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THE EXPERIENCES OF THE CLIENT, THERAPIST AND PARENTS WHEN USING EQUINE-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPY IN A SEXUAL ABUSE CASE

by

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MINI DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER PSYCHOLOGY

in

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

SUPERVISOR:

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NOVEMBER 2012
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my Heavenly Father, God, Who gave me this dream and without Whom I would not have had the strength to get through this. You have carried me through three of the toughest years of my life and brought me to this place. I can look back and say thank you; without You, I am nothing. I now truly know the meaning of being able to do all things through Christ our Saviour. I also thank you for your favour and mercy over these three years.

To my husband-to-be, Ricardo. Without you, I would have not made it through the last couple of months. You are a blessing in my life. Thank you for believing in me even when I started to doubt myself. Your love and encouragement gave me the courage to get through every day. I love you and I will always be grateful for everything you did for me during this time. You are my hero.

To Mom and Dad. Thank you for helping me to reach my dream. Thank you for encouraging me to study. Thank you for understanding when I neglected you because of work and thank you for believing the best of me. I appreciate every phone call and every parcel of food. You two mean the world to me and I am thankful for a mom and dad like you.

To Sarina, Marni and Sani. I would not have made it through this Master’s programme if it were not for you. This programme gave me the greatest gift that anyone could ever wish for: you as my friends. Thank you for everything!

To Erika, your belief in me has pushed me to reach things I have never thought I could reach. You are a true soft place to fall and I want to thank you for everything you do for me, but also for the person you are in my life.

To my special friends, Lynette, Elenor, Yolandi, Nicolene, Adri-Mari and all my other friends who have been so badly neglected, thank you so much for your prayers, phone calls, love and support. I appreciate it more than you will ever know. I am so blessed to have people like you in my life.
To my godfather, Uncle Fannas. Every time I am in need, you are there to help with love and guide with wisdom. I thank you for giving me a place where I know I can go when the world is closed. I am so blessed to have a godfather like you and I appreciate everything that you have done for me with all my heart.

To the best and most patient supervisor in the world, Dr Elzette. Words are not enough to say thank you for all your help. Your help for me extended even beyond what your supervisory duties entailed and for that I would be ever grateful. It was such a privilege to work with you and I stand in awe, not only in terms of your knowledge in the field of psychology, but also in terms of your passion for life and people. I also want to thank you for your faith in me as therapist. This dissertation could not have been a reality if it was not for you. Thank you for walking with me every step of the way.

To Dr Helen, thank you for understanding me and for assisting me through everything I faced in these past three years. Your presence, wisdom and kindness are sometimes just what we need to know that everything is going to be all right.

To Renette, Nelson and everyone at Equilabre Stables. Thank you for accommodating me and for letting me use the stables and the amazing horses for therapy. I really love working there. I am forever grateful.

To the horses Vink and Mignon, you teach us lessons everyday. Thank you for your patients, kindness and compassion for us as humans and thank you for giving us your all, every day, in such a selfless and humble way.

To the participants who were so brave to take part in this research. Thank you for being willing to give of yourself and of your time. We have walked an intense and wonderful road together. I thank you for welcoming me into your family’s deepest hurts and I thank you for trusting me and the horses to walk this path of healing with you. It was a privilege to work with you as a family.
DEDICATION

I have dreamt of working with horses and people since I can remember. It is still so very clear, the day when I first fell in love with the most magnificent of creatures, the horse. I was five years old. By grace, here I am fulfilling my dream, and what a privilege it is. Horses daily helping children to heal in ways humans never could; inspiring yet mysterious, and though very real. A very special and brave seven-year-old girl, her family, myself and horses named Vink and Mignon embarked on an unforgettable journey. As you read through this document and see the enriching experience of these brave horses and equally brave young girl, you will be hard pressed to miss the wonderful value and impact that equine-assisted psychotherapy can have on the experience of those involved. I therefore dedicate this study to all the brave horses out there that offer us their lives and hearts to help children just like this little girl. I also dedicate this study to this brave client and her brave family. Their courage inspired me and it was an absolute privilege to share this journey with them.
DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by the University of Johannesburg will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signature: ....................................... Date: ...............................................

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
ABSTRACT
The high child sexual abuse rate in South Africa and all over the world makes these cases a reality for educational psychologists practising today. Equine-assisted psychotherapy is a relatively new field in psychology, and research shows that this therapeutic intervention can have a very significant impact on people.

Sexual abuse leaves children with psychological effects (Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta & Akman, 1991) ranging from intrapersonal problems such as low self-esteem and feeling emotionally overwhelmed to interpersonal problems resulting in communication and relationship challenges (Mandrell, 2006). According to Kidson (2012), equine-assisted therapy deals very well with such issues as well as self-concept, self-efficacy and self-acceptance. These issues correlate well with the effects of child sexual abuse and the issues that the therapist needs to deal with in the therapeutic sessions (Conte & Scheumann, 2011). Seeing the possibilities that equine-assisted therapy held for a therapist working with a case of sexual abuse, I inquired in terms of the involved systemic influences and experiences.

The study investigated the experiences of the therapist, the client and the parents when using equine-assisted psychotherapy in a case of sexual abuse. The study attempted to identify themes that could explain these experiences and maybe make a contribution to the field of equine-assisted psychotherapy, specifically pertaining to work with sexual abuse cases.

I made use of a phenomenological, qualitative case study design to explore the experiences of the participants. The data collection methods included interviews, field notes and observations. Artefacts were used to aid the researcher in the observation process but also to help the researcher explain the findings in Chapter 4. Furthermore, creative expressive arts therapy tools were used in the
interviews to assist the participants in expressing their experiences regarding the equine-assisted therapy process.

Data was analysed using the phenomenological data analysis process. This process is all about “being true to the phenomenon”. The first step in this research was to transcribe the interview recordings. Using the transcribed text, the field notes and the observations, the researcher then identified units of general meaning. Out of the units of general meanings, themes were identified. In the findings, three themes were identified: equine-assisted therapy, an empowering life changing experience; the extent to which active engagement with horses assist in expressing emotions; and the equine-assisted therapy process and therapeutic experience.

The limitations and strengths of the research were also explained and discussed. Subsequently, recommendations were made for possible future research that evolved from the study’s findings.
CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to inform the reader in terms of the study. A brief background to sexual abuse and equine-assisted therapy will be discussed and introduced; specifically within the context of the educational psychology field in South Africa. A brief introduction will be presented on the theoretical framework, followed by the aim and motivation and then the purpose of this study. Key concepts used in this study will also be defined, followed by the research paradigm, design and methodology used in the study. Ethical considerations regarding this research will then be explained.
1.2 Background and rationale for the research

“Life has many ups and downs and twists and turns, but you are going to spend some healing time with a very special teacher, someone highly recommended and very accomplished. When you meet, your senses are submerged; your heart recognises someone you know from long ago in your evolution. The wise eyes hold your attention, seeing you within and without, the presence is unique and listens attentively in a way that no one else has ever done before. You bare your soul and by acute observations of your thoughts and emotions, the teacher reflects back to you things of which you had not previously been aware. There is nothing covert or judgmental in the approach, only a benign desire to help. Without using words, the teacher can change your life. You reach out and touch the loving face, feel the warm breath on your hands, stroke the soft body. You are saved. This guide is your horse, and all the horses in the world” (Coates, 2006, p 53).

According to research done by Government in South African schools (2002), sexual abuse of children is one of the worst challenges faced by educational psychologists. In a research project conducted in 2000, it was found that almost 90 000 cases of abuse had been reported. In America, It was estimated that a statistical number cannot however be a true reflection of the extent of abuse, owing to unreported cases when children are too scared to report such abuse and also to the challenges encountered in legal procedures (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2004). These statistics also showed that in children under the age of 18, one in four girls and one in six boys have experienced some kind of sexual abuse. The Bureau of Justice found that 67% of all victims of sexual assault reported were children under the age of 18. Some 34% of these victims were under the age of 12. Furthermore, according to these statistics, one in every seven victims of sexual abuse reported was under the age
of six (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). According to research done in South Africa, child sexual abuse and other forcible sexual acts towards children are one of the most problematic social problems (South African Government, 2002).

Sexual abuse leaves children with psychological effects (Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta & Akman, 1991) ranging from intrapersonal problems such as low self-esteem and feeling emotionally overwhelmed to interpersonal problems resulting in communication and relationship challenges (Mandrell, 2006). According to Kidson (2012), equine-assisted therapy deals very well with issues like these, as well as with self-concept, self-efficacy and self-acceptance. These issues correlate well with the effects of child sexual abuse and the issues that the therapist needs to deal with in the therapeutic sessions (Conte & Scheumann, 2011). Equine-assisted therapy entails psychotherapy that incorporates horses, not just as tools to use in a therapeutic process, but also as co-therapists. Equine-assisted therapy is a hands-on process and is therefore tailored to the needs of the client. Clients participate in activities with the horses through the guidance of a therapist, and then process with the therapist their thoughts, actions, patterns, feelings and behaviours while interacting with the horse and the participating in the activity. Through the engagement with horses, the therapist receives invaluable information, which the therapist and client can then use to obtain deeper knowledge regarding the reason for referral (Kidson, 2011).

Therefore, seeing the possibilities that equine-assisted therapy held for a therapist working with a case of sexual abuse, the researcher required in terms of the involved systemic influences and experiences. Equine-assisted therapy is a new field within the South African context and a whole new intervention approach in the domain of educational psychology. The reason for doing research in this field is to make a contribution to equine-assisted therapy in the context of sexual abuse.
1.3 Theoretical framework

“We cannot solve the problems that we have created with the same thinking that created them” (Albert Einstein, Think Exist, n.d).

Equine-assisted psychotherapy draws from the systems theory (Mandrell, 2006). Working within this theory and the belief that all systems influence the client, I worked within the systems theory framework. This framework assisted me in identifying possible answers for the research questions, as equine-assisted psychotherapy has various dimensions (Mann, 2008). Furthermore, I also drew from family systems theory (Hanna, 2004) and some Gestalt theory (Johnston, 2002). The research question is specifically focused on establishing the experiences of the different participants when taking part in a therapeutic intervention like equine-assisted therapy. The focus will also be on exploring a client's experience that went through sexual abuse trauma. The specific research in terms of equine-assisted therapy and sexual abuse in children needed more exploration, especially considering the experiences of the involved parties in the therapeutic process.

1.3.1 Concept clarification

“Excellent communicators, horses respond to how people feel in an unbiased way and, completely tuned into human emotional states, reflect them back” (Coates, 2006).

1.3.1.1 Equine-assisted psychotherapy

Equine-assisted psychotherapy is a therapeutic intervention process that incorporates horses as co-therapists. This is to facilitate and effectively improve better functioning within people’s lives, especially in terms of health, wellness and long-term change (EAPISA, 2011).
1.3.1.2 Educational psychology
Educational psychologists are trained to do assessments, diagnose and do interventions to facilitate the optimum functioning in terms of psychological adjustment, learning and development of people within the contexts of family, school, social or peer groups and communities (HPCSA, 2011).

1.3.1.3 Processing
This is an activity that is used to help the participants reflect, describe and analyse the activity, and then find the relevance for them within their lives (Mandrell, 2006).

1.3.1.4 Child sexual abuse
According to Tomison (1995), sexual abuse is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards.

1.4 Research question, aim, purpose and motivation

“A creative spiritual experience with the horses is offered, including music, art, writing, dance and exercising intuition” (Linda Kohanov, The Tao of Horses, 2008, p 45).

The research question that drove this research entailed: What are the experiences of the therapist, client and parents when using equine-assisted psychotherapy in a case of child sexual abuse? The aim of this study was to document the experiences of the therapist, parents and child when using equine-assisted therapy in the context of child sexual abuse. The purpose and motivation of this study was also to inform the use of equine-assisted therapy by educational psychologists when working with sexual abuse cases.
1.5 Research paradigm, design and methodology

“To acquire knowledge, one must study, but to acquire wisdom, one must observe” (M. Vos Savant, Think Exist, n.d).

1.5.1 Research paradigm, approach and design

According to Ponterotti (2005) the research paradigm is the anchor of qualitative research. In this study constructivism-interpretivism will be the philosophical underpin. The participants and researcher will find their own meaning out of the data. The phenomenological methodology was followed in this research project. Furthermore a qualitative case study design was also followed (Robert K. Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), the case study design allows the researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. This complements Pontorotto’s (2005) research paradigm discussion above. The fact that I focused on the experiences of the participants made this the most suitable methodology. According to Ponterotto (2005, p.4), the characteristics of a phenomenological question is “when the researcher seeks to understand the lived experiences of persons about a phenomenon”. Furthermore, the research question will focus on the essence that all people may experience about this phenomenon (Pontorotto, 2005). In this methodology, I described what all the participants have in common in terms of their experience (Pontorotto, 2005). According to Van Manen (1990, p.177), it is “grasping the very nature of the thing”. Therefore, the phenomenological design is more about describing the essence of the participants’ experiences and not so much about explanations or analyses (Moustakas, 1994). A qualitative research approach was followed, as it provided information pertaining to the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2009). I also made use of a phenomenological research design because it enabled me to understand the social and psychological phenomena, as perceived by the participants (Groenewald, 1994; Lester, 1991).
1.5.2 Research participants

The participants included a seven-year-old girl who had been sexually abused, her parents, and me as the therapist. The mother also went through equine-assisted therapy with another psychologist to deal with the trauma. This made her contribution also more reliable. The child and her parents were purposefully selected; according to Creswell (1998), when purposefully selecting cases according to criteria, it gives the study quality insurance. The selection criteria were based on the following: a child younger under the age of 12 who has experienced sexual abuse and who was referred for equine-assisted therapy. This child had already disclosed the fact that sexual abuse took place, because this study did not focus on the disclosure but on the therapeutic intervention process and the experience in terms of the process.

1.5.3 Researcher assumptions

“Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won’t come in” (Alda, 2006, p. 67).

Starting out with this project, my first assumption was that equine-assisted therapy could make a difference in terms of sexual abuse. I have listened to a lot of people talking about sexual abuse and how long it sometimes takes to get through to the child who was victimised; and to earn enough trust from the child so that the sharing of the trauma becomes possible. I anticipated that the horse would help with building rapport and earning trust from the child. The horse is a non-human and in my experience a horse is very intuitive and sensitive. My second assumption was that working within a systems theory framework, the horse can be seen as another system and this could add to the healing process for the family system as a whole. Seeing that this study focused on the experiences of the clients, I had an assumption that the family would find some
sessions very intense – my experience has taught me that being with horses brings out our most vulnerable parts. My experience has also taught me that trust in the horse plays a significant role in opening up to the horse and therapist; and showing them your vulnerable true self. I will discuss in Chapter 3 how I engaged with these assumptions throughout the research to ensure that my assumptions did not cloud my engagement with the research process and the data.

1.5.4 Data collection

I collected data, guided by Ponterotto (2010) in assisting me to understand the research paradigm in which I was working. I also conducted informal and semi-formal interviews (Weiss, 1994) with the parents, client and the co-therapist; during and after the research process. I documented observations (Tjora, 2006) of the research process, focusing on the participants’ experiences in the form of field notes (Tjora, 2006). I also included photos of the various sessions with the client, keeping confidentiality and anonymity in mind (Hergenrather, Rhodes & Bardhoshi, 2009). I used the photos to assist me in the observation notes. I then made use of creative expressive art to assist in the reflective process and, as such, to inform the data collection process (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Groenewald, 2004). The participants were asked to make two creative expressive art pieces – a collage and a symbol of any sort made from any material – about their experiences. I then included these to inform the semi-structured interviews at the end of the research process (Weiss, 1994). The child was also asked to choose pictures of horses and explain her experience accordingly.

1.5.6 Reliability and validity

According to Mirriam (2002), reliability and validity of a qualitative study like this one can be assured by evaluating specific areas of the study. The first aspect that should be looked at is the problem. Is the problem being supported by research and literature? In this study, as explained in the above discussion, there
was evidence that the research problem had support from literature. Furthermore, Mirriam (2002) says that sampling and how the participants were selected also plays a role in the trustworthiness of the study. According to Creswell (1994), selecting candidates purposefully gives the study more validity and reliability. In this study, the participants were purposefully selected according to certain criteria, as discussed above. Finally, Mirriam (2002) argues that the researcher should clearly state how the data was collected and analysed. In this research study, the validity and reliability of the findings were verified by means of all the data collected in the study using the reflective journals, the transcriptions of the interviews, the creative expressive arts material made by the clients and the therapist, the therapist’s observations, and photos taken of sessions with the client. The data was then put into three data sets for triangulation (Merriam, 2002). The analysis of the data mentioned above was done by triangulation of the different sets of data. This insured that the findings were supported by themes found within the data, through the process of triangulation. I discuss this in-depth in Chapter 3.

1.6 Ethical considerations

“Action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics” (Jane Addams, Think Exist, n.d).

The research process was conducted following ethical guidelines as provided by Mertens & Ginsberg (2009). Clearance was obtained from the University of Johannesburg’s Ethics Committee as well as the Higher Degrees Committee. I also adhered to the Health Professions Council of South Africa’s code of conduct for psychologists conducting research.
1.6.1 Informed consent and assent

The participants were asked to volunteer in this study. They were also informed that they could and may at any time of this process withdraw from this research. Informed consent and assent from the participants was obtained regarding the use of the data collected and what they want to keep confidential and anonymous. The purpose of the research was also discussed with the participants. It was also explained to the participants, that even if they wanted to withdraw from the study, they could still continue with therapy.

1.6.1.1 Consent

“Expressed consent means consent which is expressed orally or in writing (except where patients cannot write or speak, when other forms of communication may be sufficient)” (Government Gazette, 2006).

“Consent”, according to the National Health Act, is explained as where a person gives permission to receive a health service by a person with legal capacity. Furthermore, according to the Children’s Act, consent may be given by any person older than 12 years, but the person must be sufficiently mature to provide the consent (Children’s Act, 2005, nr.38). In this study I did not only get consent in terms of the therapy done, but also to participate in the research.

1.6.1.2 Assent

“Assent” is the expressed consent from a person that is under 12 years. This means that the child’s assent must be accompanied by the parents/guardian’s consent (Children’s Act, 2005, nr.38). The child was also informed that she would be part of a research process and she had to give assent for this as well.
1.6.2 Confidentiality and keeping of records

Confidentiality was maintained in that the participants’ names and any identifying information were changed. All data collected for research purposes was kept in an ethically safe place. The research documents will be kept for 2 years after completion of the research and will then be destroyed.

1.6.3. Setting for research

The research was collected at Equilabre Stables. To avoid harm to the client and to ensure safety, I used “safe” horses. This means that I used horses that do not bite and do not kick. The therapy also took place in a confined and controlled space, where I could anticipate any dangers. All data collected was stored safely to secure participant confidentiality. The researcher also obtained supervision from supervisors appointed by the university on a regular basis.

1.6.4. Supervision

Supervisors were appointed by the University of Johannesburg to supervise me. Supervision was done at least once in a week, whether electronically or face-to-face. The supervisor was involved in every part of this research, including the emotional health of the researcher.

1.6.5. Research findings

The research participants were given the opportunity to read the final document.
1.7 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1: This chapter provided the reader with an overview of the research process and what the reader can expect from this document.

Chapter 2: Explanation of the theoretical framework and a review of the literature that informed this research.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and data analyses used in this research

Chapter 4: Discussion of data and findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

"Perhaps the horse is our alter ego and that is why, when with them, we are encouraged to reflect on who we are in order to become complete" (Coates, 2008, p.35).

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the theoretical framework that contextualised this study, while also providing a literature review. Furthermore, this chapter provides the background pertaining to the use of horses and the power it has within the therapeutic context. Systems theory provides the background in exploring the role of horses in the triadic relationship between the client, educational psychologist and horse. I also consulted literature on the sexual abuse of children, and its effect and prevalence in the South African context. I consulted literature on equine-assisted therapy and guided the reader to an understanding about using equine-assisted therapy. The following diagram will act as a guide to the reader through this chapter.
2.2 Theoretical framework
Before I explain my theoretical framework, I will first explain the term equine-assisted therapy. Afterwards, I will explain the theoretical framework, which will enable the reader to understand the study’s position in this research.

2.3 Equine-assisted psychotherapy

2.3.1 Defining equine-assisted therapy

“What if a horse could teach love, trust, communication, empathy, appropriate boundaries, healthy conflict resolution, teamwork, creativity, honesty, patience and resilience? What if a horse could motivate and empower a person to be their best and happiest?” (Kidson, 2007, p 2).

Equine-assisted psychotherapy can be defined as a method of psychotherapy that has been developed by incorporating horses to facilitate and act as co-
therapists to promote health, wellness and change in people who are not functioning effectively within their daily lives (Kidson, 2007). Selby and Smith-Osborne explains EAP as an approach where horses are used in therapy as “agents of change” (Selby & Smith-Osborne, 2012). It is an experiential, hands-on method whereby people learn about themselves and others. Kidson (2007) says that they do that by participating in activities with the horses and then discussing or processing their experiences, thoughts, behaviours and patterns of interaction with the therapist. According to the Veterans Multi-Purpose Center in America (Unknown), which also uses equine-assisted therapy in their therapy programmes, equine-assisted therapy is an emerging field of therapeutic intervention where horses are used as tools to bring about self-understanding and emotional growth. Kidson stresses that in equine-assisted therapy, the horse is not merely a tool but also a co-therapist (Kidson, 2011). Douglas Mann (2007) also states that in an equine-assisted therapy session, the horses and the therapist combine to become a therapy team. I will take in this position that the horse is not merely a tool but a co-therapist. Coates (2008) explains equine-assisted therapy as a combination of psychotherapy and horses. It does not usually include riding; most of the work is done on the ground (Kidson, 2007). The concept of equine-assisted therapy is that certain difficulties and emotions will rise to the surface when that client interacts with the horses and take part in the activities (Coates, 2008). The role of the horse and the reason for using a horse will be explained in Section 2.6. Furthermore, equine-assisted therapy can be explained as a therapy that uses different kinds of therapies while integrating horses into the process (ANON, 2009).

2.3.2 Defining processing

Processing, in this context, was defined by Mandrell (2009) in her book Introduction to Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. Processing is the activity in the session that is structured in such a way to encourage the clients to plan, reflect, describe, analyse and communicate everything about the activity. They then usually relate the experiences from the activities directly back to similar situations
they may be experiencing at home, school, work, in their relationships and, in this specific case, within the context of the sexual abuse trauma. In the experiential learning process explained in Section 2.5, processing will therefore be part of the second, third and fourth part, and will include all discussed elements from the adapted diagram. I will explain this in more detail when I refer to family therapy and the equine-assisted therapy process.

2.3.3 Equine-assisted psychotherapy as a therapeutic intervention

According to Kidson (2007) equine-assisted therapy deals very well with the following issues: poor communication skills, low self-esteem and self-confidence, ineffective boundaries, low or no trust in others, anger management, problem-solving skills, anxiety and fear, self-isolated individuals, parenting and discipline issues, grief, relationship difficulties, behavioural problems, substance abuse or chemical dependence, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression and anxiety, eating disorders and much more.

In their study about therapy with equine’s, Selby and Smith-Osborne’s conclusion was that including horses to therapy is definitely beneficial (Selby & Smith-Osborne, 2012). According to Coates (2008), equine-assisted therapy also improves the health of clients because they are also having fun together, and this adds another dimension to the therapy process. She also mentions that apart from the above-mentioned difficulties, it also helps with motivational issues. Equine-assisted therapy uses the accommodation or joining principle used in family therapy and Gestalt therapy, explained in sections 2.3 and 2.4 (Mann, 1999). Erickson (1991) suggested that the therapist involve clients in therapy by appealing to the perceptual framework they bring into the therapy session. Then, by using metaphors like in the equine-assisted therapy context, it brings new meaning to those perceptions and change into the framework of that family (Mann, 1999). In Section 2.6, the use of metaphors in equine-assisted therapy is explained.
2.4 Systems theory

I will now continue to explain the theoretical framework that informed this study. The systems theory framework was used to inform the theory of equine-assisted therapy in this research (Mandrell, 2006). According to Hall & Fagen (1956) and Hannah (2004), a system in a psychological context can be defined as a set of objects or people together with the relationships between these people, also bearing in mind that the hierarchy, the environment and the purpose of the system have an influence on how the specific system will be defined (De Greene, 1982 & Hannah, 2004). Working with the belief that all systems influence the client, this framework provided valuable information for the equine-assisted therapy field (Mandrell, 2006) – especially when working within the family systems context. Furthermore, families can be seen as systems, as they are made up of interrelated elements. They are interrelated systems, because they are interdependent on one another and exhibit coherent behaviours. As a therapist, you must then understand that the client’s behaviour and actions cannot be understood if the systems within which the client functions are not understood (Mandrell, 2006). The interaction between these different systems holds valuable information. Family theorists also acknowledge the fact that, if change occurs in one part of the system, then it affects all the other parts of that system (Gass, 1993). According to Mandrell (2006), the systems theory used within the equine-assisted therapy context can help people reconstruct a new life story and construct a more positive perception of the old, painful story. Mandrell (2006, p 92) also looks closely at the term “integrating second-order change”. This means that the therapist and client must not only attend to the information that is given by the discussion and the processing going on between the systems, but also the manner in which this processing is taking place between the systems or sub-systems. In equine-assisted therapy, this will include the reactions and actions of the horse and the body language of the clients when processing is taking place. Therefore, the horse – through equine-assisted therapy and through also being a system – provides very valuable information.
about the client, and this makes equine-assisted therapy very unique. Therefore, change will not just come if you only focus on what the client’s verbal communication is saying, but also the non-verbal communication of the client and the horse. It is important to understand that being a co-therapist, the horse is a system as well. Equine-assisted therapy, as discussed in Section 2, has inherited a lot of similarities with the family systems way of treatment (Mann, 1999). This study was also done within the family system, focusing on the experience of the whole family with this kind of intervention in terms of sexual abuse. According to Chamberlain & Kosicky (1997), working with dysfunctional cycles in structural family therapy, social learning therapy and ecological approach targets interventions in multiple relative systems within the family context. One of the reasons I included this in the study is as follows: the sexual abuse theory clearly states that when sexual abuse occurs in a family, the child’s trauma includes the parents’ feelings towards it and how they handled and handle the situation. Therefore, part of the child’s healing process lies in the systems around him or her.

2.5 Structural family therapy theory

“This model requires a respectful curiosity about diverse forms of family experience and strengths … a preference for concrete behavioural changes over talk about changed feelings … a willingness to direct … a tolerance for intensity in human transactions, and the courage to raise intensity when necessary” (Hanna, 2004, p 43).

In this study, I worked within the family systems, including the therapy process of the family members and the experiences they had. Everyone and everything acts as a system and has an influence on the other system. The therapist, the horse, the client, the environment in which the session is facilitated as well as the child’s environment at home and the family members formed a system on their own. As
explained in the section on equine-assisted therapy, this systems theory also applies to the structural family therapy theory (Hannah, 2004). With this approach, families are observed in terms of their interactions and activities to determine the organisation or structure of the family, or in this case the different systems (Hanna, 2004). In the equine-assisted therapy process, the different systems are also being observed. It also involves joining with your clients and all the systems involved (Hanna, 2004). Joining is a principle used in Gestalt as well as family therapy. “Joining” means that the therapist must build rapport with the clients by being responsive and personable. This links to the joining that happens according to Mann (1999) in an equine-assisted therapy session, where the horse as the co-therapist joins with the client. Mann (1999) also refers to joining as “accommodation”. This accommodation is very important, because it is the “glue that unites the family and the therapist”. In equine-assisted therapy, the horse is included in accommodation throughout the therapy process (Mann, 1999). In the case of sexual abuse, where basic trust in humans have been affected because of being sexually abused by a close caregiver or relative, the horse plays a very important role in helping the therapist to join with the client.

2.6 Gestalt therapy theory

Basic principles of Gestalt psychology are also interwoven into this dynamic approach of equine-assisted therapy to human growth, healing and learning (Johnston, 2002). The basic principles that overlap with equine-assisted therapy is firstly it is also an experiential approach that moves away from just talk therapy to action (Levine, 2011). Furthermore, it is also about creating awareness (Brownell, 2010) that the therapist does not control what happens in the session. The therapist is also just a system in the process, focusing on what is happening now, while what is being said now (Levine, 2011). Just like in the equine-assisted therapy process and the experiential learning process that will be discussed in sections 2.4 and 2.7, the therapist also comments on the observations made during the interaction in the session. Like the Gestalt process (Brownell, 2010),
the equine-assisted therapy process is actually putting the client in a real-life drama being played out in the here and now. Therefore, the client's conscious and unconscious difficulties come to the surface, and the session is tailored to attend to those needs. Johnson (2002) stated that equine-assisted therapy is a natural way of therapy that can be used as a tool involving the holistic principle of Gestalt therapy – bringing change through action. She further states that every unhealthy behaviour created by a person to cope because of trauma and therefore becomes an ineffective coping skill, is visible in how a person reacts, interacts and approaches daily life situations. In equine-assisted therapy (Johnson, 2002), it does not matter if the unhealthy coping skills were acquired in early childhood or later in life. It also does not matter that much why the client is presenting with certain behaviour and why he or she is handling certain situations the way he or she does. What matters in equine-assisted therapy is how the client relates to the world and reacts with ineffective behaviours (EAGALA, 2002). Addressing these ineffective behaviours will help the client deal with the trauma. Therefore, equine-assisted therapy is experiential and in-the-moment therapy like Gestalt therapy. When introducing the horses to a session, the client basically goes through a Gestalt therapy process because they must deal with the issue physically and on a practical level (Johnson, 2002). The equine-assisted therapy process was developed out of various theories (Mandrell, 2006). The equine-assisted therapy process will be adapted and explained in Section 2.7 out of the Gestalt therapy process, the family therapy process as well as the experiential learning process in the next section.
2.7 Experiential learning process

“In the early 1980s, Mezirow, Freire and others stressed that the heart of all learning lies in the way we process experience, in particular, our critical reflection of experience. They spoke of learning as a cycle that begins with experience, continues with reflection and later leads to action, which itself becomes a concrete experience for reflection” (Rogers, 1996, p 57).

Equine-assisted psychotherapy makes use and relies a lot on the experiential learning process (Kidson, 2007). The experiential learning process is explained in the following diagram used in training notes for EAPISA (Kidson, 2007) therapists:
Diagram 2.1

1. Experience
2. Share
3. Process
4. Generalize
5. Apply

Diag. 2.1
The experiential learning process shown in the diagram above can be explained as follows:

Diagram 2.2

The important aspect to remember and to take note of is that one of the greatest benefits of equine-assisted therapy is that through learning with the horses, positive, effective and healthy behaviours are not only taught but experienced (Johnson, 2002). Thus, the client can experience the feeling there and then of the healthy behaviour, which brings immediate change and new growth. Change comes through action (Mann, 1999). According to Coats (2008), people from all over the world attained healing on an emotional, physical, mental and spiritual level by participating in equine-facilitated experiential learning. According to Kohanov (Coates, 2008), when you use equine-assisted therapy in an experiential learning process, people find that they re-awake forgotten abilities that they need to help them bring back the balance in their lives. Change comes through experiencing the process. Re-awaking the client, in some ways, also links to the Gestalt principle that says “the only ‘good’ client is a ‘live’ client” (Brownell, 2008).
2.8 Why use a horse?

“Only when calmness prevails and we are in harmony will a horse say from the heart, ‘I want to be with you and follow your lead’”

(Koates, 2008, p 126).

Kidson (2007) says that the size and power of a horse can be naturally intimidating to people – especially to children. Therefore, when the client accomplishes a task with or alongside the horse, it is very empowering. Hamilton (Coates, 2008) explains that in an equine-assisted therapy session, horses become a metaphor. This helps the clients to learn how to deal with emotions of being overwhelmed by something far bigger than themselves.

The following diagram was adapted and integrated from numerous research by Coates (2009), Kidson (2007), Mandrell (2006), Mann (2006) and EAGALA (2012):
Diagram 2.3
Using horses in a therapy process can have a lot of benefits, as seen in the above diagram. But, according to Kidson (2007), when working with horses, the greatest benefit is that positive change and behaviours are not only taught, but experienced. Horses are very honest (EAGALA, 2012); they do not know how to play a part or wear masks like people do (Kidson, 2007; ANON, 2012, Coates, 2008). Therefore, horses are very powerful messengers. The lesson that horses learn the client is that when something in themselves changes, the horse’s behaviour and reactions towards them will change (EAGALA, 2012). The very important thing to understand about equine-assisted therapy is that it is unlike any other animal-assisted therapies, for example therapy incorporating dogs. The reason for this is that humans and dogs are predators and horses are prey. Predators can conceal themselves from the outside world; they are only focused on what is in front of them. Prey, on the other hand, have heightened senses and
are very aware of what is going on around them at all times. They do not know how to conceal themselves; they only know how to be aware. Being aware is what keeps them safe (Kelly, 2011). In today’s day and age, people have learned very well to “conceal” their true feelings and intent. It is then the horse that can mirror and bring out what the true feelings are, because of their acute sense of awareness and perception (Kelly, 2011 and Mann, 2007). Coates (2008) says that the horse has an advantage over the human therapist because of the fact that they can touch us, and we can touch them. The study of medicine and modern positive psychology confirms that touch has a healing power (Victor, 2004). According to Dr James Lynch, a professor of medicine at the University of Baltimore who continues to conduct extensive studies on the power of touch has on the body, says that physical contact has a very big impact on someone’s psychological health (Victor, 2008). Therefore, just being close to the horse and touching the horse can be a healing experience (Kidson, 2007). Horses do not use verbal language to communicate and to read and react on each other and people. They use body language. Thus, you as a client can only use body language to communicate with the horse, which then teaches you to develop healthy non-verbal communication (Coates, 2008 and Kelly, 2011). This is very beneficial for clients, especially in terms of relationships, because 95% of communication is non-verbal body language (Kelly, 2011). “The client’s body language tells all their secrets,” says Mandrell (2006, p 43). Coates (2008, p 185) says: “Horses are an indicator of human behavioural and emotional states.” She goes on by saying: “Excellent communicators, horses respond to how people feel in an unbiased way and, completely tuned into human emotional states, reflect them back”.
2.9 The equine-assisted therapy process

“When you dance, your purpose is not to get to a certain place on the floor. It is to enjoy each step along the way” (Wayne Dyer, n.d.).

“By reflecting what we feel, horses encourage self-reflection” (Coates, 2008, p 76).

Diagram to show processes informing EAP process:

As mentioned in Section 2.4, the equine-assisted therapy process was developed out of various theories (Mandrell, 2006). In this section, the equine-assisted therapy process will be explained and adapted by using similarities to the Gestalt therapy process, the family therapy process as well as the experiential learning process discussed in sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5. as I subsequently developed and integrated.
The equine-assisted psychotherapy process:

- Professionals choose horse(s) and setting with goal in mind before client arrives
- Every horse has its own trauma, background, personality and ways of interacting; therefore you choose the different horses with your goal and client in mind.

- Client is introduced to the horse and the setting
- Experiential learning: Phase 1 - Experience
- Gestalt and Family Process: Joining/Accommodation

- Client is asked to get comfortable with the horse and area.
- Experiential learning: Phase 1 - Experience
- Gestalt and Family Process: Joining/Accommodation

- Client is given the activity (the activity is only a medium)
- Experiential learning: Phase 1 - Experience
- Gestalt Therapy Process: Putting client in real life situation - Change comes through action.

- Therapist and Horse behaviorist observes client and horse.
- Experiential Learning: Phase 1 - Experience
- Family systems therapy: Observing behaviors

- When therapist chooses or client feels that he/she completed task, processing starts.
- Experiential Learning: Phase 2 and 3 - Share and Process (Reflecting)
- Therapist will ask client to tell them how the experience was and how the client is feeling.

- Therapist gives feedback on how the client handled the task in terms of non-verbal body language.
- The horse behaviorist comments on when the horse, the co-therapist, did what and then the therapist links the two behaviors together (Gestalt therapy and Family Therapy)

- Client is asked to reflect on this and what they make of it (it is left to the client to interpret).
- Experiential Learning: Phase 2 and 3 - Share and Process

- Therapist may encourage relating the EAP experience to other aspects of the client’s life.
- Experiential Learning: Phase 3 and 4 - Process and Generalize (Reflecting and Applying)
- Gestalt - Action through change and Family therapy (relating patterns and behaviors to real life)

- Here the client may be asked to go back to the activity or change something in the activity to bring forth change and reframing.
- Change is experienced (powerful component of EAP) - here they must change to see the horse’s behavior to possibly change.
- Gestalt therapy - Change through action.
- Experiential Learning: Phase 4 and 5 - Application

Diagram 2.4
An equine-assisted therapy session is facilitated in the stable, in the yard, in the ring or in the arena (it depends on the outcome and the goal of the session). The therapist decides how many horses and which horses are put in with the client. Every horse has its own trauma, background, personality and ways of interacting; therefore you choose the horses with your goal and client in mind. The client will be given an activity to do inside the allocated area. While this takes place, the behaviour, feelings, reactions and actions of the horses and the client is observed by the therapist and the horse behaviourist. Timing is essential in equine-assisted therapy. It is very important to know exactly when what happened because the horses mirror the client’s feelings, behaviours and patterns. When the activity is completed or the therapist chooses, processing begins. Here, the therapist may encourage relating the equine-assisted therapy experience to other aspects of the client’s life. This brings new insights, skills and change. According to Thomas, equine-assisted therapy has inherent similarities with family systems theories of treatment discussed in Section 2.2 (Douglas, 2009). In the family systems, the unconscious and conscious needs are usually not spoken about or recognised. Therefore, putting the client in the “real-life” situation gives the client a way to express his or her concerns and also change behaviour (Hannah, 2008). This also links to the Gestalt therapy theory that change comes through action (Section 2.4).
According to Mandrell (2006) and Kidson (2007), processing in equine-assisted therapy has four components that form part of the process of equine-assisted therapy:

1. **The Activity**
   - Focuses on content (actions and expression)
   - How did the client approach the activity?
   - Resources used?
   - Did the horse respond to client?
   - What steps did client take to find success?
   - What happened that kept client from being successful?
   - What did the client say during the activity?

2. **What messages are the horse giving?**
   - The EAP team must observe the horse’s response to EVERY activity and client.
   - Non-verbal cues did horse communicate?
   - Themes within horse’s response?
   - Does the horse keep on doing the same thing over and over again? Why?
   - How did horse respond to any unclear expectations?
   - How were the horse treated by the client before, during and after the activity?
   - How did the horses relate to each other?
   - How can each horse help client deal with different people and situations in life?

3. **What messages are the client sending?**
   - Therapist must look beyond the contents and words - non-verbals
   - Themes and patterns?
   - Did the client do the same thing over and over? Why?
   - Any exceptions to behavior?
   - Congruency and roles client play?
   - How did the client handle success? Failure? Disappointment?
   - Creativity?

4. **What is the integration between the horse and client revealing?**
   - Identify patterns of interactions between horse and client.
   - How did the client relate to all interactions in the arena?
   - Clients response towards horses and others when things went well, and when things did not go well?
   - How did client communicate needs?
   - Life metaphors?
2.10 Sexual abuse

“I’m just a little girl, in a great big world, I need you, come rescue me from all I’ve seen, I’m suffering, I need your love to protect me from the one who came to rob me of my innocence, my confidence, my self-respect, my voice in this” (Holly Spears, A Small Voice (a song written by Spears about sexual abuse following her own personal experience).

According to research that the South African Government did within South African schools (Submission by the Department of Education to Task Group on Sexual Abuse in Schools, 2002), sexual abuse is one of the worst realities in South Africa and therefore one of the challenges educational psychologists have to address. In a research project conducted in 2000 on sexual abuse experienced up to the age of 18 years, it was found that almost 90 000 cases of abuse had been reported. It was estimated that this number was, however, not a true reflection of the extent of abuse, owing to unreported cases when children are too scared to report such abuse and also to the challenges encountered in legal procedures (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2004 and Unicef, 2001). These statistics also indicated that in children under the age of 18, one in four girls and one in six boys have experienced some kind of sexual abuse. The Bureau of Justice found that 67% of all victims of sexual assault reported are children under the age of 18. Some 34% of these victims were under the age of 12. Furthermore, according to these statistics, one in every seven cases of sexual abuse reported involved a child under the age of six (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). According to the latest South African crime report of South Africa, 51,9% of all crimes committed against children is sexual abuse. The age group between 15 and 18 made out 39,5% and 29,4% of child sexual abuse cases were between the age group of birth to 10 years. This
means that 35,820 children were reported to being sexually abused in 2011 (Crime Report, 2011).

Furthermore, according to Linda, Dawes & Higson-Smith (2006), definitions are very important when it comes to child sexual abuse. The reason for this lies in the interpretation of the event with the child. Research done by Linda et al. (2006) showed that the definition for sexual abuse by Tomison (1995) is the most comprehensive. According to Tomison (1995), sexual abuse is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Another very comprehensive definition for child sexual abuse was given by Sgroi (Calder, 1999). Child sexual abuse according to Sgroi is (Calder, 1999, p. 392):

“A sexual act imposed on a child who lacks emotional, maturational, and cognitive development. The ability to lure a child into a sexual relationship is based upon the all powerful and dominant position of the adult or older adolescent perpetrator, which is in sharp contrast to the child’s age, dependency, and subordinate position. Authority and power enable perpetrator, implicitly or directly, to coerce the child into sexual compliance.”

Sexual abuse can also be defined as a form of child abuse that includes actions between a child and an adult or older child that often involve body contact (Anon, 2012).

Sexual abuse leaves children with psychological effects (Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta & Akman, 1991) ranging from intrapersonal problems such as low self-esteem and feeling emotionally overwhelmed to interpersonal problems resulting in communication and relationship challenges (Mandrell, 2006). According to research done by the American Institute of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2011), no child can cope with sexual stimulation at any stage of their
life. Furthermore, children who are being abused by someone in the family are faced with even more psychological difficulties than children who were abused by a stranger. Children will usually develop a fear that the rest of the family will be angry at them, and that the family will break up and it would be all their fault. They are also trapped between the feeling of loyalty towards the person in the family and the feeling of knowing that the sexual acts are wrong and hurtful. Sexually abused children mistrust others (AACAP, 2011). This is a very big aspect to overcome in therapy, as it takes very long to get a sexually abused client’s trust in rapport-building. Therefore, in terms of the systems theory that was explained in Section 2.3, according to Childline (2000), their treatment programme has found more success when they included the family and caregivers of clients. According to them, children who have a sense of security in terms of their family or caregivers are more likely to find it easier to explore the self and other difficulties (Childline, 2000). The reason for this is that, with this sense of the security, the child will not be as scared of rejection or exclusion because of what happened to him or her. Therefore, when working with sexual abuse, it is better to work with all the systems involved. This is also a reason why I decided to work under the systems theory framework.

The psychological effects of sexual abuse are very much developmentally dependent (AACAP, 2011). The following diagrams will explain these effects for the different ages and developmental stages, and will also point out the behaviour of the child in these different age groups. The initial effects will start within two years of the first incident of abuse, but the long-term effects can be present for a lifetime (APA, 2012). Re-victimisation is also a common phenomenon with these individuals (APA, 2012).
The following information was retrieved from the research done by the American Humane Association (2011).

*Diagram explaining different effects of child abuse in different developmental stages:*

**Up to 3 years:**
- Fear or excessive crying
- Vomiting
- Feeding problems
- Bowel problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Failure to thrive
- Low self-concept development

**Between 2 and 9 years:**
- Fear of particular people, places or activities
- Regression to earlier behaviors such as bedwetting or stranger anxiety
- Victimization of others
- Excessive masturbation
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Nightmares or sleep disturbances
- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Fear of attack recurring
- Eating disturbance
- Low self-esteem
- Low self-confidence

**Older children and adolescents:**
- Depression
- Nightmares or sleep disturbances
- Poor school performance
- Prematurity
- Substance abuse
- Aggression
- Running away from home
- Fear of attack recurring
- Eating disturbances
- Early pregnancy or marriage
- Suicidal gestures
- Anger about being forced into situation beyond one's control
- Pseudo-mature behaviors
- Low self-esteem
- Low self-confidence

*Diagram 2.6*
Furthermore, according to Barker (2006) and Brink (2012), sexual abuse trauma can also be linked to attachment trauma because it contributes to attachment difficulties (Barker, 2006). Attachment trauma is any trauma in a child’s life that can influence his or her attachment style in a negative way (Barker, 2006). Despite all the influences and effects of sexual abuse on a child, attachment trauma also has a neurological component to it (Barker, 2006 and Brink, 2012). The one important neurological component in trauma is that the trauma itself, in this case sexual abuse, has an impact on the neurochemistry of the brain. Ultimately, the trauma changes the structure and function of the brain, and also affects communication and the ability to communicate how we feel (Barker, 2006; Brink, 2011 and Levine, 2008). When looking at the experiences of a client, it is thus important to understand as a therapist that one function that changes within the brain is the process of formation of our internal representations of the external world. This will influence how the client experiences and communicates the experience of the external world. Baker (2006) concludes in saying that a child who experienced sexual abuse early in life will experience attachment difficulties later in his or her life. This correlates well with the other findings in terms of sexual abuse and relational difficulties and trust issues (Elam & Kleist, 1999). Therefore, children who went through sexual abuse trauma also may have a change in their brain functions. According to Brink (2011), the brain can be changed when therapy is used to deal with trauma. Baker (2006) goes on by saying that the changing of the brain in a therapeutic process involves a process triggered by physical and emotional experiences.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“Research is about creating new social realities, not just about studying old ones” (Terreblanche, 2011, p.9).

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study is aimed at the experiences of participants when using equine-assisted therapy in a case of sexual abuse. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the research process and how the research was facilitated to answer the research question. With this chapter, the ethical considerations will be included and discussed.

Diagram: Chapter Outline
3.2 Research paradigm

When referring to a paradigm, it is first necessary to understand what it means. According to Guba (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22), a paradigm is a “basic set of beliefs that guides action”. In other words, it can be said that this can be the basis of beliefs that guides the researcher to be able to perform a specific study and then interpret it from the viewpoint of these beliefs. Part of this paradigm is the methodology, ontology and epistemology (Denzin et al. 2005, p.22). Therefore, these concepts must be explored before the research paradigm used in this study can be understood. I will now briefly explain the following concepts:

3.2.1 Epistemology

Epistemology can be defined as the study of knowledge and beliefs that was justified in the study. This section usually aims to answer the questions about the research structure, the limits and the creation of the knowledge in the research.

3.2.2 Ontology

The ontology of a research paradigm is the description of the concepts within a research paradigm. (Gruber, n.d)

3.2.3 Methodology

A methodology can be defined by saying it is a set of practices within a system of principles and specific scope. Specific methods and procedures are used in every methodology. (Business Dictionary, n.d)
3.3 Research methodology

“… a specific philosophical and ethical approach to developing knowledge; a theory of how research should, or ought, to proceed given the nature of the issue it seeks to address” (Hammell, 2006, p.167).

“Unlike other methodologies, phenomenology cannot be reduced to a ‘cookbook’ set of instructions. It is more an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals” (Keen, 1975 in Hycner, 1985, p.279).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the phenomenological design was followed in this research project. Considering that I focused on the experiences of the participants, this was the most suitable methodology. According to Ponterotto (2005, p.4), the characteristics of a phenomenological question is “when the researcher seeks to understand the lived experiences of persons about a phenomenon”. Furthermore, the research question will focus on the essence that all people may experience about this phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2005). In this methodology, I describe what all the participants have in common in terms of their experiences (Ponterotto, 2005). According to Van Manen (1990, p.177), it is “grasping the very nature of the thing”. Therefore, the phenomenological design is more about describing the essence of the participants’ experiences and not so much about explanations or analyses (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore

3.3.1 Ethical considerations

According to Ponterotto (2009), it is important to be aware of the fact that ethical practice is more dependent on the researcher’s own self-awareness and commitment than it is on the design’s characteristics. I had to be aware of the
fact that I was in both a researcher and therapist role. I had to be aware of my own assumptions, which will be discussed in Section 3.4. Ponterotto goes on by saying that the qualitative research approach poses unique ethical dilemmas. In this case, you can say that one of the ethical considerations was dealing with interviews and the data analysis of the information given to me: I had to take ownership of the interpretation of the information, not allowing for any agendas of my own. Furthermore, I played a dual role. In the sessions, I was the researcher as well as the therapist. To ensure ethical research, I reflected on every role and made sure that I saw these two roles as separate, not enmeshed with each other. In the researcher role, for example, when making the field notes, it was important to write down only what I saw and leave the interpretations for the reflective work – the therapist role’s work. In qualitative research, it is often necessary to maintain contact with the participants for a while (Ponterotto, 2010). I therefore engaged with the participants for approximately seven months.

The process I followed with the participants in terms of consent and confidentiality was handled with all ethical considerations in mind. It was important, ethically, to inform the parents and the child client about their rights in this research process. If they felt uncomfortable, they could at any point in time make me aware of this and/or withdraw from the process. In qualitative research, the usual post study follow-up is not enough. Before I started the therapeutic process, I explained the process verbally to the child. I also obtained assent from the child and explained all the procedures with pictures; to make it age appropriate, but also to ensure that the participant fully understood what was going to happen. These forms can be seen in Addendum A. The parents gave voluntary written consent after the whole process was explained to them. I also included the parents by exploring their experiences of the therapy process. This research did not focus on the disclosure of the sexual abuse, but on the experiences of the participants pertaining to the therapeutic process.
The child first engaged with me in an office setting to build rapport and was then introduced to the horse. This is important when dealing with clients, because ethically you should always keep your client safe. For a client to be emotionally safe, they should feel safe with you as a therapist (Donna, 2005). Equine-assisted therapy usually entails only groundwork with the horse (Mandrell, 2006). The client engaged outdoors with the horse; the child was asked to construct scenes using props such as ropes, large barrels and balls. Photos of these constructed scenes and the child’s engagement with the horse was taken. The ethical consideration in terms of the photos was that confidentiality and anonymity was ensured by editing out recognisable faces and features. I also conducted informal and semi-formal interviews with the parents and child after the therapy process. Here also, pseudonyms were used in the transcriptions of the interviews. Through observations, I took field notes of the child’s engagement with the horse; how she constructed her life world and how the horse responded during the therapeutic process. As mentioned in the above discussion, this could be ethically challenging in terms of multiple roles – being the therapist and the researcher (the observer). The different roles and how I dealt with it in an ethical way was discussed above. Engagement in some creative expressive art therapy activities assisted the child and parents to reflect on their experiences of the therapeutic process. This ensured that the clients could express their emotions freely and use what was comfortable for them. This can also ensure reliable data. The data that was collected will be kept safe in the client’s file for at least two years after the therapeutic process and will be locked up in a filing cabanet in my office. If the participants experience any emotional turmoil, I will be there to assist them and, if neccessary, I will refer them appropriately. I will also receive supervision in event of this.
3.3.2 Research design

“The aim of a research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximized” (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p.7).

In the light of the discussion about the research methodology followed, Morrow (2007) said that the reason most psychologists choose the constructivist qualitative method route is because it mostly includes the emotional and cognitive aspects of the experiences of the participants. I followed a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2009), with a phenomenological research design to understand the social and psychological phenomena, as perceived by the participants (Groenewald, 1994). According to Durrheim (2004) a research design can be defined as a strategic framework for action to assisting the researcher in implementation after the research question has been asked. In the quote above by Mouton et al. (1990), part of the purpose of a research design is to maximise the validity of the findings. Therefore, a research design consists of four dimensions (Durrheim, 2004). Firstly, the researcher must look at the purpose of the study. This question is answered in the previous chapter, where a research gap was identified in the equine-assisted therapy field as well as in the educational psychology field. The second dimension is the theoretical framework informing the research. This dimension was discussed in Chapter 2, referring to the theory that informed this research question. Thirdly, the context of the research must be discussed and this includes the research methodology – in this study I used a qualitative, phenomenological approach, and the context will be discussed under Section 3.3.3. The fourth dimension will be the research techniques used in the study to conduct the data collection and analysis. This will be discussed in Section 3.3.4.
3.3.3 Selection of participants

The participants included a seven-year old girl who had been sexually abused, her parents and me. The reason for including the parents is because I worked from a systemic theoretical framework as discussed in Section 2.2. The child and her parents were purposefully selected, which means that they had to fit certain criteria (Creswell, 1998). The participants requested therapy and indicated their willingness to participate in the research. Criteria for participants included the following: the child participant must already have disclosed the fact that sexual abuse took place and her parents had to be willing to take part in the research. This study did not focus on the disclosure but on the experiences of the participants of the therapeutic process in dealing with sexual abuse. The first three sessions were conducted in my office. The rest of the sessions were conducted at the stables. I did not specifically choose a horse for her; but rather waited to see with which one she resonated the most. The duration of every session was one hour and in total I had nine sessions with the client for the purpose of this research. The following table shows the demographical details of the participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Ethnic group, language</th>
<th>World view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7-8 years</td>
<td>Grade 1-2</td>
<td>White, Afrikaans</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31-32 years</td>
<td>Substitute teacher and housewife</td>
<td>White, Afrikaans</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Registered</td>
<td>White, Afrikaans</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.4 Data collection

Data collection included a researcher reflective learning journal (Ortlipp, 2008) to bracket my experiences as participant researcher. To ensure trustworthiness, I looked for themes when bracketing. Semi-formal interviews (Weiss, 1994; Cohan and Crabtree, 2006) were conducted with the parents and the child after the research process. In these interviews, I focused on each participant's experience pertaining to being part of the equine-assisted psychotherapy process when going through trauma such as sexual abuse. They were asked to engage in various creative expressive arts therapy activities to help them express their experiences. I also documented observations (Tjora, 2006), where I focused on the participants' experiences, in the form of field notes (Tjora, 2006). Photos of the various sessions with the client, keeping confidentiality and anonymity in mind (Hergenrather, Rhodes & Bardhoshi, 2009), informed my observations. The process I followed was made up of a sequence of activities (Durheim, 2004) such as an initial interview with the parents; building rapport with the client and parents; equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions with the client, where I made the observations and field notes; equine-assisted psychotherapy session with the parents, with the therapist of the parents; and lastly interviews after the sessions. This research was conducted as an involving process that entailed the process to be more flexible and non-sequential.
3.3.4.1 Interviews

In the research interviews, I used informal and semi-structured interviews (Hoepfl, 1997). I engaged with informal interviews with the participants in conversations during the therapy process. I then did semi-structured interviews and asked the same question to all the participants to obtain the person’s real experience of the process, but there were no predetermined responses. The questions I asked can be seen in the transcription in Addendum B. In terms of the semi-structured interview, the researcher is free to probe and explore certain subjects (Hoepfl, 1997). Therefore, I explored some answers that were given by the participants.

3.3.4.2 Observations

The other prevailing qualitative data collection method I used was observation. According to Hoepfl (1997) and Creswell (2009), observations take place in the context of the natural scene. I used observations along with interviews, as it enabled me to get a much deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2010) and to see things that the participants themselves might have been unaware of or unwilling to talk about. Furthermore, it also provided me with the context, such as the horses and the natural environment where therapy took place. When observing and making my field notes, I tried to include and observe both the verbal and nonverbal cues of the client and the horse. An example of this can be seen in the photographs in Addendum C. I also used these photos to write down my observations and field notes after every session. Recording data, such as field notes, may also include drawings and other material (Hoepfl, 2005).
### 3.3.4.3 Artefacts (collages, pictures of horses, symbols, paintings)

These artefacts served as a memory aid and assisted me in providing evidence for the findings, thereby contributing to research validity and reliability. The artefacts also assisted the participants in expressing their experiences. Furthermore, the artefacts used in the equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions were part of the therapeutic process (Kidson, 2005). The artefacts used in the equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions can be seen in the photos in Addendums D, E, G and F. The following artefacts were used:

i. **Collage**
   The parents were asked to make a collage of their experience of being part of the equine-assisted psychotherapy process. They then also made me a collage of their experience of the client before the equine-assisted psychotherapy process and after the equine-assisted psychotherapy process. These collages can be seen in Addendum D.

ii. **Symbols**
   The parents and the child were asked to make a symbol to metaphorically explain their experience. Photos of these symbols can be seen in Addendum E.

iii. **Paintings**
   The child was asked to paint anything that could assist her in expressing and explaining her experience. This painting can be seen in Addendum G.

iv. **Photos of horses**
   The child was shown 60 different pictures of horses. I asked her to choose one that could explain her experience of herself before the equine-assisted psychotherapy process and one to explain her experience or herself after the equine-assisted psychotherapy process. The pictures that she chose can be seen in Addendum F.
3.3.5 Phenomenological data analysis

“…unlike other methodologies, phenomenology cannot be reduced to a ‘cookbook’ set of instructions. It is more an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals” (Hycner, 1985, p. 279).

According to Ponterotto (2010), there are some methods that can be used in phenomenological data analysis that can assist the researcher in “being true to the phenomenon”. The first step in this research was to transcribe the interview recordings. Using the transcribed text, I then identified units of general meaning (Hycner, 1985). An example of this can be seen below in Table 3.2 in the transcription with Participant 1. I engaged with data analyses throughout data collection (Merriam, 1998), according to interpretative phenomenological analysis, focusing on exploring participants’ particular lived and subjective experiences, their description thereof and the what they make of it (Smith & Osborne in Smith, 2008). I included an example of the field notes and observations of the first session in Table 3.3.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Number</th>
<th>Interview with Participant 1</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N: Okay... wys vir my wat jy gemaak het, en vreet hy vir my wat was jou ondervinding... jou ondervinding, okay?</td>
<td>1. Relaxed</td>
<td>5,24</td>
<td>Parents experience of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N: Ja, jy mag</td>
<td>2. Willing</td>
<td>19,20</td>
<td>Parents experience of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D1: Dit ding wat ek beloof het met die persé terapie was dat sy was baie onderskeiding, ek dink omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>3. Empathetic for therapy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Parents experience of different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>N: Ja, jy mag</td>
<td>4. Safe</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Parents experience of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>D1: Sy was twee keer al by ander skoolkundiges, een het met haar spesialisie met haar gedaan, daardie een waar ons Paryse toe gery het waarvan jy weet, ons het ondervind vir 3 maande gegaan en toe, wou sy nie meer doen nie, want sy maak toe, sy wil nie praat nie.</td>
<td>5. Confidence</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>6. Empowerment</td>
<td>42,62</td>
<td>Present in SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>N: Ja, jy mag</td>
<td>7. Freedom</td>
<td>59,60</td>
<td>Present in SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>8. Different experience of different</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>Present in SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>N: Okay...</td>
<td>9. Gunnig</td>
<td>42,45</td>
<td>Parents own emotional process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>10. Gunnig</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Experience of the IAP process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>11. Gunnig</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Parent’s experience of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>12. Gunnig</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Parent’s experience of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>13. Gunnig</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Parent’s experience of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>14. Gunnig</td>
<td>5,23</td>
<td>Parent’s experience of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>D1: Dit is omdat dit baie in die mindie was... kan ek nuur vergelyk met 'n opset vir 'n kantoorterapie?...</td>
<td>15. Gunnig</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Parent’s experience of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes were then developed from codes, which were clustered into categories, summarised into a table (Table 3.4) and a narrative account written of “the interplay between the interpretative activity of the researcher and the participant’s account of their experiences” (Lyons & Coyle, 2007, p. 45).
### Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories from Individual experiences from different data sets (Refer to Addendums nr ...)</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAP lead to participation in horse show - confidence</td>
<td>Theme #1: EAP, an empowering life changing experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive experience</td>
<td>Theme #2: Active engagement with horses assists in expressing emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>Theme #3: EAP Process and therapeutic experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made me happier person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable person to express feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables to open up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life changing experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited to go to therapy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not feel pressured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In control of own healing process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took out her hurt and only complete self was left</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP is positive therapeutic space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables client to identify emotions and behaviour patterns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables client to share and open up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated experience {stimulates brain, emotions and creativity}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagements with calming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed because child is relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life changing experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents felt part of process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confronting and engaging with issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse makes it easier to open up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse shows your true feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse resonates with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse sees through defences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This facilitated description of the themes in terms of the experiences and various levels of interpretation. According to Creswell (2009), clustering these units of meanings into categories can be called bracketing (and the phenomenological
reduction). Keen (1975, p.38) and Creswell (2009) says that these data sets must be approached with an openness to whatever meanings emerge. Keen (1975, p. 38) goes on by saying: “The phenomenological reduction is a conscious, effortful, opening of ourselves to the phenomenon as a phenomenon”.

It was important for me to listen for the meaning of the words and therefore I had to be open to the different meanings contained in the captured data. After bracketing, I had to consider non-verbal and paralinguistic levels of communication, as this also provided meaning to the words spoken. This process, according to Hycner (1985, p.282), can be called “getting a sense of the whole of the interview”. In other words, to get one unit of general meaning out of the several bracketed units of meanings (refer back to Table 3.4). Thereafter, the general meaning was used to answer the research question (Table 3.5).

### 3.3.5.1 Data analysis process

When discussing data analysis, it is necessary to refer to the methods of data analysis spoken about in Chapter 3. I engaged with the data analysis throughout data collection (Merriam, 1998), according to interpretative phenomenological analysis. I focused on exploring participants’ particular lived and subjective experiences, their description thereof and the way they make of it (Smith & Osborne, 2008). The themes were then clustered according to codes, summarised into a table and a narrative account written of “the interplay between the interpretative activity of the researcher and the participant’s account of their experiences” (Lyons & Coyle, 2007, p.45). This facilitated description and various levels of interpretation. Here, it is necessary to refer back to the method of data analysis, as discussed in Section 3. In this case, I used themes to triangulate between the data and through that findings were made. Themes were formulated through colour-coding the themes and sub-themes in the different data sets. In the next table, you will find a reference key that will assist the researcher to refer to the different data sets effectively.
Table 3.6 Reference key of data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with participant 1 and participant 2 using the creative expressive arts therapy tools</td>
<td>D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field notes and observation notes of Participant 3</td>
<td>D2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphors</td>
<td>D3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data accumulated in this study was categorised into three different data sets. These data sets will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.5.2 Data sets

I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants 1 and 2. These interviews were conducted with the help of creative expressive arts therapy tools. Participant 1 made collages to assist her in explaining her experience as parent in this equine-assisted psychotherapy process. She made two collages that can be seen in Addendum ?. Participant 1 also brought a symbol with to act as a metaphor for her experience. Participant 2 chose two pictures of horses as explanation for the change that she experienced within herself through the equine-assisted psychotherapy process. She also made a metaphor out of clay and she painted a picture to assist her in explaining her experience as a client in this process. I acted as Participant 3, the educational psychologist. I took photos of the sessions and this guided me in writing up the field notes and my observations. I also chose a metaphor and wrote a reflection to assist me in explaining my experience as the educational psychologist in a process like this.
3.3.6 Findings

The findings will be discussed in Chapter 4. However, the main themes that were identified can be seen in the following table from Chapter 4.

Table 3.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme # 1</td>
<td>EAP, an empowering life changing experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme # 2</td>
<td>Active engagement with horses assists in expressing emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme # 3</td>
<td>EAP Process and therapeutic experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.7 Reliability and validity

According to Merriam (2002), reliability and validity of a qualitative study like this one can be assured by evaluating specific areas of the study. In this research study, the validity and reliability of the findings was verified by means of all the data collected in the study. This can be seen in Section 3.3.4. Data was put into data sets, and analysed within and across data sets for triangulation of findings (Merriam, 2002). This can be seen in Table 3.5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories from individual experiences from different data sets (Refer to Addendums nr ...)</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Enable person to express feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables to open up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life changing experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited to go to therapy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
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<td>In control of own healing process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Took out her hurt and only complete self was left</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables client to share and open up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated experience (stimulates brain, emotions and creativity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagements with nature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed because child is relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Positive experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life changing experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents felt part of process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confronting and engaging with issues</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Purifies</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Horse resonates with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse sees through defences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I presented a clear trail of evidence pertaining to the engagement with the data in tables 3.2 to 3.4 and findings were presented to the participants for feedback. I engaged with the data considering literature discussed in Chapter 2. This can be seen in Chapter 4. According to Creswell (2003) and Merriam (2002), selecting candidates purposefully gave the study more validity and reliability. In this study, all the participants were selected purposefully, as discussed in Section 3.3.3. Finally, Merriam (2002) argues that the researcher should clearly state how the data was collected, measured and analysed. In Chapter 3, I take the reader through the trail of evidence and all the evidence can be seen in the addendums as mentioned throughout this document. In terms of using a qualitative research design, Mohatt & Thomos, (2006) and Ponterotto (2005) says that this approach levels the power hierarchy between the participants and the researcher. This empowers the participants and, therefore, reduces the chances of marginalising and stereotyping.

3.3.7.1 Assumptions

In the light of this literature, it can be concluded that an experiential approach like equine-assisted psychotherapy will be beneficial for clients that went through sexual abuse trauma because of the similarities. The above discussion states that it is more effective; and the child’s experience is more positive when you work systemically. Furthermore, is there a great trust issue to overcome when you are a therapist engaging and joining with a client that experienced sexual abuse. The horse can assist here with joining and gain the client’s trust. If a therapy is beneficial and has positive effect for the client, there is a high likelihood that the experience of the therapy process will also be positive. Like the quote in the beginning of this section clearly reflects, the victims of child sexual abuse have been through so much and it would be a great therapeutic contribution if equine-assisted psychotherapy can make the therapeutic experience a positive one. Therefore, just going back to the equine-assisted
psychotherapy method of therapy and as explained in Section 2.6, the horse then earns trust very quickly from the client because it is a non-human therapist. Keeping reliability and validity in mind, I kept my assumptions separately when engaging with the data. I bracketed my assumptions and then looked for possible patterns to see if my assumptions were leading the data analysis process. If this was true, I started over again.

3.7 Summary

“We want not to see this event as an example of this or that theory that we have, we want to see it as a phenomenon in its own right, with its own meaning …” (Keen, 1975, p. 38).

When you do a study, you want to see exactly what the above quote from Keen (1975) says. In this chapter, I explained how I analysed the data so that a phenomenon can be discovered. In the next chapter, the findings will be discussed as mentioned in Table 3.5.
CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUMMARY

4.1 Introduction:

As discussed in previous chapters, this study was guided by the following research question:

*What are the experiences of the educational psychologist, the client and the parents when engaging in equine-assisted psychotherapy in a case of child sexual abuse?*

This chapter will present the findings derived from the data collected in the analysis. After sharing the findings, the respective themes will be discussed referring to my theoretical framework and literature pertaining to the topic. It is important to understand that this study did not focus on the disclosure of sexual abuse from a client, but rather explored the emotional experiences of the child, parents and the educational psychologist involved in the therapeutic process.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I identified three themes. The following table is an outline of these themes.

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4.2 Discussion of themes

What if a horse could teach love, trust, communication, empathy, appropriate boundaries, healthy conflict resolution, teamwork, creativity, honesty, patience and resilience? What if a horse could motivate and empower a person to be their best and happiest? (Kidson, 2007, p 2).

If horses can do what this quote suggests, what are the significant experiences that accompany the therapeutic process? With the research done, I answered this question from the data I collected. I will now present the themes introduced in Table 3.5. These themes were established by finding similarities throughout all the different categories found in the respective data sets as explained and discussed in Chapter 3. These themes enabled me to answer the research question at hand. When discussing the different themes where there are two or more concepts at hand, I will discuss the concepts separately and in different paragraphs. In the discussions below there will be reference to the client’s “heart”. This refers to her world of feelings.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Equine-assisted psychotherapy: an empowering, life-changing experience

“Equine-assisted therapy is a treasure that needs to be discovered by more people. I do not know if my daughter could have healed – could have been where she is now – if it was not for equine-assisted therapy. The empowerment; I think the empowerment played a huge part” (P1, lines 129-134).
What was discovered from the data was how engaging in horse therapy was experienced as empowering and perceived as a life-changing experience. The above quote from the mother of the client was also supported by the child, as primary participant, when she said that horse therapy helps her to grow stronger and stronger:

“… no one can do anything to the flower, because it is too big. The horses helped me to make that flower bigger and bigger. When I see the horses, my flower becomes 10 times bigger!”

She used the flower metaphor to say that the horses make the flower in her grow stronger and stronger. In the process of therapy, I observed that after every session, she seemed more empowered. With every session, I perceived her possessing more strength to tell her story. This can be seen in my field notes where I said: “It is my experience that the change within a session is lasting and ever-growing up to the next session.” The mother confirmed this observation, when she mentioned in the interview that every time her daughter returned from a therapy session, she seemed stronger:

“… the equine-assisted therapy definitely removed her pain, and only her whole self remained, I think … even though she enjoyed it, there were times when they came back and you could see that there had been worked on the pain. But their whole selves, you know, they were stronger … they were hurting but they had a sense of pride, she had a sense of pride … it definitely empowered her while she was there. The hurt was still there, as with all the other therapies, but with this therapy she definitely felt empowered when she came back.”

The Oxford Dictionary (2000, p 232) defines the word “empower” as “to make someone stronger and more confident”. Furthermore, according to Oladipo
(2010), who did research to find the true meaning of empowerment, said that empowerment is the process of an individual gaining power and control over things that determine the quality of one’s life. The above quotations are evidence that this is exactly what equine-assisted psychotherapy did for this client. It made her stronger and more confident. This can be supported by what the child said in her interview. Because of her experience in equine-assisted psychotherapy, she started competing in show-jumping events. This attested to me that the child had gained confidence, which increased due to her involvement in the equine-assisted psychotherapy process. According to the client’s mother, she also felt empowered because of the fact that she was in control of the process. In the interview she said:

“... she felt empowered, she could do something about her pain, she could work on her positive emotions; she could choose on what she wanted to work each time. I think they feel more relaxed, more free, because ... ‘I can do something about this myself, it’s not someone asking questions and I must draw this and this now, I have to do things now’.”

She could choose and make decisions about her process and that gave her a sense of taking back control. According to choice therapy (Ragha, 1998), all people have basic needs, and control is own of them as it gives the person a sense of power. Giving a person a choice in therapy gives them a sense of power over their own life (Ragha, 1998). Thus, it is evident from the data that this process gave the child a choice and therefore also empowered her.

A life-changing experience is defined as “altering a person’s life or circumstances in a substantial way” by the Oxford Dictionary (2000, p 492). Both the mother and client indicated that going through the equine-assisted psychotherapy process was life-changing. The mother said in her interview that without this process, her child’s life would not have been the way that it is now: “... I do not know if
would have healed to such an extent, to be where she is now, if it was not for equine-assisted therapy.” The client commented by saying that she told everyone in her class that you must do equine-assisted psychotherapy to have a better life: “… to have a better life – I even told all the children in my class.” Furthermore, it was my observation that after therapy, the client’s emotional well-being changed positively. I say this because her symptoms decreased after every session – she did not lock herself in the bathroom anymore, she did not get meltdowns anymore, she did not isolate herself from her friends anymore. This change had an effect on all her life systems and therefore changed the way she lived. The following image is very significant and shows the change that happened in the client. In the image, the horse is touching her lower body, the horse is also standing at the back of the client. This is both very sensitive and vulnerable places for a sexually abused child. But the client was not bothered by the horse, she was totally relaxed and at ease with the horse being in these vulnerable spaces.
Then, in the client's interview she pointed out two pictures of horses to act as metaphors for how she had changed. Image 4.1 was the first horse and Image 4.2 was her second horse:

Image 4.1

Image 4.2
With these pictures, she illustrated that when she started the process, she was not emotionally healthy (Image 4.1). In her words: “The first horse does not feel well, if you look carefully, look at his eyes”. For her second picture, she chose as a metaphor to illustrate how equine-assisted therapy changed her. She stated that the horse in the second picture (Image 4.2) changed in such a way that she does not bottle anything up anymore, she shares everything that is in her heart; and the horses helped her to do this. She added (Image 4.2):

“This horse feels much better. The first horse could not tell you everything that had happened, but the horses let everything come out, all the stuff inside. Now, this black horse does hold things inside, she tells you everything immediately.”

More data from the interview with the client showed that there was empowerment in her daily life:

“I do not want to get involved in fighting, but when two of my friends were fighting, I thought of Vink and then I told them to stop .... and then they stopped.”

She said that it felt good to be able to stand up and do something like that. Thus, she feels empowered enough to take a stand and this in turn also contributes and reinforces her feeling of empowerment.

I found no formal research findings on empowerment and equine-assisted psychotherapy being a life-changing experience. There are, however, testimonies from other therapists and clients from various practices confirming this. According to Kerr (2010), in her blog How can horses help, horses are cued up to do work of empowerment. She says that only with a simple task like haltering, she sees empowerment in her clients. According to Kerr, working with
a big and strong animal like a horse itself empowers the clients. There is, however, literature on equine-assisted psychotherapy building confidence (Kidson, 2006). Kidson says that when humans engage with horses, it builds their confidence. According to Coates (2008), building self-esteem and confidence is some of the most prominent experiences when engaging in equine-assisted psychotherapy. When referring back to sexual abuse literature and the effects it has on a child, low self-esteem, low confidence and disempowerment are some of the prominent effects (American Humane Association, 2011). Therefore, it will be important to follow a therapeutic intervention that helps aid these effects. It is therefore evident from the data that the experiences of the participants are that the equine-assisted psychotherapy process does build up and restore these effects. Carol Hammon-Paulson (Unknown) also verifies the empowerment intrinsic to equine-assisted psychotherapy, by saying that equine-assisted psychotherapy enhances empowerment and interpersonal assertiveness. The literature in Chapter 2 talks about children being re-victimised (APA, 2008), because of the fact that a child’s self-esteem and self-confidence is affected by sexual abuse. Experiencing these elements as being restored can thus be very empowering and therefore also prevent re-victimisation. According to APA (2010), the effects of sexual abuse will be present for a lifetime and that children who have gone through sexual abuse trauma can live with the effects for a lifetime. But the data discussed in terms of the client’s symptoms shows that the effects of the sexual abuse in this client’s life did not continue consistently and were to an extent addressed in the EAP experience. Thus, it can also be said that it was a life-changing experience.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Active engagement with horses assists in expressing emotions

“I could not easily tell what had happened, but the horses helped everything to come out … it was better for me to talk there at the horses” (P2, lines 76-78).
In the above quotation from the child, she stated that first she could not communicate what she was feeling, but being with the horses made it easier for her to talk about the trauma. This quote verified that the client’s active engagement with the horses assisted her in expressing her emotions. Being with the horses aided the client’s communication process and helped her to talk about the sexual abuse event. In the following images, it shows how the client progressed in telling her story. She used non-verbal language first and then progressed to verbal language. The client first built out her emotions that she felt in her heart, but could not talk about it. In this image, the horse and I were not yet invited in:

![Image 4.1](image)

In the first session, the client barricaded herself in with various materials. She used all the ropes available and strung the ropes al through the inside ring so that she was left isolated in the middle. At the end of the session, the client took down some of the ropes because she said that she thought that Vink (the horse)
wanted her to take some down so that she can feel better. In this session, her communication was done through non-verbal actions and she changed things within the session, and that brought change. Already in the first session, the horse’s presence assisted her in communicating her feelings.

In Image 4.2, it can be seen that in the second session the horse was invited to go inside her “heart” that she built out with her and she shared her feelings with the horse:

Image 4.2
In this session, she communicated with the horse and therapist about her world of feelings - her heart, something she could not do in the first session. She told me, the therapist, and the horse what the feelings were that she was building in her “heart”. She did not explain in full but said that something very bad happened to her. At this stage she only let the horse close to her and in her space during
therapy. As you can see from the photograph, she closed the inner ring off again, but this time with the horse inside and with softer materials. She also engaged with the horse this time and touched her during the session, as opposed to the first session, where she only engaged with the horse before and after the session. Baring this in mind the client participant also said that it was easier and better for her to share and express her emotions with the horses present and in the context of EAP (the context will be discussed in the following theme). Furthermore, in my observations I noted that the client shared without hesitation and EAP assisted her in communicating these emotions to the horse. The horse therefore plays a very significant role in the client participant’s experience in terms of being able to share her emotions. The horse also share in these emotions because in the interviews, the field notes and the observations it was evident that the horse resonated with the client. In the interview with the mother participant she said: “

“...’n perd het emosies net soos ‘n mens...en em...perdeterapie wys vir jou dat n perd is n verlengingstuk van n mens se denke en emosies dink ek...alhoewel n perd in ‘n ander vorm voorkom as n mens en dit is makliker om vir n mens te sê,jy weet, ek maak toe, ag ek gaan nie oopmaak nie, ek gaan nie met jou hieroor praat nie, mens kan sien daai perd voel wat jy voel, want die mens voel nie wat jy voel nie, daai perd voel wat jy voel, en dan voel dit vir jou jy wil die perd verlos, van om te voel die seer wat jy voel, dis hoekom dit makliker is om deur n perd te werk as deur n mens, want jy sien daai perd voel regtig wat ek voel...” (A horse exhibits emotions just like a human...and em...EAP demonstrates that a horse is an extension of a person's thoughts and emotions I think...although a horse’s form is different to a human’s, and it is very easy to tell someone ..you know... I am shutting down, I am not going to open up and I am not going to share this with you...you can see that the horse really feels what you are feeling, a human does not feel what you feel, but a horse does, and then you feel you want to relieve the horse from feeling the pain that you feel, it is much easier to work through the horse than a human because you feel that the horse really feels what you are feeling...)
In the interviews both the mother and the client participant said that you cannot wear masks with horses. The mother said that: “jy is bereid om dit vir die perd te doen, waar teenoor mense maak mens toe en jy wil verdedig” (…you are willing to do it for the horse, but are opposed to opening up to people as you want to defend yourself). She then went on by showing me these picture that she put in her collage and said the following:

Image 4.5
“Perdeterapie is soos ‘n magneet, dit trek die ware self uit en jy kannie toeskulp nie, daarvan kan ek getuig … Die perd wys vir jou wat jy self nie eintlik wil erken nie, en dit is ook eintlik wat ek bedoel het met die kompas daar, hy wys vir jou die ware rigting, wat jy in jou binneste nie eers wil herken nie, wys daai perd vir jou … daai perd voel wat jy voel” (EAP is like a magnet, it draws out your true self and you can not bottle up, this I can testify to… The horse shows you what you don’t really want to admit…and that is also what I meant by the compass, the horse demonstrates the true bearing…what your innermost being doesn’t even want to recognise, that horse will demonstrate to you…because the horse feels what you are feeling…) - P2, line 85 - 96
In the following photo (Image 4.5) you will see her telling the horse verbally about the abuse. The horse went and stood inside of the block that she built as a container for her feelings and then the client participant reflected and said she thinks the horse wants her tell her what makes her feel these feelings. I asked her if she wanted me to stay or leave, and she asked if it is okay if she only tell the horse for now.

![Image 4.5](image)

The next session she did not close herself off from me. She told me that the horse said that it is okay that I come in as well. As you can see from the photo below, the horse and I was inside the ring with her (I took the photo from inside the ring and the as you can see the chain was unhooked). She then started to tell me about how grownups can hurt children and told me that today she wants to tell me what happened because she felt so much better after she told the horse. Thus, looking through the process, it is evident that the horse played a significant role in her sharing her emotions in terms of the abuse.
Furthermore, the data shows that the participants felt that the horse understood what they were feeling and this also aids the process of expressing emotions. In the interview with the mother and the client participant, they both said that when the horse is feeling what you are feeling then you want to open up to the horse. In the above-mentioned quote it also shows that the horses leads the clients into a place of expression. The mother said that the horses show you your true feelings. In the following photos you will see that the horse engages with the client during the session and reacts on everything the client does. The client then takes these reactions and responses of the horse on certain behavior and reflects on that. In Image 4.7 the horse went down and rolled in the sand the moment when the client participant put herself (the dark orange cone) down and said she is darker because she is dirty. When the horse responded like this, the client reflected on that and said maybe the horse says that she must get rid of the dirt.
According to the mother and the client participant, the horse does not only help you to express, but also assists you in the process of change by showing you the way. As showed in Image 4.7, the horse responds to your actions and reactions, your non-verbal and verbal ques. The client stated the following: “Hulle het baie gehelp om oop te maak want hulle is baie slim en hulle het my gehelp om goeters te doen (They helped a lot to open up and they are very clever and they helped me to do things.)” In the following photo you will see that in this session particularly, assisted the client participant to “break down her walls in front of her heart”. She built the cones in front of her heart to keep herself away from people so that people could not hurt her anymore. The horse nudged the cones and waited in front of her heart. She reflected on this by saying that she thinks that the horse says it is okay to take down the walls and it is okay to let the horse come inside her heart. Thus, the horse’s actions enabled the client to do things that was neccessary for her healing process. In Image 4.8 the horse nudges the cones and in Image 4.9 and 4.10 you will see how she removes the cones and
the pole to open up her heart. Then in Image 4.11 you will see how the horse then goes inside her heart. It was also at this point that she unhooked the chain that she used to isolate herself and the horse and invited me to come in. This you will see in Image 4.12.

Image 4.8
To also show that the horse plays a significant role in expressing and bringing change through active engagement, the participant referred to a session she had with a horse named Vink. She took this horse for a walk and the horse did not want to take the path she wanted to take. In the interview, the client participant said:

“It was nice when you put on the halter and stuff, and went for a walk with Vink. I now understand what he was trying to tell me that day. I did not understand then, but I understand now. When we went on a walk with Vink and he stopped at the path I wanted to take and then he took another path … he was telling me that you must choose the right path in your life. He is very clever, and I listened to him.”

In making sense of the findings, I was guided by the following quotation by Coates (2008, p.56) in her book Connecting with horses: “By reflecting what we feel, horses encourage self-reflection.”

In the above-mentioned data, it is imminent that in self-reflection, communication seems to open. The findings in this theme are confirmed by literature. According to Kidson (2007) and Coates (2008), horses mirror what we feel. The data verified that the client participant was of the opinion that the horse understood what she was experiencing and this played a role in her trusting the horse and to be able to share and communicate. According to literature by Buk (2009), Lacoboni and Depretto (2006) and Freedman and Gallese (2007), humans and animals have mirror neurons. These systems respond to hand gestures and non-verbal language, which is situated in the left hemisphere of the brain. According to Buk (2009), these mirror neurons may be a form of mirroring that makes empathy a reality in the body. Bernardis and Gentilucci (2006, p.65) goes on by saying that mirroring “enhances the capacity both to comprehend and to verbalise”. This correlates well with the data found in this research that the horse’s ability to mirror the client participant’s emotions assists the client to
verbalise and communicate. Freedman and Gallese (2007) also talk about the shared body state and that this brings forth the deepest form of empathy. Referring back to what the mother said in her interview (P1, lines 97-109), when you see that the horse is feeling what you are feeling, you feel that pain and you want to save the horse from feeling what you are feeling. I think Coates was right when saying that the horse encourages the client to reflect on who they are to become complete (Coates, 2008).

Furthermore, it is evident from the literature that when a person undergoes trauma linked to sexual abuse, trust in others is affected (American Human Association, 2011). Sharing for such individuals does therefore not come easily. Furthermore, trauma also influences the neurochemistry of the brain (Brink, 2011 and Baker, 2005). This means that a client who went through trauma is often unable to communicate the emotions regarding the traumatic event. According to Brink (2010), the right hemisphere of a child is involved with expressing feelings and when the child is able to do this, a sense of self can develop. Baker (2005) says that trauma specifically blocks the working and development of the right hemisphere and therefore the child will struggle to communicate and even remember the trauma. Data in this research shows that the active engagement with horses in an equine-assisted psychotherapy setting assists clients in expressing these emotions. It appears that the contained relationship between the client, horse and therapist plays a significant role in assisting the client in expressing emotions. Therefore, it can be said that the engagement with horses can have a restorative role in the brain of a traumatised person. Baker (2006) stated that in psychotherapy, the changing of the brain involves a process triggered by physical and emotional experiences. Engaging with the horse in equine-assisted psychotherapy is physical as well as emotional when facilitated by the therapist. As said in Chapter 2, I took in the position that the horse is a co-therapist and according to Mann (2008), the horse and the therapist constitute a therapy team. This aids the emotional process because the horse and client
resonates with each other and the therapist can then facilitate the processing part that assist the client in what ever can happen next.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Equine-assisted process and therapeutic experience

“It is better for me to talk there at the horses … there is more open space … and it makes it more interesting” (P2, line 65 and 66).

According to the data found in this research, the space in the setting in which equine-assisted psychotherapy is facilitated plays a significant role in the experience of the client. The above quote emanates that for the client being in an open space and being in this kind of setting, not only makes the therapy process easier, but also makes it more interesting. The mother of the client participant stated on more than one occasion that the fact that the client could do therapy in nature made her a lot more relaxed. Evidence of this is shown in the picture below that was taken out of the mother’s collage where she said that her child was very relaxed because of the fact that the therapy took place in nature:
In the interview the mother, she also said that “she was a lot more relaxed, I think because it was outside in nature”. She then went on by saying “she was always happy to go, I think because it was outside in nature. She did not feel closed in, and the horses were there … she was very, very relaxed”. The client added that the equine-assisted psychotherapy environment is open and being in nature made a significant difference to her. The mother then went on by saying that within the equine-assisted psychotherapy setting, there is a sense of freedom. In my observation notes, I also noted the fact that the client had emotional and physical space in the equine-assisted psychotherapy context to build and explore emotions (exerpts from the data set of observations):
Daarna het ek haar gevra om haar hart te bou.
Toe marianka inloop om haar hart in die binnekring te bou, het die perd uitgeloop.

Prosessering: Sy het vertel dat die twee poppe elkeen in ’n trommel is, want dit is hoe sy voel, sy voel sy is in ’n gat, in die donker, sy se eintlik moet bou wat sy wil, enige iets wat sy nodig het om te bou vandag en wat sy gereed is om te deel. Sy het ingegaan en haar en Mignon toegemaak met die koeie in die middelveld. Sy het die muur aangestel.

Image 4.14

In the following images, you will also be able to see that she had and used a large space. In this specific session, she built a container for her emotions that she wanted to explore. The images are in chronological sequence.

Image 4.15
As you can see in these pictures, the equine-assisted psychotherapy context gives her the freedom to decide who she wants in her space; and it gives her the freedom to choose what she wants to use and what she wants to express.

Thus, according to my findings, equine-assisted psychotherapy is a comprehensive experience in such a way that it includes different elements. These elements include nature, horses and the fact that the space is not enclosed. This means that creative and experiential activities are therefore possible. The word “comprehensive” in this case can be defined as: “So large in scope or content as to include much” (Oxford Dictionary, 2000, p 198). Therefore, a comprehensive experience can be an experience that includes a large scope of content or elements in this case. The client participant in her interview also stated that being outside in nature, where you can feel the warm wind and the warmth, made a significant contribution to her experience. She said: “There is more open space and the horses are there, it makes it more interesting. It is outside, it is warm, there is a nice breeze ... the horses and being outside and everything made me feel happier”. As you can see, she explicitly said that being outside made her feel happier. Therefore, we can say that the natural environment and being with the horses makes for a more positive therapeutic experience.

The mother also commented on other more abstract elements of the equine-assisted psychotherapy process that does not only make it a comprehensive experience but also a integrative experience. In her interview, the mother said: “I do not think she was never bored in equine-assisted therapy. My experience was that her brain, her emotions and her creativity was stimulated there. That is why she never minded going there, and enjoyed going there”. She added that: “This was, ‘I can build things, I can express my creativity'. This is why I said that equine-assisted therapy is stimulating, it works with both the brains and emotion”. She then included the following metaphor to explain this statement:
I use the word ‘integrative’ in this case because according to the data in this research, the equine-assisted psychotherapy process stimulates the brain, the body and emotions. Therefore, it is called an integrative process because of the fact that there are emotional, physical and emotional stimulants. In the interview with the mother, she said that:

“She felt safe and calm … she could do something about her pain, she could work on her positive emotions; she could choose on what she wanted to work each time. I think they feel more relaxed, more free, because … ‘I can do something about this myself, it’s not someone asking questions and I must draw this and this now, I have to do things now’. This was, ‘I can build things, I can express my creativity’. This is why I said that equine-assisted therapy is stimulating, it works with both the brains and emotion. She was definitely never bored.”

It is evident from the quote above that the client was stimulated on all levels. Referring to literature by Dosamantes-Beaudry (1997, p.522), he said that the somatic dialogue between a therapist and a patient is very important as it assist
the client to evolve and create a sense of self and self-narrative (Dosamantes-Beaudry, 1997). This somatic dialogue includes “sensory or kinesthetic sensations, physical symptoms, shifts … and enactments” (Vulcan, 2009, p.278). According to the data in this research, equine-assisted psychotherapy includes these sensations in terms of the somatic dialogue as well, and therefore can assist the client in creating a sense of self. As already mentioned in Finding 1 and literature in Chapter 2, one of the effects of child sexual abuse is a loss of a sense of self, which in turn affects the child’s self-esteem and self-concept (Elam & Kleist, 1999). Therefore, these findings correlates with Finding 1 in terms of empowerment; and this can indicate that the fact that it is an integrative process is part of the reason why equine-assisted psychotherapy is empowering.

The mother then continued by saying in her interview that it was her experience that her child’s brain, emotions and creativity was stimulated and this was one of the reasons why she enjoyed the therapy. The client, in her interview, said that being in nature, with the horses, doing all the activities makes the therapy much more interesting: “There is more open space and the horses are there, it makes it more interesting. It is outside, it is warm, there is a nice breeze. The horses and being outside and everything made me happier”. Excerpts from my observation notes show that it was my experience as educational psychologist that the different elements mentioned in the previous paragraph not only makes for a positive experience, but also contribute to the therapeutic process (Exerpts from observations):
Baker (2006) states that physical and emotional experiences trigger change of the brain in psychotherapy. The data in this research therefore emanates that in an equine-assisted psychotherapy session, the client's experience is on a physical and an emotional level. In previous paragraphs, I already discussed the
contribution of the somatic dialogue in a session. Perhaps this is why the clients felt that the comprehensive and integrative equine-assisted psychotherapy process contributed to their experiences of the therapy? According to research, the idea of equine-assisted psychotherapy is that certain difficulties and emotions will rise to the surface when the client interacts with the horses and take part in the activities (Coates, 2008), but no literature shows that the setting in which equine-assisted psychotherapy takes place plays a significant role. The data from this research project specifically points to the fact that the natural, open environment in which equine-assisted psychotherapy takes place contributes to the therapeutic experience and makes the client’s engagement more positive. Mandrell (2006) says that equine-assisted psychotherapy functions according to the systems theory. This means that there already is a notion in literature that the different systems in equine-assisted psychotherapy play a significant role. The systems mentioned in literature only include the horse, the therapist and the client. Mandrell (2006) looks closely at the term integrating second-order change. This means that the therapist and client must not only attend to the information that is given through the discussion and the processing going on between the systems, but also the manner in which this processing is taking place between the systems or sub-systems. Thus change is affected by all the systems and therefore this research shows that there are other systems and/or dimensions to be considered in equine-assisted psychotherapy. Mann (2008) says that the different systems within the equine-assisted psychotherapy context can help people reconstruct a new life story and construct a more positive perception of the old painful story. With this research, it can be included that the context that Mann (2008) was talking about is the different elements discussed in this theme. In terms of sexual abuse literature, this theme specifically addresses the fact that the space in which equine-assisted psychotherapy takes place gives the client a sense of freedom. This is an important finding in terms of sexual abuse clients, considering that they often experience feeling trapped, unable to flee and be free (Elam & Kleist, 1999). Therefore, the spatial aspect of equine-assisted
psychotherapy plays a very significant role when doing therapy with sexually abused children.

4.3 Summary of the research

The primary aim of this research was to explore the experiences of the educational psychologist, the client and the parents when using equine-assisted psychotherapy in a sexual abuse case. When found that all the experiences of equine-assisted psychotherapy were positive, the research then set out to establish what it is about going through an equine-assisted psychotherapy process that makes the therapeutic intervention a positive experience. A further aim was to see how everyone involved experienced this process. This research made an original contribution to the equine-assisted psychotherapy field. Because equine-assisted psychotherapy is a relatively new field in psychology and in the South African context, it was important for me to make a contribution and help this field expand. It also made a specific contribution to the equine-assisted psychotherapy field in terms of what equine-assisted psychotherapy can offer a sexually abused client and how the equine-assisted psychotherapy process can assist these clients and their families.

Firstly, I found that equine-assisted psychotherapy can be a life-changing experience; with empowerment coming to the fore as a prominent theme in this experience. I therefore agree with Coats (2006), when she said that: “When and if we are ready, the horse can open up for us experiences of incredible depth.” Kidson (2007) also asks in her writing to the public: “What if a horse can empower a person to be their best and happiest?” The research showed very clearly that equine-assisted psychotherapy can do this.

Secondly, the data showed that when sexually abused clients actively engages with horses, it assists clients in expressing emotions. The horse itself is a very prominent and respected co-therapist throughout the therapy. This theme again
showed how powerful and therapeutic an encounter with a horse can be. The following quote is from Pam Brown (2012): “A horse is the projection of people’s dreams about themselves – strong, powerful, beautiful – and it has the capability of giving us escape from our mundane existence”. In this case, the horse gave the client a sense of self again, and maybe by having a sense of self, the client can start dreaming again.

Thirdly, the fact that equine-assisted psychotherapy is a comprehensive and integrative process the participants experience was enriched significantly. Ulrich, Warner and Marcus (2000) did a research project aimed at showing the positive relationship between nature and human health and healing possibilities, within the field of environmental psychology and positive psychology. Their findings showed that nature does enhance the human healing process. The contribution therefore from this study is that equine-assisted psychotherapy has more dimensions to its powerful healing process than the horse, the client and the therapist. There are other systems to consider and to include in this systemic intervention. Also when looking at equine-assisted psychotherapy as therapeutic intervention, this study showed that nature and the space in which equine-assisted psychotherapy is facilitated plays a role in the client’s experiences. The fact that the process makes for an integrative process, stimulating cognition, emotional and physical elements, makes a difference as well. It can also refer to our senses being stimulated. Equine-assisted psychotherapy stimulates senses like touch, smell, sight and hearing. In the literature review, I also mentioned the effect of touch in therapy on the emotional health of a person (Victor, 2008). There were significant findings in terms of equine-assisted psychotherapy and the different systems that interact with each other to also contribute to the experience of the clients. The data in this research shows that there are more systems present in the equine-assisted psychotherapy process than the horse, the client and therapist. Nature and the space where equine-assisted psychotherapy plays off also serve as separate systems in this therapeutic intervention. I conclude with a quote from Coates (2006, p 64): “The heart yearns
for us to be still so that it can liberate our senses … horses continually operate through all their senses”. This quote shows us that horses operate through all their senses and the data from this research shows that when we operate through all our senses in therapy, possibilities are opened.

4.4 Limitations of the study

Originally, I thought that a limitation of the study was that this being a minor dissertation, there was not enough time to include more participants. But research shows that this is not a limitation. When referring to literature, according to Ponterotto (2006), qualitative research is reliant on thick descriptions and therefore it is not quantity-based. An actual limitation was that there was limited research on equine-assisted psychotherapy and sexual abuse – especially in South Africa – as this is a relatively new field. Furthermore, I am not experienced in my professional research skills. I could benefit by refining these skills for possible future research projects or articles. Then, in future I would use mixed methods, especially in a study where the data is so rich. To verify data, I would have liked to have used an emotional checklist for example to see what degree of changes occurred in the client. This is definitely an possibility for future research. Furthermore English is my second language and therefore writing in English was difficult. I think if I had a better English vocabulary, I could have been more confident in writing up the findings. This topic touched me as a researcher and therapist. I was touched by this girl’s courage but also by her pain. I received supervision to be debriefed and the hope that the horses gave me in other cases, gave me hope that this will make a difference in her life. Another limitation is that EAP cannot be generalized. It is a specialized field and must be conducted by a therapist whom did not have the necessary training.
4.5 **Strengths of this study**

The strength of this study is that it contributed to the equine-assisted psychotherapy field within the South African context. This is a new field in South Africa and all research is needed if we are to strengthen this therapeutic intervention. Furthermore, with sexual abuse being so prominent all over the world, new research is needed in terms of how we as therapist can assist these clients, as it is a very complex trauma with many short- and long-term effects. This research can therefore empower therapists in the equine-assisted psychotherapy field when working with sexual abuse cases. Another strength is that I spent a lot of time engaging with the client, therefore we had a strong and trusting relationship. This made it very easy for her to be honest in her interview about her experience. I also built an open relationship with the parents and therefore the mother could also be honest in her interview. It was also useful to use creative expressive arts therapy tools to assist me and the participants in the interviews. It gave the data depth and also concrete evidence to the findings.

5.6 **Recommendations for future research**

A further area of interest linked to this study would be to use the sessions with clients who have been sexually abused – as documented in this study – to develop a guidelines booklet for therapists using equine-assisted psychotherapy engaging with children who have been sexually abused.

Another contributing study could be to focus on the disclosure of sexual abuse. In this study the findings show that equine-assisted psychotherapy opens up communication. Maybe equine-assisted psychotherapy can also assist children in disclosing sexual abuse.

The last recommendation can be to do this study again and use mixed methods like an emotional ticklist and get some quantitative data to enrich this study.
Reference list:


5. Appendices

A. Ethical Documents
B. Transcriptions, Observations and EP’s experience and Themes
C. Photos
D. Collage/Symbols/Metaphor (Mother)
E. Pictures of horses – Metaphor (child)
F. Painting (child)
G. Editor’s Certificate
ETHICS CLEARANCE

Dear K Van Heerden

Ethical Clearance Number: 2012-012

Re: The experience of the Educational Psychologist, the client and the parents engaging in Equine assisted psychotherapy in a case of child sexual abuse.

Ethical clearance for this study is granted subject to the following conditions:

- If there are major revisions to the research proposal based on recommendations from the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
- If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted;
- It remains the student’s responsibility to ensure that all ethical forms and documents related to the research are kept in a safe and secure facility and are available on demand.
- Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents.

The Faculty Academic Ethics Committee has decided to

☑ Grant ethical clearance for the proposed research.
☐ Provisionally grant ethical clearance for the proposed research
☐ Recommend revision and resubmission of the ethical clearance documents

Sincerely,

Dr Geoffrey Lautenbach
Chair: FACULTY ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMITTEE
31 May 2012
Hi Daar!

Ek wil graag weet of jy sal deelneem aan my projek wat ek wil doen. Net soos die projekte wat julle doen in die skool moet ek ook 'n projek doen. In my projek wil ek kyk hoe jy en jou ouers die werk met die perde ervaar.

Hoe dit gaan werk:

- Ons gaan eers so paar keer in my kantoor ontmoet sodat ek en jy mekaar beter kan leer ken. In hierdie tyd gaan ons sommer net gesels, speel met verf en klei en dalk teken met kryte.

- Wanneer ons reg, gaan ons die perde ontmoet en dan met een begin werk. Ons gaan elke week 'n uur besig wees met die perd en oor alles praat waaroor jy wil gesels. Ons gaan ook met goed soos toue, groot dromme en balle werk. Ek sal alles vir jou verduidelik.
• Ek gaan ek fotos neem terwyl ons besig is, omdat ek moet seker maak dat ek onthou wat ons gedoen het en sodat ek die regte gooi in my projek kan skryf. Jou gesig sal nie op die fotos verskyn nie.

• Ek gaan ook op 'n stadium weer met jou by die kantoor ontmoet en ons gaan lekker aktiwiteite doen terwyl ek vir jou vragies gaan vrae oor hoe dit vir jou was om met die perd te werk. Wanneer ons gesels, gaan ek ons gesprek op band opneem sodat ek jou presiese woorde kan onthou.

• Ek sal seker maak dat ander mense wat my dokument lees, nie jou naam of gesig sien nie.
• Enige iets wat jy nie wil hê ek in my dokument moet sit nie, mag jy vir my sê.
• Onthou altyd dat jy enige tyd vir my vrae mag vrae, veral oor my projek en wat ek met die inligting doen. Jy mag ook enige tyd vir my sê as jy nie meer wil deelneem aan die projek nie. Jy mag steeds met die perde werk, al wil jy nie aan die projek deelneem nie.

Ek sien uit daarna om saam met jou by die perd te gaan kuier. Baie dankie.

Katherine van Heerden

Handtekening van Ouer

Datum 9 Jan. 2012

Vingerafdruk van Klient

Datum 9 Jan 2012
Ethics Clearance Application – Faculty of Education

I, Katherine van Heerden hereby confirm that:

1. The information provided in this ethics clearance application to undertake research with human participants is accurate to the best of my knowledge;

2. I understand the principles of conducting ethical research;

3. I will endeavor to conduct all the research in an ethical manner as prescribed by Faculty and University rules; and

4. I will inform the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee of any substantive changes to the project that might impact on the ethical clearance of the project.

Signature

5 June 2012

If this is a student project, then:

☐ This project and associated ethics application has been approved by the Department for submission to the relevant Committees of the Faculty of Education

Signature - Supervisor

If this research project will be undertaken under the auspices of UJICE, then:

☐ This project and associated ethics application has been approved by the UJICE Management for submission to the relevant Committees of the Faculty of Education

Signature - UJICE Management
Research Design

Please supply the relevant information.

1. Data Collection Types
   - Qualitative
   - Quantitative
   - Mixed Methods

2. Research Methodologies/Approaches
   - Biographical
   - Phenomenological
   - Grounded Theory
   - Ethnographical
   - Case Study
   - Design Experiment
   - Action Research
   - Survey
   - Other (please provide details)

3. Research Instruments/Methods
   - Document analyses
   - Questionnaires
   - Surveys
   - Individual interviews
   - Group interviews
   - Observations
   - Other (please provide details)
   - Artifacts and photos (keeping confidentiality and anonymity in mind)

4. Sampling
   - Random
   - Targeted
   - Purposeful
   - Snowballing
   - Other (please provide details)

5. Sample size
   - ≤ 11
   - 12-50
   - > 50
   - Other (please provide details)

6. Age of participants
   - ≤ 14
   - 14-17
   - > 17
   The parents will be involved in the research process.
   Please provide the name and designation of an adult who will protect the rights of the child who
   has neither parents nor a guardian, or who is younger than 14 years of age.
Faculty of Education - Research Project Information
The experience of the Educational Psychologist, the client and the parents engaging in Equine assisted psychotherapy in a case of child sexual abuse.

Background to the study

When children are betrayed by someone that they trust through something like sexual abuse, it is easy to lose trust in fellow human beings. Trust is the most difficult hurdle to cross in terms of therapy and sexual abuse clients. This is why a study including the horse as a co-therapist can be very valuable in terms of rapport building and gaining the client's trust to talk about the abuse. The sexual abuse of a child does not only impact on the child, but also influences the child's family. Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) entails psychotherapy, which incorporates horses, not just as tools to use in a therapeutic process, but also engaging with the horses as co-therapists. EAP is a hands-on process and is therefore tailored to the needs of the client. Clients participate in activities with the horses, through the guidance of a therapist, and then process with the therapist their thoughts, actions, patterns, feelings and behaviour while interacting with the horse and the activity. Through engagement with horses, the therapist receives invaluable information, which the therapist and client can utilize to obtain deeper knowledge regarding sexual abuse and the aspects that children may struggle with. EAP is a new field in Psychology and therefore not a lot of research is available in terms of EAP in the context of Educational Psychology. This research will focus on the experiences of the child as client, the parents, as well as the therapist.

Intention of the project
Research associated with this project attempts to:
In this project, I will explore as therapist how a single child, as primary client, and her parents experience the process of Equine Assisted Psychotherapy in the context of child sexual abuse. I will also document my own experiences of the process. This project attempts to inform the use of EAP by Educational Psychologists and as such strives to contribute to practice and existing theory on the topic.

Procedures involved in the research
After explaining the process verbally and obtaining assent from the child, she will be involved in EAP sessions. Parents will give voluntary written consent after the whole process has been explained to them. I will include the parents by exploring their experiences of the therapy process. This research will not focus on the disclosure of the sexual abuse but on the experiences of the participants in the therapeutic process. The child will first engage with me in an office setting before being introduced to the horse. When engaging outdoors with the horse, the child will be asked to construct scenes using props such as ropes, large barrels and balls. Photos of these constructed scenes and the child's engagement with the horse will be taken. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by editing out recognizable faces and features. I will also conduct informal and semi-formal interviews with the parents and child throughout the therapy process at times convenient to all. Through observations, I will take note of the child's engagement with the horse, how she constructs her life world and how the horse responds during the therapeutic process. Engagement in some creative expressive art therapy activities may assist the child and parents to reflect on their experience of the therapeutic process. Should the parents or the child decide to withdraw from the research project, they will still be welcome to continue with therapy. Nonetheless, therapy will be an integral part of the process to address sensitive issues pertaining to the child's experiences related to sexual abuse.

Potential Risks
Although the participants might feel uncomfortable, anxious or stressful, there are minimal risks involved in participating in this study. The horses are trained to engage with people, especially with children, and I will be monitoring the process at all times. The questions asked in the interviews may seem invasive as the topic is of a sensitive nature and I will therefore take heed of the participants emotional experiences. The client will not be probed to divulge details of the trauma and I will be guided by the client during the therapeutic process. I will treat her with sensitivity, knowing she is a vulnerable participant and as such, will keep her parents informed regarding her progress.
Potential Benefits
Participating in this research will provide a better understanding of Equine assisted psychotherapy with children who have been sexually abused. It will also explore the experiences of parents as well as the reflections of the therapist. This research will contribute towards psychological practice and theory in terms of EAP and working with children in the context of sexual abuse. The child will most likely enjoy the time engaging with the horse in therapy and as such she will benefit from her involvement in the research. The expression of pent-up feelings may also ease the relationship between parents and the child.

Confidentiality
Every effort will be made to protect (guarantee) your confidentiality and privacy. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, we are often identifiable through the stories we tell. Furthermore, if information you have provided is requested by legal authorities then I may be required to reveal it. In addition, all data collected will be anonymous and only the researchers will have access to the collected data that will be securely stored for no longer than 2 years after publication of research reports, or papers. Thereafter, all collected data will be destroyed.

Participation and Withdrawal
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate in the project at any time during the project. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. Your decision whether or not to be part of the study will not affect your continuing access to any services that might be part of this study.

Future Interest and Feedback
You may contact me (see below) at any time for additional information, or if you have questions related to the findings of the study.

Katherine van Heerden
Educational Psychologist Student
University of Johannesburg
E-mail: kathvheerden@gmail.com
Tel: 072 378 7340

Dr Elzette Fritz
Research Supervisor & Coordinator MED Educational Psychology Programme
Department of Educational Psychology (BR-418A)
University of Johannesburg
Tel: (011) 559-2273
083 325 1794

5 June 2012
Informed Consent/Assent Form

Project Title:
The experience of the Educational Psychologist, the client and the parents engaging in Equine assisted psychotherapy in a case of child sexual abuse.

Investigator:
Katherine van Heerden

Date:
5 June 2012

I hereby:
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant.
☒ Agree to be involved in the above research project as an observer to protect the rights of:
☒ Children younger than 14 years of age;
☐ Children younger than 18 years of age who might be vulnerable*; and/or
☐ Children younger than 18 years of age who are part of a child-headed family.
☒ Agree that my child, Marianne, may participate in the above research project.
☐ Agree that my staff may be involved in the above research project as participants.

I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project and understand the nature of the research and my role in it. In addition, I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

☒ Please allow me to review the report prior to publication.

Name: Heidie van den Berg
Phone or Cell number: 082 769 4637
e-mail address: hudberg@ow.com
Signature: Heidie Berg

If applicable:
☒ I consent/assent to audio recording of my/the participant’s contributions.
☒ I consent/assent to video recording of my/the participant’s contributions.

Signature: Heidie Berg

* Vulnerable children refer to individuals at risk of exposed to harm (physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Number</th>
<th>Interview with participant 1 (Mother of Child)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Okay...wys vir my wat jy gemaak het, en vertel net vir my wat was jou ondervinding... jou ondervinding, okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Okay dit is hoe ek dit vir jou uiteensest het wat ek gedink het.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Die ding wat ek beleef het met die perde terapie was dat sy was baie ontspannend, ek dink omdat dit buite in die natuur was...kan ek maar vergelyk met 'n opset in 'n kantoor vir terapie?...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ja, jy mag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>By tweee keer al by ander sienkundiges, een het met haar speeltherapie met haar gedoen, daardie een waar ons Parys toe gery het waarvan jy weet, ons het omtrent vir 3 maande gegaan en toe wou sy niets meer doen nie, want sy maak toe, sy wil nie praat nie, en sy het op 'n stadium vir my gesê, ek wil nie meer gaan nie, al speel ons en doen lekker goed, ek wil nie gaan meer nie, en daarna was sy en Anandi by Adele du plessis, hulle het seker drie sessies gehad en toe het hulle alwee gesê hulle weier om verder te gaan want ons wil nie gaan nie, dit is vervelend en ons wil net nie gaan nie, die tannie praat met ons soos grootmense al sê sy dis speeltherapie, dit is nie lekker nie. Hulle wou net nie gaan nie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Okay...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ek het nooit teenkanting gekry oor perde terapie nie, nooit nie, nie een keer nie, nie een keer het sy vir my gesê sy wil nie gaan nie, sy was altyd bly dat sy gaan. En ek dink dit is omdat dit buite in die natuur is, dit is nie ingehok nie, en die perde is teenwoordig en sy het nog altyd 'n groot liefde gehad vir perde, en deur dit terapie het sy nou in aanraking gekom met die perde, en sy was baie baie...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Willing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Excited to go to therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Did not feel pressured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>In control of own healing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Took out her hurt and only complete self was left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Parent's own emotional experience of the EAP process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Parent's own emotional experience of the EAP process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Integrated experience (stimulates brain, emotions and creativity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Engagements with nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Parents experience of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Parents experience of different elements present in EAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Parents experience of engagement with horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ontspanne gewees.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: ...Dis 'n goeie ding...en jy? Hoe was dit vir jou dat sy so ontspanne was?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1: Natuurlik is ek dan baie meer gemaklik daarmee, em, want jy kan nie 'n kind dwing om terapie toe te gaan nie. Dis hoekom die vorige terapie gestaak moes word want jy kan hulle nie dwing nie, al gee die mense baie om vir hulle en wil hulle help, as sy nie wil saamwerk nie en sy maak toe en sy weier om te praat oor dit waaroor gepraat moet word is dit vir jou as ma verskriklik sleg want dan is jou kind in 'n slegte bui, jy weet, as hulle...daar uitkom, jy weet, ja, is hulle ongelukkig en dan is dit weer 'n stryd om jou kind weer daar te kry en dit is sleg om hulle te vat want jy weet dit is teen jou kind se grein wat dit ingaan... jou kind wil dit nie gaan doen nie. En dit is iets wat jy nooit kan regkry nie, nooit nooit nie. Okay, hier het ek vir jou gewys, sy het geborge en rustig gevoel oor die terapie (lag)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: Aaaag, dis te oulike pretjie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1: (lag)...Ek dink dit is hoe sy gevoel het, dit is nou 'n pretjie van 'n hond, maar dit is hoe sy gevoel het by die perde ook, sy was altyd rustig daaroor gewees, ek dink sy het bemagtig gevoel, sy kon self smeet aan haar seer, en sy kon werk aan haar positiewe emosies self, sy kon self elke keer kies watter stukkie sy wou aan werke. Ag, ja ek dink net hulle <em>voel baie meer ontspanne</em>, hulle <em>voel vry</em>, dit is van... ek kan self werk daaraan, dit is nie iemand wat sit en vrae vra en ek moet nou hierdie teken, ek moet nou dit doen nie. Hierdie is, ek kan goed bu, ek kan my kreatiwiteit uitlaat. Dit is hoekom ek gese het, perdeterapie is stimulerend, dit werk met die brein en die emosies. Sy was <em>definitief nooit verveeld nie</em>, waar met die ander terapie wou sy nie gaan nie want sy was verveeld, sy wou nie gaan praat nie maar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Never bored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Systemic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. Relaxed because child is relaxed |
| 2. Positive experience |
| 3. Life changing experience |
| 4. Parents felt part of process |
| 5. Confronting and engaging with issues |
| 6. Purifies |

| 1. Horse makes it easier to open up |
| 2. Horse shows your true feelings |
| 3. Horse resonates with you |
| 4. Horse sees through defences |
| 5. Horse gives direction |
| 6. Horse is extension of... |
sy was ook verveeld met wat daar gebeur. Sy was nooit nooit nooit
verveeld in perdeterapie gewees nie, ek dink...my ervaring was dat
haar brein, en haar emosies en haar kreatiwiteit was gestimuleer
daarso. En dit is hoekom sy, nie omgee het nie, en dit geniet het
om soontoet te gaan.
N: Okay
D1: En dan, die perdeterapie het dan definitief haar seer uitgehaal.
het haar volledige self het oorgebly, em...dink ek...natuurlik, al het sy
dit geniet, was daar die kere wat hulle teruggekom het en hy kon sien,
daar is seer aangewerk. Maar die volledige self, hy weet, hulle het
sterker...hulle was seer maar hulle het 'n trots in hulle, in haar, sy het
'n trots in haar gehad.
N: So dit het haar bemagtig in 'n manier?
D1: Ja, ja, ja...definitief, dit het haar definitief bemagtig, terwyl sy
daar was, maar die seer was teenwoordig, soos by al die ander
terapie, maar hier het sy definitief bemagtig gevoel, hy weet, as sy
daar uitkom... Dan maar net my opsomning is, die perdeterapie is
soos 'n magneet, dit trek die ware self uit en hy kan die toekwil nie
daarvan kan ek getuig, soos toe Vink my 'n lamme gee het, omdat
ek nie...ek wou nie hardkoppig wees en nie saamwerk nie... dit is net
'n deel van jou wil nie oopmaak nie, hy beskerm jouself, en ek weet
dieselfde het met haar gebeur wanneer sy vir my gewys het, hyt my
geknibbel, kyk, kyk my geknibbel, daat perd dwing jou om oop te
maak, maar anders as 'n mens, doen hy dit vir daardie perd...
N: Hoekom, dink jy doen jy dit eerder in die teenwoordigheid van
die perd, wat is anders van 'n perd, vir jou, want jy was ook deel
daarvan?
D1: Ja, want ek was ook deel van die perdeterapie...weet jy aan die
een kant, ek het die perd jammer gekry want hierdie perd kry swaar
human
7. Horse becomes a instrument used to heal the hurt
8. Horse gives you empowerment
9. Cant wear masks with horses – only true self
100
120
128
169
terwyl ek nie oopmaak nie, en hierdie perd wys vir jou dit wat jyself nie eers wil herken nie, en dit is ook eintlik wat ek bedoel het met die kompas daar, hy wys vir jou die ware rigting wat jy in jou binnestel nie eers wil herken nie, wys daai perd vir jou, en daarom... ek weet nie... daai perd, dit doen net iets aan jou... jy is bereid om vir die perd oop te maak en dit vir die perd te doen... waar teenoor mense voel jy jy wil terugstaan, jy wil... verdedig, jy wil... em, jy wil nie oopmaak nie... 

N: Sal jy sê dit het ook miskien iets te doen met die feit dat 'n mens 'n verteenwoordigende figuur is van iets wat jou seergemaak het en waarin jy vertroue verloor het...

D1: Ja, ja!

N:...waar die perd kom uit 'n heeltemal 'n plek...

D1: Ja, die perd het niks aan my gedoen nie, en... en... 'n perd het emosies net soos 'n mens... en em... perdeterapie wys jy jou dat 'n perd is 'n verlengstuk van 'n mens se denke en emosies dink ek... alhoewel 'n perd in nander vorm voorkom as 'n mens en dit is makliker om vir 'n mens te sê, jy weet, ek maak toe, agek gaan nie oopmaak nie, ek gaan nie met jou hieroor praat nie, mens kán sien daai perd voel wat jy voel, want die mens voel nie wat jy voel nie, daai perd voel wat jy voel, en dan voel dit vir jou jy wil die perd verloss, van om te voel die seer wat jy voel, dis hoekom dit makliker is om deur 'n perd te werk as deur 'n mens, want jy sien daai perd voel regtig wat ek voel want jy weet 'n mens voel nie regtig wat jy voel nie...

N: ja... dit is baie interessant, okay... so jou ondervinding met die perd by, dit was 'n heeltemal 'n positiewe ervaring...

D1: Ja, ja... en ek dink die ding wat ek wil klem op lê wat positief is, waar mense soms 'n verkeerde idee het, soos iemand waarmee ek
gepraat het wat haar kind vir perdeterapie wil vat, waar die
sielkundige haar gewaar is dat die kind geheg raak aan die perd
en wanneer die terapie verby is dat die kind dan trauma opnuut
beleef...en ek het toe dadelik vir daardie persoon gesê dit is verkeerd
want nie ek of my kinders, jy werk nooit met dieselfde perd met jou
nie...en jy bou nie 'n band met daai perd nie...die **perd is 'n
instrument wat jy gebruik om die seer te help genees**, dit is nie 'n
band... ek kan nie oor Mignon of Vink, ek dink dit is die twee
waarmee ek te doen gehad het...ek kan nie se ek voel anders oor daai
twee perde as oor dilly en que, waarmee ons nou ook te doen het
met Marianka se ry, em...
N: So...hulle word nie 'n kruk nie?
D1: Nee, nee, nee hulle is **'n instrument, nie 'n kruk nie...ja, ek dink
nie M en A is afhanklik van daardie perde nie, glad nie...glad
nie...daardie **perd gee vir jou bemagtiging, nie 'n kruk nie...en dan
het ek net gesê, perdeterapie is 'n skat wat baie meer ontek moet
word, ek weet nie of m so kon geheel het, om te wees waar sy nou is
as dit nie vir perdeterapie was nie. Dit het definitief die saad gesaai
en die groetwerk gedoen vir daardie geneesing om plaas te vind, en
die bemagtiging, ek dink daardie bemagtiging speel 'n baie baie groot
rol, voral in M se geval...
N: As ons nou na al hierdie goedjes kyk, al hierdie aspekte wat jy
hier uitgelug het ne, wat sal jy sê was jou oorhoofse ondervinding as
ma en jy kan maar vir pa ook praat as jy wil...om deel van hierdie
proses te wees...
D1: Weet jy Katherine, vir ons was dit net 'n **goeie belewenis om
deel van die perdeterapie te wees**, wat ek en (pa) al oor gepraat het,
is daar strategie wat die kind moet leer om te gebruik, wat
wonderlike strategie is, wat blootgestel word aan hulle, en dit is
waar ouers na die tyd nodig is om te sê, dit is 'n goeie ding daardie.

gebruik dit so, of so; jou kind het jou as ouer nogsteeds nodig om dit
wat hulle geleer het, om dit in verskillende situasies wat hulle in
hulle lewe moet hanteer, toe te pas, en al die positiewe dinge wat
hulle leer, positief te gebruik...

N: En dit is baie interessant dat jy dit nou se want die hele studie
gaan oor om sisteeme te fokus, en dat jy nie die terapie alle...

D1: ...alleen kan gebruik nie, hulle het hulle ouers nodig, hulle het
nogsteeds hulle gesin nodig, dan het jy gesê ek moet 'n simbool
bring, nou jy kan seker sien daar en uit dit wat ek gepraat het...

N: ...ja hier is baie simbole hier...

D1: ...ek het vir jou 'n magneet gebring...dit was vir my die sterkste
ding van perdeterapie was, net soos 'n magneet daai ysterveilsels
aantrek, daai ysterveilsels kan nie hulle tee sit nie, hulle kannie
besluit, ek wil liever hier in die gemors bly nie, dit trek dit aan, en
dan kan die ysterveilsels ook sinnebeeld speel van wat ek gesê het, jy
kannie toemaak nie, jy kannie wil nou seer behou en dit verdoesel as
jy in perdeterapie is nie, perdeterapie trek dit oop, en skei die
negatiewe en die positiewe van mekaar en en...by trek dalk nie
onrein goed, die negatiewe emosies en belewenisse, trek dit uit en
die kind moet dit in die oe kyk, of di egopersoon, jy moet dit in di eie
kyk, jy moet dit verwerk, jy moet daarmee werk, en alles verwerk,
maar dit wat agterbly, die positiewe, die goeie dinge, is nou suiw,
dis absoluut wat ek gesê het, 'n suiw self, ja wat oorlogy, want die
seer is uitgetrek en deurgewerk...

N: Dit is interessant dat jy die masker gebruik het?

D1: By mense kan jy 'n masker dra, nie by perde nie, (lag) die perd
gee jou 'n lammie (lag)...

N: (lag)...ek onthou daardie sessie...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>D1: Nee maar die perd sal aanhou en vir jou wys dat jy moet oopmaak.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>N: Okay, dankie (naam).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line number</td>
<td>Interview with participant 2 (Child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N: Ons is amper klaar nou, jy het nog een kuier by die perde oor ne? Maar jy kan enige tyd vir mamma se as jy weer met my en die perde wil kom gesels okay? So wat ons vandag gaan doen, is ek wil by jou weet, hoe was dit vir jou? So jy kan heetemal eerlik wees okay? So ons gaan goedjies doen en dan kan jy heetemal eerlik wees oor hoe dit was vir jou. So kom ons sit hier...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D2: Ek het sondag deelgeneem aan die perdeskou tannie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N: Regtig? En hoe was dit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D2: Clear round!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>D2: Op Que.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>N: Ag ek is so bly, ek wens ek kon dit gesien het!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>D2: ja, ons het net oor pale gelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>N: Nogteeds, dit is baie goed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>D2: Ek het tot begin draf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>N: Dit is baie goed, en dit is hoe mens begin. Okay, so ek wil graag by jou weet, eerste kan jy vir my die klei vat en dan kan jy vir my enige ietsie maak, wat jou kan help om vir my te verduidelik, hoe dit was vir jou om by die perde te wees en perdeterapie te doen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>D2: Hierdie een is te hard...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>N: Hierdie een? Dit is sag?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>D2: Ja, en daar is nog (lag)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>N: ja hulle is beter, okay so maak vir my enige iets wat vir jou kan help om vir my te verduidelik hoe dit vir jou was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>D2: Eet jou toffie ook, dit is baie lekker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>N: Moet ek ook my toffie eet, okay, kom ek eet my toffie wat jy gebring het vir ons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Dit is buttermilk...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>mmmm ek hou ook van Buttermilk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Weet tannie wat is dit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Lyk vir my soos 'n hartjie?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>ja!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>So verduidelik vir my hoekom het jy 'n hartjie gemaak?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Ek is lief vir die perde, ek hou van bulte...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Ja? En as jy dink aan hoe jy gevoel het laas jaar toe ons begin het en hoe jy nou voel? En hoe dit vir jou was? So hoekom het jy 'n hartjie gemaak om alles wat ek en jy en mignon en vink al deur is in terapie, te verduidelik?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>dit was vir my <strong>bare lekker</strong>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Was dit vir jou lekker?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Ja, want ek hou baie daarvan om met die perde te werk en dit was lekker om saam met tannie na die perde toe te gaan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Okay, en hoe was dit vir jou anders om te praat oor dinge wat jou gepla het, byvoorbeeld in hierdie kantoor teenoor daar by die perde?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Wel hier is dit nie so lekker nie, dit is nie so lekker spaste nie, daar is dit <strong>buite</strong>, dit is <strong>warm</strong>, die wind wiet lekker...Ek kannie ophou vir die perde prentjies kyk nie...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Wel, terwyl jy vir daardie perde prentjie kyk op die muur, kan ons nou met die werk...kom ons sluit net gou hierdie een eers af okay? So jy het 'n hartjie gemaak, so hoe het dit jou hartjie gemaak voel om met die perde te werk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Baie beter, die <strong>perde en die</strong> <strong>buite,</strong> wees en alles het my baie gelukkiger gemaak...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Dit het jou gelukkiger gemaak?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Ek dink tannie moet hierdie hartjie gebruik, hierdie <strong>hartjie is mooier</strong>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Okay, ek sal hierdie hartjie gebruik...dit is 'n baie mooi hartjie. Kies nou gou vir my 'n prentjie ne, om vir my te wys hoe jy vir die tyd gevoel het...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2:</td>
<td>Voor die tyd?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
N: Ja hoe het jy voor die tyd gevoel en hoe het jy na die tyd gevoel?
D2: Okay, hierdie een was voor die tyd...
N: Okay...
D2: En hier is my ander prentjie van nou...
N: Okay, so hoe was dit vir hierdie perde op hierdie prentjie? Al moes sy partykeer oor goed gesels wat moeilik was, hoe was dit vir haar?
D2: Dit was *nie* so lekker altyd nie maar dit was nogsteeds lekker om met die perde te werk... dit was beter vir my om daar te gesels by die perde.
N: So dit was beter vir jou om by die perde oor alles te gesels?
D2: Ja, daar is daar meer oop spesie en die perde is daar, dit maak dit baie meer interessant.
N: Het die perde jou gehelp of nie?
D2: Hulle het baie gehelp om oop te maak, want hulle is baie slim en hulle het my gehelp om goeters te doen...
N: Ja?
D2: Wat baie nodig was...
N: En wat is anders aan hierdie eerste perde wat jy gekies het teenoor die tweede perde wat jy gekies het?
D2: Emmm, die eerste perde voel nie lekker nie, as tannie mooi kyk, sien sy oë...
N: So hierdie perde voel nie so lekker nie...
D2: Nee, hierdie perde voel baie beter... hierdie eerste perde kon nie lekker vertel het wat gebeur het nie, maar die perde laat alles uitkom en goeters... en nou hierdie swart perde, hou nie meer goeters binne nie; sy vertel alles sommer dagelik...
N: Oo, so die perde terapie het jou gehelp om oop te maak?
D2: Ja, baie...
N: Ons moet vir Mignon en vir Vink baie dankie gaan sê...
D2: Ja...
N: Okay nou gaan ons bietjie vry!
D2: Okay!
N: Ja kan kies, of jy kan vingerverf, of jy kan teken of jy kan met die pastelle werk met hierdie werk en dan kan jy vir my soveel prentjies teken wat jy wil, of enige iets maak wat jy wil, om te wys hoe dit vir jou was om deur alles te gaan saam met my en die perde, enige iets...
D2: Okay... wat van ek teken met rooi... tannie kan my help?
N: Okay?
D2: Mmmmm so wat kan ons doen met rooi... hoekom as my sussie nog nie klaar nie?
N: Want onthou jy, jy het baie vroerer as sy begin, onthou jy? So sy gaan nog so rukkie aan...
D2: O ja, okay. Hierdie rooi is vir my baie mooi...
N: oo so jy het nou weer 'n hartjie geverf?
D2: ja en nou gaan ek die puffy art gebruik...
N: ja?
D2: En nou gaan ek weer verf... hy moet so wees...
N: Kom dit uit?
D2: Sal tannie my help, dit kom nie uit nie?
N: Ja, kom ons kyk... een twee drie! Daar...
D2: Watter kleur is in hierdie een?
N: Dit is groen...
D2: En die een?
N: Blou...
D2: en hierdie is geel... ek het blou nodig...
N: Wow...
D2: en hier is nog so mooi blommetjie, en dan gaan ek nog ietsie doen...
N: okay...
D2: Het tannie nie nog glitter nie?
N: Ja, kom ons kyk hier in...
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>D2: Jae k gaan bietjie oranje gebruik en nog ’n bietjie puffy art…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>N: Hier is daardie glitter ook…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>D2: Dankie tannie…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>N: Plesier…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>D2: okay dit is nou genoeg… en dan nog een…en dit is hoe dit lyk!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>N: Dit lyk verskriklik mooi…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>D2: Dit lyk vir my ook baie mooi dankie tannie…ken tannie vir Nadine Blom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>N: Ja ek ken haar…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>D2: Sy is baie lief vir Jesus, sy sing daardie super cool vir Jesus…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>N: ja sy doen, dis baie cool…So verduidelik vir my wat sé hierdie prentjie van jou ervaring, weet jy wat beteken ervaring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>D2: Nee…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>N: Hoe dit vir jou was om deur hierdie terapie te gaan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>D2: Die prentjie sé ek was lief vir die perde, die blommetjie sé dit was lekker, die hartjie sé ook ek was lief vir die perde en die gesigje sé partykeer was dit bietjie moeilik maar sy glimlag nogsteeds. Meeste kere was lekker…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>N: Onthou jy spesifieke kere wat vir jou lekker was?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>D2: Jip…dit was toe ons die halter en goeters opgesit het, en met Vink te gaan stap…ek kon nou verstaan wat hy vir my daardie dag probeer sé het ek kon nie daardie dag verstaan nie, maar ek kan nou verstaan…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>N: Ja?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>D2: toe ons so met Vink gaan loop het en hy het so geslyp hy die paardjie waar ons moes gaan, toe staan hy net so stil en vat die ander pad…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>N: Ja?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>D2: Ja, hy het gesê, jy moet die regte pad loop in jou lewe!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>N: Jinne maar Vink is slim?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>D2: Jaah, hy is baie slim! en ek het vir Vink geluster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>N: Ja hy het…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 136 | D2: Soos ek wil myself nou nie regty inmeng by ’n bakleier nie, maar toe dink
ek aan Vink toe my twee maaitjies baklei en toe sê ek vir hulle stop dit…toe hou
hulle op…
N: En hoe het dit gevoel?
D2: Bate lekker!
N: So wat kan jy my nog vertel van hierdie pretjie mevroukie?
D2: Die raampies…
N: Ja?
D2: Dit help dat goed nou dieselfde bly, soos dat die hartjie nie weer in
wreedheid verander nie en die blom nie verander dat goed nie weer lekker voel
nie…
N: so die raampies beskerm die goeie goed?
D2: Ja, die groot blommetjie kan niemand iets aandoen nie, want bys te
groot… Die perde help my om daardie blommetjie groter en groter te maak. As
ek die perde sien dan word my blommetjie sommer tien keer groter!
N: Sommer tien keer groter! Wow…
D2: Al wat ek nog kan sê is dit was ‘n bate lekker ervaring…
N: Sal jy dit weer oorhê as jy kan?
D2: Ja…
N: En as iemand vir jou vra is dit die mocite werd om na die perde toe te gaan vir
terapie, wat sal jy sê?
D2: Ja, want om ‘n beter lewe te hê, ek het tot al die kinders gesê in my klas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Notes Session 1</th>
<th>Reflective Notes Educational Psychologist</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Themes and Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Participant 1
SESSION 1

ARTIFACTS wat gebruik is – kyk op foto
Perd – Vink (galding)

Mariana was gevra om in te gaan en vir Vink te gaan ontmoet, sy moes vir my se wanneer sy gereed sal voel om 'n aktiwiteit te doen, wanneer sy gemaklik genoeg gevoel het met vink.
Sy het sommer gou vir my gese, okay, sy is gereed. Sy het ingelope en vir vink gegroeet, hom gevryf. Op hierdie stadium was die perd aan die binnekant van die kring. Die perd het haar in sy spasie toegelaat en hulle het vir 'n ruk gestaan en wees bymekaar.
Daarna het ek haar gevra om haar hart te bou.
Toe maranka inloop om haar hart in die binnekring te bou, het die perd uitgeloop.
Mariana het die binnekring se ketting toegemaak dws sy het haarself in die binnekring toegemaak – vink was die heeltyd bewus van haar en het na haar

1. My experience as EP was that the client quickly indicated her readiness to engage with the horse.

2. My experience as EP was that the horse responded to the client's emotional boundaries.

3. My experience as EP was that the client had physical and emotional space to build her emotional world.

4. My experience as EP was that the horse was interested in what the

EP's experience of client's engagement with horse

1. Active engagement with horse
2. Horse resonates
3. Client feels horse understands
4. Horse built trust very easy and naturally

EP's experience of EAP process

1. EAP is positive therapeutic space
2. Enables client to
| gestaan en kyk terwyl sy haar hart gebou het.  | client was doing  |
| Die heel eerste strukture wat sy gebou het, was alles | 5. My experience as EP was that the  |
| figure en strukture wat haar hart beskerm – terwyl | horse responded to the client’s  |
| sy hierdie goed gebou het het die perd (soos gesien | feelings  |
| in die fotos) aan dit geruik en was hy baie |  |
| geïnteresseerd daarin. |  |
| Die oomblik toe sy die gevoelens bou wat in haar |  |
| hart is (hartseer en kwaad) – het die perd sy rug op |  |
| die strukture gedraai en so bly staan (dit is die balle |  |
| op die kegels) |  |
| Daarna het Marianka die die poppe gebruik om |  |
| “wagte” voor te stel wat haar hart kan beskerm sodat |  |
| niks slegs kan inkom nie – toe sy die poppe vat en |  |
| hulle gebruik, het die perd weereens nader gekom en |  |
| belangstelling gewys. |  |
| Sy het egter vir die perd ook ’n plek gemaak in haar |  |
| hart spasje, maar hy mag nog nie daarin gegaan het |  |
| nie – sien foto. In hierdie hele proses was ek |  |

| identify emotions and behaviour patterns | 10,8  |
| 3. Enables client to share and open up |  |

**EP’s experience of elements in EAP**

1. Different elements positive experience for client (integrative experience)
2. Different elements enables client to process
3. EAP space – nature – makes it a more relaxed
heeltemal buite die die ring. Soos wat ons geprossesseer het, en sy weer haar emosies genoem het, het die perd weerens sy rug op haar gedraai. Sy het begin praat oor haar emosies en soos wat sy gepraat het, het die perd al hoe nader beweeg.

Patrone: Perd wys elke keer belangstelling wanneer sy goed bou wat haar kan beskerm, perd draai rug elke keer as sy met die emosies werk, net soos perd uitgelooop het toe sy inloop om haar hart te bou.


7. Once again my experience was that the horse responded to the emotional boundaries of the client. But this time it was more than that, he was mirroring her behavior.

8. My experience as EP is that the processing with the horse and the experiential activities makes it easier for the client to identify and share emotions.

9. My experience as EP is that the horse responding to the clients emotions.
10. My further experience is that the identifying of the behavior patterns and emotions makes it easier for the client to share.

11. My experience as EP was that the horse’s reactions change towards the client as the client processes, this brings change in the client.

12. My experience is that because the horse responds to the emotions of the client, the client feels that the horse understands.
SESSION 2

Ek en Marianka het buite die ring gestaan en ek het haar gevra of sy nog kan onthou wat sy laasweek gebou en gese? Toe sy ja se, het die perd in die middelring ingegaan waar die ander perd in die eerste sessie uitgeloop het.

Daarna het ek haar gevra om vir haar hart "n "container" te bou. En in die container moet sy as sy voel sy kan, die goed in haar hart bou wat haar so kwaad en harseer maak.

Hierdie keer het sy nie dadelik die ketting toegemaak

13. My experience as the EP was that the client changed spaces with the horse and therefore trusted the horse after 1 session.

My experience was that the client could easily recall the previous session.

My experience as EP was that the horse responded on emotional boundaries that shifted in previous session.

My experience as EP was that the client felt safe.
nie. Sy het 'n vierkant gebou vir die “container” en begin om goed daarin te sit. Mignon het elke keer op die plek gaan staan waar die goed gestaan het wat sy op daardie oomblik mee gebou het. Sy het ook 'n tou gespan voor die opening, maar sy het nie die ketting hierdie keer toegemaak nie.

Sien fotos vir wat sy gebou het. Toe sy klaar gebou het, het die perd begin ruik aan die goed in haar “hart” stil gaan staan en buitentoe gekyk. Haar liggaamstaal was baie “alert” en sy was nie ontspanne nie.

Prosessering: Sy het vertel dat die twee poppe elkein in 'n trommel is, want dit is hoe sy voel, sy voel sy is in 'n gat, in die donker, sy se eintlik moet die poppe op die stoële sit maar hulle is nie daar nie want die ding wat met haar gebeur het, is baie erg, so die harsteer en die kwaad wen, en dan is hulle daar in die gat, die een probeer nog vasklou maar hy kan dit nie regkry nie want die kwaad en hartseer wen.

My experience as EP was that the horse resonated.

My experience as EP was that the horse showed the way for the client to go forward.

My experience as EP was that the horse showed interest in what the client was doing.

My experience as EP was that there was space for the client to express her emotions.

My experience as EP was that the horse resonating with client makes it easier for client to share.
Ek het haar gevra hoekom dink sy die hartseer en die kwaad daar is? Toe het sy vir my gese want daar het 'n verskriklike ding met haar gebeur, wat nie met iemand moet gebeur nie, en nou hou sy maar net uit en aan en probeer wen. Toe vra ek haar wat dink sy se mignon vir haar as sy so aan al die goed ruik en knibbel. Toe se sy, sy dink Mignon wil he sy moet haar die waarheid vertel. Mignon het nader beweeg soos wat sy dit gese het. Ek het haar gevra of sy vir Mignon wil vertel wat gebeur het. Sy het gese ja, sy wil vir Mignon vertel. Ek het haar gevra of sy my daar wil he, of sy net vir Mignon daar wil he. Sy het gese, sy wil net vir Mignon daar he, sy wil vandag vir Mignon vertel. Ek het haar en Mignon alleen gelos en sy het vir ongeveer 10 minute gestaan, Mignon se kop by haar kop, en sy het haar vertel. Die perd het heeltyd gestaan en "lick and chew" (dit beteken daar is kongruensie/prosessering).

Toe sy klaar was, het ek nader gegaan en aan haar
It is my experience that the client feels that the horse really understands.

It is my experience that sharing with the horse and opening up to the horse brings breakthroughs in client/ breaks down the emotional barriers.
SESSION 3

Perd: Weer Mignon (agv wat laaste sessie gebeur het)
Ek het vir Marianka gevra om in te gaan en vir Mignon hallo te se. Ek het haar gevra of sy nog kan onthou wat laaskeer gebeur het. Sy het gese ja, ek het vir Mignon vertel wat met my gebeur het.
Daarna het ek vir haar gese, vandag, kan sy enige iets bou wat sy wil, enige iets wat sy nodig het om te bou vandag en wat sy gereed is om te deel. Sy het ingegaan en haar en Mignon toegemaak met die ketting in die middel sirkel. Sy het die sweep opgetel en dit buite die ring gegooi en gese, daar is seker mense wat die perde seermaak met hierdie ding. Net soos sommige groot mense kinders seermaak.
Sy het begin met dieselfde struktuur wat sy die eerste keer gebou het. Terwyl sy hierdie struktuur gebou het, het sy vir my klomp voorbeeldige genoem van stories wat sy al gehoor het van grootmense wat

It is my experience that the client could recall the previous session readily.

It is my experience as EP that the EAP process gives the client the freedom to choose

It is my experience that the creative activities assist the client to share.
It is my experience that the horse resonates with the client.

It is my experience that the horse reflects the client's emotions, helps the client move forward and brings change.

It is my experience that the horse is trusted by the client.

kinders seermaak. Ek het haar gevra of al hierdie stories haar aan iets laat dink wat miskien met haar gebeur het? Waar Mignon toe omdraai en direk na haar toe loop by die struktuur. Sy het gese, ja dit laat my dink aan wat sy vir Mignon vertel het. Sy het gese, sy wil haar ding verander. Ek het vir haar gese, net soos wat sy voel is nodig. Sy het toe haar struktuur verander en geskuif – sien fotos. Die perd het 'n sirkel gemaak van die tyd wat sy die struktuur begin bou het tot sy klaar was.

Sy het toe die groen tou agter die struktuur weggevat en vir my gese, ek wil he mignon moet daar ingaan, in my hart in. Daarna het sy 'n ander tou voor kom span by die ketting.

Prosessering het hierna begin: Ek het met haar prossesseer wat gebeur het. Sy het vir my gese sy het die hek gebou wat voor haar hart is. En sy dink Mignon staan daar by haar hek want sy moet die hek afkry sodat sy in haar hart kan ingaan en kan deel
wat in haar hart is. Sy het my toe gevra of sy iets kan gaan doen. Ek het gese, sy kan doen net wat sy nodig het.

Sy het gegaan en die hele hek oopgegooi, elke item gevat en weeggegooi.

Sy het ook die ketting oopgemaak.
Daarna het ek haar gevra hoekom sy die ketting oopgemaak het. Sy het gese, ek mag maar nou in haar hart inkom, maar sy wil nog nie vir my vertel wat gebeur het nie, maar sy het daaroor gedink en sy sal vir my vertel maar vir nou mag ek ingaan.

Toe sy dit se toe loop die perd na die ingang toe en staan reg voor die ingang.

Ek het haar gevra wat wil sy he moet ons doen in haar hart vandag. Sy het gese sy dink ons moet vir Mignon borsel en net lekker gesels.

Ek het haar gevra wat sy daarvan maak dat Mignon net voor die ingang kom staan het. Sy het gese, sy dink Mignon se dit is so ver ek, die EP, mag gaan vir

It is my experience that because of the experiencial nature of EAP that change happens within the session

It is my experience that the horse assists the EP to gain trust from the client.

It is my experience that the EAP process allows the client to set the pace and to choose.
nou. So toe staan ons daar en borsel en gesels. Soos die tyd aangestap het, het Mignon agtertoe getree en dieper in haar “hart spasie” getrap maw het my verder en verder toegelaat binne in. Sy het gese: “kyk tannie, sy se dis okay as tannie al dieper inkom”. Ek het haar gevra is dit okay met haar, toe se sy ja, sy wil he ek en Mignon moet inkom.

Daarna het Mignon gedraai en na haar oop “hek” toe gelyoop en gestop reg so paar tree voor die “hek” van haar hart. Sy het my gevra of sy vir Mignon in haar hart in kan lei, maar ek en sy moet saam haar halter en ek moet nader kom. Ek en sy het toe saam die perd gehalter en sy het haar ingelei. Ek het nog nie in die hek inbeweeg nie. Ek het haar gevra hoe dit voel om vir Mignon heetemal daar binne haar hart te he. Sy het my gese, dit voel baie lekker, dit maak haar gelukkiger om vir ons te wys wat binne haar hart is. Sy het weer daarna die wortels gaan haal en die perd gevoer, Mignon het die heeltyd in haar hart

It is my experience that the client's emotional state changes positively within a session.
spasie bly staan tot sy uit die ring gegaan het en huis toe is.

Sessie 3 Refleksie van terapeut

Vandag se sessie het vir my gewys dat die perd as 'n sisteem, jou as terapeut help om vertroue te bou. Dit help die kind om veilig te voel, en die feit dat die perd elke keer reageer op haar emosies en reflekteer wat sy voel en watter emosionale skuiwe gebeur binne haar, maak die proses baie vinniger. Die feit dat die skuiwe in die sessie plaasvind maak dit konkreet en jy as terapeut sien die skui gebeur in die kind. Dit is 'n ongelooflike ervaring. My ervaring van marianka elke keer as sy terugkom, is dat sy aanhou prosesseer op haar eie van een sessie na 'n ander, wat ook goed is. Want dit is in 'n manier 'n bewys van aanhoudende verandering in die persoon.
### SESSION 4

**Perd: Mignon**

Marianka het met hierdie sessie weer vir Mignon wortels en appels gebring, maar hierdie keer het sy ook vir die terapeut iets gebring om saam met haar iets te eet – dan kan Mignon, sy en die terapeut (wat ek is) saam eet na die tyd.

Ek het haar eerstens gevra of sy nog onthou wat het laaskeer gebeur. Sy het gese ja, sy kan onthou. Sy het die hek van haar hart oopgebreek en my en Mignon ingelaat.

Ek het vir haar gese, sy kan vir Mignon gaan groet en wanneer sy gereed is om aan te gaan kan sy terug kom na my toe. Mignon het dadelik haar kop ophragig en sy het vir 'n rukkie gestaan met Mignon se kop by haar kop met haar hande om haar nek.

Ek het haar gevra of sy eers weer vir 'n rukkie vir Mignon wil borsel saam met my in haar spasie, voor ons aangaan soos laaskeer. Sy het gese ja en ek mag

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| It is my experience that the change within a session is lasting and evergrowing up to the next session. |
| It is my experience that processing goes on for the client even after the sessions stop. |
| It is my experience that the client can recall the previous session readily. |
saamkom, maar sy wil eers alles reg kry, sy het die borsels gaan haal. Sy het geloop om die borsels te gaan haal en Mignon het haar gevolg. Sy het gese ek moet inkom en ek kan maar kies watter borsel ek wil gebruik. Ek het die keuse aan haar oorgelaat en sy het vir my 'n borsel gegee. Mignon het haar nog heeltyd gevolg en daarna gaan stil staan langs ons en ons het haar begin borsel.
Terwyl sy geborsel het, het ek haar gevra dat wanneer sy reg sal voel, dat sy hier by my en Mignon die gebeurtenis moet kom uitbeeld wat sy vir Mignon vertel het wat haar so hartseer en kwaad maak – as sy gereed is om dit te bou.
Sy het dadelik die borsel gelos en dit begin bou – sien fotos.
Soos wat sy die gebeurtenis uitgebeeld het het Mignon vorentoe beweeg om dit oop te maak van my kant af. Ek het haar gevra wat sy daarvan maak. Sy het gese, ja want sy het besluit sy is eintlik braaf

It is my experience that the **horse resonates** with the **client**

It is my experience that the client has the freedom to choose in EAP

It is my experience that after sharing with the horse, the client is ready to share with therapist
It is my experience that the element of nature included in the EAP process, makes the client more relaxed.

It is my experience that sharing in an EAP environment is relaxed and contained.

It is my experience that the client reflects own emotions on the horse.
It is my experience that the horse resonates with the client.

It is my experience that the client also resonates with the horse’s actions and reactions.

It is my experience that the EAP process empowers the client.

It is my experience that the EAP process helps the client to express emotions.

It is my experience that the horse resonates.
sy gemaak het, sy het alles aan die binnekant van haar toe gerol maar nou doen sy dit nie meer nie. Daarna het sy haar kegel omgerui en vir my gese, sy wil net 'n skoner kegel gebruik want sy rol nie meer so in die sand rond nie. Daarna het sy haar op haar oupa se plek gesit. En die mannetjies wat in die donker was in die vorige sessies en nie sterk genoeg was om te veg nie, was nou op die kegels en hulle raas met haar oupa en lag vir hom. Toe sy dit se het Mignon haar kop regop gebring en haar ore regop gelig en uitgekyk. Ek het haar gevra wat maak sy daarvan saam met dit wat sy nou gese het. Sy het gese sy voel nou sterkter, soos Mignon so op en sterk is, sy is nou sterker. Daarna het sy 'n spinnekop op haar oupa se kegel gesit – sy het daarna gese die spinnekop lyk missien klein maar hy is baie sterk en die spinnekop gaan wen. Ek het haar gevra wat het sy nodig om te doen. Sy het haar oupa (die kegel) gevut en hom gegooi, en gese, dit voel lekker want ek

It is my experience that EAP empowers the client.
It is my experience that EAP gives the client the opportunity to express emotions and vent.

is kwaad vir hom. Ek het haar gese sy kan dit doen soveel keer soos wat sy wil. Sy het die kegel 5 maal opgetel en neergegooi. Daarna het sy die paal ook opgetel en erens anders neergegooi. Sy het gese sy voel baie beter en sterk na hierdie sessie. Daarna het sy vir Mignon haar wortels gegee en ek en sy het saam gesit en die lekkers geeet wat sy vir ons gebring het om te eet.

Sessie 4 Refleksie van terapeut

Die hele ervaring wat ek met die klient het, is dat die eap spasie self, baie contained en veilig is. Sy het haar hele seksuele mishandeling ervaring, en die perd se gedrag en refleksie van hierdie emosies het haar bemagtig en ’n tipe bevryding gebring. Sy was sterk genoeg om die gebeurtenis te herbou, sodat sy die een was wat die mag het, nie meer die persoon wat haar mishandel het nie. Die feit dat sy hierdie
keer vir my en die perd goed gebring het om saam piekniek mee te hou na die tyd, se vir my as terapeut dat ek nou saam met hulle in die binnekring is. Dit voel vir my asof die perd my pad was tot by haar. Die feit dat ons onder die boom kon sit en gesels en piekniek hou met die lekkers wat sy vir ons gebring het, was so spesiaal. Die omgewing maak 'n groot verskil in hoe die kliente die terapie ervaar – dit lyk so. Daar is geen bedrygende elemente nie, dit wil vir my so voorkom.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories from Individual experiences from different data sets (Refer to Addendums nr ...)</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAP lead to participation in horse show - confidence Positive experience Enjoyable Made me happier person Self-esteem Enable person to express feelings Enables to open up Trust Empowerment Life changing experience Relaxed Willing Excited to go to therapy Safe Calm Empowerment Freedom Did not feel pressured In control of own healing process Took out her hurt and only complete self was left EAP is positive therapeutic space Enables client to identify emotions and behaviour patterns Enables client to share and open up Integrated experience (stimulates brain, emotions and creativity) Engagements with nature Creative Never bored Systemic Relaxed because child is relaxed Positive experience Life changing experience Parents felt part of process Confronting and engaging with issues Purifies Horse makes it easier to open up Horse shows your true feelings Horse resonates with you Horse sees through defences</td>
<td>Theme # 1: EAP, an empowering life changing experience. Theme # 2: Active engagement with horses assists in expressing emotions. Theme # 3: EAP Process and therapeutic experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Horse gives direction
Horse is extension of human
Horse becomes an instrument used to
heal the hurt
Horse gives you empowerment
Cant wear masks with horses – only true
self
Different elements positive experience
for client (integrative experience)
Different elements enable client to
process
EAP space – nature – makes it a more
relaxed environment for client
Horses empower
Love for the horses
Trust the horse
Engagement with horses made it more
enjoyable experience through difficult
sessions
Engagement with horses provides
insight
Active engagement positive experience
Horse lets feelings come out
Horses assist in activities
Engagement with nature positive
experience
Easier to open up in EAP setting
Open space
Therapist facilitating session with
horses positive experience
Makes therapy interesting
Session 1
Session 3
Session 4
Session 5
To whom it may concern

This is to attest that I have edited the language of Katherine van Heerden's minor dissertation: *The Experiences of the Client, Therapist and Parents When Using Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy in a Sexual Abuse Case.*

Jacqueline Hefez
Free Lance Editor and Translator
12/12/2012