 (b)).

It was clear in the findings which managers supported the training and which did not. Further research is required in relation to managerial buy-in and support given its significance to support the diffusion and sustainability of training within organisations. There is little evidence on how influential a non-supportive manager can be on a training programme and their influence on staff who try to implement a training programme into their organisations.

(b) Colleague Support

In addition to managerial buy-in and support, colleague support was also crucial to diffuse training within an organisation. Forming groups or cohorts through EL practices has shown to be a possible strategy for diffusion of a programme (Seed, 2008) and Valente and Myers (2010) state that diffusion generally happens through personal networks in organisations such as peer support and 'bottom up' approaches. Rogers (1995) identifies two essential factors for diffusion which are 'a social system' (adopter categories) and 'communication channels' and both are required and can be achieved through colleague support in an organisation. Colleague support will be discussed under the following two factors; a) the relationship between the two youth workers who attended the residential training and b) the ripple effect this had on other colleagues in the organisation.

In the training, youth workers were recruited as a cohort and two were selected from each organisation for the residential training. The relationship between the two colleagues was a crucial factor for diffusion of the training. This supports Rogers (1995) theory of how an innovation can be communicated effectively through homophily, which describes how a pair communicate on similar levels when they share common meanings and beliefs, education and communication. This was clear in the findings through the strong colleague relationship between Lucy and Brook which coincided with their supportive management and colleagues within the organisation. Their relationship encompassed trust, support and encouragement as

they travelled long distances to the residential training, in which they had the opportunity to de-brief with one another on the journey. They also encouraged and supported one another to integrate the training into their work practice.

In the 'Youth Studies Certificate' programme in the University of New York, workers were recruited as a cohort to create a 'community of practice' as learners could support one another, build relationships, decrease feelings of isolation and learn from one another (Shockley & Thompson, 2012). This type of support was evident in the findings through Suzanne's strong relationship with her colleague Ava as Suzanne used this relationship as a mechanism for support, due to the limited support from her manager. Suzanne and Ava worked together to try to and integrate the training whilst also supporting one another to deal with management and other colleagues in the organisation. Unfortunately Suzanne left the organisation shortly after the training but a strong relationship was evident with her collegaue before she left.

Similary to Suzanne, Gillian also used her relationship with her colleague as a mechanism for support due to her unsupportive and critical manager. However before the training had finished, Gillians colleague Emma withdrew from the training, leaving Gillian and the initial support that was there. Perhaps Emma felt it would be easier to withdraw from the training, given her managers berating of it, and this may have been a self-care mechanism on Emmas part to stay safe within the system. On a point of note, Emma became Gillians manager before the end of the training that may or may not be to do with her colluding with her manager and as a result, leaving the training. Once Gillian did not have collegaue or mangerial support, she gravitated towards other collegaues in her organisation who liked to work experientially and had an interest and were involved with health promotion programmes. However Rogers (1995) outlines that this might not neccessarily work for diffusion as if colleagues are just communicating amongst each other, the potential for diffusion to flow down becomes diminished and ideas can spread horizontally rather than vertically in the organisation. This demonstrates that diffusion is limited if only happening among colleagues. This might be the case in Gillians workplace but perhaps this is the only and safest way that diffusion of this training can potientially occur in her organisation considering her managers influence and heavy critism of the training.

It was evident that Gillian and Emma's manager was not supportive and the negative impact this had on their organisation. Leadership support is of significant importance, particularly for

promoting health in a workplace (National Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotion, 2015). The manager can be a significant and influential programme champion as they attempt to bring others from other levels of the organisation on board. Leadership support can also positively influence employee health as demonstrated in the WOLF study in which managers listened to employees, clarified their roles and expectations, provided support and feedback and promoted participation and belonging in the organisation. As a result, there was a positve impact on employee health as a decrease in heart disease amongst employees was noted (National Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotion, 2015).

Overall, peers in the organisations were very supportive of the training and noted the impact the two colleagues who took part in the residential training had in their organisations and how they were the people to 'go to' for support in relation to the training. Colleagues in Lucy and Brooks organisation commented on their strong relationship and the level of support they provided to implement the training.

Pidd (2004) states that a 'transfer climate' is necessary for diffusing a training programme which describes situations in the workplace that support or hinder the transfer of training, including colleague's or peers' attitudes towards training. If colleagues do not see the benefits of training, it can have negative repercussions for the learner in relation to training transfer as the learner may not feel supported enough to continue to implement this training into their work practice. The learner may also fear backlash from others as they were released from the organisation and allocated time to go on the training. Pearce et al. (2012) notes how communality is necessary to support diffusion and communicating messages to audiences that are similar results in a stronger likelihood of diffusion as audiences feel they can relate to each other. This was the case in this training with youth workers as they were provided with residential training and their organisations were provided with colleagues training.

Design of training programmes needs to acknowledge the importance of both workplace social support for the content of training programmes and identification with workplace groups that provide this support. Matching the goals and objectives of the training to the goals and objectives of the organisation could enhance the effectiveness of the training programmes (Pidd, 2004).

The key factors in this study that underpinned the diffusion were; managerial buy in and trust in staff which translated into support of staff to integrate training via tangible mechanisms

including funding. Also the relationship between the two residential learners, having at least one adopter and possible advantage of the second being a late adopter (see section 5.4.1 (b)).

From the literature and the findings it is clear that managerial and colleague support is significant to integrate training into practice, and the strong relationship between the two colleagues that attended the residential training. Further research is required in relation to colleague support as literature on this was limited.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Youth workers require support to address the mental and emotional issues they meet on a daily basis and to support their clients to make healthy choices for themselves. Support is too often provided in the form of a new resource for the curriculum and does not focus on building capacity within staff members themselves to engage and interact more effectively with clients. The 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training aimed to do this. This training is not a new resource and, as one youth worker noted, it is *"not about changing my work load or content, it is about changing how I do my work".* By building capacity to facilitate via a TL process, the training sought to facilitate self-discovery and, in turn, develop the ability amongst youth workers to self-support in both their personal and professional lives.

It is evident from the findings of this study that youth workers who participated in the 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training experienced transformational learning TL) to the benefit of their personal and professional lives. In this study, TL occurred via 3 distinct, yet related phases that are; a) a critical examination of oneself, b) increased awareness and recognition for the potential for change and c) moving from awareness to meaningful action. In brief, the training prompted youth workers to critically examine and question their sense of themselves, exploring their feelings at an in-depth level. Their awareness increased through noticing the fast pace at which they lived their lives at as they developed a deeper understanding of their relationship with themselves and others and realised the array of choices available to them. With these choices came the potential for change. Many of the youth workers then translated the insights they had gained in the training into meaningful action as they made changes in both their personal lives and work practice. These phases (a, b and c) mirror the stages identified by Mezirow (2000) and others who have defined and refined TL theory (Christopher et al., 2001; Cranton, 2002; Freire, 1993; Jarvis, 1995; Kitchenham, 2008; Taylor, 2001, 2008).

Notably, as others have found, TL is not a linear process from phases a- c as listed above but rather TL is a complex process of ongoing movement between the three phases of questioning, awareness and meaningful action. It is also possible that a learner can create meaningful action in one particular area of their life and still be questioning or resisting in other areas, therefore concluding that TL is specific to the learner as outlined in the literature (Cranton, 2002; Jarvis, 1995; Newman, 2012).

The training factors that underpinned this learning were identified as the a) facilitators, b) experimental learning (EL) cycle, c) residential component and physical setting, d) training syllabus e) group effect and f) youth workers openness to self-exploration and reflection. The importance of the facilitators' skills and qualities were outlined and their ability to create a safe and supportive environment for learning and transformation to occur. The facilitators provided an EL methodology with emphasis on the affective domain which took learners through the EL cycle. The residential component was an opportunity to explore TL in a peaceful environment, away from the hectic pace of everyday life. This component was not explicitly outlined in the literature and therefore further research is required in relation to its impact on training and the TL process. The training syllabus appropriately challenged the learners to consider their actions, behaviours and feelings which can support transformation to happen. The group itself went through a clear progression from initial feelings of discomfort to relating, trusting and supporting one another to become a 'performing group'. Finally the youth workers openness for self-exploration and reflection was evident, and this was clearly outlined in the advertising, recruiting and selection process of this training. It is important to note the significance of the recruitment process in this training, which specified learners being open to self-exploration and reflection as this is vital for TL.

This study also sought to investigate the diffusion of the training in practice, and the factors that supported and hindered this diffusion. It is evident that training transfer happened, i.e. practices were changed based upon learnings from the training and diffusion among staff is also evident (managerial buy-in and colleagues wanting more of the training for themselves). It is clear that the degree of diffusion is dependent upon a number of factors that are; a) the degree of TL experienced i.e. learners skill and confidence to bring training back, b) the adoption category of learners, c) managerial buy-in and support and d) colleague support. The literature and findings support that if a learner has the capacity to self-support upon returning to their organisations after training, they will have developed greater skills and confidence to integrate their learning into their work practice. Recruiting two learners per organisation was also significant and the importance of at least one learner being a gatekeeper to drive the programme and be approachable for other colleagues within the organisation. Further research is required in relation to the importance of recruiting two learners per organisation as this was not clear in the literature. Managerial buy-in was also significant for training transfer and the optimum level of support was from managers who; value training, trust staff, create space to integrate the training and fund training. As colleagues were

recruited as a cohort, the relationship between the two colleagues who attended the residential training was vital as was the peer support of other colleagues in the organisation. Further research in relation colleague support is required as the literature had a greater focus on managerial buy-in and support.

Training is necessary and vital for worker retention and meaningful self-care practices, however it is a significant investment for organisations in relation to releasing staff, loss of work, time required to attending training and funding. It is important that training is both effective in terms of generating learning and that it is beneficial to the workplace in terms of training transfer. This study adds to the body of knowledge of effective delivery to a specific service provider working with vulnerable young people. Further research and support is necessary for those working across the sector.

6.1 Limitations

Whilst some levels of diffusion of the training were apparent in organisations, the timeframe of the research was too short to assess the sustainability of the training. If the study was longitudinal, further data could have been gathered in relation to whether the TL process survived over time amongst youth workers and the potential of the training to influence the young people within the organisations.

Ideally the Project Team would like an annual follow up in relation to how the training is progressing within the organisations. The Project Team managed to get further funding for the group of residential youth workers in November 2016 (2 residential days) and currently funding is not available to repeat the training for this group of youth workers in 2017. This is despite youth workers interest in further training and discussions about funding the training themselves. One group member has gone on to do the MA (Masters of Arts) in the 'Advanced Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' programme as they wanted to further their knowledge and experience in relation to this topic.

The 16 youth workers who took part in the residential training were all female. It would have been beneficial to have some male participants also given the 'feminisation of youth work' and how this type of 'caring work' is perceived. It is clear that the training was valuable for those who took part, however as men have not experienced this residential training, there is a gap in relation to examining the TL process amongst men.

There was no control group in this study to compare with the intervention group who received the training. The research team took a pragmatic approach considering the limits in relation to time and funding. It was deemed more appropriate to collect a volume of data from one group and to conduct this properly rather than stretching one researcher across 2 groups and getting a lesser quality of data. There is value in having a comparison group who take part in a different type of training or are provided with a resource and comparing this to the 'Facilitation Skills for Health and Well-being' training.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

- A longitudinal study (incorporating a control group) to assess the long-term impact and sustainability of EL programmes with the potential of TL on learners. This would also provide an opportunity to probe further on topics such as the residential component of the training, which was not explicitly outlined in the literature and also whether the training had an impact on the young people in the organisations.

- Noting the learners' perceptions of the training as follow-up was only 5 months post-training and further follow-up was beyond the resources of the study. All residential youth workers commented that they were significantly positive about the training and its benefits for them and their organisations.

- More male participants in EL training programmes to create a gender balance and to assess the TL process amongst males.

- Using this training model beyond the youth sector with other groups e.g. social care workers, teachers and health professionals.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Youth Workers Journals (Blocks 1-4)

(a) Guided Reflection Journal 1

This is a guided reflective piece in which four broad questions will be asked and your responses are invited. This journal is designed to help you think more deeply about your learning, including your feelings and experiences during the facilitation training. It is encouraged that you write soon after the facilitation training has taken place as your experiences may be clearer to you. There is no word limit on this piece, although it would be advised to write a minimum of 1 page for the benefits of your reflection process.

1) What is your motivation to attend this training?
2) Now that the first sessions are complete, how was it for you to focus on yourself? What challenges did you encounter, if any?
3) What impacted you most from the sessions over the last 2 days?
4) How was it for you to go through these experiences being part of a group?

For any queries on this please contact:

Lisa Harold MA Student, WIT

Address: Luke Wadding Library, Waterford Institute of Technology, Cork Road, Waterford.

Email: lisamarie.harold@gmail.com

Phone: 087-9249302

(b) Guided Reflection Journal 2

This is a guided reflective piece in which questions will be asked and your responses are invited. This journal is designed to help you think more deeply about your learning, including your feelings and experiences during the facilitation training. It is encouraged that you reflect and write soon after the training has taken place as your experiences may be clearer to you. It would be advised to write a minimum of 1 page for the benefits of your reflection process.

1) What impacted you most from the sessions over the last 2 days?
2) Now you are halfway through the training, how has the experiential work impacted you personally and in your workplace?
3) How does being in the group help you to engage in the experiential work?
4) What factors are supporting you to engage in the experiential work?
5) What factors are blocking you from engaging in the experiential work?

(c) <u>Guided Reflection Journal 3</u>

1. How has the work of this third block impacted your capacity to live life in a way that supports your being?

2. As a result of your experience on this third block, how will that influence the way that you may work with young men and women, boys and girls?

3. As a member of this training group, how has the dynamic within the group influenced your capacity to learn about yourself at a deeper level?

4. What is it about this training that has supported your capacity to learn in the way that you are learning?

(d) <u>Guided Reflection Journal 4</u>

1. What has been your most significant learning over the last four blocks of training?

2. How do you feel now the training is coming to an end?

3. What specific learnings from the training do you think will support you in your work with young people?

4. What factors about the training have enabled your learning?

5. How do you think you will implement what you have learned in your work with young people and in your personal life?

6. How have the learnings you have gained as part of this training transformed your way of being in the world?

7. In what way would you like your organisation to support you to carry out this work?

8. What would support you to use this training?

9. What will hinder you to use this training?

Participants who missed the last block of training were also asked the following additional question:

How was it for you to miss the final block of training?

Appendix 2: Managers Interview Topic Guide

1. What motivated you to have your organisation be a part of this training and research?

2. How were your staff 'selected' to attend or was there a selection process?
   Prompt: What was your thought process around staff selection?

3. As you reflect on the Managers Day, what stays with you?
   What is your understanding of experiential learning? Has it changed as a result of this training?

4. How, in your opinion, has participation on the training programme impacted upon your staff who attended (as you have observed/witnessed)?

5. Has, in your opinion, the training impacted or been integrated into your organisation in any way? e.g. any changes noticed in work practices etc. If yes, please elaborate.

6. Do you see other opportunities for the training to be integrated into your organisation? / What areas of your organisation, in particular, do you think will benefit as a result of this training?

7. What supports are available for the training to be further integrated in your organisation?

8. How do you think this training will affect the young people you work with in your organisation or has it already?

9. Can you identify what your organisation needs in order for the training to become sustainable?

10. As a final question to end this interview, can you please sum up your experience of the training to date and its relevance [or otherwise] to your organisation?

Appendix 3: Selected Youth Workers (n=3) Interview Topic Guide

There are some areas I would like to explore as a result of the training such as:

- Any changes you have experienced in yourself since beginning the training.
- One or two main factors about the training that enabled that change in you.
- How this/these change(s) has/have impacted on your personal life.
- How this/these change(s) has/have impacted on your work life.
- The nature of support within your organisation.

Further Probing:

From Sept-March there was quite a change, can you talk about this change?

Can you reflect on where you were then to where you are now?

Can you tell me 1 or 2 key things that it was about the training the created/moved that transformational change?

Managers and colleagues days and their impact, if any.

How has it been for you in your personal/professional life now this change and transformation has occurred?

How much of the training are you bringing back into your work?

Coming back to work environment and you say you are different, how has this been received in the workplace?

Would it be a welcoming and supportive environment to integrate this training?

Appendix 4: Facilitator & NYCI Representative (Recruitment Process) Interview Topic Guide

(a) Guided Reflection Facilitator

So [NAME OF FACILITATOR] I am just going to take you through a guided reflection to familiarize yourself with the selection process day that happened here in WIT back in June. If I could just get you to gently put both of your feet on the ground and close your eyes. If you could take a deep breath in and gently exhale out….and if you can do this a few times.

So keeping your eyes closed and both feet on the floor, I am just going to talk you through the initial stages of the selection process. It began with Ailish sending out flyers to the organisations advertising the training. The organisations then applied to do the training through the National Youth Council of Ireland and sent in their applications. You read through the applications individually first, as did Paula. You then went into John Wells office in the nursing building in WIT to discuss and decide on the organisations chosen. Ailish and Paula were sitting at the table and Lisa was also there taking notes on the selection process. The three of you then proceeded to discuss and decide on which organisations would be the most suitable for the training.

I am going to leave you for a minute or two now just to give yourself some time to picture yourself in the room and your thoughts or feelings you can remember around that time.

So just to bring you back into this room now and to ask you a few questions about the selection process…..

1) **Can you take me through the initial process involved in selecting the organisations/participants?**
   - Flyer sent out to orgs by NYCI REPRESENTATIVE
   - At least two participants were to attend
   - Engaging line managers/whole organisation

   Also **selection process on your own first**? *

2) **What happened then when you went into the larger room with other members of the project team?**
   - Gave applications a score out of 10 or 100
   - Came to a decision about which organisations/applicants to choose

- Three organisations were chosen quite quickly based on previous knowledge and experience the NYCI representative had with them and the simultaneously high scores given by both facilitators to their applications. The other 5 organisations needed follow- up to determine if they were suitable. *

3) **Did you select the organisations or the participants first? Or a mixture of both? Why?**

4) **Can you talk to me about the criteria used for selection?**
   - commitment of the organisation,
   - openness and awareness of staff members to self-exploration,
   - modules delivered by staff members to service users,
   - managerial buy-in,
   - ethos of the organisation,
   - previous commitment and willingness to implement training in the organisation,
   - follow-up with staff members to ensure they knew this training was about them, first and foremost.*

5) **What were the important points for you in the selection process of the organisations & participants?**
   - Ailish previous knowledge of orgs?
   - Commitment of whole organisation?
   - Participants self- awareness and knowledge/practice of reflection? Their knowledge that training is about themselves first. *

6) **How did you feel the selection process went? Any stand out moments for you?**

7) **And finally, how did you feel about working with the group prior to meeting them?**

*prompts used for researcher only and were not on the topic guide given to participants.

(b) <u>Guided Reflection NYCI Representative:</u>

I am just going to take you through a guided reflection to familiarize yourself with the selection process of the organisations for this training. If I could just get you to gently put

both of your feet on the ground and close your eyes. If you could take a deep breath in and gently exhale out….and if you can do this a few times.

So keeping your eyes closed and both feet on the floor, I am just going to talk you through the initial stages of the selection process. It began with the recruitment process by yourself and the NYCI staff sending out flyers to the organisations advertising this training. The organisations then called the NYCI with enquiries and sent in their applications. You read through the applications and then went to WIT in to discuss and decide on the organisations chosen. Beatrice and Paula were sitting at the table and Lisa was also there taking notes on the selection process. Beatrice, Paula and yourself then proceeded to discuss and decide on which organisations would be the most suitable for the training. You then followed up with the organisations and participants chosen to ensure they were aware of the experiential nature of the training and the personal commitment that was required.

I am going to leave you for a minute or two now just to give yourself some time to picture yourself in the room and your thoughts or feelings that you can remember around that time.

So just to bring you back into this room now and there is a pen and paper in front of you there, you have the option to write down a few thoughts if you like if it would help you remember the selection process.

I am now going to ask you a couple of questions about the selection process:

1) **Pre-Training**

   What stays with you from the selection process? What made a difference do you think? Any stand out moments?

   Prompts (for researcher only)

   - Liasing with the individuals and organisations prior to the training.
   - Follow-up calls with staff members/organisations to ensure they knew this training was about them, first and foremost.
   - At least two participants were to attend.
   - Engaging line managers/whole organisation.
   - Commitment and ethos of organisation.
   - Previous commitment and willingness to implement training in the organisation.
   - Modules delivered by staff members to service users.*

2) **Post Training**

   Now the training has taken place how do you feel? Any stand out moments do far?

- Participants/organisations calling about how good they found training to be etc.*

*prompts used for researcher only and were not on the topic guide given to participants.

Appendix 5: Project Team Focus Group Topic Guide

-Taking you right back to the beginning of this process, how did it come about?

-Can you tell me about the design elements of the training (2 from each, residential aspect, other training days-managers, colleagues etc) Why two from each, why 16 participants total, why over 4 blocks?

- What did you want for the participants out of the training?

-Thoughts on the managers day, colleagues day and their benefits or not.

- The confusion that arose with different expectations by managers vs reality for participants in relation to participants being able to train others in facilitating health & well being.

- Value of experiential learning processes – do they expect the participants to be able to facilitate it for others?

-Confusion also from managers and some participants about explaining the training

-How do you see this training being implemented in the organisations amongst participants going forward?

-Now the training has finished, any stand out moments? Anything you would do differently?

-Where to go from here?

Appendix 6: Vox Pop Questions for Colleagues

1. What was your most significant learning from the day?
2. Do you think there is value in bringing this type of learning to the young people with whom you work? Please elaborate on you answer.
3. How do you think this kind of experiential work will be supported in your organisation going forward?

Appendix 7: Information Sheet and Consent Forms for all Participants (Project Team, Managers, Youth Workers and Colleagues)

    (a) Project Team Information Sheet and Consent

Research Subject: Exploring the impact of facilitation skills training for health and well-being on workers in the youth sector.

Informed Consent

You have been asked to participate in an interview and focus group as part of a research project. This aims to gain better insight into your experience of planning, developing and delivering the facilitation skills for health and well-being training programme. The findings from this will inform best practices related to the process of developing and delivering such programmes in the future. You are under no obligation to participate in the research and choosing not to participate will in no way reflect negatively on you or your organisation. To help you to decide whether or not to participate, you need to fully understand what is required of you and what the research entails. This is called an informed consent.

What is this research about?

This research aims to get an insight into your experience of planning, developing and delivering the facilitation skills for health and well-being training programme. The findings from this interview and focus group will inform best practices related to the process of developing and delivering such programmes in the future. Specific attention will be paid to your reflections of the factors related to the project design and implementation, organisational factors and factors within the community environment**.** Your answers will be analysed and synthesized with additional data collected in this project and presented in a publishable academic manuscript and service-provider report.

What does participation involve?

Participation involves an interview on the selection process of organisations and a 45-75 minute focus group where you will be asked to contribute your views and opinions on certain questions. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer, or ask to remove any of your responses from the resulting transcript. Only Lisa and her project supervisors will have access to this audio recording, which will be password protected and deleted immediately after responses have been transcribed. If you are not comfortable having your interview recorded, you can indicate your preferences to Lisa, who will take notes during your interview instead**.**

Information used will not be identifiable.

We guarantee anonymity by giving you a unique code/ pseudonym. The data from this focus group will be linked to this code/pseudonym instead of any personal details. This will be done immediately following the focus group so that any information added to a computer database or used for analysis cannot be connected to your personal information. The list of

participants and pseudonyms will be password protected, and kept distinct from any other data (i.e. transcripts, consent forms). Lisa and her project supervisors will have access to this list of participant names and pseudonyms**.** Audio recordings from the focus group will be transcribed verbatim with any identifying information (i.e. names, personal details, organizational affiliation etc.) removed. All hard copies of data will be kept in a locked file cabinet, and soft copies will be password protected in a limited access office at Waterford IT. No identifiable information (i.e. quotes that may disclose your identity) will be used in any final publication or resources developed from this project.

Who will have access to the data from the interview and focus group?

Lisa and her project supervisors from Waterford IT will have access to all of your information (i.e. consent forms, contact information, interview responses). All records will be kept at Waterford IT for five years after the study has been completed. After this time, all data will be permanently and securely destroyed: hard copies will be shredded, and soft files will be deleted.

Absolute confidentiality is assured and will be maintained.

Any information used in the preparation of the project report, research publication, or any other resource will be anonymous and not linked to any personal or organizational information you provide. All data, including any personal information, will be kept strictly confidential and secured: computer files will be password protected, and hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet. Only Lisa and her project supervisors will have access to keys and passwords. No information will be available to third parties at any point.

All information will be treated as strictly confidential and no information will be provided to any other party without your written permission. All information held by Waterford IT is subject to the terms of the 1997 Freedom of Information Act, and 2003 Data Protection Act. You can find information about this on the college website:

http://www.wit.ie/about_wit/for_staff/foi_useful_resources and
http://www.wit.ie/about_wit/for_staff/data_protection.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You can stop the interview or focus group at any time, or withdraw your participation after the focus group prior to the completion of the data analysis phase, which is usually 2-3 weeks afterwards.

Contact details

If you have any questions about the research you can contact Lisa by:

Email: lisamarie.harold@gmail.com

Phone: 087-9249302

For any questions or concerns you do not wish to discuss with Lisa, you can contact the project supervisors:

Dr. Paula Carroll

Email: pcarroll@wit.ie

Mairead Barry

Email: mlbarry@wit.ie

Dr. Maeve O Grady

Email: mogrady@wit.ie

(b) <u>Managers Information Sheet and Consent</u>

Research Subject: An exploration of the sustainability of facilitation skills for health and well-being training in the out of school sector.

Informed Consent

You have been asked to participate in this study as part of a research project. This research project aims to gain better insight into your experience of participating in the 'facilitation skills for health and well-being' training programme. The findings from this research will inform best practices related to the process of developing and delivering such programmes in the future. You are under no obligation to participate in the research and choosing not to participate will in no way reflect negatively on you or your organisation. To help you to decide whether or not to participate, you need to fully understand what is required of you and what the research entails. This is called an informed consent.

What is this research about?

This research aims to get an insight into your experience of participating in the 'facilitation skills for health and well-being' training programme. The findings from this will inform best practices related to the process of developing and delivering such programmes in the future. Specific attention will be paid to your reflections of the impact of the programme on your organisation and staff members. Your answers will be analysed and synthesized with additional data collected in this project and presented in a publishable academic manuscript and service-provider report.

What does participation involve?

Participation involves an interview with the MA Researcher of the project, Lisa Harold. Each participant will be given a pseudonym and Lisa will be the only person who knows this. In the interview you will be asked to contribute your views and opinions on certain questions. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer, or ask to remove any of your responses from the resulting transcript. Only Lisa and her project supervisors will have access to this audio recording, which will be password protected and deleted immediately after responses have been transcribed. If you are not comfortable having your interview recorded, you can indicate your preferences to Lisa, who will take notes during your interview instead**.**

Information used will not be identifiable.

We guarantee anonymity by giving you a unique code/ pseudonym. The data from the interviews will be linked to this code/pseudonym instead of any personal details. This will be done immediately following your interview so that any information added to a computer database or used for analysis cannot be connected to your personal information. The list of participants and pseudonyms will be password protected, and kept distinct from any other data (i.e. transcripts, consent forms). Only Lisa will have access to this list of participant names and pseudonyms**.** Audio recordings from the interview will be transcribed verbatim with any identifying information (i.e. names, personal details, organizational affiliation etc.) removed. All hard copies of data will be kept in a locked file cabinet, and soft copies will be

password protected in a limited access office at Waterford IT. No identifiable information (i.e. quotes that may disclose your identity) will be used in any final publication or resources developed from this project.

Who will have access to the data from the interviews?
Lisa and her project supervisors from Waterford IT will have access to your information (i.e. consent forms, contact information and interview responses), however only Lisa will have access to changing participant names to pseudonyms. All records will be kept at Waterford IT for five years after the study has been completed. After this time, all data will be permanently and securely destroyed: hard copies will be shredded, and soft files will be deleted.

Absolute confidentiality is assured and will be maintained.
Any information used in the preparation of the project report, research publication, or any other resource will be anonymous and not linked to any personal or organizational information you provide. All data, including any personal information, will be kept strictly confidential and secured: computer files will be password protected, and hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet. Only Lisa and her project supervisors will have access to keys and passwords. No information will be available to third parties at any point.

All information will be treated as strictly confidential and no information will be provided to any other party without your written permission. All information held by Waterford IT is subject to the terms of the 1997 Freedom of Information Act, and 2003 Data Protection Act. You can find information about this on the college website:
http://www.wit.ie/about_wit/for_staff/foi_useful_resources
and http://www.wit.ie/about_wit/for_staff/data_protection.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You can stop the interview at any time, or withdraw your participation prior to the completion of the data analysis phase.

Contact details:

If you have any questions about the research you can contact Lisa by:
Email: lisamarie.harold@gmail.com
Phone: 087-9249302

For any questions or concerns you do not wish to discuss with Lisa, you can contact her supervisor Mairead Barry by:
Email: MLBarry@wit.ie
Phone: 051 -302165

Agreement to Consent

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be issued a copy of this form for your own records.

I --- understand the purpose of *Exploring the sustainability of facilitation skills for health and well-being training in the out of school sector* study, and why I am being asked to participate. I consent to take part in the study. I confirm that all aspects of my participation have been fully explained to my satisfaction. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me for my participation, but realise that this may contribute to a better understanding of best practices in the field of facilitation for health and well-being.

Name: --

Address line 1:   --

Address line 2:   --

Town and County: --

Contact Information: --

Signature Participant: ------------------------- Date:-------------------------

Signature Researcher: ------------------------- Date:-------------------------

Study Contact Information:
Lisa Harold
MA Student, WIT
Email: lisamarie.harold@gmail.com
Phone: 087-9249302

Research Subject: Exploring the impact of facilitation skills training for health and well-being on workers in the youth sector.

Informed Consent

You have been asked to participate in this study as part of a research project. This research project aims to gain better insight into your experience of participating in the facilitation skills for health and well-being training programme. The findings from this research will inform best practices related to the process of developing and delivering such programmes in the future. You are under no obligation to participate in the research and choosing not to participate will in no way reflect negatively on you or your organisation. To help you to decide whether or not to participate, you need to fully understand what is required of you and what the research entails. This is called an informed consent.

What is this research about?

This research aims to get an insight into your experience of participating in the facilitation skills for health and well-being training programme. The findings from this will inform best practices related to the process of developing and delivering such programmes in the future. Specific attention will be paid to your reflections of the impact of the programme on you both personally and professionally. You will also be asked to reflect on the factors related to the programme that influenced your participation and learning**.** Your answers will be analysed and synthesized with additional data collected in this project and presented in a publishable academic manuscript and service-provider report.

What does participation involve?

Participation involves 4 reflective logs (1 after each block of sessions) which Lisa will receive and analyse. Each participant will be given a pseudonym and Lisa will be the only person who knows this. There will also be a 45-75 minute focus group/interview where you will be asked to contribute your views and opinions on certain questions. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer, or ask to remove any of your responses from the resulting transcript. Only Lisa and her project supervisors will have access to this audio recording, which will be password protected and deleted immediately after responses have been transcribed. If you are not comfortable having your interview recorded, you can indicate your preferences to Lisa, who will take notes during your interview instead**.**

Information used will not be identifiable.

We guarantee anonymity by giving you a unique code/ pseudonym. The data from the reflective logs and focus group/interview will be linked to this code/pseudonym instead of any personal details. This will be done immediately following your reflective logs and focus group/ interview so that any information added to a computer database or used for analysis cannot be connected to your personal information. The list of participants and pseudonyms will be password protected, and kept distinct from any other data (i.e. transcripts, consent

forms). Only Lisa will have access to this list of participant names and pseudonyms. Audio recordings from the focus group/interview will be transcribed verbatim with any identifying information (i.e. names, personal details, organizational affiliation etc.) removed. All hard copies of data will be kept in a locked file cabinet, and soft copies will be password protected in a limited access office at Waterford IT. No identifiable information (i.e. quotes that may disclose your identity) will be used in any final publication or resources developed from this project.

Who will have access to the data from the reflective logs and focus group/interview?

Lisa and her project supervisors from Waterford IT will have access to your information (i.e. consent forms, contact information, reflective logs and focus group/interview responses), however only Lisa will have access to changing participant names to pseudonyms. All records will be kept at Waterford IT for five years after the study has been completed. After this time, all data will be permanently and securely destroyed: hard copies will be shredded, and soft files will be deleted.

Absolute confidentiality is assured and will be maintained.

Any information used in the preparation of the project report, research publication, or any other resource will be anonymous and not linked to any personal or organizational information you provide. All data, including any personal information, will be kept strictly confidential and secured: computer files will be password protected, and hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet. Only Lisa and her project supervisors will have access to keys and passwords. No information will be available to third parties at any point.

All information will be treated as strictly confidential and no information will be provided to any other party without your written permission. All information held by Waterford IT is subject to the terms of the 1997 Freedom of Information Act, and 2003 Data Protection Act. You can find information about this on the college website:
http://www.wit.ie/about_wit/for_staff/foi_useful_resources
and http://www.wit.ie/about_wit/for_staff/data_protection.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You can stop the reflective logs and focus group/interview at any time, or withdraw your participation prior to the completion of the data analysis phase.

Contact details:

If you have any questions about the research you can contact Lisa by:
Email: lisamarie.harold@gmail.com
Phone: 087-9249302

For any questions or concerns you do not wish to discuss with Lisa, you can contact her supervisor Mairead Barry by:

Email: MLBarry@wit.ie
Phone: 051 -302165

<div align="center">

Agreement to Consent

</div>

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be issued a copy of this form for your own records.

I ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻   understand the purpose of *Exploring the impact of facilitation skills training for health and well-being on workers in the youth sector* study, and why I am being asked to participate. I consent to take part in the study. I confirm that all aspects of my participation have been fully explained to my satisfaction. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me for my participation, but realise that this may contribute to a better understanding of best practices in the field of facilitation for health and well-being.

Name: ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻

Address line 1:   ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻

Address line 2:   ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻

Town and County: ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻

Contact Information: ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻

Signature Participant: ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻ Date:⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻

Signature Researcher: ⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻ Date:⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻⸻

Study Contact Information:

Lisa Harold

MA Student, WIT

Email: lisamarie.harold@gmail.com

Phone: 087-9249302

(d) Colleagues Consent Sheet- Staff Day

You have been asked to participate in this study as part of a research project. This research project aims to gain better insight into your experience of participating in the 'facilitation skills for health and well-being' training programme. The findings from this research will inform best practices related to the process of developing and delivering such programmes in the future. You are under no obligation to participate in the research and choosing not to participate will in no way reflect negatively on you or your organisation.

Participation involves a 'vox pop' with the MA researcher of the project, Lisa Harold in which you will be asked to contribute your views and opinions on certain questions. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your answers will be analysed and synthesized with additional data collected in this project and presented in a publishable academic manuscript and service-provider report.

It is important to note that names or any other personal details/identification are not required and therefore we guarantee complete confidentiality. Only Lisa and her project supervisors at Waterford IT will have access to this audio recording, which will be password protected and deleted immediately after responses have been transcribed. All records will be kept at Waterford IT for five years after the study has been completed. After this time, all data will be permanently and securely destroyed.

Agreement to Consent

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be issued a copy of this form for your own records.

I --- understand the purpose of the *Exploring the impact of facilitation skills training for health and well-being on workers in the youth sector* study, and why I am being asked to participate. I consent to take part in the study. I confirm that all aspects of my participation have been fully explained to my satisfaction. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me for my participation, but realise that this may contribute to a better understanding of best practices in the field of facilitation for health and well-being.

Name: ---

Address: ---

Town and County: ---

Contact Information: --

Signature Participant: ----------------------- Date:-------------------------

Signature Researcher: ----------------------- Date:-------------------------

Study Contact Information:

Lisa Harold, MA Student, WIT

Email: lisamarie.harold@gmail.com

Phone: 087-9249302

Appendix 8: Overview of the Training Topics

Table 1: Overview of workshops that can be used for the 12 week programme

Workshop Topic

Topic		Page
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21	Role of Personal Development in supporting facilitators	100
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For further information on the full training syllabus please email:

Dr. Paula Carroll   **Email:** pcarroll@wit.ie

Mairead Barry   **Email**: mlbarry@wit.ie

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