

**GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING FRIENDSHIPS AS AN
INTEGRAL PART OF FACILITATING MENTAL HEALTH
IN THE COMMUNITY**

by

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my creator and strength: God Almighty;

to my loved ones and friends; and

to those who treasure people and friendship.



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To God Who is my creator and strength.

To my loved ones and friends, thank you for your support and encouragement.

To all the participants, for your time and for sharing about yourselves and your friendships. It was a precious experience for me, thank you.

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SUMMARY

People are created for relationships. To be alive is to reach out to others. Initiating, developing and maintaining committed relationships are the most important and often the most underestimated activities in people's lives (Johnson, 2006:2). Throughout a person's whole life, relationships are the core of his or her existence. People are conceived within relationships, are born into relationships and live their lives within relationships. People are dependent on other people for the realisation of life itself, for survival, for aid and comfort, for love and education necessary for healthy development, for fun, excitement and fulfilment. People's relationships with others form the context for all other aspects of their lives (Johnson, 2006:3).

Relationships play a significant role in a person's mental health. They also help to form a person's support system that helps a person deal with life's difficulties and trauma (Duck, 1999:1). During interaction with clients admitted at a private Psychiatric clinic where the researcher worked as a Psychiatric Nurse, the following were observed: the clients' responses concerning their support system would be non-existing, or a spouse or a relative, such as a sister and in rare occasions a friend. Some of the clients would also be working through the loss of a friendship or some would complain that they did not have friendship relationships anymore.

Bearing in mind the significance of friendship relationships in relation to mental health and the observations made in practice, the researcher identified that the loss or absence of a friendship can lead to poor mental health. The research questions asked were: How can friendships be maintained and what guidelines can be described to assist individuals to maintain friendships?

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships, and as a result of the findings,

describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships.

A qualitative research design, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature, was followed (Brink, 1999:125). The research took place in two phases. In phase one the researcher explored and described what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships. In phase two the results of phase one were utilised to describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate their mental health.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews using the Appreciative Inquiry approach (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:4). Interviews were conducted with eight participants who met the inclusive sampling criteria and who were purposively selected. Consent was obtained from the participants. Firstly, a pilot study was done with one of the participants in order to assess the strong and weak points of the research, and to make changes where necessary; thereafter the rest of the participants were interviewed. The researcher and an independent coder analysed the data using the descriptive analysis technique by Tesch (Creswell, 1994:155 – 156). A consensus discussion on the research findings was held between the researcher and the independent coder. Trustworthiness was insured by using strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289).

The results showed what people with existing friendships do to maintain these friendships. Significant features were identified in these friendships that are being maintained and these features are as follows. The friendship provides support. The friendship provides relaxation. The friendship portrays effective communication. The friendship portrays effective time investment. The friendship portrays commitment. The friendship is ongoing and if it has not yet reached maturity, it provides an opportunity for growth and development. From these

results guidelines were described for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate their mental health.

Recommendations were made regarding the application of the results of the study in nursing research and Psychiatric Nursing practice. It was concluded that the research questions were answered, the research objectives were reached and the problem statement was supported.



OPSOMMING

Mense is gemaak vir verhoudings. Om te lewe is om uit te reik na ander toe. Om verhoudings te inisieer, te bou en te handhaaf is die belangrikste aktiwiteit in mense se lewens (Johnson, 2006:2). Verhoudings vorm 'n belangrike kern van mense se lewens. Mense word gebore uit verhoudings en lewe in verhoudings. Mense is afhanklik van mekaar om te oorleef, vir hulp en ondersteuning, vir liefde en opvoeding, vir plesier en vervulling. Mense se verhoudings met ander vorm die konteks van alle ander aspekte van hulle lewens (Johnson, 2006:3).

Verhoudings speel 'n belangrike rol in 'n persoon se geestesgesondheid. Dit vorm ook deel van 'n persoon se ondersteuningstelsel wat 'n persoon help om die lewe se uitdagings en trauma te hanteer (Duck, 1999:1). Tydens interaksie met pasiënte by 'n privaat Psigiatrisie kliniek, waar die navorser as 'n Psigiatrisie Verpleegkundige gewerk het, was die meedeling van die pasiënte oor hulle ondersteuningstelsel in meeste gevalle dat hulle nie 'n ondersteuningstelsel het nie of dat dit 'n eggenoot of 'n familielid is, maar in rare gevalle 'n vriend. Sommige van die pasiënte het ook deur die verlies van 'n vriendskap gewerk en ander pasiënte het gekla dat hulle nie meer vriende het nie.

In gedagte gehou wat die belang van vriendskapsverhoudings in verhouding met geestesgesondheid is en die waarnemings in praktyk gemaak, het die navorser geïdentifiseer dat die verlies of afwesigheid van 'n vriendskap tot swak geestesgesondheid kan lei. Die navorsingsvrae wat gevrae was is: Hoe kan vriendskappe in stand gehou word en watter riglyne kan geskryf word om individue te help om vriendskappe in stand te hou.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om te verken en te beskryf wat mense met bestaande vriendskappe doen om die vriendskap in stand te hou en na

aanleiding van die bevindinge van die studie riglyne te skryf vir die Psigiatriese Verpleegkundige om individue by te staan om vriendskappe in stand te hou.

‘n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp wat verkennend, beskrywend en kontekstueel van aard is, is gevolg (Brink, 1999:125). Die navorsing het in twee fases plaasgevind. In die eerste fase is daar verken en beskryf wat mense met bestaande vriendskappe doen om daardie vriendskappe in stand te hou. In die tweede fase is die bevindinge van fase een aangewend om riglyne te skryf vir die Psigiatriese Verpleegkundige om individue by te staan om vriendskappe in stand te hou om sodoende geestesgesondheid te fasiliteer.

Die data is ingesamel deur semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude waarin die “Appreciative Inquiry” benadering gevolg is te voer (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:4). Onderhoude is gevoer met agt individue wat voldoen het aan die navorsingskriteria en wat doelbewus gekies is. Ingeligte toestemming is by elke individuele deelnemer verkry. Daar is eers ‘n loods-studie gedoen met een van die individue om die sterk en swak punte van die studie te identifiseer en nodige veranderinge aan te bring, daarna was onderhoude met die ander sewe individue gevoer. Die navorser en ‘n onafhanklike kodeerder het die data geanaliseer en ‘n konsensus bespreking oor die bevindinge gehou. Die data analise is gedoen volgens Tesch se beskrywende metode (Creswell, 1994:155-156). Vertrouenswaardigheid is deur die strategieë van Guba se model te volg toegepas in die studie (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289).

Die navorsingsbevindinge het gewys wat mense met bestaande vriendskappe doen om die vriendskappe in stand te hou. Die volgende uitstaande kenmerke is geïdentifiseer in vriendskappe wat in stand gehou word. Die vriendskap verskaf ‘n veilige ruimte. Die vriendskap verskaf ondersteuning. Die vriendskap verskaf ontspanning. Die vriendskap handhaaf effektiewe kommunikasie. Die vriendskap handhaaf effektiewe tydsbelegging. Die vriendskap verskaf getrouheid. Die vriendskap gaan voort en as dit nog nie volwassenheid bereik het nie, verskaf dit

geleentheid vir groei en ontwikkeling. Uit hierdie bevindinge is riglyne vir die Psigiatriese Verpleegkundige geskryf om individue by te staan om vriendskappe in stand te hou en sodoende geestesgesondheid te fasiliteer.

Aanbevelings is gemaak in verband met die toepassing van die bevindinge van die studie met betrekking tot Verpleegkundige Navorsing en Psigiatriese Verpleegkunde praktyk. Daar is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat die navorsingsvrae van die studie beantwoord is, die navorsingsdoelwitte is beantwoord en dat die probleemstelling van die studie geondersteun is.



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CHAPTER ONE

RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

Proverbs 27:17

“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

During the review of relevant literature a great deal of information on friendships and the effects thereof on an individual's mental health was found. A lack of specific guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse on teaching or assisting individuals about how to maintain friendships was identified.

People are created for relationships. To be alive is to reach out to others. Initiating, developing and maintaining committed relationships are the most important and often the most underestimated activities in people's lives (Johnson, 2006:2). Throughout people's lives relationships are the core of their existence. People are conceived within relationships, are born into relationships and live their lives within relationships. People are dependent on other people for the realisation of life itself, for survival, for aid and comfort, for the love and education necessary for healthy development, and for fun, excitement and fulfillment. People's relationships with others form the context for all other aspects of their lives (Johnson, 2006:3). Personal relationships and friendships are important to people. They are the sources of peoples' greatest pleasure and pain. It is important to feel loved and wanted. It is also important to have available sources of help in disasters or during emotional crises and transitions (Duck, 1999:1).

Friendship is one type of interpersonal relationship. Friendship means: participating in intimate conversations in which both hopes and fears

are shared; being honest and trustworthy; committing to the other person and the relationship; really listening to each other; working together to achieve shared goals; and negotiating and problem solving when they do not agree (Johnson, 2003:37). An interpersonal relationship is interdependent on two people interacting with each other. This relationship is facilitated by communication that aims at initiating, building and maintaining fulfilling and trusting relationships with other people (Kneisl, Wilson & Trigoboff, 2004:153).

“Friendship is a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in a concern on the part of each friend for the welfare of the other, for the other’s sake and that involves some degree of intimacy. As such, friendship is undoubtedly central to our lives, in part because the special concern we have for our friends must have a place within a broader set of concerns, including moral concerns and in part because our friends can help shape who we are as persons.”

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
(www.friendship.com.au/writing/definitions.html)

Characteristics of friendship include those listed below.

- Friends participate as equals.
- Friends enjoy each other’s company.
- Friends trust one another to act in their best interest.
- Friends help each other in times of need.
- Friends accept one another and are not inclined to mould one another into new people.
- Friends respect one another.
- Friends are able to be themselves around one another and do not wear ‘masks’.
- Friends understand one another.
- Friends confide in one another.
- Friends share similar interests and values.

These are ideal characteristics and any particular friendship may contain only a few of these features (Kenrick, Neuberg & Cialdini, 2005:216).

One of the conclusions that emerged from health psychology research is that nurturing contact with other people is linked to a longer and happier life. Loneliness has been linked to depression, drug and alcohol abuse, sleep disturbance, headaches and lowered immune response. By contrast people who have strong social ties are less upset by stressful life events, are more resistant to disease and even live longer after being diagnosed with life threatening diseases (Kenrick, Neuberg & Cialdini, 2005:216).

According to the World Health Organisation the essential dimension of mental health is clear from the definition of health in their constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/

Mental health is an integral part of this definition. Mental health can be conceptualised as a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Mental health is the foundation for well-being and effective functioning for an individual and for a community.

[\(www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/\)](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/)

Donnelly, Eburne and Kittleson (2001:23) states that a myriad of lists, classifications and groupings of mental health characteristics include the ability to:

- be self-accepting;
- enjoy life;
- establish and maintain relationships;
- develop intimacy;

- have a realistic view of life;
- make allowances for inadequacies in others;
- manage stress;
- find joy in life; and
- live solidly in the present while remembering the past and preparing for the future.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Relationships play a significant role in a person's mental health. Close friendships are associated with enduring happiness and well-being (Carr, 2005:20). People are created for relationships not for isolation, they are dependent on one another for the realisation of life itself, for survival, food and shelter and aid and comforts and for love, for guidance in learning essential competencies required to survive in this world and for fun, excitement, comfort, love and fulfilment (Johnson, 2006:2&3). Friendships also help to form a person's support system that helps a person deal with life's difficulties and trauma (Duck, 1999:1). During interaction with clients admitted at a private psychiatric clinic this researcher observed that their answer concerning their support systems would be that support systems were non-existing, or that they had a spouse or a relative such as a sister and in rare occasions a friend as support. Some of the clients would also be working through the loss of a friendship, or some would complain that they did not have friends anymore. Keeping in mind the significance of friendship relationships in relation to mental health and the observations made in practice, the researcher identified the following research problem: the loss or absence of a friendship can lead to poor mental health.

Having identified the research problem, the researcher asked the following research questions:

- How can friendships be maintained?

- What guidelines can be described to assist individuals to maintain friendships?

1.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is firstly to explore and describe how people with existing friendships maintain their friendships, and secondly to utilise the research findings to describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships, in order to facilitate mental health.

1.4 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE AND ASSUMPTIONS

A paradigm is an overall philosophical framework or model of how scientific knowledge is produced. It provides organisation for thinking about, observing and interpreting what is observed. It frames the way in which a discipline's concerns will be viewed and the direction that a research project will take. It also structures the questions to be asked within the conceptual boundaries of the paradigm and provides a linkage to certain research methods and criteria for judging appropriate research tools (Brink, 1999:28). According to Guba (1990:17) the term paradigm in its most basic or generic sense is a fundamental set of beliefs that guide action. In the case of this research study it is action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry.

1.4.1 Meta-theoretical and theoretical assumptions

Each type of qualitative research is guided by a particular philosophical stance considered a paradigm. The philosophy directs the questions that are asked, the observations that are made and how the data is interpreted (Burns & Grove, 2005:54).

This study was approached from a positive psychological point of view. Positive psychology is a scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues. It revisits the “average person”, with an interest in finding out what works, what is right and what is improving (Sheldon & King, 2001:216). Positive psychology is also a study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the optimal functioning of people (Gable & Haidt, 2005:104). In this study the strengths and what works and what is right in friendships were studied to see what can contribute to the optimal functioning of friendship relationships in order to maintain and enhance mental health.

The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences like well-being, contentment and satisfaction in the past, hope and optimism for the future, and flow and happiness in the present. At the individual level it is about positive traits, for example, the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent and wisdom (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002:5). The research study also focused on the subjective experiences of individuals regarding friendships like well-being, contentment and satisfaction in the past, hope and optimism for the future, and flow and happiness in the present.

Therapists who work with positive psychology as a therapeutic tool are concerned with: the ways in which individuals can enhance the good in their lives; how can they experience mutually supportive, satisfying and lasting friendship relationships and love relationships; and how can they find meaning and fulfilment in work experiences and live a socially ‘good’ life. They study the experiences that make people feel good and the personality traits that are associated with reports of feeling happy (O’Boyle, 2006:345). In this study the researcher focuses on how individuals can experience supportive satisfying and lasting friendships that will make them feel good and happy, and therefor enhance or

maintain their emotional well-being. Positive psychology is concerned with enhancing subjective well-being, rather than remedying deficiencies (Carr, 2005:1&2) and close friendships are associated with enduring happiness and well-being (Carr, 2005:1&2).

Happiness is a central part of mental health; thus an important goal for positive psychology is advancing knowledge about how to help people increase their levels of happiness and positive mental health. This issue has received little research attention because mental health interventions have primarily focused on ameliorating suffering, weakness and anxiety, rather than on increasing happiness and well-being (Linley & Joseph, 2004:127).

The Theory for Health promotion in Nursing (Department of Nursing Science, University of Johannesburg, 2008:1-7) plays a significant role in this study. The purpose of the theory is to promote the health including the mental health of the individual, family, group and community. The theoretical assumptions that relate to this study are that a person is seen holistically in interaction with the environment in an integrated manner. This environment includes an internal environment which consists of body mind and spirit, and an external environment which consists of physical, social and spiritual dimensions. In this study the external environment which will focus on the social dimension within which friendships are studied will have an influence on the internal environment of the person (especially the mind and spirit) which plays a role in mental health. Psychiatric Nursing is an interactive process which facilitates the promotion of mental health, and the Psychiatric Nurse is a sensitive, therapeutic professional who demonstrates knowledge, skills and values to facilitate the promotion of mental health. The study aims towards producing guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to help individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate mental health.

1.4.1.1 Definitions

Key concepts in this study that will be defined are: interpersonal relationship; friendship; mental health and mental health nursing.

1.4.1.1.a Interpersonal Relationship

An interpersonal relationship is interdependent on two people interacting with each other. This relationship is facilitated by communication that aims at initiating, building and maintaining fulfilling and trusting relationships with other people (Kneisl, Wilson & Trigoboff, 2004:153).

1.4.1.1.b Friendship

Friendship is one type of interpersonal relationship. Friendship means: participating in intimate conversations in which both hopes and fears are shared; being honest and trustworthy; committing to the other person and the relationship; really listening to each other; working together to achieve shared goals; and negotiating and problem solving when they do not agree (Johnson, 2003:37).

1.4.1.1.c Mental health

Mental health is a state of well-being in which individuals realise their own abilities, cope with normal life stressors, work productively and are able to contribute to the community (www.who.int/media/factsheets). Mental health is reflected in peoples' relationships with themselves, others and with the environment (Kreigh & Perko, 1983:5-6). Mental health is a dynamic process in the person's environment. This interaction contributes or interferes with the promotion of mental health (Department of Nursing Science, University of Johannesburg, 2008:1-7).

1.4.1.1.d Mental health nursing

Mental health nursing is an interpersonal process where counselling and health education are aimed at supporting and facilitating healthy lifestyle functioning (Uys & Middleton, 2004:15).

1.4.2 Methodological assumptions

A qualitative research design, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature, will be used (Brink, 1999:125). The study will be approached from a positive psychological point of view which studies human strengths and virtues, with a focus on what works, what is right and what is improving (Sheldon & King, 2001:216). It is also to study conditions and processes that contribute to optimal human functioning (Gable & Haidt, 2005:104).



1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

1.5.1 Research design

A qualitative research design, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature, will be used (Brink, 1999:125). The study will be approached from a positive psychological point of view. Positive psychology studies human strengths and virtues with a focus on what works, what is right and what is improving (Sheldon & King, 2001:216). In this study the strengths, what works and what is right in friendships will be explored and described to see what can contribute to the optimal functioning of friendships in order to maintain friendships and enhance mental health.

1.5.2 Research method

The research will take place in two phases. Phase one will explore and describe what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships. In phase two the results of phase one will be used to describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate their mental health.

1.5.2.1 Phase One

Exploration and description of what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendship.

1.5.2.1.a Population and sampling

The target population will be identified as participants between the ages of 25 and 30, who have maintained friendships for a period of at least two years or longer. According to Erikson's Eight Developmental Stages (Wilson & Kneisl, 1996:35), young adulthood ends at 25 and adulthood starts at 25 years of age, and during those stages commitment to relationships and concern for others are key concepts and basic attitudes. A purposive sampling method also known as selective sampling will be used to ensure that specific elements are included in the sample. The researcher will select information rich cases or cases from which a great deal can be learned about the focus of the study (Burns & Grove, 2005:252 - 253).

1.5.2.1.b Sampling criteria

The sample criteria are that the participants should be mentally healthy and fully functioning in society. They should be between the ages of 25 and 30. They should be female participants and have maintained friendships for a period of at least two years or longer.

1.5.2.1.c Sample size

Purposively sampled participants (Brink, 1999:141) will be interviewed till data saturation (Burns & Grove, 2005:750) is reached. Data saturation is reached when no new information is found in interviews.

1.5.2.1.d Method of data collection

Data collection for this study will be done through semi-structured interviews, using the Appreciative Inquiry approach (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:42-45). The Appreciative Inquiry approach will help the researcher to identify what people with existing friendships do to maintain these friendships. The interviews will be semi-structured using four main questions based on the Appreciative Inquiry Approach. Additional communication skills and techniques will be used to gain optimal information on what people with existing friendships do to maintain these friendships.

1.5.2.1.e Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach towards seeking, identifying and enhancing the life-giving forces that are present when a system is performing optimally (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:14). Appreciative Inquiry is a journey where profound or intense knowledge of human beings at their moments of wonder is uncovered and used to co-construct the best and highest future for human beings (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:14).

Appreciative Inquiry uses a process of seeking and understanding through asking questions that focus on the generative and life-giving forces in human beings (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:14). The Appreciative inquiry process that will be used is the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) initiative Four-D Model. This is summarised in four phases as:

1. the “Discover phase” where that which gives life are appreciated;
2. the “Dream phase” where the perfect future are described;
3. the “Design phase” where the future is constructed; and
4. the “Deliver phase” where ways to deliver on the images of the future are created (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:42-45).

1.5.2.2 Data analysis

The recorded interviews will be transcribed and analysed using the descriptive analysis technique of Tesch (Creswell, 1994:155-156). See the description of data analysis in Chapter Two (Section 2.5.1.6).

A set of clean data will be given to an independent coder with experience in qualitative data analysis. After completion of the data

analysis by the researcher and the independent coder; they will meet for a consensus discussion on the findings.

1.5.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness will be maintained by using the strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289). These are described below.

Credibility – Credibility is about truth-value and truth in reality. Credibility can be obtained in this study by building trust through honouring anonymity, honesty and openness. Using multiple methods and having discussions with participants will provide them with opportunities to add material, make changes and offer interpretations.

Transferability – Transferability is the standard against which the applicability of qualitative data is assessed. It is the extent to which a judgment can be made about the generalisability of results, in terms of transferring findings to similar contexts. Transferability can be obtained in this study by: using purposeful sampling; describing the results in detail with direct quotations from the interviews; and then recontextualising the results in the literature.

Dependability – This refers to extend of the stability of the results, once unpredictable changes have been discounted. Dependability in this study can be obtained by performing data quality checks and describing all aspects of the research fully, including the methodology, characteristics of sample and process and data analysis.

Confirmability – This focuses on whether the results of the research could be confirmed by another. Thus, are the data confirmable? Confirmability can be obtained in this study by using triangulation.

These strategies will be described in Chapter Two (Section 2.5.2).

1.5.4 Ethical considerations

The following human rights will be protected: the right to self-determination; the right to privacy; the right to anonymity and confidentiality; the right to fair treatment and the right to protection from discomfort and harm (Burns & Grove, 2005:181-190).

Informed, voluntary consent will be obtained from research participants after essential information about the study has been shared with them, and once the participants show comprehension of the given information. The informed consent will include: an introduction to the research purpose and activities; a description of the risks and discomforts and freedom from harm; a description of the benefits; and an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. It will offer answers to questions, be non-coercive and will offer the option to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Informed, voluntary consent will be obtained to conduct interviews for the study and to audiotape these interviews. Anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured by not using participants' names. The audiotapes will be kept under lock and key for two years after publication of the research report, and then will be destroyed. The research participants will be informed about their right to access information regarding the research study and will also be given feedback about the research findings.

Approval for this study was obtained from the academic Ethics Committee. The letter for approval of this study is included in Annexure One and the informed consent form is included in Annexure Two of this study.

1.5.5 Phase Two

The results of phase one will be used to describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate their mental health

1.6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions, guidelines and recommendations from the study are set out in Chapter Four (Section 4.3 and 4.4).

1.7 DIVISION OF THE CHAPTERS

This minor dissertation will be divided into four chapters. In Chapter One the rationale and overview of the study will be covered. In Chapter Two the research design and method will be discussed. In Chapter Three feedback on research findings will be given, and Chapter Three will also cover the literature review. In Chapter Four the guidelines, conclusion of the study and the recommendations will be discussed.

1.8 SUMMARY

Chapter One provides an overview of the research study. It provides the background and rationale for the study and describes the problem statement, research question, research purpose, paradigmatic perspective and assumptions, as well as the research approach and method.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD

Proverbs 24:26

“An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.”

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a detailed plan and structure of the research approach and method used in the research study is given.

2.2 RESEARCH RATIONALE

Relationships play a significant role in a person's mental health. They also help to form a person's support system, that assists a person in dealing with life's difficulties and trauma (Duck, 1999:1). During interaction with clients admitted at a private psychiatric clinic, the researcher found their answer concerning their support system would be that it is nonexistent or a spouse or a relative such as a sister, and on rare occasions a friend. Some of the clients would also be working through the loss of a friendship or some would complain that they did not have friends anymore.

The loss or absence of a friendship can lead to poor mental health. In this project the researcher wishes to explore and describe what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships and then to describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate mental health.

2.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to:

- explore and describe what people with existing friendships do to maintain their relationships; and
- describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships.

2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research design, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature, will be used (Brink, 1999:125). The study will be approached from a positive psychological point of view (Sheldon & King, 2001:216). In this study the strengths, what works and what is right in friendships will be explored and described to see what can contribute to the optimal functioning of friendships in order to maintain friendships.

2.4.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a systematic, interactive, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Parahoo, 1997:59-61). Creswell (1994:1&2) defined a qualitative study as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting the detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.

According to Brink (1999:13), distinguishing features of qualitative research include the following. It attempts to understand the phenomenon in its entirety. It has few preconceived ideas and emphasises the

importance of people's interpretations of circumstances and events. It collects information using a narrative approach. It does not attempt to control the context of the research, but rather attempts to capture the context in its entirety. It assumes that subjectivity is essential for the understanding of human experience. Qualitative research analyses narrative information in an organised intuitive fashion. It involves sustained interaction with the participants in their own language and in their own environment. Inductive and dialectic reasoning are predominant.

Qualitative research aims to generate knowledge concerned with meaning and discovery. Predominant in these studies are inductive and dialectic reasoning (Burns & Grove, 2005:24). With inductive reasoning, reasoning from the specific to the general, in which particular instances are observed and then combined into a larger whole or general statement, takes place (Burns & Grove, 2005:739). With dialectic reasoning, the holistic perspective is involved in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It examines factors that are opposites and making sense of them by merging them into a single unit or idea that is greater than either alone (Burns & Grove, 2005:734).

The qualitative researcher has an active part in the study, and the findings from the study are influenced by the researcher's values and perceptions. Thus the research approach is subjective, but the approach assumes that subjectivity is essential for the understanding of human experiences (Burns & Grove, 2005:24).

In this qualitative study the researcher has described and has given meaning to the lived experience of participants regarding their friendships and what they do to maintain their friendships.

2.4.2 Exploratory Research

The purpose of exploratory research is to explore the dimension of a phenomenon, the manner in which it is manifested, and the other factors with which it is related (Brink, 1999:11). Exploratory research provides more insight about the nature of the phenomenon. The researcher, therefore, explores the dimensions of a phenomenon to gain insight into the phenomenon to provide more insight about the nature of the phenomenon (Hungler & Polit, 1995:11).

In this research study the researcher has explored and described what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships, to gain insight in order to be able to write guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate mental health.



2.4.3 Descriptive Research

The purpose of descriptive research is to obtain complete and accurate information about a phenomenon through observation, description and classification in order to provide new information on a phenomenon (Brink, 1999:11; Parahoo, 1997:143). According to Burns and Grove (2005:734), descriptive research provides an accurate portrayal or account of the characteristics of a particular individual, event, or group in real-life situations for the purpose of discovering new meaning, describing what exists, determining the frequency with which something occurs and categorising information.

In this research study information was obtained through observation, description and classification of characteristics of existing friendships and how these are maintained.

2.5 RESEARCH METHOD

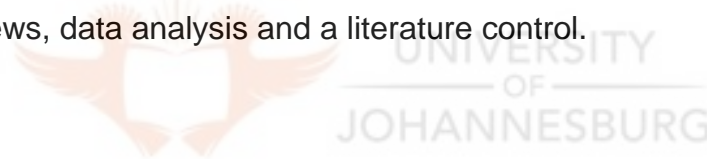
The study was conducted in two phases which are described below.

Phase One explores and describes what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships.

In Phase Two the results of phase one were used to describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships.

2.5.1 Phase one: The exploration and description of what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships

This phase included population and sampling, data collection through interviews, data analysis and a literature control.



2.5.1.1 Population and sampling

A population is the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher; the group of persons who meet the criteria the researcher is interested in studying (Brink, 1999:132). A sample is part of a whole or a subset of a larger set selected by the researcher to participate in a research project. A sample then consists of a selected group of elements from a defined population (Brink, 1999:133). Sampling refers to the process of selecting the sample from a population in a way that represents the population of interest to obtain information regarding a phenomenon that is being researched (Brink, 1999:133). According to Miller (2000:77) the goal of sampling is to secure participants who represent all the types or groups that are important for the research subject.

In this study the sample will be taken from the population that will meet the sampling criteria for the research study. The target population is mentally healthy young adult females with existing friendships.

A purposive sampling method was used in this study. This sampling method is also known as theoretical or judgmental sampling and is a type of non-probability sampling (Brink, 1999:141; Parahoo, 1997: 232&233). Purposive sampling involves the conscious selection of certain participants who can provide the necessary data (Parahoo, 1997:232). The researcher selects information rich cases from which a great deal about the central focus or purpose of the study can be learned (Burns & Grove 2005:352). This researcher selected participants with existing friendship relationships for this study and used the sampling criteria included in the study.

2.5.1.2 Sampling criteria

With the sampling criteria the researcher indicates those characteristics that are needed in participants for the specific study, and also provides a rationale for selecting these types of participants in order to obtain essential data for the research study (Burns & Grove, 2005:352). The sampling criteria were developed from the research problem, the research purpose and the review of the literature (Burns & Grove, 2005:342). The sampling criteria for this study were inclusion sampling criteria; meaning that the criteria are those characteristics that a participant should possess to be part of the target population (Burns & Grove, 2005:343).



The inclusion sampling criteria for this study are set out below.

- Participants should be mentally healthy and fully functioning in society.
- They should be female participants between the ages of 25 and 30 years.
- They should have maintained friendships for a period of at least two years or longer.

The rationale for the above sampling criteria are presented below.

- Mental health is a state of well-being where the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to society (www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en). Establishing and maintaining relationships is also a mental health characteristic (Donnelly, Eburne & Kittleson, 2001:23).
- Same-gender friendships formed by men and women differ. Women's friendships are likely to be deeper and more intimate than friendships between men. Men are less expressive and are more likely to talk about sports, politics and business, whereas women are more likely to share their feelings and problems (Kaplan, 1998:356).
- According to Erikson's Eight Developmental Stages (Wilson & Kneisl, 1996:35), young adulthood ends at 25 years of age and during those stages commitment to relationships and concern for others are key concepts and basic attitudes.
- Relationships are developmental; they evolve over time as people interact with each other (Wood, 2000:153).

2.5.1.3 Saturation and sampling size

In qualitative research the focus is on the quality of information obtained from the participants versus the size of the sample (Burns & Grove, 2005:358). The number of participants in a qualitative study is adequate when saturation of information is achieved in the study area (Burns & Grove, 2005:358). Data saturation occurs when additional sampling provides no new information, only redundancy of previous collected data (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:201). Too many participants in a qualitative study would serve both to cloud the issues that are being studied and also to overcomplicate the complex analysis process. Therefore the sample size is adequate when the meanings are clear and data are fully explored in the qualitative study (Burns & Grove, 2005:142). The researcher will stop seeking additional participants when theoretical data saturation is achieved.

2.5.1.4 Role of the researcher

Qualitative research is interpretative research; therefore the biases, values and judgment of the researcher are revealed in the research report. Such openness is considered to be useful and positive (Creswell, 1994:147). In varying degrees the researcher influences the participants being studied and vica versa. The mere presence of the researcher may alter the behaviour of the participant. In qualitative research it is considered to be a natural and necessary element of the research process (Burns & Grove, 2005:536).

The researcher's personality is an important factor in qualitative research; skills in empathy and intuition are cultivated. To interpret the participant's experience, the researcher needs to become closely involved in the participant's experience. It is necessary for the researcher to be open to the perceptions of the participant, rather than to attach her own meaning to the experience. Participants being studied

often participate in determining research questions, guiding data collection and interpreting research results (Burns & Grove, 2005:536).

The researcher followed the steps of trustworthiness and ethical consideration in the research study.

2.5.1.5 Data collection

Data collection is the process of selecting participants and gathering data from these participants (Burns & Grove, 2005:430). Data collection for this study was done through semi-structured interviews, using the Appreciative Inquiry approach (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:42-45). Interviews were conducted face-to-face, at a suitable quiet area of the participant's choice and did not exceed one hour. The interviews were recorded on audiotape and later transcribed for analysis.

During a semi-structured interview the researcher is generally required to ask a certain number of questions, but additional probes are allowed or even necessary, and open-ended and close-ended questions are included in semi-structured interviews (Brink, 1999:158). In this research study the interview was semi-structured using four main questions based on the Appreciative Inquiry approach. Additional communication skills and techniques were used to gain optimal information regarding the research topic.

A pilot study was done with one of the participants to assess the feasibility of the study and to obtain information for improving the research project (Hungler & Polit, 1995:34). This initial interview determined whether the participants would be open to share about their friendships and if the researcher's approach needed to be modified.

According to Watkins and Mohr (2001:14), the term 'appreciative' comes from the idea that when something increase in value it 'appreciates'.

Therefore Appreciative Inquiry focuses on the generative and life-giving forces in the person, the things the person wants to increase. Inquiring is the process of seeking to understand through asking questions.

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach towards seeking, identifying and enhancing the life-giving forces that are present when a human being is performing optimally (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:14). Appreciative Inquiry is a journey where profound or intense knowledge of human beings at their moments of wonder is uncovered and is used to co-construct the best and highest future for them (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:14). In other words Appreciative Inquiry looks for what is going “right” and moves towards its understanding that, in the forward movement toward the ideal, the greatest value comes from embracing what works (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:11).

Appreciative Inquiry uses a process of seeking and understanding through asking questions that focus on the generative and life-giving forces in human beings (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:14). The Appreciative Inquiry process that was used is the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Four-D Model. This is summarised in four phases as: the “Discover phase” where that which gives life is appreciated; The “Dream phase” where the perfect future is described; the “Design phase” where the future is constructed; and then the “Deliver phase” where ways to deliver on the images of the future are created (Watkins & Mohr, 2001: 42-45).

The following is a description of the GEM initiative Four-D model (See Figure 2.1) as described by Watkins and Mohr (2001:42-45):

Discover (appreciating that which gives life)

In this phase participants share the core life-giving factors of the friendship and elaborate on the aspects of that which they most value and want to bring into the future from the past of the relationship. It

focuses on the history of the relationship as positive possibility, rather than problematic or forgotten.

Dream (envisioning impact)

The participant describes the preferred future for the friendship and engages in conversation regarding the relationship's position, potential and calling. A new historical narrative emerges; one that engages those involved in re-creating the positive history of the relationship, which in turn gives life to its positive future.

Design (co-constructing the future)

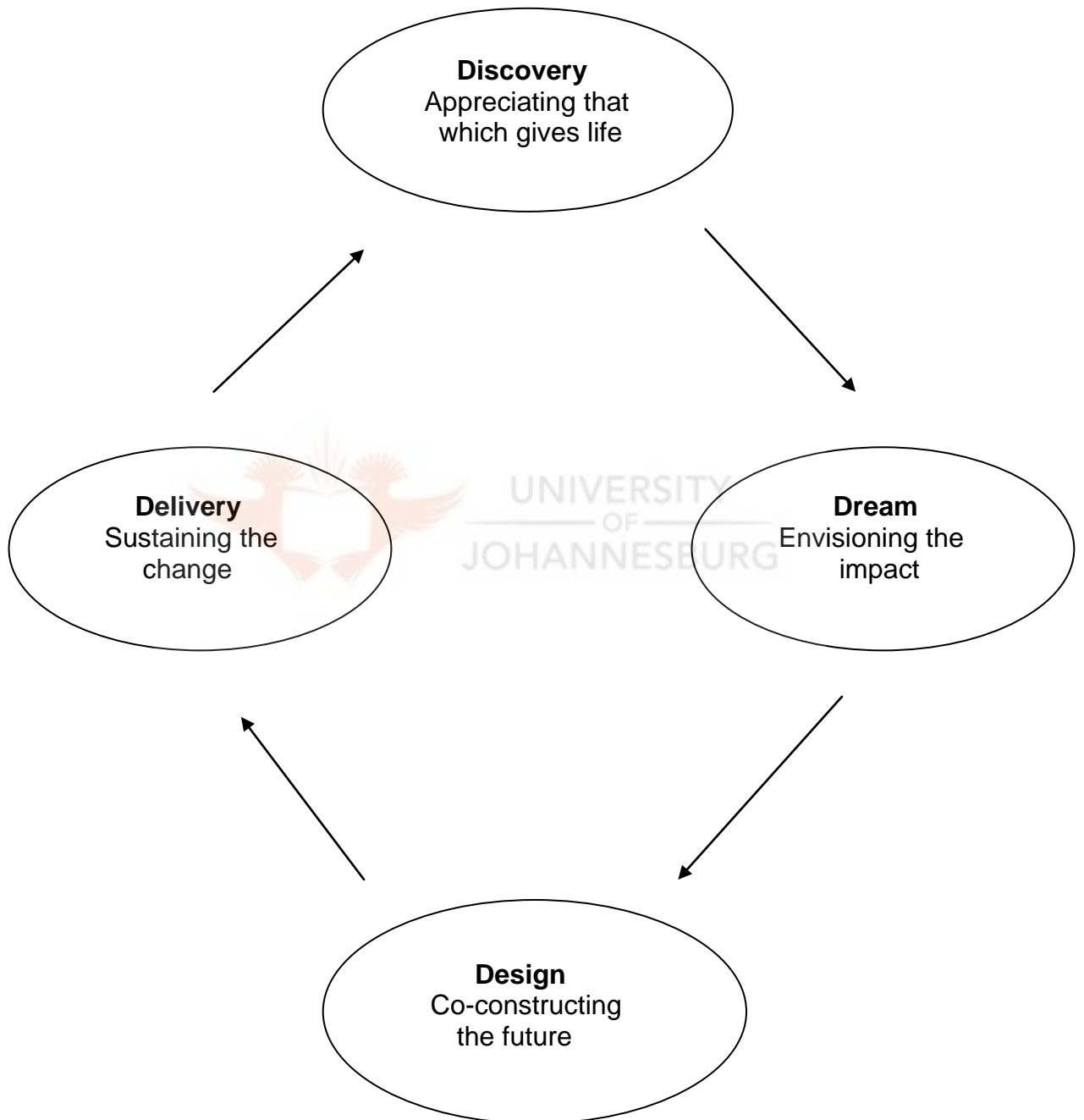
The desired qualities and behaviours that will enable the friendship to function in a way that move towards the higher vision in the dream phase are articulated. Both the dream and design phases involve the collective construction of positive images of the future.

Deliver (sustaining the change)

The final phase creates ways to deliver on the images of the future (the overall vision of the dream and design phase for the friendship).

Figure 2.1 gives a schematic presentation of the four phases described in the GEM initiative Four-D model.

Figure 2.1: Schematic presentation of the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Initiative's Four-D Model



Additional communication skills and techniques that were used to encourage participants to share information regarding the study subject are discussed below.

- **Responsive listening**

This is where the researcher attends to the verbal and nonverbal messages to show genuine understanding and acceptance and also increase the understanding of the issue by clarifying the participants' statements (Okun, 2002:69).

- **Making minimal verbal response**

The researcher uses verbal cues such as "mm-mm" or "yes" to indicate that she is listening, and is following what the participant is saying (Okun, 2002:81).

- **Paraphrasing**

The researcher makes a verbal statement that is interchangeable with the participant's statement (Okun, 2002:81).

- **Probing**

This is where the researcher uses an open-ended attempt to obtain more information about something, for example: "Tell me more" (Okun, 2002:81).

- **Reflecting**

This refers to communicating to the participant the researcher's understanding of her perspectives (Okun, 2002:81).

- **Clarifying**

This is an attempt to understand the basic nature of the participant's statement (Okun, 2002:81).

- **Checking out**

This occurs when the researcher is confused about her perception of the participant's verbal or nonverbal behaviour. The researcher asks the participant to confirm or correct the researcher's perception or understanding (Okun, 2002:81).

- **Summarizing**

By summarizing, the researcher synthesises what has been communicated during an interview session. Thus a summary is a type of clarification (Okun, 2002:81).

“As I considered the importance of language and how human beings interact with the world, it struck me that in many ways the development of language was like the discovery of fire – it was such an incredible primordial force. I had always thought that we used language to describe the world – now I was seeing that this was not the case. To the contrary, it is through language that we create the world, because it's nothing until we describe it. And when we describe it, we create distinctions that govern our actions. To put it another way, we do not describe the world we see, but we see the world we describe.”

Joseph Jaworski, Synchronicity

(Watkins & Mohr, 2001:13)

2.5.1.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is conducted to reduce, organise and give meaning to the data or information that is collected during the research study (Burns &

Grove, 2005:733). Analysis of data in qualitative studies involves an examination of words. Data analysis is generally not a distinct step in qualitative research studies, but is done concurrently with data collection (Brink, 1999:192). For this qualitative study the descriptive technique by Tesch (Creswell, 1994:155-156) was used to analyse the data.

After transcribing the recorded interviews; the following eight steps of Tesch's analysis technique was used to analyse the textual data systematically (Creswell, 1994:155). The process is described below.

1. The researcher read carefully through all the transcriptions to gain a sense of the whole.
2. The researcher picked one interview and read through it, asking the question: "What is this about?" and thinking about the underlying meaning of the information.
3. The researcher completed step two for several participants. She then made a list of topics and clustered similar topics together. The topics were formed into columns of major, unique and leftover topics.
4. The list was taken back to the data, topics were abbreviated as codes and the codes were written next to the appropriate segments of the text.
5. The researcher then identified the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into categories. The total list of categories were reduced by grouping topics that relate to each other.
6. The abbreviations for each category were finalised and these codes were set out in alphabetical order.
7. The researcher assembled data material belonging to each category in one place and performed a preliminary analysis.
8. Existing data were then recoded as necessary.

An independent coder was met and a discussion about the subject of the research study was held (de Vos, 1998:345). A set of clean transcriptions of the interviews was given to this independent coder

who has experience in qualitative data analysis. He was also asked to use Tesch's eight steps of analysis. After completion of data analysis by the researcher and the independent coder, they met for a consensus discussion on the findings.

2.5.1.7 Literature control

The literature control is a process that involves finding, reading, understanding and forming conclusions about the published research and theory on a particular topic (Brink, 1999:76). According to Creswell (1994:20&21), the literature in a study accomplishes several purposes: it shares the results of other studies with the researcher; it relates the research study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature about a topic; it provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study; and it acts as a benchmark for comparing the results of the study with other findings.

In qualitative research, the purpose and timing of the literature control vary, according to the type of study to be conducted (Burns & Grove, 2005:95). In this study the literature control is presented in the study at the end. It forms a basis for comparing and contrasting findings of the qualitative study. This approach is most suitable for this research study because the literature does not guide and direct the study, but rather becomes an aid, once patterns or categories have been identified (Creswell, 1994:23). The literature will be incorporated to compare and contrast findings regarding what participants do to maintain their friendships.

2.5.2 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in this research study will be maintained by using the strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289).

Credibility – Credibility is about truth-value and truth in reality.

Credibility can be obtained in this study by building trust through honouring anonymity, honesty and openness. Using multiple methods and having discussions with participants will provide them with opportunities to add material, make changes and offer interpretations. See application in Table 2.1.

Transferability – Transferability is the standard against which the applicability of qualitative data is assessed. It is the extent to which a judgment can be made about the generalisability of results, in terms of transferring findings to similar contexts. Transferability can be obtained in this study by using purposeful sampling, describing the results in detail with direct quotations from the interviews and then recontextualising the results in the literature. See application in Table 2.1.

Dependability – This refers to the extent of the stability of the results, once unpredictable changes have been discounted. Dependability in this study can be obtained by performing data quality checks and describing all aspects of the research fully, including the methodology, characteristics of sample and process and data analysis. See application in Table 2.1.

Confirmability – This focuses on whether the results of the research could be confirmed by another. Thus: are the data confirmable? Confirmability can be obtained in this study by using triangulation in the form of an independent coder. See application in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Strategies to ensure trustworthiness

STRATEGIES	STEPS TO APPLY
<p>Credibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged engagement with the field: was accomplished in this study by spending time with the participants before the interviews and developing a relationship of trust and allowing sufficient time for the interviews (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:303). • Reflexivity: was done by the researcher by using field notes of, and reflecting on, her experiences during the study where she reflected on her own values and judgment and feelings and what influence these would have on the data collection and data analysis of the study (Creswell, 1994:147). • Member checking: in this study was done by asking the participants to review, validate and verify the researcher’s interpretations and conclusions of the data obtained (Brink, 1999:124). • Triangulation: in this study was applied by using multiple data sources like various participants and the literature control and using an independent coder when the data were analysed (Parahoo, 1997:65).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review: was done by communicating to two supervisors and independent coder. This helped the researcher to focus on the study and clear her mind of emotions that could have clouded her good judgment regarding data collection and analysis. Her advisors helped her to follow sensible next steps regarding the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985: 308). • In-depth Interviews: were held with participants and structured questions were asked, as well as other methods like probing or open-ended or close-ended questions. These enabled the participants to add data or change data or offer interpretations which helped the researcher to clarify the meaning of the data collected (Brink, 1999:158; Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289).
<p>Transferability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposive sampling: was used by selecting participants with information rich cases from which a great deal of the central focus of the study was learned (Burns & Grove, 2005:352). This had an influence on the generalisability of the research findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289). • Rich description of results with supporting direct quotations from participants: was achieved in this study as evidenced in Chapter Three. The results were recontextualised and supported by the literature control (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289).

<p>Dependability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependability audit: in this study all aspects of the research were fully described and recorded. This made an audit trail possible and the audit trail reduces any subjective effect (Parahoo, 1997:354; Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289). • Dense description of research methodology: in this study took the form of in-depth descriptions of the research methodology and of the data which showed interactions with the participants. This was done by using the descriptive research methodology through interviewing the participants (de Vos, 1998:351). • Code-recode procedure: was followed by using Tesch’s analysing technique (Creswell, 1994:155) when the data were analysed and by consulting an independent coder. • Independent coder: was utilised to ensure the stability of the results when the data were analysed (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289).
<p>Confirmability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmability audit: with an audit trail others, for example in this study it was the independent coder and two supervisors; can read transcripts and field notes and data analysis to help reduce subjective effect (Parahoo, 1997:354 & 357). • Chain of evidence: in this study all aspects of the research were fully described and recorded

	<p>to make it possible to confirm the research findings or results (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:289).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation: in this study was used to confirm the findings by utilising an independent coder and by two supervisors who monitored the research process and findings. This helped to free the research procedures and results from bias (de Vos, 1998:350). • Peer review: was obtained by communicating with two supervisors and the independent coder. This helped the researcher to focus on the study and clear her mind of emotions that could have clouded her good judgment regarding data collection and analysis. It also helped to prevent bias regarding research procedures and results and it established truth value and applicability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985: 308; de Vos, 1998: 350-351).
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2.5.3 Ethical considerations

The following human rights will be protected: the right to self determination; the right to privacy; the right to anonymity and confidentiality; the right to fair treatment and the right to protection from discomfort and harm (Burns & Grove, 2005:181-190). Refer to Chapter One 1.5.4 for a full description of the ethical considerations.

2.5.4 Phase two: Description of guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships

The data that was collected and analysed along with the literature control and triangulation during phase one were used in phase two to develop guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate mental health.

The guidelines were based on the research findings and the strategies to implement the guidelines were based on the theoretical approach of the nursing process (Department of Nursing Science, University of Johannesburg, 2008:7&8).

2.6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made her conclusions and recommendations at the end of the study after the data had been analysed. Recommendations based on the research findings were made for nursing practice, education and further research.

2.7 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Two provides a detailed plan and structure of the research approach and method used for the research study. Methods to ensure trustworthiness and ethical aspects were addressed as these play a vital role in research.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Proverbs 27:9

“Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart and the pleasantness of one’s friend springs from his earnest counsel.”

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three gives an account and discussion of the research findings. The research findings are based on the analysed transcribed interviews that were held with the participants in this study. In this chapter a literature review is included to validate the findings of the research study.



3.2 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

After eight interviews, the data were saturated as evidenced by there being no new information; the pilot study is included in this eight interviews. Participants were purposively selected according to the sampling inclusion criteria for this research study. The participants were all females, between the ages of 25 and 30 years, who were mentally healthy and had maintained friendships for at least two years or longer. They were from the middle socio-economic level and were professional and working individuals.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The research study and interviews were discussed with the participants and appointments for the interviews were made with them. Interviews were conducted in private homes at times that were suitable for the participants.

Informed consent was given by the participants to conduct the interviews as well as consent to audiotape these interviews.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews until data were saturated as evidenced by there being no new information (Brink, 1999:142). The four main questions based on the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Four-D Model of Appreciative Inquiry (Watkins & Mohr, 2001:42-45) that were used during each interview are set out below.

If you think of a friendship that is dear to you, and has lasted for two or more years:

1. What do you appreciate in that friendship?
2. Where do you see that friendship developing to?
3. What is needed to reach that?
4. How can you reach that?



As the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, the questions as they were originally asked in the interviews are set out below.

As jy dink aan 'n vriendskap wat twee jaar of langer duur en jou na aan die hart lê:

1. Wat waardeer jy van daardie vriendskap?
2. Waarheen sien jy daardie vriendskap ontwikkel?
3. Wat is nodig om dit te bereik?
4. Hoe kan dit bereik word?

These interviews were transcribed and then systematically analysed using Tesch's eight step technique of analysis (Creswell, 1994:155).

The researcher made an appointment with an independent coder who is a senior university lecturer with a D Ed (Psychology Education), and who is experienced in qualitative research and data analysis. A discussion about the research study took place with the independent coder during the appointment. A summary of the research study, together with information on Appreciative Inquiry and Tesch's eight-step analysis technique was given to the independent coder, along with the transcribed interviews.

After the researcher and independent coder had analysed the data (both used Tesch's eight step analysis technique), they met for a consensus discussion on the findings.

Data from the research were grouped into a central theme, categories and subcategories. The research findings are presented. Table 3.1 provides a schematic summary of significant features in friendships. The results or findings are discussed and interpreted further in this chapter.



Table 3.1 A schematic summary of significant features in friendships

<p>Central theme</p> <p>Friendships that are being maintained reveal various significant features that are beneficial to an individual's mental health.</p>	
<p>Category</p>	<p>Sub-category</p>
<p>1. The friendship provides a safe space.</p>	<p>1.1 You feel comfortable with and around each other; you can be yourself without any pretence.</p> <p>1.2 There is unconditional acceptance of the other person and her circumstances.</p> <p>1.3 There is a relationship of trust.</p> <p>1.4 Boundaries are communicated and respected.</p> <p>1.5 There is mutual respect.</p> <p>1.6 You know each other.</p> <p>1.7 There is spontaneous growth of the friendship.</p>
<p>2. The friendship provides support.</p>	<p>2.1 Caring about each other's well being.</p> <p>2.2 Involvement in each other's lives.</p> <p>2.3 Providing help through times of trouble and crisis.</p>

	2.4 You can talk about your feelings and worries.
3. The friendship provides relaxation.	<p>3.1 Have fun together and enjoy each other's company.</p> <p>3.2 Take a break from life's taxing challenges.</p> <p>3.3 Share and enjoy humour.</p>
4. The friendship involves effective communication.	<p>4.1 Openly discuss interests and dislikes.</p> <p>4.2 Honest with each other about feelings and expectations.</p> <p>4.3 You know where you stand with each other and understand each other.</p> <p>4.4 Work through conflict and problems in the relationship.</p>
5. The friendship involves effective time investment.	<p>5.1 Spontaneously spend time together, without pressuring each other into it.</p> <p>5.2 Over a period of time the friendship grows stronger.</p> <p>5.3 Spend time together and do things together.</p> <p>5.4 Have contact and stay in contact with each other.</p>

<p>6. The friendship involves commitment.</p>	<p>6.1 Both parties willingly decide that the friendship is important.</p> <p>6.2 Both parties actively maintain the friendship.</p> <p>6.3 They maintain friendship in spite of changing life circumstances.</p> <p>6.4 They persevere when the friendship experiences difficulty.</p>
<p>7. The friendship is ongoing and, if it has not reach maturity yet, it provides an opportunity for growth and development.</p>	<p>7.1 You are aware that personal changes and life phase changes bring changes and adjustments in the friendship relationship.</p> <p>7.2 There is an awareness that the friendship will go through times of growth and absence.</p> <p>7.3 The friendship grows stronger.</p> <p>7.4 There is space for improvement and development.</p>

3.4 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND LITERATURE

The literature review was conducted after the research study had been done and after the data had been analysed. The literature study was done to support the findings and put these into context with what is already known (Brink, 1999:76).

The interpretation and discussion of the findings were based on the central theme, categories and subcategories that are schematically summarised in Table 3.1.

3.4.1 Central theme

Friendships that are being maintained reveal various significant features that are beneficial to an individual's mental health. These features can also be seen as characteristics or values. These are things that people do in their relationships, or expect from their relationships, to make them work and to contribute to the maintenance of their friendships.

The main features identified in this study are: friendship provides a safe space; friendship provides support; friendship provides relaxation; friendship involves effective communication; friendship involves effective time investment; friendship involves commitment and if it has not reach maturity yet, it provides an opportunity for growth and development.

According to Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini (2005:216) characteristics of friendship include that friends participate as equals. Friends enjoy each other's company. Friends trust one another to act in their best interest. Friends help each other in times of need. Friends accept one another and are not inclined to mould one another into new people. Friends respect one another. Friends are able to be themselves around one another, and do not wear 'masks'. Friends understand one another. Friends confide in one another. Friends share similar interests and values. These are the ideal characteristics of friendship and any particular friendship may contain only a few of these features.

According to Nelson-Jones (1996:13&14), examples of values that are guiding principles in effective relationships are: commitment and loyalty; cooperation and compromise; caring and compassion; gentleness; equality; openness; assertiveness; fun and personal and relationship growth.

The categories under the central theme will be described and the subcategories will be discussed with quotes from the interviews conducted in this study along with quotes from the literature. These quotes relate to the discussed content of the subcategory.

3.4.2 Friendships provides a safe space

Participants saw their friendships as spaces where they can feel secure and free. The friendship provides a safe environment for the individual where they can feel at ease and just be themselves.

A safe space is a space, in this case the friendship, where one can feel secure and free. A space is the environment in which the friendship exists. Creating this environment is the responsibility of both parties involved. If this space is safe, it is open, warm, light and inviting. If this space is unsafe it will be dark, unforgiving and full of fear

(www.outblogger.com/content/psychology/2008/safe-relationship-spacehtml).

From the interviews, different characteristics of this safe space were identified as will be discussed in the following sub-categories.

3.4.2.1 Friends feel comfortable with and around each other; they can be themselves without any pretence

When asked what they appreciated about their friendships, participants replied that they appreciated the fact that they feel comfortable in their friendship and that they could be themselves within the friendship without having to pretend.

“Die gemaklikheid, die gemaklikheid met mekaar.” (Being comfortable, we feel comfortable with each other.)

“Dit is baie gemaklik en ontspanne.” (It is very comfortable and relaxed.)

“Dat mens net by mekaar se huise kan opdaag en net gemaklik kan wees. En kan huil as jy wil huil en lag as jy wil lag.” (That you can just show up at each other’s homes and just be comfortable. You can cry if you want to cry and laugh if you want to laugh.)

“Maar ons twee sal altyd met mekaar gemaklik wees...” (We will always be comfortable with each other...)

“Imm, ek dink die feit dat mens net jousef kan wees.” (The fact that you can just be yourself.)

“...ook die feit dat ek net myself by haar kan wees, dat daar nie voorgee is nie.” (...also the fact that I can just be myself when I am with her, there is no pretence.)

“...daar is net niks voorgee nie, daar is net totale eerlikheid en totale self wees.” (...there is no pretence, there is just total honesty and you can totally be yourself.)

According to Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini (2005:216), one of the characteristics of friendships is that friends are able to be themselves around one another and do not wear ‘masks’.

Friends feel comfortable with and around each other. Being able to feel comfortable with and around each other in a friendship provides security. “You are you, and I am I, and if by chance we find each other it’s beautiful”

(www.org/control/uncond.htm).

3.4.2.2 You and your circumstances are accepted unconditionally

Unconditional acceptance of who they are as people and their circumstances was an important aspect of friendship to the participants.

“...uit daai vriendskap is dit meer net totale aanvaarding vir wie jy is.” (...from that friendship it is more the total acceptance of who you are.)

“Imm, weereens niks skok haar nie, verstaan niks. Imm, sy is vreeslik oop, vreeslik, sy dwing haarself nog vandat ek kan onthou om mense se, om mense te verstaan, om mense nie te ‘judge’ nie, om mense se totale verskillend wees te aanvaar en te verstaan.” (Nothing shocks her, she is open, she wills herself to understand people and not to judge them, to accept and understand the vast differences between people, ever since I can remember.)

“Jy word aanvaar onvoorwaardelik. Imm, aanvaarding, soos wat jy is.” (You are accepted unconditionally; acceptance for how you are.)

“...mekaar se omstandighede is ‘ok’... as jy in daai omstandighede is, dan is dit nogsteeds ‘ok’.” (...each other’s circumstances... if you are in those circumstances, it is still fine.)

Friends accept each other as individuals and within reason are also prepared to tolerate specific difficult behaviours, ‘mistakes’ and idiosyncrasies. Friends incorporate forgiveness and resilience into how they relate (Nelson-Jones, 1996:13).

Friends expect that each one will accept the other. Each of us has shortcomings and vices, but we count on friends to accept us in spite of these shortcomings (Wood, 2007:2770). As seen with Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs, being accepted by others is important to our sense of self-worth (Wood, 2007:2770).

According to Perlman (2007:7-17), humans have a pervasive, near universal need to belong, and this drives them to form and maintain significant and lasting interpersonal relationships like friendships. Friendships make people's lives meaningful.

3.4.2.3 There is a relationship of trust and you can share

Trust within the relationship was a factor according to the participants, which added to the safe space in a friendship.

"...daai persoon kan vertrou." (...that person can be trusted.)

"Ek sou sê dan kan mens eintlik deel met daai persoon enige iets wat na aan jou hart is." (Then I would say that you can share with that person anything which you hold dear to your heart).

"Ons vertrou mekaar..." (We trust each other...)

"Maar, dis goed wat mens nie noodwendig met enige iemand sal bespreek nie en ook nie goed wat jy noodwendig met jou familie buite jou huisgesin wil bespreek nie. En dan het jy so iemand nodig." (But there are things that you would not discuss with anyone, and things that you would not discuss with family outside your household family and then you need someone like that.)

"... dis of jy rêrig daardie persoon honderd persent kan vertrou." (It is as if you can really trust that person one hundred percent.)

Trust within friendship is important. Relational trust refers to one's expectations of trust within close relationships, for example friendships, thus expecting from each other to act honourably. Relational trust involves the expectation that a friend is predictable and dependable and faith that he or she will continue to be so. Relational trust develops over time (Carr, 2005:253).

According to Wood (2007:278), trust is a key component of close friendships. Trust has two dimensions. Firstly, trust involves confidence that others will be dependable; we count on them to do as they say, and not to do what they promise they will not. Secondly, trust assumes emotional reliability, which is the belief that a friend cares about our welfare and us. When we feel both dimensions of trust, we feel safe sharing private information with friends, secure in the knowledge that they will not hurt us.

3.4.2.4 Your boundaries are communicated and respected

The importance of boundaries in their friendship was clearly stated by the participants. This included the communication of, and respect for, the boundaries of both parties in the friendship.

“...ons verhouding is van so aard dat ons kan sê: ‘Hoor hier ek hou nie van dit wat jy nou doen nie’ en jy kan sê: ‘Dankie, ons sal dit nie weer doen nie’.”
(...our relationship is of such a nature that you can say: ‘Listen I do not like what you are doing now’ and you can say: ‘Thank you, we will not do it again’.)

“...baie van die ontwikkeling wat moes plaasvind, die goedjies wat moes uitgestryk word en mekaar leer ken, die ‘jy mag nie so met my praat nie’ en ek kan nie so met jou praat nie en as ek dit sê dan vat jy dit verkeerd op en ek...dit het reeds plaasgevind.” (...a lot of the development that was needed, such as things that needed sorting out and learning to know each other; the ‘you can not talk to me like that’, and the ‘I can not talk to you like that’ and ‘if I say this you take it up wrongly’ has already taken place.)

“... daar is lyne van respek, daar is lyne van hier moet ek versigtig wees, want dit is teer en hier kan ek net wees. Hier kan ek net sê.” (...there are lines of respect, there are lines that say; ‘here I need to be careful, because this is a sensitive subject, and here I can just be, here I can just speak’.)

“So, ja dit is die ‘boundaries’ om mekaar te respekteer en vas te hou en vir mekaar te sê waar is die lyne, juis om die vriendskap te beskerm.” (So, these are the boundaries to respect each other, and to hold each other, and to say to each other where the lines are to protect the friendship.)

Boundaries define a person. They define who you are and who you are not. They show you where you end, and where someone else begins, thus they are personal property lines that define who you are, and who you are not, and they influence all areas of your life including, your friendships (Cloud & Townsend, 1992:29).

Cloud and Townsend (1992:146) state that, as people enter further into an attachment-based life, they learn that the bonds of true friendship are not easily broken, and they learn that, in a good friendship, they can set limits that will strengthen, not injure the connection.



3.4.2.5 You as a person are respected

Being respected and showing respect represented an integral part of friendship relationships according to the participants.

“So, dit is liefde, dit is respek. Ek weet waar is ‘n lyn met haar en sy weet waar is myne ook, so dit is respek.” (Thus it is love and it is respect. I know where the lines with her are and she knows mine; that is respect.)

“... daai respek vir mekaar te hê, daai besluit dat dit is ‘n vriendskap wat ek respekteer...” (...to have that respect for each other, that is what decides that this is a friendship that I respect.)

“... en ek respekteer jou vir wie jy is, al is dit nie noodwendig presies soos ek nie.” (...and I respect you for who you are, even if it is not necessarily exactly like me.)

According to Knapp and Vangelisti (1996:207), one of the features characterising close relationships such as friendships is respect. Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini (2005:216) also confirm that one of the characteristics of friendships is that friends respect each other.

3.4.2.6 You know each other

The participants stated that they knew each other in their friendship relationships and this was also a reason why the friendship was successful.

“... weet die persoon ken jou.” (...know that the person knows you.)

“... ek dink na twee jaar is dit nogal ... dit is ‘n rukkie om te weet wie daai persoon is...” (...I think after two years... it is a while to know who that person is.)

“... sy ken jou goed genoeg om te weet wat jou belangstellings is en wat julle saam doen en wat vir jou na aan die hart lê en wat nie na aan die hart lê nie en baie keer sonder om rêrig te praat. Weet, daai oomblik wat julle in mekaar so oë kyk en julle is op dieselfde golflengte en ‘n grap saam waardeer. Daai tipe goed. Dit werk.” (...she knows you well enough to know your interests and what you do together, and what is dear to your heart, and not dear to your heart, without really talking. You know - that moment when you look into each other’s eyes and you are on the same wavelength and you can appreciate a joke together. That kind of stuff, it works.)

“... dat dit iemand is wat jou goed ken. Dis iemand wat jou omstandighede ken. Ken jou swak punte, ken jou sterk punte.” (...That this is someone who knows you well. It is someone who knows your circumstances. Knows your weaknesses, knows your strengths.)

“Ons weet waar ons met mekaar staan.” (We know where we stand with each other.)

Healthy relationships are built on self-disclosure; this enables you and the other person to get to know each other. A relationship grows and develops as two people become more open about themselves to each other (Johnson, 2006:47). According to Wood (2007:245), people reveal themselves to others, discover who they are and elaborate on their identities through communication in the context of personal relationships, such as friendships. Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini (2005:216) state that friends understand one another.

3.4.2.7 Within this safe space the friendship develops and grows spontaneously without pressure

The participants talked about the importance of the spontaneity of the friendship, meaning that the friendship is able to grow spontaneously, without any pressure to make it work or grow.

“Ek dink ons altwee het gegroei, en ons... in ‘n ander rigting in en nou gaan die vriendskap imm, op ‘n natuurlike manier ook in ‘n meer volwasse rigting in groei. Ek dink nie dit is iets wat mens noodwendig hoef te druk nie. Ja... behalwe die feit dat jy gaan moet tyd afstaan.” (I think we both grew... into another direction and now the friendship will grow naturally into a more mature direction. I don’t think it is something that you necessarily need to push... except for the fact that you will need to convey time towards the friendship.)

“Daar is nie enige druk om die vriendskap in stand te hou nie. Die vriendskap hou homself instand.” (There is no pressure to maintain the friendship, the friendship maintains itself.)

A friendship is a unique relationship. Unlike most relationships, friendships are voluntary. Friends come together voluntarily (Wood, 2007:273). Parks (2007:78), states that the essential elements of friendship include its voluntary nature.

3.4.3 Friendships provide support

From the study it became clear that by being involved in each other's lives as friends, people create a form of support. This can be created in different ways as indicated by the participants in the interviews. Having a sufficient support system is vital for maintaining mental health. Duck (1999:1) also claims that friendships provide support in different ways and on different levels. Roberts, Towell and Golding (2001:197&198) confirm that support plays a role in mental health, and that relationships provide support.

3.4.3.1 You care about each other's well-being

In friendship relationships the friends care about each other's well-being. This was one of the aspects that the participants talked about when interviewed on their friendships.

"Sy gee om." (She cares).

"... ek weet sy gee om en sy sal enige iets doen om die lewe vir jou makliker te maak op haar manier." (...I know that she cares and that she will do any thing to make life easier for you in her own way.)

"Sien om na mekaar. Sy sal luister... wanneer jy wil praat sal sy altyd luister. 'Where ever, when ever'. Maak nie saak hoe haastig sy is nie. Sal sy sê: Luister ek het vyf minute, praat'. So, sy maak tyd om te luister." (Look after each other. She will listen... when you want to talk, she will listen. 'Where ever, when ever'. It does not matter if she is in a hurry. She will say: 'Listen, I have five minutes - talk'. She makes time to listen.)

"Ek sien hoe ek geval het by Joos-Bekker karavaan park en sy my opgetel het en omtrent gesleep het na haar ma-hulle toe op haar rug, omdat ek omtrent nie kon loop nie." (I think back of how I fell at Joos-Bekker Caravan Park and

how she picked me up and practically dragged me on her back to her parents, because I could hardly walk.)

“Mens maak moeite om daar te wees vir mekaar.” (You make an effort to be there for each other.)

“... om ondersteuning te gee, as sy deur slegte tye gaan om dit vir haar aan te bied.” (...to support her when she goes through times of trouble and to offer support to her.)

*“...basies net omgee vir mekaar en van tyd tot tyd hoor hoe dit gaan...”
(Basically, just to care about each other and to hear from time to time how the other person is doing.)*

The extent to which partners care for each other is a central issue in all relationships. Caring means letting your friend know ‘you are important to me, I am concerned about what happens to you, I will look after you’. Friends show their caring through their caring behaviours (Nelson-Jones, 1996:223). Caring about each other’s well-being provides support that keeps the friendship healthy and also enhances the mental health of the individual (Duck, 1999:1). Woman who participate and interact in mutually sensitive and supportive relationships experience a sense of power and self value (Allen & Phillips, 1997:332).

3.4.3.2 You are involved in each other’s lives

From the descriptions of participants’ friendships, it appeared that they were involved in each other’s lives as friends and this created a form of support and helped to maintain the friendship.

“Wel, essensieël is dit seker maar kommunikasie. Imm, betrokke in mekaar se lewens altyd. Hou op hoogte van wat aangaan.” (Essentially it is communication. Always to be involved in each other’s lives.)

“So, net om so af en toe saam te kuier. En net daai band te bevestig dat dit wel ‘n vriendskap is.” (To some times spend time together. Just to confirm that bond that it is a friendship.)

“Kontak bly hê met mekaar. En jy hoef nie noodwendig altyd met mekaar te praat of te bel nie. Hoef net ‘n sms te stuur om te sê ek dink aan jou.” (To stay in touch with each other. You do not necessarily have to talk to or phone each other. You can just send a text message to say that you are thinking about the other person.)

“... en ja jy moet moeite doen met mekaar ook. Met spesiale datums dit spesiaal maak vir daai persoon.” (...you have to put in effort for each other. Make it special for the person on significant dates.)

“... en dan nou spesifiek ‘n punt daarvan maak om vir spesiale geleenthede soos verjaarsdae by mekaar te wees, en saam te kuier.” (...specifically make an effort to be with each other on special occasions like birthdays, and spend time together.)

“ ‘n Gevoel van om mekaar te betrek by alles belangrik in jou lewe. Al is dit net om mekaar te vertel van dit wat belangrik is...” (A feeling of involving each other in the important things in your life. Even if it is just to tell each other about the things that are important...)

“Ek maak jou deel van wat aangaan. Ek bel jou as my ma siek is en sê vir jou daarvan. Ek bid saam met jou oor jou ander familie. Daai erkenning, daai besluit om hierdie persoon te betrek by jou lewe, al sien mens mekaar nie fisies so baie nie.” (I make you a part of what is going on. I phone you when my mother is ill and tell you about it. I pray with you for the rest of your family. That acknowledgement and decision to make the other person a part of your life, even if you do not see each other that much physically.)

Women generally regard communication as a primary way to create, express, enlarge and celebrate closeness with others, including their friendships.

Women tend to place a high priority on daily talk and the process of engaging others (Wood, 2000:208). According to Argyle (2001:72-75), close friends are a particular source of happiness, and to form close relationships, people have to be involved in each other's lives. These close relationships will also involve an increasing level of self-disclosure.

3.4.3.3 You help each other through times of trouble

Friendships provide help through times of trouble and crisis. This seems to be an important part of the friendship, as indicated by various participants in the study.

“Ek dink as jy deur diepe waters gaan en jy sien daai persoon gee r rig om en help jou daar deur, dan weet jy daai vriendskap is daar om te hou.” (I think if you go through troubled waters, and you see that the other person really cares and helps you through it, then you know that the friendship will last.)

“... jy weet dat as jy in die moeilikheid is, kry jy ondersteuning daarvan, daar is altyd hulp. Jy weet as jy probleme het, dan kom iemand jou help. Jy weet dis iemand wat nie jou gaan wegwys nie.” (...you know that when you are in trouble, you will get support, there is always help. You know that someone will help you when you have problems. You know that it is someone who will not turn you away.)

“... en om te weet as ons regtig ‘n behoefte het om te praat. Imm, of hulp nodig het, dan het ‘n mens die vrymoedigheid om mekaar te bel en te s  hoor hier, dit en dit gebeur of wat ookal.” (...and to know that, if you really have the need to talk, or if you need help, then you can be frank and you can phone and say listen this and this is happening or what ever.)

“... dat jy na ‘n persoon toe kan gaan en s : ‘Hoor hier ek het ‘n krisis, kan jy my nie help nie?’ en of dit nou twaalf-uur in die nag is...” (...that you can go to

a person, even if it is twelve o'clock at night and say, 'Listen I have a crisis can you help me?'...)

Healthy friendships provide help through times of trouble and crisis, and also focus more on emotional support (Uys & Middleton, 2004:30). Help through crisis and trouble helps the individual cope with everyday life, and in turn plays a vital role in the mental health of the individual (Johnson, 2006:2&3). Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini (2005:216), state that friends help each other in times of need. According to Wood (2007:278), people expect friends to support them in times of personal stress.

3.4.3.4 You can talk about your feelings and worries

Friendship provides an opportunity for the friends to talk about their feelings and worries and voice their concerns, without being told what to do and this gives a sense of security and support as indicated by the participants.

"... as jy in n situasie is wat jy nie dink, jy weet nie eintlik watter kant toe nie. En dis nie noodwendig dat jy verwag daai ou moet vir jou 'n antwoord gee nie, maar, hulle verstaan net en hulle luister net en dan sê hulle vir jou dis 'ok', ons sal daar deurkom, moet nie 'worry' nie. Maar, hulle gee nie noodwendig vir jou 'n oplossing nie. Jy moet self nogsteeds die oplossing kry." (...if you are in a situation and you do not know what to do. You do not necessarily expect the other person to give an answer, but they understand and listen and say 'It is all right, we will get through it, do not worry'. You still have to find the solution on your own.)

"Sy sal luister, wanneer jy wil praat sal sy altyd luister." (She will listen; when you want to talk, she will always listen.)

"Maar net daai wete... as jy nodig het kan jy daai persoon bel." (Just to know... that when you need to, you can phone that person.)

Having a close trusted friend with whom to share concerns, troubles, doubts, dreams and accomplishments can help to ease life's burdens (Donnelly, Eburne & Kittleson, 2001:26). Wood (2007:279) states that friends support each other often by listening to each other's problems.

According to Graham, Huang and Clark (2008:394), studies support the hypothesis that expressing negative emotion is associated with positive relationship outcomes. For example, in one of the studies the participants were given scenarios in which another person was experiencing a negative emotion. The participants reported they would provide more help when the person chose to express a negative emotion.

3.4.4 The friendship provides relaxation

In the interviews the participants shared that their friendship relationships also provided relaxation. Relaxation is a vital part of mental health (Carr, 2005:223). It is a way to deal with stress, which affects a person's health (Donnelly, Eburne & Kittleson, 2001:148). Social support plays a critical role in helping individuals to deal with stress (Donnelly, Eburne & Kittleson, 2001:157).

3.4.4.1 You can have fun together and enjoy each other's company

Participants indicated that they could have fun in their friendships and that this was one of the things that they appreciated in their friendships.

"... she's just fun." (...she's just fun.)

"... as ons mekaar 'n slag weer sien, dan is dit so lekker." (...it is nice to see each other.)

“Die slag as ons moeite doen om by mekaar uit te kom gee ons alles, dan is dit ons. Soos, ons doen moeite om saam te gaan gym en dan neem ons die gym op horings, dit is net ons, ons het nie ‘n saak met die mense rondom ons nie.” (When we see each other we give everything, then it is us. For example, we put effort into going to the gym together, and then we will take over the gym, It is just us, we do not care about the other people around us.)

“Goeters saam doen.” (To do things together.)

“Dis net lekker om saam te wees.” (It is just nice to be together.)

One of the characteristics of friendship is that friends enjoy each other’s company (Kenrick, Neuberg & Cialdini, 2005:216). According to Nelson-Jones (1996:14), people look to relationships for enjoyment and fun. Argyle (2001:72) states that being with friends is a major source of joy and, that the benefits of being with friends may be due partly to the enjoyable things they do together and that they engage in joint leisure pastimes.

3.4.4.2 You can take a break or escape from life’s taxing challenges for a while

The participants indicated that friendship provided an opportunity to escape or take a break from life’s taxing challenges and troubles. This is a way to relax and cope with stress.

“Dis half ‘n ontvlugting van... as ek nou spesifiek dink toe ek by my ma-hulle gebly het. As jy ‘n vriendin het dan kan jy sommer saam iets gaan doen. Dis ‘n ontvlugting van by jou huis wees en jou omstandighede en... Ja, jy kan net lekker mal wees saam.” (It is kind of an escape... particularly if I think back to when I stayed with my parents. If you have a friend then you can do things together. It is an escape from being at your house and from your circumstances and... you can just be crazy together.)

“Ek dink jy ontspan tog as jy uit jou normale omstandighede uitkom. Bietjie weg kom...” (I think you relax when you escape from your normal circumstances; to get away for a while...)

To take a break or escape from life’s taxing challenges for a while can also be seen as a distraction. For certain individuals in certain circumstances distraction represents an effective coping strategy (Carr, 2005:227).

Friendship is one of the key elements that contribute to happiness (Girdano, Dusek & Everly, 2005:100). Miell and Dallos (1996:352) state that all relationships produce happiness and that close relationships are particularly important for mental health; social support has a ‘buffering’ effect on stress.

3.4.4.3 You can share and enjoy humour

The participants indicated that they could laugh together and do funny things together, this relates to humour in friendships.

“En ons kan lekker saam lag.” (We can have a good laugh together.)

“Sy kan lag en sy kan die lewe waardeer...” (She can laugh and appreciate life...)

“...jy kan net lekker mal wees saam.” (...you can just be crazy together.)

“Lekker saam lag.” (Have a good laugh together.)

“Mal goed kan doen.” (To do crazy things.)

Humour is important in friendships because it is an effective coping strategy that reduces stress (Carr, 2005:227). A Psychology Today survey of friendship revealed that a sense of humour is an important quality in a friend (Johnson, 2006:18). Bishop (1994:165) states that humour can ease one

through difficult situations, and that the ability to appreciate humour, as well as the ability to produce humour, acts as moderators to stress; this enhances and maintains an individual's mental health.

3.4.5 The friendship involves effective communication

From the interviews held with the participants it became clear that effective communication plays a significant role in the success of friendships. Effective communication plays an important role in relating to others and maintaining healthy relationships, in this case friendships (Kreigh & Perko, 1988:154).

According to Johnson (2006:124), the process of communication involves exchanging messages to achieve an understanding of each other's perceptions, ideas and experiences and this makes people interdependent. It takes two to communicate, and through the act of communication with another person, we begin or maintain a relationship.

3.4.5.1 You can openly discuss common interests and dislikes

The participants indicated that they could openly discuss matters of interests and dislikes in their friendships and that this was important for the maintenance of the friendship.

"...openlike kommunikasie..." (...communicate openly...)

"Ek dink meer openlike kommunikasie. Definitief sal ons moet sit en praat oor 'n paar goed." (I think open communication. We will definitely have to sit and discuss a few things.)

“...as ons nie van ‘n ding hou nie, dan sê jy dit reguit vir daardie persoon. Dan sê jy: ‘sorry, ek hou nie daarvan nie.’” (...if we do not like something, we say it to the person. Then you say: ‘Sorry, I do not like this’.)

Johnson (2006:8), states that building and maintaining effective relationships, in this case friendships, require that you communicate your ideas and thoughts effectively and face conflicts with the other person and resolve them constructively. According to Knapp and Daly (2002:567) research consistently reveals communication as one of the most important factors in determining satisfaction and dissatisfaction in close relationships, such as friendships. The skill of managing relationship conflict and negative effect in particular, appears to be immensely important to the developmental success of relationships.

3.4.5.2 You are honest with each other and about your feelings and expectations



The participants shared that it was important to be honest with each other and about their feelings and expectations within the friendship.

“...mens moet aanhou om eerlik met mekaar te wees, want ons is; seker maar oor die vriendskap wat al so lank is, kan ek ‘n ding op enige manier sê, sonder om dit eers te struktureer in my kop, is dit die regte manier om te sê. Ek kan dit op enige manier sê en sy sal verstaan...” (...you have to continue to be honest with each other; we are, and maybe because it is such a long-standing friendship; I can say a thing in any way, without having to structure it in my head first to see whether it is the right thing to say. I can say it in any way and she will understand...)

“Ek dink om eerlik te wees met mekaar.” (I think to be honest with each other.)

“So, definitief eerlikheid... kommunikasie.” (Definitely honesty... communication.)

One needs to communicate honestly about one's feelings and expectations of the friendship relationship. Honesty in communication signifies genuineness and authenticity and is based on the concepts of trust and truth (Kreigh & Perko, 1988:154). Wood (2007:291) believes that honesty is one of the most important gifts friends can give each other. Even when honesty is less than pleasant, or is not what we think we want to hear, we count on it from friends. People believe that honest feedback is what sets real friends apart from others.

Feeling the warmth, support, acceptance and caring of close friendships is one of the most exciting aspects of being alive. Feelings are especially wonderful when they are shared with other people. One of the most rewarding aspects of relationships is sharing personal feelings (Johnson, 2006:168).

3.4.5.3 You know where you stand with each other and you understand each other

Within their friendships, participants seemed to know where they stood with each other and this was achieved through effective, open and honest communication within the friendship.

“... as jy voel jy wil nie dit doen nie, of jy hou nie daarvan nie dan sê jy dit en die persoon gaan nie in die gesig gevat voel omdat jy vir haar sê: ‘Hoor hier ek hou nie daarvan nie.’” (...if you feel you do not want to do something or you do not like it, you say so, and the other person will not feel offended because you said: ‘listen; I do not like that’.)

“...ons het nog altyd dinge op die tafel gegooi en daaroor gepraat. En alhoewel dit dan ‘n bietjie rusie veroorsaak het, het dit nog elke keer verseker dat ons verhouding aangaan en dat ons mekaar verstaan. Dat ons weet waar ons met mekaar staan. So... kommunikasie.” (...we have always put things on the table and talked about them. And even though it has caused conflict, it

has ensured that our relationship continues and that we understand each other. That we know where we stand with one another. So... communication.)

Understanding each other is vital for maintaining a healthy friendship relationship. This is the skill of taking into consideration the other person's perspective. Try standing in that person's shoes (Johnson, 2006:142). Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini (2005:216) assert that one of the characteristics of friendship is that friends understand one another.

Through communication people reach some understanding of each other. They learn to like, influence and trust each other; and learn more about themselves and how others perceive them. Through communication people learn to understand others as individuals and they help others to understand them (Johnson, 2006:124).

Parrott (2008:12) states that, to see eye to eye with your friend, you should think about what he or she may want and acknowledge this before you make your own needs known. This is empathy, where you can view the world from each other's perspectives.

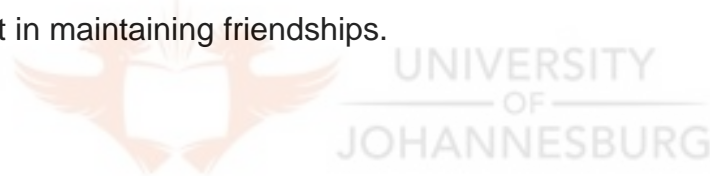
3.4.5.4 You can work through conflict and problems in the relationship

In the interviews held with the participants, it was indicated that conflict was a part of friendships, and that communication was used to work through the conflict and problems that the friendships experienced.

“Ek dink van my kant af sal ek ook sekere goed moet aanspreek... as ek dit nie gaan aanspreek nie, of as ons nie daaroor gaan praat nie, dan gaan ons vir 'n tyd lank nie kommunikeer nie en dan het ons verhouding skipbreuk gely.” (I think from my side I will have to address some things... if I do not address them or if we do not talk about them we will not communicate for a long time and then our relationship will end on the rocks.)

“Daar was baie kere dat ons ook vasgesit het oor eerlikheid. Maar, ek dink dit het ook tog gemaak dat ons vriendskap nogsteeds bestaan. Want al daai goedjies word uitgesorteer deurentyd...deurentyd.” (There were many times where we fought about honesty. But I think this is why our friendship is still standing. Because all those things are being sorted out constantly... constantly.)

Communication plays a role in working through conflict and problems in the relationship. Conflict is a natural part of life (Johnson, 2006:254). Conflict clarifies who you are and helps you to understand who the other person is. Conflicts keep the relationship clear of irritations and resentments and strengthen the relationship by increasing your confidence that the two of you can resolve your disagreements (Johnson, 2006:142). Capuzzi (2003:29-31) acknowledges the importance of effective communication and conflict management in maintaining friendships.



3.4.6 The friendship involves effective time investment

From the interviews held with the participants, it became clear that time plays an important role in their friendships. It also seemed important to the participants to invest time in their friendships. They spontaneously spend time together without pressuring each other into doing so. It seemed that their friendships grew stronger over a period of time. It has been necessary to them to invest time with each other, to share and learn to know each other, and they have contact and stay in contact with each other in various ways.

According to Wood (2007:273), friendships are built on personal investments and people expect to invest time in their friendships. Friends enjoy doing things together and by sharing activities, friends express and create closeness. This also builds a sense of camaraderie (Wood, 2007:275).

3.4.6.1 You spontaneously spend time together, without pressuring each other into doing so

The participants indicated that they spontaneously spend time together, because they want to, they do not pressurise each other into spending time together.

“... af en toe saam te kuier. En net daai band te bevestig dat dit wel ‘n vriendskap is.” (... some times to spend time together and confirm the bond that it is a friendship.)

“Ek dink die groot sleutel woord is tyd. Tyd saam. En dan dink ek ook imm, ek dink dit is ‘n natuurlike proses ook tot ‘n mate. Ek dink nie dis iets wat mens noodwendig moet dwing nie.” (I think the main key word is time. Time together. I also think it is a natural process to some extent. I do not think it is something that one should necessarily force.)

“Daar is nie verwagtinge in terme van ons moet mekaar elke twee weke sien of bel of wat ook al nie. Wanneer ons tyd het en geleentheid het, dan kuier ons. En daar is nie enige druk om die vriendskap in stand te hou nie. Die vriendskap hou homself in stand.” (There are no expectations in terms of that we have to see each other or phone every two weeks, or whatever. We spend time together when we have the time and opportunity to do so. There is no pressure to maintain the friendship.)

One of the essential elements of friendships is its voluntary nature (Parks, 2007:78). Wood (2007:273) also claims that friendship is a unique relationship. Unlike most relationships, friendship is voluntary, and friends come together voluntarily. An example from Wood (2007:282) is as follows; ‘Once Nancy and I reached the stabilized stage in our friendship, we didn’t need to check with each other about getting together; we just assumed that we would’.

3.4.6.2 Over a period of time the friendship grows stronger

The participants also indicated that, as the duration of their friendship lengthened, their friendships grew stronger.

“... die spesifieke vriendskap waaraan ek nou dink gaan eintlik al twaalf jaar aan en dis goed om te weet dat, maak nie saak wat gebeur nie en ek bedoel mens is baie besig en gejaagd en ‘n mens kom nie altyd by mekaar uit nie, maar dit ruïneer nie die vriendskap nie.” (...the specific friendship which I am thinking about now has already lasted for twelve years and it is good to know that it does not matter what happens; and I mean one is very busy and in a rush and we do not always see each other; but it does not ruin the friendship.)

“Ek dink omdat dit ‘n vriendskap is wat nou al oor soveel jaar duur. Dink ek dat baie van die ontwikkeling wat moes plaasvind, die goedjies wat moes uitgestryk word en mekaar leer ken ... het reeds plaasgevind. So, dit is ‘n baie rustige vriendskap wat nie meer groeipyne het nie. Dit is ‘n baie ‘mature’ vlak van vriendskap.” (I think because it is a friendship that has lasted for so many years. I think that a lot of the development that was necessary; the things that needed sorting out and the learning to know each other... have already taken place. It is a calm friendship that does not have growing pains any more. It is a very mature level of friendship.)

“Omdat dit ‘n vriendskap is wat al ‘n tydjie lank kom. Weet ek sy praat die waarheid as sy met my praat of goed deel... ek waardeer dit ...om net gemaklik te wees.” (Because it is a friendship that has continued for a while now; I know she speaks the truth when she speaks to me or shares stuff... I appreciate it... just to be comfortable.)

Many of peoples' interactions and relationships, such as those with friends, extend over time. Relationships evolve; they develop and change over time, sometimes appearing to progress or remain stable (Miell & Dallos, 1996:3).

3.4.6.3 You spend time together and do things together

Spending time together and doing things together formed an important part of the participants' friendships.

“Ons doen moeite om saam te gaan gym.” (We make an effort to go to the gym together.)

“...as ons moeite doen om bymekaar uit te kom gee ons alles.” (...if we make the effort to spend time together; we give everything.)

“Ons het baie tyd vir mekaar afgestaan. Mens kan op jou gemak wees. Goeters saam doen.” (We spend a lot of time together. We can be comfortable with each other. Do things together.)

“...van tyd tot tyd hoor hoe dit gaan en saam kuier.” (...to hear from time to time how the other person is doing and to spend time together.)

“... jy voel goed by haar, met ander woorde tyd wat julle saam spandeer is tyd waar jy positief oor jouself voel...” (...you feel good when you are with her, in other words time that you spend together is time where you feel positive about yourself...)

Friends are important for most people; they help people to pass time and celebrate moments of joy (Wood, 2007:273). Friends share activities; they enjoy doing things together and doing things for one another (Wood, 2007:275). A major benefit of relationships is companionship: close relationships like friendships can mean having somebody around to talk with and do other activities with, for instance playing a game together (Nelson-Jones, 1996:9).

Joint activities are one of the strategies according to Wood (2000:186) in maintaining personal relationships. Joint activities take the form of: spending

time with each other in unstructured ways (hanging out); routine ways (attending church or games); or in spontaneous ways.

3.4.6.4 You have contact and also stay in contact with each other, in various ways e.g. through visiting each other, via phone, or e-mail and other social functions

To maintain their friendships, the participants needed to have contact, and stay in contact with each other in various ways. They mentioned different examples of how they contacted each other.

“Daar sal nie ‘n week verby gaan sonder dat daar nie ‘n oproep is nie en e-mails is nie...” (A week will not pass without a phone call or e-mails...)

“Ons sal altyd kontak hê. Al is dit eenmaal in twee maande of wat.” (We will always have contact. Even though it is only once in two months.)

“Sy stuur so af en toe vir my ‘n sms van: ‘ek leef nog, lewe jy?’ En dit is vir my goed genoeg net om te weet; luister sy dink aan my, ek hoef nie alleen moeite te doen nie.” (From time to time she sends me a text message saying: ‘I am still alive, and you?’ And that is good enough for me, just to know that she is thinking of me and I am not the only one making an effort.)

“Almal is besig, maar as ‘n mens ‘n verhouding wil hou of wil behou, dan moet ‘n mens tyd maak.” (Everyone is busy, but if you want to keep a relationship you have to make time.)

“Ons sê altyd: ‘Wanneer in volgende week gaan ek jou sien?’ So, ek dink dit is vir ons altwee belangrik om mekaar so een keer ‘n week te sien.” (We always say: ‘When will I see you next week?’ so, I think it is important to both of us to see each other once a week.)

“...jy sal ‘n geleentheid moet skep om bymekaar uit te kom.” (...you will have to create an opportunity to see each other.)

“Goed... ons moet ‘n braai hou.” (Ok... we have to arrange a braai.)

“...sms en kuier en bel af en toe.” (...text and spend time together and phone now and again.)

According to Wood (2000:186), a strategy for maintaining personal relationships such as friendships is to rely on various kinds of communication to sustain contact, for example, cards, letters and telephone calls. Another maintenance strategy people use in their personal relationships is to reserve time to talk or communicate. This can be done through phone calls, scheduled contacts or e-mail (Wood, 2000:187). Johnson (2006:21) stresses the importance of spending time together and spending leisure time together in order to maintain friendships.



3.4.7 The friendship involves commitment

The participants shared that friendship is a commitment where both parties willingly make the decision that the friendship is important to them and they both actively maintain the friendship. According to Wood (2007:216), commitment is a decision to remain in a relationship and the hallmark of commitment is the intention to share the future. Commitment is also one of the traditional relationship values; including friendships (Nelson-Jones, 1996:13).

3.4.7.1 Both parties willingly make a decision that the friendship is important to them

The participants revealed that both parties willingly make a decision that the friendship is important and that they will maintain it.

*“Dis ‘n besluit van albei se kante af ...Dit is ‘n ‘commitment’, dit is ‘n besluit.”
(It is a decision from both sides it is a commitment, it is a decision.)*

“Maar op die einde van die dag is dit ek en Z wat al twee besluit het ons gaan hierdie vriendskap vat en ‘committed’ wees daartoe en mekaar leer ken en vir mekaar omgee en vir mekaar lief wees en vir mekaar daar wees.” (But, at the end of the day, it is me and Z who have both decided that we are going to take the friendship and be committed to it and that we will learn to know each other, and we will care about each other, and love each other, and be there for each other.)

“...meer tyd maak. Maar dit is meer ‘n wilsbesluit.” (...to make more time. But it is more an act of will.)

“Dit is nie vir my: ‘ek wil dit nie doen nie’ of ‘ek moet dit doen’ nie. Dit is: ‘ek wil dit graag doen’, so ek doen dit.” (For me it is not about: ‘I do not want to do it’ or ‘I have to do it’. It is: ‘I want to do it’.)

Commitment is a decision; it is a choice to maintain a relationship. When friends make a commitment, they decide to take responsibility for continuing to invest in, and care for, the friendship. They make this commitment willingly as friendship is voluntary (Wood, 2007:216 &273). It is a conscious decision to form and maintain relationships (Johnson, 2006:36 &37).

3.4.7.2 Both parties actively maintain the friendship

From the interviews held with the participants it became clear that both parties actively maintain their friendships.

“...meer as dit, ek dink dis ‘n besluit van albei se kante af en imm, dis nie net ‘n besluit nie, dit was harde werk.” (...more than that, I think it is a decision from both sides. It was not just a decision, it was hard work.)

“n Vriendskap moet van altwee kante af gebou word. En dit is vir my nodig dat sy ook sal moeite doen om af en toe te sê: ‘Hi, ek leef nog’.” (A friendship needs to be built from two sides. And it is essential to me that she will also from time to time say: ‘Hi, I am still alive’.)

“En dit is vir my goed genoeg om te weet sy dink aan my en ek hoef nie alleen moeite te doen nie.” (And it is good enough for me to know that she thinks of me and that I do not have to put in the effort on my own.)

When friends make a commitment, they decide to take responsibility for continuing to invest in and care for the friendship; friends invest time, effort, thought and feeling in their friendships (Wood, 2007:216 & 273). Commitment permits a relationship to endure and involves being able to rely on each other and to offer support and help when needed (Pennington, Gillen & Hill, 2004:230-231).



3.4.7.3 The friendship is still maintained even though the individuals' life circumstances change

The participants shared that their friendships were still maintained despite any change in life circumstances.

“... ons het altwee gegroei, getrou en nou heeltemal ander verantwoordelikhede en rolle aangeneem en so aan, maar ten spyte van dit bly ons nog vriendinne.” (...we have both grown up, got married and have adopted different responsibilities and roles, but in spite of that we still remain friends.)

“... soos wat ons padjies uit mekaar uit gegaan het, letterlik na die koshuis en jy weet mens werk op verskillende plekke en bly op verskillende plekke en so aan. Dit was tog ‘n aanpassing gewees, maar dit is ook iets wat dit self uitgesorteer het...” (... as our paths grew apart, literally after moving out of the

residence, and you know one works at different places and stays in different places and so forth. It was an adjustment, but is also something that sorted itself out.)

In young adulthood, common changes in life events are marriage, pregnancy, gaining new family members and work-related events (Kaplan, 1998:325). According to Kaplan (1998:357), friendships formed in early adulthood tend to endure, probably because families follow the same developmental course and share the same problems. Wood (2000:250) states that friendships that last are flexible enough to adapt to changes and creative enough to make the relationship workable.

3.4.7.4 You persevere when the friendship experiences difficulty

Information gathered from the participants showed that both parties persevered with the friendship even when the relationship experienced difficulty.

“Dit was nie altyd maklik nie. Ek onthou veral in ons tienerjare was dit... het sy haar baie gewip vir my en het ek my baie gewip vir haar. Maar, dit was ‘n ‘commitment’...” (It was not always easy. I remember especially in our teenage years... she got angry with me and I with her. But it was a ‘commitment’...)

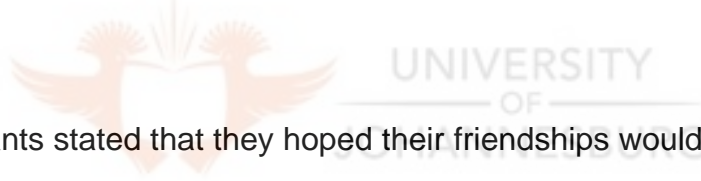
“Sy sal altyd daar wees vir my. Ons basis van ons vriendskap is goed genoeg gebou. Ek meen as ons ‘n ou in die middel van ons kon deurstaan, dan kan ons seker enige iets deurstaan.” (She will always be there for me. The basis of our friendship is strong enough. I mean if we can survive liking the same boyfriend, then we can probably survive anything.)

“Ons sal goeie vriende bly. Ek dink mens gaan deur... ek weet dat ons deur ‘ups and downs’ gaan gaan. Maar ek sien dit as iets wat blywend sal wees... ‘n persoon wat altyd in jou lewe gaan wees.” (We will remain good friends. I

think one goes through... I know we will go through 'ups and downs'. But I see it as something that will last... a person who will always be in my life.)

According to Knapp and Vangelisti (1996:377&378), researchers have found that relational commitment, or the dedication to continue the relationship even in the face of difficulties, is a very important factor in determining long-term relational quality. Wood (2007:250) states that the friendships that endure in one's life will be seasoned by challenges, crisis and disappointment and by how people and their friends define, discuss and respond to them. The friendships that last will be ones that are flexible enough to adapt to changes and creative enough to make the friendship workable.

3.4.8 The friendship is ongoing and if it has not reached maturity yet, it provides an opportunity for growth and development



The participants stated that they hoped their friendships would continue throughout their lives. Most of them said that they wanted their friendships to continue as it was and others said that they hope their friendships would develop and grow stronger. Friends in committed relationships made the choice to remain in the relationship and view their connection as continuing; they are unlikely to abandon the friendship during the inevitable difficult times (Wood, 2007:216).

3.4.8.1 You are aware that personal changes and life phase changes bring changes and adjustments in the friendship

From the interviews, it appeared that the participants were aware that personal changes and life phase changes bring changes and adjustments in the friendship. Showing insight and acceptance regarding this helps to maintain their friendships.

“Aan die begin het dit my gepla toe ons nie saam bly nie, want ek wil gereeld hoor... as ek met jou praat moet jy met my terug praat. Maar, ja... ek het besef dit gaan nie ‘happen’ nie...” (In the beginning it bothered me when we did not live together any more, because I want to hear regularly... if I talk to you, you have to talk back to me. but yes, I realised it was not going to happen.)

“... daar was tye van aanpassing...soos wat ons padjies uit mekaar uit gegaan het, letterlik, na die koshuis en jy weet mens werk op verskillende plekke en bly op verskillende plekke en so aan. Dit was tog ‘n aanpassing gewees, maar dit is ook iets wat dit self uitgesorteer het...” (There where times of adjustment... as our paths led away from each other, literally, after we stayed in the residence and you know we work at different places. It was an adjustment, but it is also something that sorted itself out.)

“Ek dink nou spesifiek aan die vriendskap voordat ek nou getroud is. Ons het baie tyd saam spandeer... sy’s ook nou getroud. So, die vriendskap sal anders wees in die toekoms...” (I am thinking of the friendship specifically before I got married. We spent a lot of time together... she is also married now. So, the friendship will be different if future.)

“Jy het nie meer daai afhanklikheid of hunkering noodwendig na ‘n vriendin nie. Noodwendig na daai tipe vriendskappe met ‘n vriendin nie. Dis iets waar jy gaan moet sê: ‘Ek wil graag tyd maak vir daai persoon’. Dit kom nie meer natuurlik soos op skool of so nie.” (You do not necessarily have that dependence on, or need for a friend. Necessarily to that type of friendship with a friend. It is something that you have to say that: ‘I really want to make time for that person’. It does not come naturally any more like when we were at school.)

“Dit sal definitief ons as gesinne wees wat saam kuier.” (We will definitely spent time together as families now.)

Johnson (2006:37) states that the nature of relationships is constantly changing. Wood (2007:287) supports this by stating that people's friendships change as people's lives change (Wood, 2007:287). In young adulthood common changes in life events are marriage, pregnancy, gaining new family members and work-related events (Kaplan, 1998:325).

3.4.8.2 There is an awareness that the friendship will go through times of growth and absence

From the responses of the participants it seemed that there was awareness by the participants that their friendships would go through times of growth and absence and they seemed to understand and accept this.

"... ek weet dat ons deur 'ups and downs' gaan gaan." (...I know that we will go through ups and downs.)

"... goeters wat my partykeer irriteer of wat haar irriteer. Goed wat ons maar eintlik gedurig uitsorteer. Maar op die ou einde weet ek dat die vriendskap altyd sal staan." (... things that sometimes irritate me or that irritate her. Things that we sort out continuously. But in the end, I know the friendship will always endure.)

"Ek dink ons altwee het gegroei, en ons... in 'n ander rigting in en nou gaan die vriendskap imm, op 'n natuurlike manier ook in 'n meer volwasse rigting in groei." (I think we both grew and we... into another direction and now the friendship will grow naturally in a more mature direction.)

People and the relationships they form are dynamic, developmental and constantly evolving (Wood, 2000:249 & 250). Miell and Dallos (1996:3) support this by also stating that relationships evolve and that they develop and change over time.

3.4.8.3 The friendship grows stronger

The participants shared that they hoped that their friendship would grow stronger in the future.

“Ek sal sê na ‘n sterker vriendskap. Imm, wat ook al daai persoon deurgaan. En julle mekaar leer ken...ja, net sterker te word.” (I would say into a stronger friendship, whatever that person has to go through. And you learn to know each other... yes, just to get stronger.)

“Ek dink as jy soos deur diepe waters gaan en jy sien daai persoon gee rêrig om en help jou daar deur, dan weet jy daai vriendskap is daar om te hou. So, dit is maar toetse wat jy moet deurgaan om ‘n vriendskap sterker te maak.” (I think if you go through troubled waters and you see that the person really cares and helps you through it, and then you know that friendship is there to stay. So, there are tests that you have to go through to strengthen the friendship.)

Relationship growth is a traditional value of effective relationships including friendships. Friends are interested in strengthening their relationship both in good and bad times (Nelson-Jones, 1996:13&14).

3.4.8.4 There is space for improvement and development

The participants stated that there was space for improvement and development in their friendships to maintain these as ongoing friendships.

“... ek sien dit ontwikkel in ‘n meer ‘mature’ tipe verhouding.” (...I see it develop into a more mature type of relationship.)

“Ja, ek dink dit kan beweeg in ‘n rigting van ondersteuning en meer belangriker goeters. Goeters wat nou, imm... meer waarde het as daai tyd se goedjies.” (Yes, I think it can move in a direction of more support and more

important things. Things that now, imm... are of more value than things in the past.)

“Ek dink daar is spasie vir verbetering in die vriendskap.” (I think there is room for improvement in the friendship.)

Nelson-Jones (1996:4) states that relationships grow and develop, and that a good relationship is a creative developing partnership. Relationships develop and endure within a broader complex of interacting influences which help to give each friendship its shape and structure (Adams & Allan, 1998:2). Most friendships evolve gradually, moving from role-governed interactions to stable friendships (Wood, 2007:295).

3.5 RESEARCHER’S PERSONAL NOTES

The results and literature review of the study were interesting and insightful. I do want to add my notes that were written after the last interview I conducted.

‘While I conducted the interviews with the research participants, I experienced how great God is and how amazing his creation and especially we human beings are. I realized how precious it is to have the privilege of walking for a short while closely and intimately with another human being on their path of life. I had the opportunity to have a glimpse into the participants’ hearts as they shared their stories about their friendships. An experience like this is fragile and special, and needs to be respected.

The honour and praise goes to our Creator. It was precious to interview the participants and to communicate with them and to discover with them the meaning and importance of friendships and how to maintain these relationships.

Thank You God.’

3.6 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER THREE

The results from the data analysis of the interviews held in this study were presented in this chapter together with a literature review to support the findings of the study. The researcher also shared personal notes regarding her experience of the research interviews, results and literature review.



CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF GUIDELINES, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Proverbs 17:17

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the guidelines for Psychiatric Nurses to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to maintain or enhance mental health will be presented.

The conclusion of the research study as well as recommendations also form part of this chapter.

4.2 GUIDELINES FOR PSYCHIATRIC NURSES TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE MENTAL HEALTH

In Psychiatric Nursing, the Psychiatric Nurse directs efforts towards the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental disturbances, early identification of and intervention in emotional problems and follow-up care to minimise the long-term effects of mental disturbance (Uys & Middleton, 2004:755). Guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendship relationships will assist in improving their mental health. Relationships play a significant role in a person's mental health. They also help to form a person's support system that helps a person deal with life's difficulties and trauma (Duck, 1999:1). The loss or absence of a friendship can lead to challenges to mental health.

Figure 4.1 provides the significant features in maintaining friendship relationships and the nursing interventions that can be utilized when assisting the individual to maintain friendship relationships.

The following strategies and guidelines are for Psychiatric Nurses to assist individuals to maintain friendship relationships:

Strategies to implement guidelines

1. **Assess** with the individual whether the stated features in the guidelines are present in the friendship.
2. **Plan** with the individual how to gain those stated features in the guidelines in the friendship and give psycho-education as needed.
3. Guide and support the individual in **implementing** the plan.
4. **Evaluate** together with the individual whether the implementation is working and adjust as needed.

4.2.1 Guideline one: Facilitating a friendship that provides a safe space

A safe space is evidenced by the factors listed below.

- Individuals feel comfortable with and around each other; they can be themselves without any pretence.
- Individuals and their circumstances are accepted unconditionally.
- There is a relationship of trust and individuals can share.
- The individual's boundaries are communicated and respected.
- The individual as a person is respected.
- Individuals know each other.
- Within this safe space the friendship develops and grows spontaneously without pressure.

4.2.2 Guideline two: Facilitating a friendship that provides support

Support is evidenced by the features discussed below.

- Individuals care about each other's well-being.
- Individuals are involved in each other's lives.
- Individuals help each other through times of trouble.
- Individuals can talk about their feelings and worries.

4.2.3 Guideline three: Facilitating a friendship that provides relaxation

Relaxation is evidenced by the following factors.

- Individuals can have fun together and enjoy each other's company.
- Individuals can take a break or escape from life's taxing challenges for a while.
- Individuals can share and enjoy humour.

4.2.4 Guideline four: Facilitating a friendship that provides effective communication

Effective communication is evidenced by the features listed below.

- Individuals can openly discuss their interests and dislikes.
- Individuals are honest with each other and about their feelings and expectations.
- Individuals know where they stand with each other and understand each other.
- Individuals can work through conflict and problems in the relationship.

4.2.5 Guideline five: Facilitating a friendship that involves effective time investment

Effective time investment is evidenced by the aspects which appear below.

- Individuals spend time together spontaneously, without pressuring each other into doing so.
- Over a period of time the friendship grows stronger.
- Individuals spend time together and do things together.
- Individuals have contact and also stay in contact with each other, in various ways; for example through visiting each other, via phone, or e-mail and other social functions.

4.2.6 Guideline six: Facilitating a friendship that involves commitment

Commitment is evidenced by the factors set out below.

- Both parties willingly make a decision that the friendship is important to them.
- Both parties actively maintain the friendship.
- The friendship is still maintained even though individuals' life circumstances change.
- Individuals persevere when the friendship experiences difficulty.

4.2.7 Guideline seven: Facilitating a friendship that is ongoing and provides opportunity for growth and development

A friendship that is ongoing and provides opportunity for growth and development is evidenced by these characteristics below.

- Individuals are aware that personal changes and life phase changes bring changes and adjustments in the friendship relationship.
- There is an awareness that the friendship will go through times of growth and absence.
- The friendship grows stronger.
- There is space for improvement and development.

4.3 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The researcher carried out this study to assist the Psychiatric Nurse in helping the individual to maintain friendships in order to facilitate the mental health of the individual.

The following research questions were asked:

- How can friendships be maintained?
- What guidelines can be described to assist individuals to maintain friendships?

The objectives of the research study were: to explore and describe what people with existing friendships do to maintain their friendships; and then to see whether the findings can be used to describe guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships.

To achieve these objectives; a qualitative research design, which was explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature was used. The study was approached from a Positive Psychological point of view, which studies human strengths and virtues. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews using the Appreciative Inquiry method to collect data on what people with friendships do to maintain these relationships.

After the data had been analysed the research findings indicated that significant features that form part of a healthy relationship. Seven main features were identified as well as sub-features under each. These findings are tabulated in Chapter Three (Refer to Table 3.1).

The research findings were used to formulate guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to facilitate mental health.

The researcher can therefore conclude that the research questions for this research study have been answered, and the objectives have been achieved.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Psychiatric Nursing Research and Psychiatric Nursing Practice will be made based on the findings of the study.

4.4.1 Recommendations for Psychiatric Nursing Research

Acknowledging the importance of close relationships is not the same as understanding how they develop and change. Parks (2007:22) noted that the evolution of academic interest in close relationships has followed a rather tortuous path. Over the last century, especially during the last 35 years, social scientists have moved toward a more dynamic, contextually situated view of personal relationships, but much work remains to be done (Parks, 2007:22).

Researching friendship relationships as an interpersonal relationship is a relatively new development. In the field of Psychology, especially that of Social Psychology, a great amount of information is available and, studies on friendship relationships have been done. The field of Psychiatric Nursing Research provides an inviting opportunity for further research on the subject of friendship relationships.

Female and male friendships differ. Women's friendships are likely to be deeper and more intimate than friendships between men (Kaplan, 1998:356). This study focused on female friendships. To enhance the mental health of the integral community, could this study possibly be replicated by using male participants to see what they do to maintain their friendships?

In her research on friendship between older women, Roberto (1996:56) mentioned that a summary of comparative data suggests that there are differences in later life friendships, and that there is limited information available about the specific relationships between older women and their friends within the same friendship categories, for example, best friends. In her study she examined specific interactions between older women and multiple members of their close friend network to explore in more depth similarities and differences in close friend relationships. Could this be an indication for further research on maintaining friendships between older women?

If there is a difference between how older women maintain their friendships in comparison to how young adults do so; could there be a need for research on maintaining friendship relationships between older men?

4.4.2 Recommendations for Mental Health Education

Mental Health Education is the process of assisting individuals to make informed decisions on matters affecting individual, family and community health (Neil-Di Lima & Shust, 1997:3). In this study the important issue will be to maintain healthy friendship relationships. The mental health education process is the continuum of learning that enables the individual to make decisions voluntarily, modify behaviours and change social conditions for example friendships in ways that enhance their mental health (Neil-Di Lima & Shust, 1997:3).

Mental health education is one of the aspects involved in helping to enhance mental health (Dines & Gribb, 1997:94 &95). Health education, including

mental health education, is not primarily about enforcing directives. It is, instead about helping individuals to help themselves (Doyle & Ward, 2001:286). According to Doyle and Ward (2001:286-293), the decision-making power lies in the hands of the individual who receives the mental health education. His or her beliefs, expectations, values, desires and concerns will ultimately dictate his or her health related behaviour.

The role of the Psychiatric Nurse as mental health educator is to facilitate the individual's decisions by providing information, access to resources and guidance as needed. To be able to do this effective communication skills are needed (Doyle & Ward, 2001:286-293). The Psychiatric Nurse will also utilise therapeutic skills and other psychiatric nursing skills that will help her to implement the guidelines in assisting the individual to maintain friendships in order to enhance the mental health of the community.

It is recommended that in-service training programmes for Psychiatric Nurses should be incorporated regarding mental health education skills to be able to assist the individual to maintain friendships in order to enhance the mental health of the community.

4.4.3 Recommendations for Psychiatric Nursing Practice

Mental health is a dynamic process in the person's environment. These interactions in the person's environment reflect the relative mental health status of the person. This interaction contributes to or interferes with, the promotion of mental health (Department of Nursing Science, University of Johannesburg, 2008:5). Mental health is reflected in the person's relationship with himself or herself, others and with the environment (Kreigh & Perko, 1983:5-6). Being able to maintain friendships is important for a person's mental health, and the Psychiatric Nurse can contribute towards enhancing the mental health of the individual and community by assisting individuals in maintaining friendships.

Mental health nursing is an interpersonal process where counselling and health education are aimed at supporting and facilitating healthy lifestyle functioning (Uys & Middleton, 2004:15). To facilitate the promotion of the mental health of the individual and the community, the nurse engages in the nursing process, a methodology through which nursing care is provided. This includes assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation as continuous activities (Department of Nursing Science, University of Johannesburg, 2008:5).

The guidelines that were described for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist the individual in maintaining friendships were based on the nursing process. It is important that the Psychiatric Nurse understands how the nursing process can be applied in assisting the individual to maintain friendships; training regarding this may be needed.

It is also important that the Psychiatric Nurse is aware of the significance of friendships in the mental health of the individual. The Psychiatric Nurse should be able to counsel and educate the individual regarding the maintenance of friendships. This can be incorporated in the nursing process. If necessary training regarding this can be done.

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter the guidelines for Psychiatric Nurses to assist individuals to maintain friendships in order to maintain or enhance mental health have been described. The conclusion of the research study, as well as recommendations for Psychiatric Nursing research and practice, have been made.

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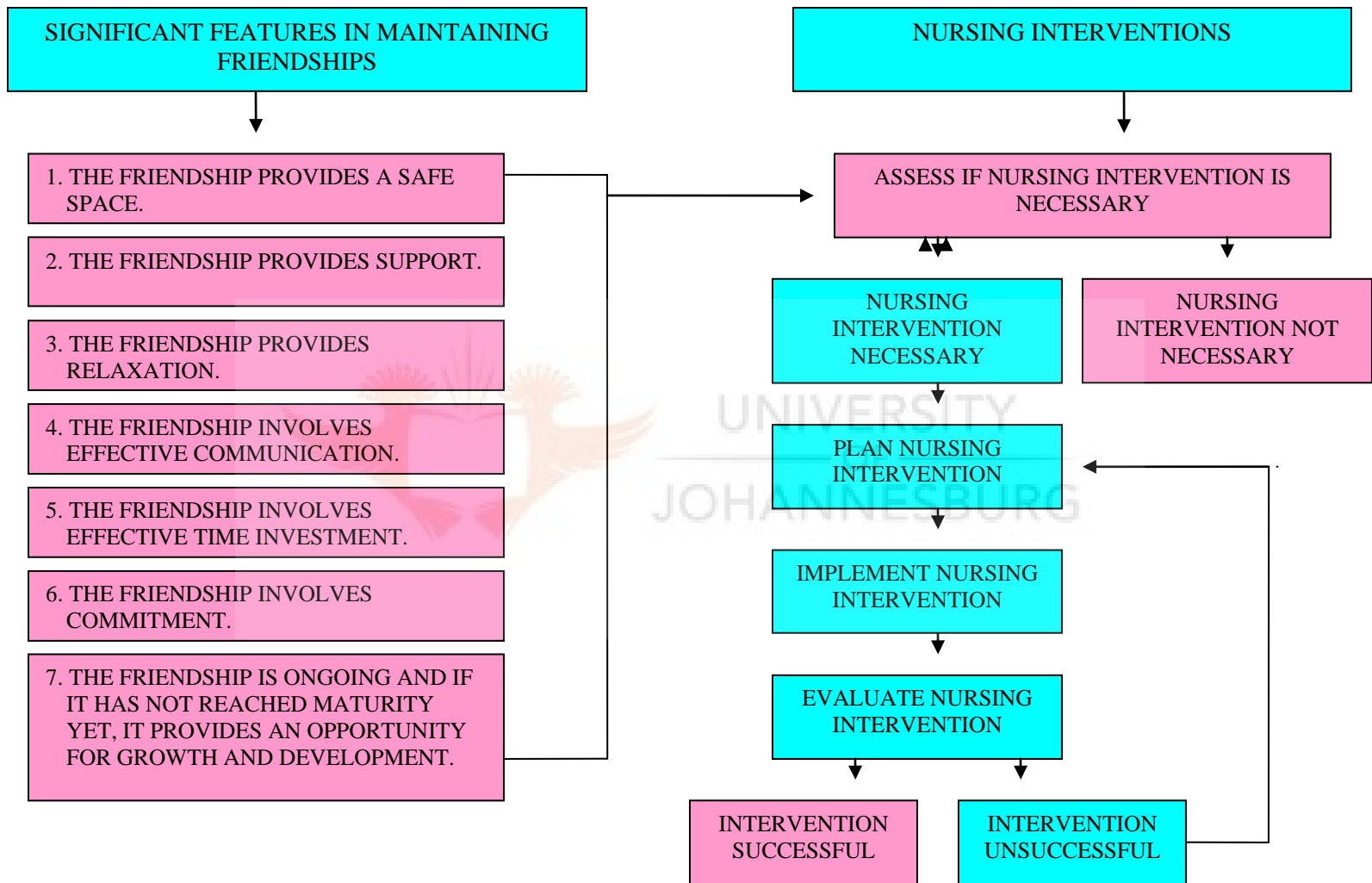


Figure 4.1: Schematic presentation of significant features in maintaining friendships and the nursing interventions to assist the individual to maintain friendships in order to facilitate mental health

INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Project title: Guidelines for maintaining friendships as an integral part of facilitating Mental Health in the community

Dear prospective participant,

I am Laetitia Grobbelaar an M.Cur (Psychiatric Nursing) student under the supervision of Prof. M. Poggenpoel and Prof. C.P.H. Myburgh. I invite you to participate in this research project.

The purpose of the research project is to explore and describe what people with existing friendships do to maintain their relationships and then to provide guidelines for the Psychiatric Nurse to assist individuals to maintain friendships.

An interview will be conducted which will not exceed one hour. With your permission the interview will be audio-taped and you will be asked structured questions about a friendship that is dear to you and has been a part of your life for a two-year or longer period.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the audiotape will not be shared with anyone other than possibly the supervisors of the study and the external coder. The audiotapes will be kept under lock and key for two years after the publication of the research report. Only my supervisors and I will have access to the audiotapes. Thereafter they will be destroyed. Your name will not be on the transcription associated with the study or on any publications resulting from this research, although some of your words may be included in these reports.

There may be old hurts and joys that are recalled, which may arouse negative or positive emotional responses in you. There may be no direct benefits to you as an individual, though the intention is that there will be guidelines available after completion of the study to assist other people in maintaining friendships.

Researcher: Laetitia Grobbelaar
M. Cur student at the University of Johannesburg
Phone 082 202 3756
Supervisor: Prof M Poggenpoel (University of Johannesburg)
Co-Supervisor: Prof CPH Myburgh (University of Johannesburg)

INFORMED CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

I hereby give permission to the M. Cur student researcher to conduct an interview for this research study. I understand that the information may be published, but my name will not be associated with the research, though my words may be used.

I understand that I am free to refuse to answer specific questions during the interview. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time. I have been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions I desire, and all such questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Participant: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____



INFORMED CONSENT TO AUDIOTAPE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

I hereby give permission to the M. Cur student researcher to audiotape the conducted interviews. I understand that the audiotapes will be kept under lock and key for two years after publication of the research report. Thereafter the audiotapes will be destroyed.

I also understand that the audiotapes will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher and possibly the supervisors of the study and the external coder.

Participant: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

ONDERHOUD 3

NAVORSER:

X, as jy dink aan 'n vriendskap met 'n vriendin wat jou na aan die hart lê, wat al twee jaar of langer duur... Ek gaan jou vrae vra oor daardie vriendskap.

KLIËNT:

'OK'. Moet ek een spesifieke vriendskap vat?

NAVORSER:

Ja, een spesifieke vriendskap. 'n Vriendskap wat jou na aan die hart lê. Sê vir my as jy gereed is, dan vra ek vir jou die eerste vraag.

KLIËNT:

'OK'.

NAVORSER:

Wat waardeer jy in daardie vriendskap?

KLIËNT:

Ek waardeer die eerlikheid, oopenheid van... kan ek die persoon se naam sê?

NAVORSER:

Ja.

KLIëNT:

Van Z, sy is baie reguit. Omdat dit 'n vriendskap is wat al 'n tydjie lank kom. Weet ek sy praat die waarheid as sy met my praat of goed deel. Imm... wat nog... ek waardeer dit... 'n mens kan net... om gemaklik te wees. Ja... moet ek nog goed sê?

NAVORSER:

Net wat op jou hart kom... as dit al is waaraan jy dink, dan is dit 'ok'.

KLIëNT:

Ek waardeer dit dat dit iemand is wat jy sommer net kan bel. Sommer... dit is imm, of dat dit iemand is wat jou goed ken. Wat jou omstandighede ken. So, jy hoef nie... dis nie iemand vir wie jy moet verduidelik voordat jy begin praat nie. Dis iemand wat jou omstandighede ken. Ken jou swak punte, ken jou sterk punte. Imm... ja.

NAVORSER:

Toe jy gesê het jy waardeer ook die feit dat sy “reguit” is. Wat bedoel jy met daai “reguit”?

KLIëNT:

Dat sy nie noodwendig gaan sê wat jy wil hoor nie. As jy vir haar raad vrae oor iets dan sê sy vir jou presies wat sy dink. So, dit is nie imm, waar mens... by ander mense partykeer gaan iemand vir jou sê wat jy wil hoor, maar daai persoon ken jou nie goed nie en weet nie hoe jy gaan reageer nie.

Is dit meer iemand soos... iemand wat die waarheid met jou gaan praat. Wat vir jou gaan sê: “jy lyk sleg in daai broek, of in daai toppie”. Of... weet, vir jou gaan sê hoor hier dit is hoe ek oor hierdie ding voel. So, jy weet waar jy staan met daai persoon.

NAVORSER:

Waarheen sien jy hierdie vriendskap ontwikkel?

KLIËNT:

Imm, ek sien... ek weet nou nie of ek die vraag reg verstaan nie. Maar ek sien dat in die toekoms sal ons kinders maatjies wees of... ek weet nie... verstaan ek dit nou reg?

NAVORSER:

Ja.



KLIËNT:

Imm, ek sien dit as iemand op wie ek kan leun in die toekoms. Ons sal goeie vriende bly. Ek dink mens gaan deur... ek weet dat ons deur “ups and downs” gaan gaan. Maar ek sien dit as iets wat blywend sal wees. As iets wat altyd daar sal wees. ‘n Persoon wat altyd in jou lewe gaan wees.

NAVORSER:

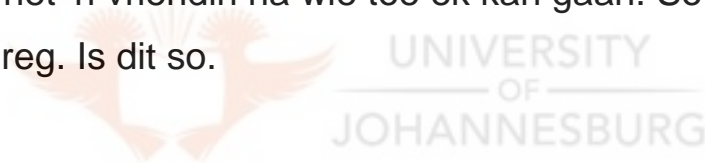
As ek na jou luister, dan hoor ek jy sê die vriendskap ... jy sien dit as iets wat altyd daar gaan wees. Dit gaan blywend in jou lewe wees. Is daar iets spesifiek in hierdie vriendskap

wat jy sal wil verander en laat groei? Of is jou uitkoms dat dit moet net wees soos wat dit is?

KLIËNT:

Ja... nee. Ek dink daar is definitief goedjies. Imm, ek dink goeters wat my partykeer iriteer of wat haar iriteer. Goed wat ons maar eintlik gedurig uitsorteer. Maar tog op die ou einde weet ek dat die vriendskap altyd sal staan. Imm... ja, ek dink mens kan ... ek dink daar is spasio vir verbetering in die vriendskap. Om mekaar beter te verstaan. Miskien meer tyd saam te spandeer.

Imm, maar in “essence” weet ek wie sy is en sy weet wie ek is en ek weet ek het ‘n vriendin na wie toe ek kan gaan. So, in daai opsig is dit reg. Is dit so.



NAVORSER:

Imm. X. Ek hoor drie goed as ek dit opsom, wat jy vir my sê. My vraag was waarheen sien jy die vriendskap ontwikkel? En toe sê jy vir my dat: “ ons kinders eendag sal saamspeel en dat hierdie vriendskap sal blywend wees”. Maar, daar is nog goed wat julle uitsorteer en dit klink vir my jy wil graag hê julle moet hierdie goedjies uitsorteer soos wat dit aangaan.

KLIËNT:

Ja.

NAVORSER:

En imm, dat julle mekaar meer sien. Dat julle meer tyd saam spandeer. Het ek jou reg verstaan?

KLIëNT:

Ja.

NAVORSER:

Wat is nodig om daar te kom? Wat is nodig...

KLIëNT:

Om dit te laat gebeur?

NAVORSER:

Om dit te laat gebeur?



KLIëNT:

Ek dink meer oopenlikke kommunikasie dink ek. Definitief, sal imm, sal ons moet sit en praat oor 'n paar goed so... imm... ja... ons sal moet kommunikeer. En dan tyd maak ek dink... dis nogals 'n dilemma. Almal is besig, maar as 'n mens 'n verhouding wil hou of wil behou, dan moet 'n mens tyd maak. So definitief kommunikasie.

Ek dink van my kant af sal ek ook sekere goed moet aanspreek.

NAVORSER:

As jy sê van jou kant af sal jy sekere goed moet aanspreek; wat bedoel jy daarmee?

KLIËNT:

Imm, ek bedoel goeters wat my dalk... imm, om dit nou reg te sê: "irriteer". Of imm, kon ek 'n voorbeeld gesê het?

NAVORSER:

Ja. Waarmee jy gemaklik voel.

KLIËNT:

'n Voorbeeld wat ek kan gebruik is... imm... daar is sekere goedjies wat partykeer hinder soos... nou kan ek nie aan 'n voorbeeld dink nie.

Partykeer sal Z baie imm... presies sê wat sy dink. Maar dit is nie noodwendig hoe die situasie... dit hoe sy dit sien is nie noodwendig waar nie. Ek dink dan is kommunikasie belangrik. Dan in plaas van om stil te bly, moet ek met haar daaroor praat.

Wat is die vraag presies?

NAVORSER:

Ek het vir jou gevra wat is nodig dat dit bly waar dit is en toe sê jy kommunikasie en dat daar goed van jou kant af is wat jy sal moet aanspreek.

KLIËNT:

Ja... moet aanspreek. Goedjies wat irriteer of wat plaë en dit is veranderend. Dit verander van tyd tot tyd. Miskien 'n insident wat gebeur het wat Z dan 'n bietjie vies is. As ek dit nie gaan aanspreek nie of as ons nie daaroor gaan praat nie, dan gaan ons

vir 'n tyd lank nie kommunikeer nie en dan het ons verhouding skipbreuk gely.

NAVORSER:

Is daar nog iets wat jy daarop wil sê? Wat jy dink julle nodig het om daar te kom dat julle vriendskap standhoudend is, dat hy sal tot in die toekoms oorleef.

KLIËNT:

Ek dink om eerlik te wees met mekaar. Ja, ek dink as ek nou spesifiek dink aan ons verhouding. Imm, Z veral en ek ook baie eerlik gewees. Daar was baie kere dat ons ook vasgesit het oor eerlikheid. Maar, ek dink dit het ook tog gemaak dat ons vriendskap nogsteeds bestaan. Want al daai goedjies word uitgesorteer deurentyd... deurentyd.

Alhoewel ons al vir mekaar baie eerlike en harde woorde gesê het. So, definitief eerlikheid... kommunikasie.

NAVORSER:

My volgende vraag is... hoe kan jy dit bereik? Hoe kan jy bereik dat julle meer kommunikasie het, dat julle meer tyd saam spandeer?

KLIËNT:

Imm, ek weet nie. Imm, ja... miskien 'n gereelde tyd instel dat ons mekaar sien en praat en... 'n tyd inruim. Wat mens miskien nie altyd doen nie, 'n spesifieke tyd vasmaak. Miskien een keer 'n

week of twee keer 'n week. Wat ons mekaar sien en kuier en oor goedjies praat, en ... want ek dink dit is ook belangrik.

NAVORSER:

As ek na jou luister, dan hoor ek jy sê... as ons nou oor tyd praat. Dan hoor ek jy gee 'n voorbeeld van: “byvoorbeeld een keer 'n week of twee keer 'n week mekaar te sien”. Dink jy sy voel dieselfde?

KLIËNT:

Ja.

NAVORSER:

Het jy dit al vir haar genoem?

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KLIËNT:

Ja, definitief. Ons sê altyd ons kom te min by mekaar uit ons moet mekaar ten minste een keer sien in 'n week of ons moet mekaar volgende week sien. Ons sê altyd: “wanneer in volgende week gaan ek jou sien? Wanneer in volgende week”? So, ek dink dit is vir ons altwee belangrik om mekaar so een keer 'n week te sien.

NAVORSER:

Kry julle dit reg?

KLIËNT:

Imm, nie altyd nie, nie altyd nie. Maar, gewoonlik ja.

NAVORSER:

Die vraag oor waarheen sien jy die vriendskap gaan... was daar eintlik half soos twee goed. Goed waaraan julle nog moet werk, maar ook goed wat... jy wil hê dit moet standhoudend wees. Dit moet daar wees.

Wat staan uit in julle vriendskap wat maak dat dit tot dusvêr instand gehou is?

KLIËNT:

Imm, vir my sal ek sê: oop en eerlikke kommunikasie, definitief. Soos wat ek sê daar's baie keer... het ons imm... ons het altyd alles aan die lig gebring. As een persoon nie lekker voel oor 'n situasie of iets wat plaasgevind het nie... ons het nog altyd daaroor gepraat.

En ek dink dit het die verhouding eintlik deurgedra. Want as een van ons besluit het nou 'ok' ek gaan nou nie hieroor praat nie, dan het die verhouding dalk gekwyn. Maar ons het nog altyd dinge op die tafel gegooi en daaroor gepraat. En alhoewel... alhoewel dit dan 'n bietjie rusie veroorsaak het, het dit... het dit nog elke keer verseker dat ons verhouding aangaan en dat ons mekaar verstaan. Dat ons weet waar ons met mekaar staan. So... kommunikasie.

NAVORSER:

Is daar nog iets wat jy wil sê?

KLIËNT:

Ek weet nie... ja, ek dink my en Z se verhouding is al amper 'n vyftien jaar verhouding en die grootste kenmerk van ons verhouding... dit was baie keer wispeltuurig. Imm, omdat, omdat gevoellens altyd oop en eerlik bespreek is, was dit baie keer wispeltuurig.

Maar op die ou einde... hou dit nou al vyftien jaar. So, dit sê tog iets van eerlik wees en 'n oop verhouding te hê.

NAVORSER:

X, dankie.

