

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONNECTING THE PATHWAYS



#### Phase One Method and Findings

##### *Research design*

Snyder, following “A Way Through” workshops using The Map in 2001-2002, collected evaluation data. It was decided to begin with these de-identified archival data to gain a picture of how previous participants of the workshops had experienced The Map. The data collected were both quantitative and qualitative. For example, the quantitative data were collected using a rating scale for workshop organisation, content and relevance. The qualitative data, for example, asked participants to provide two key messages from the workshop. The archival data were analysed with descriptive statistics and thematically. This analysis looked at what people were saying about The Map and the workshop, from this information themes were selected and data synthesised to assist in the formation of questions for the interviews that were to be undertaken in Phase Two.

## ***Results***

The archival data collected by Snyder were from 104 participants in “A Way Through” workshops conducted in 2001-2002 utilising The Map of Loss. I undertook an analysis of this data, looking at who participated, the groups involved and identifying themes highlighted in the feedback provided. Participants were from a range of backgrounds, including health professionals, teachers, a church group, a depression support group and unemployed youth. The initial themes of analysis were comments regarding the practical nature (54%) of The Map, action statements (56%), messages regarding taking time for self-care (32%), comments related to seeing life as a process or journey (15%) and the use of art and poetry as a means of expression (7%). There were no negative comments regarding the use of The Map as a tool. Further analysis of these broad themes produced nine major themes, these being the usefulness of The Map, depression, affirmations, empowerment, hope, self-care, awareness of process, action statements and art expression, as discussed below.

### ***Usefulness of The Map***

This theme included 30 statements related to the usefulness of The Map. Statements such as “just the simplicity and application to fit anyone”, “this course has been a fantastic help”, “I liked the content, the environment, the opportunity to recognise my own skills, increase them and learn from my colleagues. I gained perspective, personal insight and growth” and “I love the simple analogies you’ve made, makes it all easier for people to understand and relate, I’ll use your map in my work.”

### ***Depression***

There were seven references made to depression, statements such as “I can get through this depression”, “My understanding of depression has increased dramatically”, and this workshop “has given me some good strategies to work thru my depression.”

### ***Affirmations***

There were 18 comments that were considered to be making positive assertions regarding The Map. Such comments include; “I found it wonderful, it seems so obvious why hasn’t it been made so clear in this form before?” “I found The Map brilliant and easy to comprehend.” “A simple and effective model for understanding loss issues”, “This workshop being directed to the wider community, schools, parents, everyone who will listen” and from the younger respondents “Well done” “Cool” “100% wicked”.

### ***Empowerment***

This theme included such statements as “I can get through this depression, time is not important”, “About how far I have come in the past 10 years of my life, awareness of false beliefs that have restricted my own expectations of me and what I can do in my work, relationships and personal life,” “That I can work effectively,” “I know how to get out of my swamps, I just need to remember this,” “Intensely moving life changing self discovering scary but excellent.”

### ***Hope***

There were 10 messages regarding hope. Statements such as “there is hope” “need to be able to feel, to have hope and vision” and “it’s okay to be me ... life can be successful”.

### ***Self-care***

There were 33 comments stating that participants had realised the need to take time out for themselves and their self-care. Statements such as “take time for myself” and “the need to look after yourself” were common, make time for “self evaluation where I am at the moment and how that works in relation to my work”, “take time out for myself and encourage family members to do the same”, “that I need to look after myself to work effectively”.

### ***Awareness of process***

This theme included 16 comments regarding the understanding that life is a journey and there is a process. Such statements as “the process is important”, “there is a process, I can help myself”, “life is a process and the journey is not all smooth”, “the schematics give a clear picture of the processes”, “coherent model of emotional journey, dealing with difficult emotions is normal”, “there is a process to work through, we feel a range of emotions – all normal” and “it’s okay to go through ‘the cycle’ I’ll be more aware of the ‘cycle’.”

### ***Action statements***

This theme included 28 statements regarding taking some form of action after experiencing The Map. Statements included “express my feelings, not bottle them up”, “talk to someone”, “should not put myself down all the time”, “learn positive ways to handle stress and problems”, “need to spend relevant time on what I consider important”, “do more thinking / planning about bringing all life’s ingredients into balance”.

### *Art expression*

This theme was related to people enjoying and realising the value of the painting and poetry, which is a part of the workshops. Comments such as “therapeutic value of painting and writing”, “I’m okay I can paint”, “the art painting and poetry ideas”, “have decided to do more painting and drawing, something which I used to do a lot of”.

### *Discussion*

As evidenced by the above comments and feedback from “A Way Through” Workshops, it is clear that people from wide ranging backgrounds are able to identify with The Map of Loss and see it as a practical, useful and empowering way of tackling a wide range of issues. These evaluative data suggest that The Map is effective in addressing life crises, improving relationships and communication between people, assists in creating an understanding of life’s ups and downs and has positively influenced the lives of a number of individuals. It is possible that the high number of positive responses from participants was influenced by the collection of these data at the conclusion of a high energy, motivating workshop. During Phase Two interviews this has been examined further with questions designed to gain an overall picture of the experiences of professionals using The Map, allowing people to tell the story of how useful or adaptable they had found The Map to be in varying environs and with differing populations.