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A Narrative Study of Emotions Associated with Negative Childhood Experiences Reported in the Adult Attachment Interview

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A NARRATIVE STUDY OF EMOTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH NEGATIVE
CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES REPORTED IN THE
ADULT ATTACHMENT INTERVIEW

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Antioch University Seattle
Seattle, WA

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Doctor of Psychology

By
Lynne Hartman

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A NARRATIVE STUDY OF EMOTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH NEGATIVE
CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES REPORTED IN THE
ADULT ATTACHMENT INTERVIEW

This dissertation, by Lynne Hartman, has
been approved by the committee members signed below
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ABSTRACT

A NARRATIVE STUDY OF EMOTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH NEGATIVE
CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES REPORTED IN THE
ADULT ATTACHMENT INTERVIEW

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Seattle, WA

Attachment patterns, which tend to be stable over time, are passed from one generation to the next. Secure attachment has been linked to adaptive social functioning and has been identified as a protective factor against mental illness. The parents' state of mind with regard to attachment—as measured with the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (Main, Goldwyn, & Hesse, 2002)—predicts the attachment classification for the infant in Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). Earned-secure individuals have overcome negative childhood experiences to achieve a secure state of mind in adulthood. Earned security, like continuous security, strongly predicts infant security in the next generation. Preoccupied anger is one of the main constructs measured in the AAI that may lead to classification of an insecure, preoccupied state of mind. The current study was an analysis of the narratives of eight individuals whose AAIs indicated mild to high scores for preoccupied anger. All of these individuals have spent considerable energy and resources in grappling with negative childhood experiences. Participants were interviewed regarding how their feelings changed over time and what, if any, events contributed to how their feelings changed. For most participants, the emergence of sustained subjective anger was reported in late

adolescence, or even adulthood. Those whose transcripts were judged earned-secure at the time of the study were associated with narratives that indicated progressive gains in Hoffman's (2008) stages of empathy and Perry's (1968) scheme for intellectual and ethical development. Reappraisal was identified as a key emotional regulation strategy that contributed to security. Supports for executive function also featured as important factors in the attainment of therapeutic goals. Attachment researchers may be especially interested that Hoffman's stages emerged as a possible link between metacognitive processes for earned- and continuous-secure individuals alike. In contrast, the study's findings regarding integrative processes associated with post-formal cognitive development, and mediators for implicit learning as predictors of behavior, suggest that earned security may be a different construct from continuous security. The results of this study hold important implications for treatment and social policy. The electronic version of this dissertation is at OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd

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Introduction

Adults who demonstrate characteristics of securely attached individuals in spite of childhood histories lacking attuned, responsive caregiving are termed by attachment theorists as earned-secure. In measuring adult attachment, earned-secure individuals are included in the secure classification, which is predictive of parenting practices that promote infant security in the next generation. Earned security appears to hold substantial promise for interruption of intergenerational transmission of insecure and disorganized attachment patterns that are often seen as the precursors to pathology.

Many of the studies to date have focused on quantitative evidence regarding attachment state of mind and associated correlations with infant security, caregiver sensitivity, and parent mental health. A few have explored the lived experience of individuals within specific categories. Angry preoccupation is an important construct in measuring the adult state of mind in differentiating between preoccupied and secure individuals (Hesse, 2008). Although early anxious attachment has been linked to preoccupying anger, there are little or no published data that addresses when and how preoccupying anger emerges and how it is resolved. The purpose of this study was to describe how individuals in various levels and stages of integration of their childhood experiences have identified and grappled with the strong emotions generally associated with this important construct. Their narrative accounts of having addressed the emotions associated with events linked to their scores for angry preoccupation are likely to provide important insights to what is measured by this construct, as well as clues for the process of becoming earned-secure. The individual's perceptions about these strong emotions and

how he or she might name them at various stages also provide possible links between clinical presentation and the construct of angry preoccupation.

The psychodrama community was chosen for the primary sample selection to study this construct due to several parallels between the practice of psychodrama and the parenting of continuously secure individuals. It was anticipated that this community might include a higher concentration of earned-secure individuals than the general population due to psychodrama's methodology for intensive practice of linking present behaviors to past experiences. It was also postulated that psychodrama, as an action method, might more fully engage the mirror neuron system than talk therapy, increasing the potential for changes to internal working models of attachment. The psychodrama community also appears to have group norms for high levels of disclosure, which is likely to further aid the narrative exploration of these issues.

Background

Attachment theory posits that individual working models for relationships are formed extensively from experiences in early relationships with attachment figures, and that these working models create a template of rules and expectations for our interactions with others (Bowlby, 1969). Securely attached individuals are attributed with a range of characteristics that are mutually exclusive of characteristics associated with pathology. Secure attachment has been demonstrated to predict emotional intelligence across inter- and intrapersonal dimensions, as well as improved mood, stress management, and general adaptability to social situations (Hamarta, Deniz, & Saltali, 2009). Conversely, differing insecure attachment styles were predictive of specific gaps in these domains (Hamarta et al., 2009).

Hesse (2008) summarized the research that was available at that time about the links between adult and infant attachment in the *Handbook of Attachment*. According to this body of research, secure adults tend to parent in ways that promote security in their infants. Likewise, insecure adults tend to parent in ways that promote insecurity in their infants. Attuned caregiving is posited to be a major contributor to the secure attachment of the infant. However, Hesse also described a group of individuals who described negative childhood experiences that were nonetheless judged to be secure. This phenomenon has given rise to the term *earned-secure*. Regardless of reported childhood histories, secure individuals tend to parent in ways that are associated with infant security (Hesse, 2008).

The AAI (Main et al., 2002) is a structured interview about childhood events. Scores are assigned to the discourse on multiple dimensions of coherence and

collaboration, yielding a primary and secondary classification for state of mind with regard to attachment. The most compelling feature for the use of the AAI is strong correlative evidence linking the caregiver's attachment classification to the attachment classification of the infant in the Strange Situation Procedure (Ainsworth et al., 1978) as derived from the AAI (Hesse, 2008).

In 1995, van IJzendoorn conducted a meta-analysis of the predictive validity of the AAI. Literature searches were conducted using PsycLit and cross-referenced by communications with the instrument's developers, other leaders in the field, and the documented proceedings of meetings conducted by the Society for Research in Child Development, the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, and the International Conference of Infant Studies.

The studies that were used in the meta-analysis were analyzed based on the three-way classification among secure, dismissing, and preoccupied, followed by an analysis of the four-way classification that includes the disorganized/disoriented category. Criteria for inclusion of studies also included blind independent coding of the infant Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978) or the Attachment Q-set (Waters & Deane, 1985). Fourteen studies, including 18 samples, were incorporated into the meta-analysis of the predictive power of three-way AAI classification for infant Strange Situation and/or Q-set classification. These studies were converted to common metrics for effect size, including correlation coefficients, standardized differences between the means of the comparison groups, and Fisher's Z .

Fisher's Z was used to combine the weighted effect sizes, and the resulting data were used to cross-check for relationships between the aggregate data and specific

populations. Gender of the parent, nationality, random selection of subjects, study design, age of the infant, socioeconomic status, and year of publication were all analyzed as predicting and/or moderating factors. Results were generated for 13 out of the 14 studies for dichotomous adult classifications of secure versus insecure, and dismissing versus non-dismissing. Ten studies included data for preoccupied versus non-preoccupied. For the secure versus insecure dichotomy, the combined effect size was 1.06; the dismissing versus non-dismissing dichotomy yielded an effect size of 1.02, and the preoccupied versus non-preoccupied yielded an effect size of .93. These strong effect sizes indicate a robust relationship between parent attachment classification and infant classification. Low effect sizes were found for the cross-checked variables identified above, with significant, but weaker relationships noted for father-infant attachment and dyads with older children.

A subsample of nine studies was analyzed in an exploratory manner for the four-way analysis due to the limited number of studies utilizing the fourth classification of disorganized/disoriented. Although a similar analysis was presented, the authors considered the number of studies available to be insufficient to form firm conclusions. These preliminary findings showed effect sizes of 1.09 for the secure/insecure split, .92 for the dismissing/non-dismissing split, .36 for the preoccupied/non-preoccupied split, and .65 for the organized/disorganized split. The diminished effect size of the preoccupied/non-preoccupied split was attributed to the substantially reduced sample size after extracting the disorganized category. A three-way cross tabulation of the results yielded a 75% correspondence between parent and infant classifications between secure and insecure, and a 70% correspondence between individual classifications.

The strong effect sizes established in the van IJzendoorn (1995) study indicate that the process by which adults transition from insecure to secure is important to how they parent their children. While this path from insecure to earned-secure appears to be a promising route toward breaking an intergenerational cycle of pathology, there are little available data on how security can be earned after childhood.

In van IJzendoorn's meta-analysis (1995) the AAI's predictive validity for responsive caregiving was also analyzed across ten of the studies. The analysis showed an effect size of .72, which led to the conclusion that parental attachment accounted for approximately 12% of the measure for parental responsiveness. Although this effect size is considered large, it points to a large proportion of unexplained variance in the intergenerational transmission of attachment patterns. While the link between parent attachment classification and infant attachment classification is strongly supported, there appears to be a gap in the data that lies between the direct observations of parenting behavior and the adult attachment classification (van IJzendoorn, 1995). This gap in the data is important because it suggests that interventions that merely teach insecure parents to behave like secure parents are likely to promote only a superficial change. Effective intervention in the intergenerational cycle is more likely to require adults to make a more global transformation from insecure to secure.

Measurement of Adult Attachment Security

One major type of measurement of attachment security attempts to indirectly measure attachment through the categorization of reported behavior. Some of these include forced choice responses for endorsement of behaviors, such as Bartholomew and Horowitz's four-category model (as cited in Feeney, Noller, & Hanrahan, 1994). Others

rely on levels of reported agreement with a list of items, such as the Feeney et al.'s Attachment Style Questionnaire (1994). Still others have sought to predict attachment status through measures of automaticity in accessing a secure attachment script in telling a story (Bretherton, 1991; Bretherton, Prentiss, & Ridgeway, 1990; Bretherton, Ridgeway, & Cassidy, 1990; Waters & Rodrigues-Doolabh, 2001; Waters, Rodrigues, & Ridgeway, 1998). The secure script is based on the patterns of behavior between secure dyads in the Strange Situation. These behaviors include the infant seeking comfort when stressed, and finding comfort in the support that is offered, and returning to a regulated state, ready for exploration.

Another type of attachment measurement attempts to activate the attachment system by introducing some modicum of stress and evaluating the observed behavior of the individual in situ. The AAI (Main et al., 2002), and the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978) are examples of these. In an effort to derive the benefits of direct observation methods while decreasing the draw on resources for training and administration, Q-sort methods have been developed. Q-sorts consist of a deck of cards that identify characteristics associated with the different attachment styles. The cards are aligned in nine forced-choice piles according to the rater's judgment regarding the fit between the individual and the characteristic. Scores are calculated based on the number of cards appearing in each pile. Waters (1989) Q-sort is based on a behavioral observation, while Koback's (1993) Q-sort is based on the AAI transcript. While some types of measures for attachment security have advantages for ease of measurement and a minimal training requirement for administrators, the predictive power for infant classification is less well established. The AAI and the Strange Situation Procedure

require extensive training, but have substantial data supporting links between adult attachment and infant attachment (van IJzendoorn, 1995). In balancing these tradeoffs, measurements that activate the attachment system appear to be more suitable for parenting studies, while measures that utilize self-reports of behavior are often used in studies involving peer-to-peer relationships and adult romantic relationships.

The AAI differs from other measures of adult attachment in that it is theorized to surprise the unconscious and activate the attachment system for the purposes of the assessment (Hesse, 2008). The overall theory behind the AAI is that a secure individual is able to self-regulate well enough to tell his or her narrative in a collaborative, balanced manner. There is no unconscious need to alter the narrative to create a positive impression, and there are no intrusive thoughts that substantially derail the conversation. The AAI is given as a face-to-face interview where the subject is asked specific questions about his or her early relationships. The audio portion of the interview is recorded and then transcribed verbatim for an extensive scoring process. Hence, the AAI transcript is essentially a record generated based on an observation of behavior.

The scales for the AAI were based on the maxims for discourse established by the philosopher Paul Grice (as cited in Hesse, 2008). Grice's maxims described appropriate discourse under the constraints of a social situation. These maxims addressed four dimensions of cooperation between speakers in a conversation. The first dimension is quantity, providing sufficient information to answer the question asked. Quality refers to providing accurate information, supporting any assertions made, and an absence of conflicting data. Relevance refers to staying on topic. The final dimension, manner, refers to the clarity and coherence of the explanations given. Transcripts that share

common qualitative characteristics based on Grice's maxims are grouped into general categories (as cited in Hesse, 2008). Scoring of the AAI transcript generally yields a classification of dismissing, preoccupied, or secure. A minority of transcripts cannot be classified due to a mixed presentation in the narrative. Transcripts which violate Grice's maxims only in sections of the transcript where traumatic events are discussed may be assigned an additional designation of *unresolved* as either a primary or secondary classification.

Transcripts of insecure individuals tend to demonstrate a loss of self-regulation that interferes with discourse (Hesse, 2008). Transcripts that are classified as preoccupied exhibit violations of discourse in the form of passive language or angry discourse that reduces their overall scores for coherence. Scores for angry preoccupation or passivity are generally elevated for these transcripts. Similarly, transcripts that are classified as dismissing exhibit violations of discourse due to inconsistencies or lack of support for their statements. Scores for scales measuring dismissing characteristics reflect the use of defensive strategies, such as inability to recall childhood, derogation of attachment figures, or idealization of parents. However, even transcripts judged to be secure are likely to demonstrate preoccupied or dismissing features at low levels. By extension, earned-secure transcripts might be expected to exhibit low level violations consistent with prior states of mind.

In addition to the state of mind scales, the AAI also has experience scales that are designed to estimate the quality of the caregiving received in childhood (Hesse, 2008). Although these scales do not contribute to the state of mind classification, they do generate a score that may be contrasted against the state of mind scores. High coherence

scores combined with low scores for loving behavior on the part of parents have been noted as anomalies in theorized expectations for intergenerational transmission of attachment states of mind. The divergence of these summary scores indicates that the secure state of mind is not the result of attuned caregiving, giving rise to the term earned-secure. While the predictive power of the state of mind scoring system is well established, the validity and reliability of the experience scores has been the topic of hot debate (Roisman, Fortuna, & Holland, 2006; Roisman, Haltingan, Haydon, & Booth-LaForce, 2014; van IJzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2014). Some researchers have attempted to resolve this issue by using more conservative cutoff scores for the loving experience scale. Unfortunately, the more conservative cutoff generally leads to very small sample sizes (Roisman et al., 2014).

Roisman, Padron, Sroufe, and Egeland (2002) compared the data collected in infancy and childhood from the Minnesota Longitudinal Studies with retrospective classifications for earned-secure from AAIs that were conducted for the study group at the age of 19. Although early data of the prospective method supports the existence of an earned-secure classification, there appeared to be only about 50% overlap between the two methods for identifying the earned-secure group. This leaves a substantial unexplained discrepancy between the retrospective and prospective methods. Although this discrepancy has no bearing on secure versus insecure classification or the predictive properties associated with infant classification, it is puzzling that the data indicated that many of those who were classified retrospectively as earned-secure were classified as secure in infancy and had parenting assessments at age 13 that indicated attuned caregiving.

In an effort to explain reports of harsh childhoods on the part of these participants, the data were further reviewed for evidence of depressive symptomology (Roisman et al., 2002). Historical data revealed increased levels of maternal depression at 42 months for the group, and increased levels of adolescent internalizing symptoms at 16 years of age. However, the level of depressive symptoms did not fully account for the discrepancy. There has also been evidence presented that indicates that the experience scales can be manipulated by mood induction, without rendering the transcript incoherent (Roisman et al., 2006).

Findings related to attachment were recently released for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD) (Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development [MSRCD], 2015). This study tracked longitudinal data for 1,364 participants at 10 different US locations, for measures of attachment status, measures of parental sensitivity, and extensive family demographics from infancy to age 15 (Booth-LaForce & Roisman, 2014). Early assessments of attachment included the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978), the Attachment Q-Sort (Waters & Deane, 1985), and the Modified Strange Situation (Cassidy, Marvin, & The MacArthur Working Group on Attachment, 1992). Parental self-assessments of depression were also tracked at multiple points of time using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) (Radloff, 1977).

Roisman et al., (2014) presented findings from 857 participants who were part of the original SECCYD sample who subsequently were recruited for the administration of the AAI at 18 years of age. The transcripts for securely classified participants were

grouped according to the Pearson method where experience scores of below 5 on the loving scale for either mother and/or father indicated earned security. This division resulted in 434 individuals classified as continuously secure and 74 individuals classified as earned-secure. The transcripts were also grouped according to the much more conservative criteria outlined by Main and Goldwyn (1984-1998), which excludes transcripts that are thought to represent the middle range of experience. By this standard, transcripts with both experience scores for loving at or below 2.5 are designated earned-secure, while the continuous-secure group is designated according to an average score for the loving scale rating at 6.5 or higher. The Roisman et al. (2014) study rounded the maximum score for loving experiences to 3 for earned-secure classification. The more conservative criteria yielded 18 earned-secure and 46 continuous-secure transcripts, eliminating the majority of the transcripts from analysis.

Roisman et al.'s (2014) findings indicated that both classification systems yielded earned-secure transcripts that were significantly less coherent than continuously secure transcripts. When scores were averaged, earned-secure transcripts were linked to greater experience scores for maternal neglect as well as paternal rejection and neglect than the insecure group. However, the average scores for maternal loving in the earned-secure group were higher than the average score for the insecure group. Self-reports of depression, averaged over several time points, yielded higher endorsement of depressive symptomology in both the earned-secure groups. Maternal reports of participant depression also yielded higher levels of symptoms for the earned-secure groups, but only reached significance in the Pearson earned-secure group. Maternal depression was also reported at significantly higher levels in the earned-secure groups than continuous-secure

groups for both scoring criteria, with maternal levels of depression of mothers of the earned-secure higher than both the continuous-secure group and the insecure group in the Main/Goldwyn groups. In the Pearson groups, maternal depression was similar between the earned-secure group and the insecure group. Paternal depression was also elevated in the Pearson earned-secure group, but was not found in the Main/Goldwyn earned-secure group. On measures of attachment, the continuous-secure group, the earned-secure group and the insecure group showed no differences in average scores for early attachment security in the Pearson groups or the Main/Goldwyn groups. Parental sensitivity scores for earned-secures tended to be at or above the average scores for the other groups for the Pearson groups. Similar results were found for the Main/Goldwyn groups, with the exception of maternal caregiving in early childhood.

The results from Roisman et al.'s (2014) findings appear to be at odds with the theoretical construct of earned security. However, it may also be important to note that the AAI interviews in both longitudinal studies were conducted in late adolescence. This age range coincides with developmental stages where many of the participants may have been struggling with individuation from their families of origin. Negative reports of parenting could be primarily the result of normal development in a portion of continuously secure individuals. It also seems possible that this developmental task could render some adolescents less coherent than they might appear at some other point of time.

It also seems that further analysis of the AAI transcripts and or scoring system for the experience scales might be warranted. The AAI experience scales yield a single rating for each type of experience. The rater must assign a single rating, taking into

account a range of experiences. It seems likely that when parents are experiencing depressive symptoms, they might be more erratic with attuned caregiving than they might be at other times. If so, the early experience of the individual might contain a more disparate range of actual experience that is not reflected in the score. Caregiving might also be more contingent on elevated levels of infant cues, such as crying or whining before an attuned response is achieved. This scenario seems consistent with the findings from the SECCYD study cited above on a number of issues. Internalizing symptoms in adulthood might be related to the need to amplify signaling for infant or child needs. Difficulties identified with emotional regulation indicate that current mood is also more likely to be a factor in the AAI interviews in this sample; this may render the experience scales more unreliable for this group than for others. Measures of parental sensitivity may be more sensitive to social desirability factors in depressed parents, who may attempt to rally their best skills when under observation. Finally, habitual amplifying of signals in infancy and childhood could lead to amplified reports of negative experiences on the AAI.

To date, much of the evidence regarding the measurement of earned security has been derived by comparing the quantitative background data of individuals based on their scores on the AAI. These results have led researchers to question the measurement of earned security, the external validity of parental sensitivity measures, and generate hypotheses about how depressive symptomology might impact the data. These inquiries are important to our ability to differentiate between genuine earned security and false positives in further research.

Taken as a whole, the data suggest that the AAI experience scales are not reliable measures of childhood experiences, and indicate that we need better ways to measure earned security (van IJzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2014). Presently, the most compelling way to differentiate earned security from continuous security is to measure the attachment state of mind at two or more periods of time. A few studies have compared AAI classifications before and after specific events, such as the formation of new relationships or marriage, consist of correlative data. Crowell and Waters (2005) found AAI scores to be 96% stable for the secure classification and only 76% stable for insecure classification between AAIs conducted at 3 months prior to marriage and 18 months after. The majority of the instability was represented by a transition from insecure to secure. Along with marriage, transitioning out of the parents' home before marriage and higher education also appeared to contribute to increased coherence on the AAI. While these data were consistent with the theoretical construct of the development of a secure working model through relationships, there is much that is not accounted for in this process.

Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn (1993) found 78% test-retest reliability for the AAI for a sample size of 83 subjects. However, 25% of those were originally classified as dismissing and 18% of those who were originally classified as preoccupied were classified as secure on the second administration two months later. Further interviews revealed that these individuals had spent time between the two administrations pondering their responses. One might speculate that these individuals had acquired skills that they had not previously used in the examination of childhood experiences, either in their early attachment relationships or through other experiences.

Other studies have also found strong test-retest reliability over different periods (Benoit & Parker, 1994; Sagi et al., 1994); however, retests indicating increased coherency were either ascribed to closely related categories or not investigated further.

Interestingly, the test-retest statistics regarding transitions from insecure to secure found by Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn, (1993) appear to approach similar percentages as data regarding marriage cited in Crowell and Waters (2005). While the authors of both studies offer plausible explanations for the increased coherence in the subjects, these transitions did not include interventions beyond the focus on attachment secondary to involvement in the respective study. Due to the short time span and relative ease of transition, one might surmise that these transitions might represent individuals who were able to become secure with skills that they already possessed. Perhaps they had childhood experiences that were more similar to those of continuously secure individuals than to other insecure individuals, had other secure relationships in childhood, or had developed skills through other activities that were utilized for the transition. While we may seek ways to quantify the experiences from early relationships, it must be remembered that every parent-child relationship is unique. Every child has personality characteristics that might make him or her more vulnerable or more resilient. Clearly, further detailed analysis of the transition from insecure to secure is needed.

Secure Attachment and Intersubjectivity

Secure attachment in adults is correlated with empathy and compassion for others, adaptability to social demands, balanced viewpoint in reasoning, ability to self-regulate affect, and attuned and responsive parenting (Hesse, 2008). The hallmark of the securely attached individual is the ability to tell about his or her attachment history in a coherent,

succinct manner without becoming lost in the narrative, altering the story to preserve a desired impression, or discounting emotionally salient events. These dimensions of self-awareness in the secure adult are thought to support the capacity for accurate empathy toward the infant, allowing him or her to be more fully available to the infant, and more accepting of the infant's emotional needs.

In theory, infants become secure through attuned, responsive care giving and by having their physical and emotional needs met (Ainsworth, 1967). Mary Ainsworth pioneered early research efforts into human infant attachment and developed a classification system that is still widely used today (Ainsworth et al., 1978). There were three categories identified in the original data: avoidant, ambivalent, and secure. Disorganized attachment was added later as an additional category to describe the most disturbed attachment, which alternates between the two insecure categories (Main & Solomon, 1990).

Secure infants are those who are able to use the caregiver as a secure base for exploration, and to turn to the caregiver when they are upset or afraid (Cassidy, 1994). They tend to be less fussy than insecure infants, and are more easily soothed by the caregiver when they do become upset. The infant's ability to emotionally regulate independently of the caregiver is thought to emerge from the infant's experience of a caregiver who can effectively soothe the infant when upset. Among other strategies, mirroring of the infant's positive and negative affect through vocalization and facial expression has been asserted to scaffold the emerging skills in self-regulation (Schoore, 2003).

Avoidant infants tend not to turn to the caregiver for comfort when upset or afraid, while showing decreased focus on exploration (Spangler & Grossmann, 1993). It was posited that these infants subvert their needs in favor of their caregivers' needs in order to maintain proximity to a caregiver who is unresponsive to or aversive (Cassidy, 1994). Avoidant infants appear calm and turn away from the caregiver to avoid rebuff, giving the appearance of not needing the caregiver. They approach the caregiver only when they are calm. Soothing is not likely to be provided when the infant is upset, because, on the surface, the infant appears not to be in need of soothing.

Ambivalent infants tend to monitor the caregiver rather than explore, staying very close by (Cassidy, 1994). They tend to appear uncertain that they will be able to garner the services of the caregiver should the need arise. Ambivalent infants tend to be fussy and clingy, and are not readily soothed by the caregiver. The fussy and clingy behavior appears to have the purpose of maintaining proximity to a caregiver who must be coaxed to meet the needs of the infant. Soothing is not likely to be provided by the caregiver, who tends to be overwhelmed, unavailable, or otherwise ineffective in meeting the infant's needs.

The hypothesized arousal states that are not apparent in outward behaviors described in this classification system have been subsequently documented through the physiological means, such as measurements of heart rate and the stress hormone cortisol (Spangler & Grossmann, 1993). Providing for the infant's emotional needs by helping him or her feel safe to explore, and soothing the infant when he or she is frightened or upset appears to be central to attachment. Caregivers co-regulate infants' affect not only by rocking, patting, and holding them, but also through mirroring their emotions and

providing language for their emotional experiences (Schoore, 2003). Intersubjectivity between infant and caregiver appears to be an important capacity in soothing the infant and the infant's learning to self-regulate.

Working Models of Attachment

Memories where the individual is aware of the process of remembering a past event have been termed explicit memories (Siegel, 1999). An example of an explicit memory is remembering what one had for breakfast. In contrast, memories that contribute to behavior without the individual being cognizant of recalling a past experience are termed implicit memories. An example of behavior that might arise from implicit memories is how one interacts with other people. Behavior in such interactions is not necessarily based on the recall of a specific experience, but on general expectations based on accumulated past experiences. When actions are derived from implicit memories, the link between specific memories and the action are assumed to be outside of awareness.

Although it is unclear at what age the first implicit memories are created, infant-caregiver relationships are a likely starting point. These relationships are built of a foundation of intersubjective experiences, such as eye contact, facial expressions, imitation, and joint attention (Bråten & Trevarthen, 2007). Attachment patterns appear to be an important dependent variable of the infant's intersubjective experience with the caregiver, and provide a possible window to the contents of the infant's implicit memories. While attachment patterns can change over the course of a lifetime, early patterns tend to be stable unless some condition changes (Crowell & Waters, 2005). Infants with secure early attachment tend to remain secure throughout their childhood

development, unless there is some breach in attuned caregiving. Although the loss of a primary caregiver can elicit insecure behavior, early security is predictive of being able to form new attachments and recover from losses in later years. Insecure attachment tends to become increasingly more stable the longer the child is exposed to non-attuned caregiving, presumably due to the implicit memories surrounding the insecure attachment becoming more firmly entrenched over time.

In spite of the stability of attachment patterns, some adults appear to earn security in their adult relationships (Crowell & Waters, 2005). Although these adults may describe their childhood attachment experiences as negative, they are able to do so in the coherent, balanced, and implicitly forgiving manner that is consistent with those who are categorized as continuously secure (Hesse, 2008). They also demonstrate capacities for clarity in placing their history in the past by self-monitoring their narrative. They do not become lost in the past or seem unaware of inconsistencies between semantic and episodic memory. In this context, semantic memory refers to the descriptors that are used in recall, while episodic memory refers to an individual's account of events.

Due to the centrality of applying appropriate language to childhood events in attachment security, one might speculate that attachment security is likely to be dependent on verbal reasoning ability or cognitive intelligence. However, the evidence appears to rule out that possibility, at least in adult attachment. In a meta-analysis of twenty five different infant studies, van IJzendoorn, Dijkstra, and Bus (1995) concluded that measures of infant intelligence did not substantially influence attachment patterns. Although they did find small effect sizes indicating that secure infants showed an advantage over insecure infants on measures of language development, larger effect sizes

were noted in clinical samples. This skew in the data suggests that secure attachment might be a protective factor in language development, and lends credence to their initial hypothesis that secure adults are likely to be more effective teachers for their infants than insecure adults, and that secure dyads are likely to benefit from security in their communications.

While one might be cautious in considering the reliability of measures of infant intelligence, additional evidence exists regarding the AAI and adult measures of intelligence. Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn (1993) studied the discriminant validity of the AAI classification system against intelligence measures of vocabulary fluency, verbal coherence, and perceptual reasoning and found no multivariate differences between state of mind categories. Emotional intelligence has also been shown to develop independently of cognitive capacities (Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg, & Bechara, 2003). These findings indicate that appropriate therapeutic intervention most likely necessitates something more than purely cognitive processes. Further understanding of how emotional stimuli are processed in the brain may be helpful in considering therapeutic approaches that might promote earned security.

The Mirror Neuron System and Emotional Regulation

Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies provide preliminary evidence regarding how different presentations of emotional stimuli are processed in the brain. This evidence must be considered preliminary because fMRI is an indirect measurement of brain activity. The underlying assumption is that blood flow is indicative of neuronal activation due to the need to resupply oxygen and glucose consumed in activation (Clare, 1997). The volume of data required in performing this

analysis is large and complex, leading to an increased risk of sampling errors and circular reasoning, even in studies published in peer reviewed journals (Vul & Kanwisher, 2010). Although one must be cautious about accepting this evidence at face value, it is important to continue to study these findings through multidisciplinary channels and consider their implications for increasing the efficacy of therapeutic intervention. Due to the potential limitations of this method of inquiry, our discussion of fMRI data will focus on the broader aspects of the available findings.

Different emotions appear to activate different areas of the brain. Damasio et al. (2000) found different activation patterns in fMRI scans associated with sadness, happiness, anger, and fear experienced through the recall of autobiographical memories of emotionally laden content. The brain activation patterns associated with the recall of memories appeared to differ qualitatively from those associated with observations of movement. Pichon, de Gelder, and Grezes (2008) used fMRI to study emotional reactions to full body images of anger and differences in brain activity between test subjects' observations of anger depictions in still photographs versus video segments. The videos depicted actors opening doors with either angry or emotional displays upon opening the door. Fourteen raters selected still pictures from the individual frames of each video that portrayed the greatest degree of anger or fear. Dynamic media resulted in greater activation than did static media, and angry representations resulted in greater activation than did neutral ones. The authors identified specific areas that activated only when viewing dynamic expressions of anger. These findings indicated that viewing dynamic images of angry content elicited additional responses in brain areas associated with fear responses of fight or flight.

In the study of autobiographical memories, Damasio et al. (2000) specifically noted that in under none of the emotional conditions were there indications of amygdala activation, as were reported in the study of dynamic anger; autobiographical recall of fear did not engage the full range of neuronal activity associated with fight or flight responses. This evidence suggests that the inclusion of biological action in processing past events may be advantageous to integrating these events. Biological actions are part of some forms of experiential therapy that include role-playing, such as psychodrama (Moreno, 2006). However, psychodrama has additional elements that appear to be particularly well suited for directly teaching the skills associated with secure attachment. For example, a three stage model is utilized to connect present behavior to past experience (Holmes, 1991; Moreno, 2006). Identifying ways in which current behavior is influenced by past experiences provides an opportunity to question the validity of old assumptions. Utilization of the mirror neuron system (MNS) in therapeutic intervention, combined with the possibility of directly teaching skills for viewing current relationships in new ways, points toward psychodrama as an effective method for working toward earned-secure attachment status. In light of psychodrama's incorporation of the MNS, and alignment with the development of new attachment-related skills, further analysis is warranted.

There is also some evidence that psychodrama may lead to more lasting changes in behavior and continued improvement beyond the course of therapy. This suggests a possible shift in the implicit worldview of the behavior targeted for change. Hamamci (2006) contrasted the efficacy of psychodrama against cognitive behavioral therapy in the treatment of mild depression, with some surprising results. Cognitive behavioral therapy

(CBT-alone, $n = 10$) and cognitive behavioral therapy in combination with psychodrama (integrated, $n = 10$) were compared for efficacy. The third group was a control group ($n = 11$). Although both treatments showed improvements over the control group, they did not show significant differences in efficacy at post-test. However, at six-month follow-up the integrated group showed continued improvement between posttest and follow-up, while the gains of CBT-alone group either held constant or diminished over time. At follow-up, 70% of the integrated group scored below the cut score for depression on the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1961), as compared to only 40% of the CBT group. The researcher of the current project speculates that the pattern of these results suggests that the behavior change in the CBT group may have been more superficial than the behavior change in the integrated group. Viewed from a neuroscientific perspective, one might propose that the increased efficacy might be related to psychodrama's elaborative interaction with the MNS.

Overview of Psychodrama

Psychodrama differs from other therapies in that scenes from the individual's life are enacted on a stage (Holms, 1991). The client (also called the protagonist) re-creates key scenes from his or her history that are associated with current emotional stressors. The group members participate by playing the roles of other people or objects involved in the scene. The director assists the protagonist in making therapeutic corrections to his or her interpretation of the event, and in the development of personal resources to manage his or her level of distress. As an action method, psychodrama attempts to create an event that repairs the original experience that the protagonist has been unable to successfully integrate. During a drama, the protagonist is often coached to

notice somatic markers for strong emotions and trace them back to their points of origin. Through reconstruction of the scene, the individual creates not only an explicit memory of the drama, but encounters a new experience based on a therapeutic reframe of the prior outcome. The director and group create a holding environment that reflects empathy and compassion for the protagonist in a way that is parallel to how new mothers teach infants affect regulation skills (Dayton, 2005). The structure of psychodrama appears to provide an opportunity for the client's schema to be amended by new information, such that behavior changes are a natural result of a new paradigm of explicit and implicit memories.

One classic form of psychodrama is the three-stage model (Holmes, 1991). The protagonist chooses to work with some situation in the present that is causing distress. The scene is set and the problem is made concrete so that the director can guide the protagonist in naming the core issues. The director then asks the protagonist to show a scene of his or her earliest memory of having the same feelings that were evoked in the scene representing current events. These scenes often come from childhood and include attachment figures.

In the early scene, the protagonist is supported in identifying what would have been needed for the event to have ended satisfactorily (Holmes, 1991). The director uses the various techniques to help the protagonist gain insight into the thoughts and feelings of others and recognize age appropriate expectations for the behavior of the protagonist at the time of the earlier event. The protagonist's central beliefs about the scene may be challenged if they are not supported within the context of the scene. When the early scene is dismantled, the scene for the current event is reconstructed. The

protagonist is asked what he or she notices that was not noticed before. The protagonist often notices similarities and differences between the earlier scene and the current-day scene. He or she might notice that more personal resources are available in the present or gain new insights into the motivations of others. The protagonist is then invited to practice behaviors that would contribute to a satisfactory outcome to the present problem in the context of the current-day scene.

Building a Theoretical Construct of Earned Security

A comprehensive understanding of earned security requires that we understand not only what has changed, but how it has changed, and the processes involved. In the AAI, the overall coherence of the narrative is scored based on Grice's maxims (Hesse, 2008). The theoretical basis for the utilization of coherence as a measure is emotional regulation skills that allow the individual to maintain discourse throughout the interview. Further evidence of security can be found in the identification of specific characteristics that tend to be associated with the secure classification, such as the indicators of flexibility, compassion, and a balanced point of view. Additionally, original working models of attachment are theoretically implicit. Therefore, movement toward earned security in adults is likely to involve the integration of implicit and explicit memories from the family of origin and more recent experiences. Important insights into this process are likely to come from research in areas other than attachment, such as emotional regulation, executive function, and implicit social cognition. It was also expected that growth may be demonstrated in developmental domains of cognition and empathy. The relevant findings in these areas were anticipated to provide a platform for exploring not only acquisition of the characteristics of secure individuals, but also situate them in a developmental context. A review of the literature in these areas of research will support our discussion of the narratives for the present study.

Emotional Regulation

The AAI is posited to introduce a moderate level of stress by surprising the unconscious (Hesse, 2008). Based on the theoretical construct of coherence, one might assert that what is measured by the AAI state of mind scales are essentially the behavioral

aspects of emotional regulation under stress. That is to say, what is measured is the amount of interference this stress places on discourse. The individual who is able to maintain discourse without distortions or inconsistencies while the attachment system is activated is judged secure, while the individual whose discourse demonstrates a loss of self-monitoring is judged insecure.

Some empirical evidence exists for the relationship between the administration of the AAI and stress responses. In 1992, Dozier and Kobak measured skin conductance to measure arousal in response to answering questions about childhood experiences on the AAI. The protocols were classified using the Kobak's (1993) Q-sort. Increases in skin conductance measures were linked to deactivating strategies, such as idealization of parents and lack of memory. The authors posited that the stress reaction observed in association with deactivating strategies was indicative of employment of a suppression strategy for emotional regulation. Roisman, Tsai, and Chiang (2004) extended these findings to include the other measurements of activation across three attachment classifications. Physiological responses for skin conductance and cardioactivation were examined in comparison to each question on the AAI. In addition, video tape recordings of the interviews were analyzed for emotional content according to the Facial Action Coding System (Ekman & Friesen, 1978). The AAI was administered to 30 European and 30 Chinese American undergraduate and graduate students, recruited from a United States midwestern university. Attachment classification was determined using Kobak's (1993) Q-sort. While the Chinese American group security was comparable to data from previous studies of Caucasian subjects, the Q-sort results indicated that the European American student sample was overall more secure than the Chinese American group.

Physiological, behavioral, and self-reported data was used to evaluate emotional responses to AAI questions between attachment classifications. The study's findings indicated that secure individuals did not show differences in skin conductance and that their facial expressions and self-reported emotions were congruent with ratings of inferred experience. Dozier and Kobak's (1992) findings were replicated showing that skin conductance was uniquely related to deactivating responses. Preoccupied individuals showed signs of dysregulation through facial expressions as well as self-reported emotions that were widely incongruent with inferred experience scores. Cardio-activation was not related to any classification.

An element of emotional regulation is also apparent in studies involving the cannot classify and disorganized classifications (Hesse, 2008). The disorganized state of mind is demonstrated in infants who demonstrate a mixture of simultaneous approach and withdrawal behaviors in the presence of the parent. The term disorganized indicates that the infant is dysregulated to the extent that he or she unable to organize a response to the presence of the parent. Parents of these infants tend to speak about trauma or loss experiences with lapses in reasoning that suggest altered states of consciousness, such as dissociation. Both the AAI and Strange Situation classification systems include a category for individuals that demonstrate more than one type of insecure attachment pattern, with neither type appearing to be primary. This pattern of results is labeled as cannot classify, and tends to be associated with high-risk populations. Farina, Speranza, Imperatori, Quintiliani, and Marca (2015) recently administered the AAI to 13 individuals who were referred for the treatment of trauma and were diagnosed with one or more dissociative disorders. Twelve of the transcripts were classified as disorganized

as the primary classification. Eight were assigned to the cannot classify category as their secondary category. Measures of cardioactivation were found only in the dissociative disorders group. No elevations in cardioactivation were found in the control group of 13 individuals (nine secure, three dismissing, and one disorganized).

Due to the above findings regarding the relationships between physiological measures and the AAI and the theoretical links between attachment security and emotional regulation, it was anticipated that emotional regulation would play a role in the attainment of earned security. A brief review of the emotion regulation literature follows.

Emotional regulation strategies that are internally mediated are termed intrinsic strategies (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Intrinsic strategies can be categorized by where they appear in the timeline of the emotion-producing event. Proactive strategies are defined as those strategies that preempt the onset of dysregulating events. Avoidance, self-assertion, and self-distraction all interrupt the sequence of events that are likely to lead to emotional arousal. Avoidance changes the situation, so the event does not take place. Self-assertion is used to change the particulars of the event to be more to one's liking. Self-distraction draws attention away from the emotion-provoking event. The adaptiveness of proactive strategies is likely to depend on contextual factors.

Reactive strategies are defined as strategies that are utilized to regulate emotional responses to dysregulating events. Identified reactive strategies include distancing, suppression, and cognitive reappraisal. Distancing can occur by discounting the importance of the event, the meaning of the event, the value of the relationship or the other individual's perspective. Suppression is the attempt to avoid conscious awareness of the situation. Cognitive reappraisal involves altering one's original perceptions of the

event in ways that make it more acceptable or less upsetting. In a summary of their previous correlative research from 2003 and 2004, John and Gross (2007) presented correlative evidence suggesting that chronic reappraisal is more adaptive than chronic suppression. Although all of these correlations were moderate, suppression was found to be negatively correlated to social supports and memory, and positively correlated with depression. Reappraisal was found to be correlated to positive emotion and memory, and negatively correlated with depression.

Some insights into the neurological processing of reappraisals will facilitate our discussion of participant narratives. Cunningham et al. (2004) provided an fMRI-based study that demonstrated differences between automatic and top-down processes with regard to racial prejudice. Brain activation was measured for 13 White subjects in the amygdala and frontal cortex regions at 30 ms and 525 ms exposures for White versus Black faces. It was expected that the lower exposure time would be below conscious awareness, while the longer exposure would allow for conscious awareness. Data generated by three subjects who reported facial awareness at 30 ms were excluded from the analysis. A preliminary implicit association test (IAT) revealed that test subjects showed on average more negative reactions to Black faces than White faces. As might be expected based on the IAT results, greater amygdala activation was also found for the presentation of Black faces than White faces in the 30 ms condition. However, the longer exposure condition appeared to provide time for subjects to reorient themselves based on expressed values. A comparison between the 30 ms and 525 ms condition indicated that amygdala responses to Black faces were higher in the short exposure condition than in the long exposure condition. The reverse was found for frontal regions. Responses in the

dorsolateral PFC (dlPFC), anterior cingulate, and ventrolateral PFC (vlPFC) responses to Black faces were higher in the longer exposure condition and lower in the shorter condition. The longer exposure correlated with explicit attitudes expressed on measures of nonracist attitudes compiled from the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986) and the Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice Scale (Plant & Devine, 1998). The researchers posit that this pattern of activation not only indicates that conscious awareness may offset or override implicit learning for behavioral responses, but that these responses result in emotional regulation. Regardless of the reasoning, producing socially acceptable behavior and/or modifying behavior to be consonant with internal values is ultimately self-regulating.

Interestingly, several other studies have shown links between reappraisal strategies and top-down processing demonstrating reductions in amygdala activity corresponding to activation in the PFC (e.g., Beauregard, Levesque, & Bourgouin, 2001; Ochsner, Bunge, Gross, & Gabrieli, 2002; Schaefer et al., 2002).

Executive Function

Executive function and emotional regulation are strongly interconnected in self-regulatory processes (Lewis, Todd, & Xu, 2010). Both proactive and reactive strategies for emotional regulation require self-directed actions, such as redirecting one's attention (self-distraction), or considering alternative interpretations of events (reappraisal). Likewise, working toward goals requires emotional regulation. Engagement in social situations that contribute to reaching goals requires the management of emotions to conform to socially accepted behavior.

By taking a closer look at executive function, it is expected that we may be able to better assess its role in attachment security in general, and in earned security in particular.

Russell Barkley developed the following definition of executive function based on an evolutionary perspective:

the use of self-directed actions so as to choose goals and to select, enact, and sustain actions across time toward those goals usually in the context of others often relying on social and cultural means for the maximization of one's long-term welfare as the person defines that to be. (Barkley, 2012, Chapter 9)

Barkley (2012) emphasizes the need for self-directed actions across multiple domains. These include attention, inhibition, sensory-motor actions, self-directed speech, and self-directed emotion and motivation. Effective executive function results in organized behavior for planning, self-monitoring, and problem-solving for meeting personal goals.

Zelazo and Cunningham (2007) hypothesized a model of ascending levels of consciousness as a framework to examine the relationship between emotion regulation and executive function. The levels of consciousness include the *computational* level, the *algorithmic* level and the *implementational* level. Zelazo and Cunningham propose that these levels of consciousness are associated with the ability to access rules linking antecedents to consequences according to a hierarchical level of complexity. At the computational level emotional regulation is a primary or secondary goal, as described in the above example of self-distraction. The goal is emotional regulation for peace of mind or in the service of some other immediate goal. At this level, emotions are processed mostly based on sensory information with minimal explicit review and evaluation. The algorithmic level includes reflection about an emotion-provoking event that allows for a review of mental representations associated with that event. Attending to specific mental

representations of the event is purported to create emotional distance. This, in turn, is theorized to allow access to higher order levels of reasoning, leading to reappraisal based on the application of rule sets. The implementational level is purported to include further top-down processing with the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) and anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) mediating between subcortical brain regions and recruitment of specific areas of the prefrontal cortex (PFC). At this level, emotional stimuli are compared with previously learned information and re-evaluated based on previously established rubrics.

In support of this theory, Zelazo and Cunningham (2007) cited lesion studies of the OFC that indicate greater difficulties with processing shifts in rule sets that produce reward (Fellows & Farah, 2003; Rolls, Hornak, Wade, & McGrath, 1994). They hypothesize that damage to the OFC reduces the ability to respond to changes in context, based on evidence indicating that the OFC mediates between subcortical areas and the PFC in attending to changes in reward conditions. Observational reports of OFC lesion patients' difficulty in judging social situations further support the hypothesis. They also point to the top-down processes hypothesized in conjunction with cognitive reappraisal in Cunningham et al.'s (2004) study of racial prejudice referenced above. Zelazo and Cunningham also cite fMRI data that shows a reciprocal activation between specific areas of the PFC and subcortical structures. These areas of the PFC have been associated with explicit reappraisal processes and include the dorsolateral, ventrolateral, and rostral-PFC. For example, the rostral-PFC has been associated with processing rule sets, and Broca's area is activated in private speech for self-monitoring and verbal reasoning.

Gross and Thompson's (2007) findings regarding the positive correlates to the chronic use of reappraisal as a strategy suggest that increased use of reappraisal could be

associated with gains in emotional regulation. The neuroscience of reappraisal carries important implications for how executive function might contribute to the selection of explicit activities to improve emotional regulation. Investigations of reciprocal activations between subcortical regions and the PFC with regard to top-down processing have been expanded to include the rostral-PFC, Brodmann's Area 10 (BA10), as an area of interest. Findings of activations in this area are posited to indicate an executive role in reappraisal of negative stimuli. Ochsner et al. (2004) evaluated fMRI data for 24 female subjects (mean age = 20.6 years) in conjunction with presentation of negatively valenced pictures and instructions for up- or down-regulation. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of two groups: a self-focused group, and a situation-focused group. They were trained in their assigned responses three to five days prior to the scanning session, and trainers checked for understanding upon completion. The self-focused group was instructed to imagine either themselves or a loved one as the subject of the picture and bring to mind the sensory information represented. Instructions for reappraisal for down-regulation included taking a detached position, emotionally distancing themselves from the events depicted. Subjects in the situation-focused group were instructed to interpret the pictures in the depicted context, but to regulate by making attributions about how the situation might change from that of the picture. Down-regulation instructions were to focus on how the situation might get worse, while up-regulation instructions were to focus on how the situation might improve. Both groups viewed 162 randomly presented pictures, with specific instructions to up-regulate, down-regulate, or simply attend to each picture. The condition of attending without conscious regulation served as a control.

Responses were also collected for participants' subjective rating of their success in up-regulation or down-regulation by pushing a button to select a rating. The sequence was instructional cue (2 sec.), presentation of negative or neutral photo (10 sec.), record strength of affect (4 sec.), followed by a relaxation period (4 sec.). Subjects also completed a separate computerized survey after the scanning session for rating the amount of effort required for the reappraisal of each picture. Analysis indicated a main effect for the type of instruction only, indicating that successful reappraisal did not differ as a function of strategy. Participants reported significantly greater negative affect under up-regulating condition and significantly lesser negative affect under the down-regulation condition as compared with the attend-only condition for negatively valenced photos. Measures of effort indicated that the down-regulation condition required more effort than the up-regulation condition.

Greater activation was found for both the up- and down-regulation conditions in the dlPFC, ventral lateral PFC (vlPFC), medial PFC (mPFC), anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), bilateral temporal junction, middle temporal gyrus, as well as subcortical regions. Instructions to increase affect were associated with activations that were more left-lateralized and included activation of the rostral medial and posterior cingulate cortex over the attend-only condition. Instructions to decrease affect resulted in bilateral or right-lateralized activations, and also included the orbital frontal cortex (OFC). Amygdala activation was reduced in the decrease condition in comparison to the attend-only condition. The authors suggest that increases in amygdala activation, along with some of the other brain regions, in the increase affect conditions may have been dampened by a ceiling effect. For the decrease affect condition, the self-focused group

showed more activation in the right mPFC, while the situation-focused group showed bilateral activation in the lateral PFC (lPFC). The authors concluded that both up-regulation and down-regulation lead to areas of the brain activation associated with executive function, such as the left lPFC's association with working memory and cognitive control, as well as the dorsal anterior cingulate's associations with self-monitoring. This suggests that executive function is important to emotion regulation.

Urry et al. (2006) conducted a similar study with 19 adults between the ages of 62 and 64, recruited from the larger sample of participants in the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study. In addition to the above procedures, a cortisol measurement was taken six times per day for the seven days following the scanning procedure. Change in pupil dilation was selected as the measurement for cognitive effort. Although the findings from scans were not as robust as those conducted with younger subjects, higher activation in the medial frontal gyrus (BA10) was correlated with higher activation in the left and right ventromedial PFC (vmPFC) accompanied by lower activations in the amygdala in the decrease affect condition. The results indicate that BA10 was the only region acting on the vmPFC, as it was the only region found to be associated with both the vmPFC and the amygdala. However, in a Sobel-test of mediation BA 10 was not found to have a mediating effect, as might be expected based on a level of consciousness model for executive control. Rather, it was determined that the vmPFC mediated reactions between BA10 and the amygdala. The authors ruled out skill in inducing the reappraisal as a factor, as PFC activation was associated with both the increase and the decrease conditions, showing similar cognitive effort under both conditions. The findings in these studies have been posited to be indicative of an executive role in self-regulation.

The diurnal slope of the cortisol secretion line was computed based on samples from each time block (Urry et al., 2006). Normative cortisol levels tend to be highest in the morning, 30 minutes after waking, and gradually decline throughout the day in the absence of stressors. A steady decrease over the course of the day (negative slope) indicates adaptive functioning (Hucklebridge, Hussain, Evans, & Clow, 2005). Elevated stress levels produce a line with a flatter slope. In the decrease affect condition of Urry et al.'s (2006) study, individuals who produced the most robust changes in activation of the vmPFC and amygdala in the decrease- affect condition were associated with normative cortisol slopes. Indeed, those with more normative slopes showed less change in affect in the increase affect condition. Those who did not produce this clear pattern were associated with a flatter cortisol slope, indicating a relationship between their ability to regulate with reappraisal and their overall stress levels.

While amygdala deactivation was found for all groups in the decrease affect condition across both of these studies, implicating executive processes, the increase affect condition also resulted in increased activation in areas associated with executive function. This pattern of activation suggests a more complex relationship between arousal and reappraisal than provided by the levels of consciousness model (Zelazo & Cunningham, 2007) presented above. In spite of these differences, the model remains compelling due to its resonance with day-to-day subjective experience. Few among us would be likely to say that they have never experienced stress at a level that interfered with clarity of thought. Although these studies appear to contradict the model in that they show that the increase-affect condition is also correlated to increased executive function, the studies do not take into account the full range of human emotion outside the laboratory. The

conditions of these studies are substantially different from lived experience in many ways. These studies included executive function supports, such as a training period and cueing for reappraisal. The content of the assigned reappraisals is a redundant, simple formula for both the increase- and decrease-affect conditions. The representations from these reappraisals were required to be held for very short periods, and distractors were not introduced. Moreover, the content of these particular reappraisals appear to be of limited therapeutic value in the context of ongoing personal events and relationships. Perhaps Zelazo and Cunningham's model would appear more applicable beyond some threshold of negative affect or under different conditions. The findings of the Urry et al. (2006) study support the relevance of these types of predisposing factors.

Additional support has been given for a diathesis-stress model for a degradation of executive function in conjunction with chronic stress. Baseline measures showing anomalies hypothesized to be stress-related predispositions have been linked to decreased flexibility in adaptive functioning (Davidson, Fox, & Kalin, 2007). Citing their earlier work, they hypothesized that crying is normative behavior for infants upon separation from the mother. They assert that non-crying behavior in a laboratory environment for infants might be associated with freezing behavior, a sign of extreme fright. EEG measurements of thirteen infants found correlations to asymmetry in right- and left-frontal activation between those infants who cried and those who did not (Davidson & Fox, 1989). Baseline subjective observations indicated no differences in emotional volatility prior to separation. Increased right- and decreased left-frontal lobe activation during the observation period predicted crying behavior at separation. The opposite pattern was found to be predictive of non-crying behavior for the six infants who did not

cry upon separation. The conjecture that non-crying infants were demonstrating freezing behavior was based on the finding of one of their more recent animal studies.

Cooing is normative behavior for rhesus monkeys upon separation from other monkeys, except when under predatory threat (Fox et al., 2005). Adult monkeys who did not coo upon separation under typically nonthreatening conditions were hypothesized to be exhibiting freezing behavior indicative of an atypical fear of threat. This hypothesis was supported by PET scans taken after 30 minutes of separation that indicated increased uptake of a marker in the right dlPFC, accompanied by decreased uptake in the amygdala correlated with cooing. Amygdala and dlPFC uptake measurements were found to predict cooing behavior, both together and separately. Together, levels of marker uptake in these areas predicted 76% of cooing behavior. Behavior during the separation period was videotaped and evaluated by trained raters. While locomotion was not correlated with either PFC or amygdala activity, the duration of freezing behavior was correlated with right amygdala activity.

Using the level of consciousness model, Zelazo and Cunningham (2007) hypothesized further that differences in the degree of salience of emotional stimuli lead to differences in executive function processes. They propose that highly emotional stimuli are processed at lower levels of consciousness in subcortical regions, while more moderately valenced stimuli may be processed at higher levels of consciousness in the PFC. They have adopted the terms hot executive function (hot EF) and cool executive function (cool EF) to differentiate between characteristics of processing at higher and lower levels of valence, respectively. This hypothesis is supported by data from earlier studies regarding effective strategies for delay of gratification in children. Children were

able to wait longer for an increased reward when they thought about the reward in more abstract terms (Mischel, Shoda, & Rodriguez, 1989). For example, children were able to wait significantly longer for an increased number of pretzel sticks when they were coached to think about the pretzels as little brown logs, in comparison to being coached to think about them as a crunchy, salty snack. Effortful engagement of the PFC to provide emotional distance from the stimulus appears to have supported inhibition for accepting the smaller portion. The children were better able to follow the rule set associated with goal-attainment.

Another important factor in executive function is the ability to hold and manipulate mental representations in working memory to support self-directed evaluations of progress toward goals (Barkley, 2012). Working memory capacity as an executive function applies to real-world situations where one must self-monitor and problem-solve under less than optimal conditions (Conway et al., 2005). New information arises that is relevant to goal-directed behavior. Also, distractions may interrupt task performance at inconvenient times. According to Conway et al. (2005), “Active maintenance of information is the result of converging processes—most notably, domain-specific storage and rehearsal processes and domain-general executive attention” (p. 770). In a new domain, the novice focuses heavily on domain-general executive function. As experience is gained in a specific domain, attention is shifted to domain-specific considerations. For example, a novice pinochle player may focus on the values of card combinations in his hand. The experienced pinochle player is likely to view the cards as a distribution of the entire deck, considering the statistical probabilities of what cards other players might hold and how play is likely to progress. However, when there

are distractions or stressors, the experienced player may also self-direct his or her attention via domain-general knowledge. Conway et al. assert that complex cognitive behavior is impacted by working memory capacity due to the general executive demands of the task, rather than interfering with domain-specific cognitions. Problems with working memory capacity may interfere with the development of domain-specific skills, presumably by delaying or preventing the development of domain-specific skill sets required for proficiency.

Working memory capacity is also cited by Perugini, Richetin, and Zogmaister (2010) as a mediator in the predictive power of implicit associations on behavioral measures across multiple domains. Hofmann, Gschwendner, Friese, Wiers, and Schmitt (2008) found working memory capacity to mediate the relationship between implicit associations and behavior in the consumption of sweets, viewing erotica, and angry responding. Assuming that working memory capacity is a limited cognitive resource, it stands to reason that even individuals with normative capacities might experience situations where the emotional load creates a distractor that interferes with the development of domain-specific skills. Whether or not hot and cool EF systems are eventually proven to be distinct processes (Zelazo & Cunningham, 2007), research in working memory capacity lends credence to the therapeutic benefits in finding ways to circumvent high valence distractors. For the purposes of the current study, the terms hot and cool EF will be used to differentiate between direct versus indirect processing for the reappraisal of past events.

Reflective Function and Empathy

Based on the role of attuned caregiving in the intergenerational transmission of attachment states of mind, Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Moran, and Higgitt (1991) developed a comprehensive scale for scoring the AAI. Rooted in object-relations theory in the psychodynamic tradition, the Reflective-Self Function scale was designed to capture adult capacities for understanding the mental states of the child. A 9-point scale is used to measure considerations related to examining the motivations behind one's own behavior and the behavior of others. Avoidance of the question and global generalizations that were not tailored to the specific scenario under discussion were scored at the low end of the scale. Statements that elaborated on possible emotional states and recognized gradations between emotional content and appearances were scored at the upper end. The upper end of the scale represents skills for complexity and sophistication in integrating information about mental states for multiple individuals simultaneously. The predictive validity of the scale was tested with 100 first time mothers and fathers. The AAI was administered during pregnancy and was followed by the Strange Situation Procedure (Ainsworth et al., 1978) with the infant at 12 months of age. The Reflective-Self Function Scale predicted infant security between secure and avoidant in 75% of cases.

Fonagy, Target, Steele, and Steele (1998) published a manual for the coding system that outlines a more refined coding procedure and presented further evidence of the scale's validity. The construct of reflective-function was clarified to apply to both the self and others and levels of complexity of reflective-function were defined. Additional data was released for the study above based on the mothers' childhood demographic

information. Data from mothers whose childhood experiences included high levels of deprivation prior to the age of 11 were grouped and compared to non-deprived mothers. Deprivation included difficulties such as poverty, prolonged unemployment of a parent, life threatening illness of a parent or the child, mental health concerns regarding a parent, or extended separation from a parent. Reflective-function was a strong predictor in the non-deprived group, as 79% with high scores were linked to secure infants as measured by the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978). However, in the deprived group, all 10 of the mothers with high scores for reflective-function had infants that were classified as secure, while only 6% of low scoring mothers' infants were classified as secure. While the authors of the manual assert that these data indicate the importance of reflective-function in attuned caregiving, the researcher of the current study would assert that these data also suggest a central role of reflective-function in earned security.

There are several areas of research that appear to be linked to the construct of reflective-function, such as intersubjectivity, theory of mind, and empathy. Intersubjectivity as it relates to attuned caregiving in the attachment relationship is discussed above. The vast majority of theory of mind research regarding typical development pertains to children (Miller, 2012). In general, these studies focus on false beliefs, such as the task where the child is asked what someone else might believe is in a mislabeled box. Many measures of this construct tend to reach ceiling effects before adulthood. Adolescent and adult theory of mind tasks are often confounded by high task demands for other constructs that are theoretically distinct, such as language and verbal reasoning. There is some evidence, however, that when adults are asked to predict what another adult knows in a verbally presented scenario, these predictions can be biased by

information that is given only to the test subject (Birch, 2005). This hindsight bias may be linked to the adults' difficulty with source monitoring regarding information through an expanded verbal dialogue. Newton and de Villiers (2007) compared 81 adults' performance on a nonverbal false-belief task requiring them to shadow either a verbal task or rhythmic tapping. While shadowing tapping did not impact performance in 29 out of 35 subjects, only 13 out of 31 subjects (less than half) were successful in the verbal shadowing condition.

The above data regarding the Reflective-Functioning Scale (Fonagy et al., 1998) and the data cited regarding theory of mind tasks suggests that when adults struggle with perspective-taking skills, working memory capacity is likely to contribute to errors in navigating the complexity of the task. However, these data do not incorporate the literature on empathy. Martin Hoffman (2008) developed a theory about the development of empathy. His theory, like the foundation of the Reflective-Function Scale, is based on object-relations theory. Hoffman defined empathy as feeling what another is feeling or what the other would be expected to feel under the circumstances. Empathic distress, then, is the distress that arises from feeling the distress of others. Hoffman described mature empathic distress as metacognitive and differentiated. The mature empathic individual is able to recognize that the distress he feels is not his own, but a reflection of another's. The early stages of Hoffman's theory center on the differentiation process. He posits that the newborn has a global, undifferentiated reaction to the distress of others. Hoffman theorized that over the first two years of life that empathic distress is egocentric. As the infant first realizes that the origin of the distress is external, he begins to respond with offers of comfort or help. Such responses begin with

offers that reflect the child's needs and expand incrementally to more accurate perspective-taking. Hoffman theorizes that veridical empathy emerges as the children recognize themselves as a separate individual, as evidenced by recognizing themselves in a mirror. *Veridical* empathy allows for perspective-taking with full recognition that others have a state of mind that responds to events independently of the child. Growth in this stage focuses on accurate empathy for increasingly subtle or complex emotive states. Veridical empathy allows for cognitive empathy for another's situation, based on the scope of the empathizer's previous experience. Hoffman's listed examples for veridical empathy such as a child or adolescent empathizing with another person about missing a lost possession or experiencing embarrassment about making a mistake in a group situation.

Hoffman (2008) proposed that children generally move from a stage of veridical empathy toward recognition that present feeling states are linked to past events as well as present events. A child that is bitten by an animal recognizes the event of having been bitten in the past as the source of his or her present fear. This continuity can then be generalized to others to predict their feeling states with similar antecedents. The perspective of others is perceived based on the child's understanding of cause-effect relationships regarding known antecedent events. Hoffman called this stage *empathic distress beyond the situation*. The final stage of Hoffman's theory is *empathy for distressed groups*. It is represented by the ability to feel empathy for groups of people whose circumstances are more removed or described by more abstract criteria, such as poverty, victimization, or life circumstances.

One central feature of Hoffman's (2008) work for the purposes of this study is that empathic distress is theorized to follow a pattern at each of the initial stages. The individual first recognizes the emotion within the self and then generalizes that knowledge into the intersubjective. Based on this pattern, one might speculate that the closer that one's experience is to another's, the more accurate his inferences are likely to be. Conversely, one might expect that the further one's experience is from another's the less empathy he is likely to generate intuitively. Additionally, the more complex or distal the relationship between antecedents and feeling states, the more difficult it is to link these processes, both for the self and in empathy for others. In families, some aspects of the environment are likely to be shared between parent and child, while other aspects of the environment might impact adults and children differently. Depending on the family rules, children may not have full access to their parents' narrative, either in the present or from a historical perspective.

Metacognitive Monitoring

The AAI has a scale for metacognitive monitoring (Hesse, 2008). Although this scale was under construction at the writing of the most recent *Handbook of Attachment* (2008), metacognitive monitoring has been linked to a secure state of mind with regard to attachment in conjunction with the instrument. The basis of this scale is that secure individuals tend to show awareness of how situations and the related emotions may not be what they seem, that others might not share their point of view, and/or that feelings may change over time. The secure individual discusses inconsistencies in a forthright manner, without the incorporation of defensive strategies. While the metacognitive monitoring scale includes the construct of reflective-functioning (Fonagy et al., 1998) as

discussed above, it also has a cognitive verbal reasoning component. The overlap between the metacognitive monitoring scale and cognition points to the importance of reasoning, especially for earned-secure individuals who have theoretically become coherent over some span of time.

Metacognition is also an important construct in theories of deductive reasoning. In this context, metacognition refers to the analysis of how people gather information, process that information and arrive at their conclusions. Moshman's (1990) theory identifies two main components of deductive reasoning associated with metacognition. Metalogical strategies facilitate the processing of complex data. They include strategies such as reduction, simulation, or counterfactual reasoning. Metalogical understanding is a conceptual framework defining inference as a means for gaining knowledge along with the skills for interrogating the evidence for conclusions based on criteria such as consistency and flexibility. Validity of conclusions is judged in terms of consistency with the available evidence and flexibility to apply to all possible states. However, these principles can also be applied to other types of inference.

Inference can be classified into three types, deductive, inductive, and abductive (Walton, 2005). These types of inference vary in the level of certainty associated with their conclusions. In deductive reasoning, specific causal attributions are identified as linked to outcomes, such that a given premise A necessitates a given result of B. Conversely, if the premise A is rejected, then result B is subject to question. Conclusions in inductive reasoning are reached based on the probability that a premise leads to a result. Premise A probably led to result B. Abductive reasoning, in contrast, incorporates deductive reasoning for known elements, but moves into the hypothetical for

the unknown. It identifies a given state and then reaches conclusions based on the plausibility of a best explanation while remaining true to the underlying principles of metalogical understanding. It is essentially an informed, well-educated guess that is recognized as tentative due to the hypothetical components.

Mastery of differing types of inference is likely to be associated with development beyond attainment of formal operations that Piaget demonstrated as early as adolescence (Piaget, 2008). In 1968, William G. Perry of Harvard University conducted a study of college students' cognitive development that appears to transcend the stage of formal operations. The initial focus of Perry's study was the authoritarian personality. Students were selected for interviews based on their responses to two surveys, Stern's Inventory of Beliefs (as cited in Perry, 1968) and a survey designed specifically for the study, A Checklist of Educational Views (CLEV). The CLEV was administered to 313 randomly selected students in the fall and spring of their freshman year. Based on their responses to the CLEV, 55 students were invited to participate in an interview about their college experience. The group who consented to the interview ($n = 31$) included students scoring at both ends of the spectrum between dualistic and contingent thinking. Longitudinal data were collected for 17 individuals over four years of college attendance.

Based on extensive interviews both of initial participants and corresponding longitudinal data, Perry (1968) developed a scheme describing a progression from dualism toward a contingency-based approach that is generalized to all areas of study. While Perry's conclusions were based on successful completion of a liberal arts education, there are fundamental elements in his scheme that transcend institutionalized education. Perry's scheme addressed students' relationship with truth, and how authority

mediates that relationship. In his study, the authority is the professor; the truth, the truth of absolutes. Perry's stages describe how the student navigates these concepts, developing toward viewing the professor as a fellow researcher and the absolute truth as nonexistent. In Perry's theory, increasing acknowledgement of the contextual nature of knowledge becomes the mechanism of development. Perry identified the following stages or positions in intellectual and ethical development:

- Position 1—Dualism. For every question, there is a right and a wrong answer. The task of authorities is to dispense correct answers and monitor progress in students' learning of correct answers.
- Position 2—Multiplicity Pre-legitimate. When authorities disagree, one is right and the other is wrong. Authorities create assignments so that students can learn to find the correct answers independently.
- Position 3—Multiplicity Subordinate. Even legitimate authorities may not have full access to all of the correct answers at present. The student is confused about evaluative standards for different arguments.
- Position 4—Multiplicity Correlate or Relativism Subordinate. Two alternative pathways were identified for position 4:
 - The student perceives that multiple opinions may be considered legitimate, but may not have the skills to evaluate among opinions; thus, every opinion may be considered equally valid.
 - The student recognizes multiple contingencies contributing to multiple valid arguments; however, the student views this as an exception to the rules or a special case.

- Position 5—Relativism Correlate, Competing or Diffuse. The student recognizes that all knowledge is contextual or contingent, even for authorities. There is no attainable absolute truth. However, working through conflicting areas of knowledge or coordination between different areas of knowledge seems unwieldy and unmanageable.
- Position 6—Commitment Foreseen. The student recognizes that one must choose a stance in the face of uncertainty and commit to some action to remain relevant. This commitment must be based on his or her own discernment, as there is no authority that can provide the answers.
- Position 7—First Commitment. After substantial deliberation, the student takes a self-defining stance that orients his or her world view. This stance becomes an internal compass for his or her actions. This position may be accompanied by a calmness or sense of relief.
- Position 8—Orientation in Implications of Commitment. The working-model for action and decision-making is amended and refined as new considerations arise.
- Position 9—Developing Commitments. A relativistic stance is generalized across other domains. Coordination between commitments among various domains becomes a continuously-evolving process that is expected to continue indefinitely.

Perry's (1968) study of intellectual and ethical development was limited to the collegiate environment. His data does not preclude development along a similar trajectory in other environments. A similar progression might be anticipated in other

environments where learning and experience contribute to expertise. It may also be anticipated that different environments might support or hinder development at various levels in different ways, resulting in different presentations of similar growth patterns.

The therapeutic environment can have some important parallels to an educational environment. At the start of therapy, the therapist uses expertise to structure a therapeutic experience. Psychoeducation is often provided and the presenting problem may be reframed in terms of the therapist's theoretical perspective. The client may come to therapy with expectations that the therapist will guide the experience toward correcting the presenting problem. These expectations might range from the therapist providing correct answers to these problems to assisting in exploring the possibilities.

There are also important fundamental differences between the therapeutic environment and the educational environment. There may be more variations available in therapeutic orientation than educational orientation. Students enrolled in an educational program may not have as much flexibility in choosing their instructors as clients have in choosing therapists. Growing emphasis on a medical model for short-term therapy does not support a long-term therapy relationship that is likely to support overall development. Furthermore, intellectual development is not generally purported to be a focus of therapy.

Implicit Learning

Attachment theory posits an implicit internal working model of attachment for each individual (Bowlby, 1969). While there is a body of literature that describes the types of events that may change the working model over time, they tend to be events that are not readily subject to control by the individual (Crowell & Waters, 2005). These

events can be either positive (e.g., a new supportive relationship) or negative (e.g., a trauma experience). They are not easily predictable, nor do they assure progress toward a secure state of mind. In order to investigate possible changes to implicit models, it will be important to understand how implicit learning is differentiated from explicit learning. Examining conditions under which explicit learning may override implicitly learned behavior is likely to be essential to changing intergenerational transmissions of attachment states of mind.

Implicit learning is distinguished from explicit learning by evaluation of the characteristics associated with the thought processes for storage and retrieval of the information (Moors, Spruyt, & de Houwer, 2010). Implicit processes tend to be more automatic, meaning they are efficient in terms of effort, occurring with minimal attention or awareness, and in the absence of critical thought. Explicit processes tend to be less efficient, requiring attentional resources and conscious thought. Information may be evaluated before it is accepted. Implicit versus explicit thoughts may be thought of as a continuum, where taking in subliminal messages represents the implicit end and a well thought out and tested hypothesis might represent the other. Much of what we process probably falls somewhere in the middle. The primary measure of implicit behaviors is the implicit association test (IAT). The IAT measures the speed with which subjects associate nonverbal information with an identified construct. Testing is completed on a computer with response times indicated in milliseconds (ms). Short response times evidence automaticity in accessing the construct, while longer response times provide evidence for less efficient processes.

Moors et al. (2010) reviewed the literature regarding predictive links between implicit measures and behavior. They assert that implicit measures are better predictive instruments for nonverbal behavior, as verbal mediation carries an indication of explicit learning. They also identified prejudice as one topic of study where implicit measures appear to be better predictors of IAT behavior than explicit measures. Implicit measures were asserted to provide a better measure because results were more varied across subjects, indicating a level of differentiation more in keeping with the smoother curves associated with other psychological tests. Explicit measures are assumed to be biased by factors such as impression management and social desirability. Independent measures of impression management and social desirability further support this interpretation of IAT findings. However, IAT findings are less predictive in terms of behavior outside the laboratory, where the predictive power of explicit measures is improved for certain people, under certain circumstances. Moderators were identified that reduced the predictive power of the IAT (Perugini et al., 2010). Personal moderators include personal characteristics that support behavior in specific ways across multiple contexts. *Motivation to control* was identified as a particularly important moderator with regard to prejudice. This is further supported by Cunningham et al.'s (2004) findings cited above in conjunction with the levels of consciousness model.

The need for cognition (NFC) is also included on Perugini et al.'s (2010) list of possible personal moderators to the predictive power of implicit thoughts. The Need for Cognition Scale is a measure of how much an individual enjoys and/or derives satisfaction from thinking about complex issues (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Further inquiry into characteristics associated with NFC was conducted to ascertain differences in

the persuasive power of different types of arguments on individuals who tended to prefer an elaborated style of reasoning over a more heuristic style (Petty, Cacioppo, Strathman, & Priester, 2005). They asserted that a group with a high need for cognition was more likely to favor an elaborated style in consideration of persuasive arguments, rather using common heuristics. Such heuristics might include attending to the number of assertions made, or depending on the expertise of others. As expected, a group scoring high on the Need for Cognition Scale required stronger arguments to sway their opinions, and their newly formed opinions were more persistent over time than the low-scoring group. Additionally, they were better able to recall and enumerate the reasons for the position they held than the low-NFC group.

NFC was found to be a personal moderator for the role of automatic attitudes about ethnicity in making personal judgments about a teenage offender depicted in a newspaper article (Florack, Scarabis, & Bless, 2001). The attitudes of 68 German college students toward Turkish immigrants were analyzed via IAT and an explicit questionnaire. Upon reading a counterfeit newspaper article about a Turkish teen gang member who was alleged to threaten students, commit multiple property offenses, and appear belligerent and unremorseful in court, they were asked to write down their thoughts while reading the article. They were also asked to answer questions about personality characteristics and infer causal information about the reported behavior of the teen. The IAT indicated that the students made faster implicit associations for prejudicial thoughts about the characteristics of Turkish people. A significant main effect was found for NFC, along with a more moderate effect for more positive self-reported out-group evaluation. Weakened correlations between automatic negative associations and explicit

evaluations suggest a moderating effect for NFC in the predictive power of implicit learning. Although an individual might prefer an elaborated style to decision-making, it is anticipated that motivation is also likely to contribute to employment of an elaborative style of reasoning.

Time constraints are likely to force an individual to choose a fully elaborative style for some topics and accept a more heuristic approach for others, even for individuals with high NFC (Petty et al., 2005). The study conducted by Cunningham et al. (2004) incorporates a measure of motivation to control to account for this assumption. NFC was not found to have a moderating effect between implicit attitudes toward chocolate and fruit and dietary choices made by direct observation or those recorded in a diary in two studies (Conner, Perugini, O’Gorman, Ayres, & Prestwich, 2007); however, motivation to control was not directly measured in any way. In this particular set of studies, a measure of habitual behavior in making food choices had a significant moderating effect on the predictive power of implicit associations. One might speculate that the development of healthy habitual behavior might reflect motivation that is not captured in NFC alone. Perugini et al. (2010) cite this study as evidence of habitual behavior’s moderating effect on the predictive power of implicit associations and as a counter to evidence presented regarding the moderating effects of NFC. Taken as a whole, these findings do not necessarily contradict evidence that high NFC acts as a moderator of implicit attitudes when motivation is also high.

The goal of the current study was to explore the course of emotions in grappling with negative experiences associated with unattuned parenting. The purpose behind this exploration was to identify elements that may contribute to the development of

preoccupied anger and facilitate its integration in a manner that leads to earned security. There are significant gaps in the literature about what processes might take place when one becomes secure in adulthood. Based on the differences between the theoretical constructs for preoccupied versus secure attachment, it was expected that a journey toward earned security would include substantive changes to participants' functioning across multiple domains. It was also expected that new skills and behaviors would emerge that would bridge the transition between preoccupied and secure states of mind. According to attachment theory, this transition is expected to be marked by changes in underlying processes, such as emotion regulation, implicit social cognition, and accurate empathy. The researcher anticipated that much could be discovered about the process of becoming earned-secure by exploring how participant narratives intersect with the literature across a broad range of neuropsychological topics. It was also anticipated that some of these changes might come about in ways that are not easily foreseeable based on the constructs under discussion.

MethodologyError! Bookmark not defined.

The current study utilized a process that parallels retrospective classification for earned security to identify participants. As indicated in the literature review, retrospective classification of childhood experiences has proved unreliable. It has been difficult to differentiate between individuals who meet the theoretical definition of earned-secure and continuously secure individuals who nonetheless have reported unloving childhood experiences with key attachment figures. Therefore, the researcher elected to investigate angry preoccupation as the construct of study in the narrative process in association with both secure and insecure transcripts. It was hoped that an analysis of narratives describing the lived experience of grappling with highly emotive past experiences would shed light, not only on processes leading to security, but also on contextual factors that may be important to filling in gaps in the literature with regard to prospective and retrospective assessment.

Overview of the Narrative Method

The narrative method is a qualitative method that is rooted in Hermeneutics and influenced by phenomenology. These qualitative traditions focus on interpretation and context to derive meaning (Patton, 2002). The goal of the narrative method is to capture lived experiences where context and continuity are important to gaining understanding about the topic (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The data reported remains closely connected to the source. There are many ways to analyze narrative data. Some analyses depend on internal consistencies or form, while others depend on outside corroboration. It is the investigator's task to explore the topic in a way that establishes the trustworthiness of the account in describing an area of interest (Patton, 2002).

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) described categorical-form narrative analysis as a method that relies heavily on corroborative evidence to structure the analysis of the narrative in a manner that may lead to the discovery of information not readily apparent from within the narrative. The unit of analysis is determined by the parameters of what is being studied. A categorical unit of analysis was selected for the present study because there were many predictable categories for possible change. These were identified by the available literature on attachment states of mind and links to theoretical constructs that are likely to be associated with the transition from insecure to secure attachment. Form refers to the progression of the narrative from one point to another. The present study utilized form in terms of a chronological sequencing of events in a timeline. Because the construct of earned security pertains to unidentified processes over time in a specific direction, it was fitting to analyze the data in a sequential manner. Understanding what events might chain together in a progression toward security was equally important as identifying what those events were. Lieblich et al. further point out that an emphasis on form enhances the trustworthiness of the analysis because form occurs at a deeper level. They posit that these deeper levels are not easily manipulated by participants whose narratives could be influenced by what they perceive to be more desirable actions or traits. The categorical-form narrative method as outlined above appeared to be well suited to the objectives of the present study. It had the potential to yield important information about the course of emotions in grappling with past and ongoing experiences that may have provoked strong emotions in relation to attachment figures.

Criterion sampling was selected for identifying participants for follow-up interviews, as it calls for the focus of investigation to be on cases that meet the condition being explored. Participants with an earned-secure state of mind are difficult to identify, so the data presented by these individuals is at a premium for identifying important fluctuations in this construct through resolution. It was expected that interviewing individuals scoring at various stages and levels of angry preoccupation would yield a data set rich in contextual information for the construct under study. A small sample size was also indicated for in-depth analysis of the participants' experiences. The first phase of the study was to identify participants by administration and scoring of the AAI. The second phase was to interview individuals with a range of scores on the scale for angry preoccupation about how their feelings might have changed over time.

Human Subjects Considerations

Informed consent was obtained in accordance with the application for Research Involving Human Participants (RIHP), which was approved by Antioch University Seattle's Institutional Review Board. The participants of the researcher's prior weekly training group and those attending the Saint Martin's University Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology and Antioch University Seattle's Doctorate of Psychology program during the years the researcher attended are not included in the study due to concerns regarding multiple relationships. Attendees of Antioch University Seattle's Master of Arts Counseling Program were eligible, provided they were not otherwise excluded.

The psychodrama community in the greater Seattle area is a close community. The researcher is part of that community. The interviews were informal and the

participants seemed very much at ease with the researcher. As is common for other studies, pseudonyms are utilized for discussion of experiences that can be traced throughout the analysis. Additionally, ellipses denote areas where identifying information has been omitted or the conversation veered off topic. Ellipses were also used in place of follow-up questions and conversational placeholders to support readability and keep transcripts to a reasonable length for reporting. Pseudonyms were omitted from the most highly sensitive information that was deemed important to the results of the study. Pseudonyms were also omitted where AAI classification might be determined based on the topic of discussion.

Additionally, highly identifying specific accounts are not cited as examples and contextual information that is tangential to thought processes has been omitted to protect the privacy of participants. Participants were asked to review the redacted information for accuracy as well as privacy concerns. Data were corrected as necessary for accuracy and data identified by participants as privacy concerns were omitted from the final report. There were also traumatic events reported that were linked to sustained subjective anger. Most of those that are likely to be highly identifying are not reported here. The researcher has elected to err on the side of caution due to the closeness of the community. This decision did not impair the researcher's ability to provide narratives supporting each category-content area discussed. One participant's narrative contained information about the death of her mother that is potentially identifying. This situation was discussed with the participant in detail and she felt that that this information was integral to her story. She completed the member-checking task and requested that this piece of data remain a part of the final document.

Participants

The researcher solicited participants from the psychodrama community in Washington State, preferring more local volunteers over those who reside and work further away. The psychodrama community was chosen as the primary contact for the research of this construct due to several parallels between the practice of psychodrama and the parenting of continuously secure individuals. It was anticipated that this community might include a higher concentration of earned-secure individuals than in the general population. It was also anticipated that the study would be enhanced by the psychodrama's intensive practice of linking present behaviors to past experiences, and group norms for high levels of disclosure. Requests for participants were made by word of mouth, email, or any other conventional methods. Others outside the psychodrama community were also invited to participate in the study. Brief presentations were made in Master's level courses at Antioch University Seattle, and at psychodrama workshops for self-referrals and/or client referrals of individuals who had worked extensively on their relationships.

Thirteen respondents participated in the first phase of the study, including the administration of the AAI. Two individuals dropped from the study after administration of the AAIs. One could not be reached after several attempts at follow-up, and the other decided not to continue, citing time constraints as the reason to discontinue. Eight transcripts were selected for narrative interviews based on the state of mind scores for preoccupied anger above the base level of 1 on a 9-point scale. Scores for preoccupied anger ranged from 3 to 7, with two transcripts each at ratings of 3, 4, 5, and 7. Note that 5 is the cutoff score between secure and preoccupied transcripts, with transcripts rated at

5 being a judgment call for the rater. Three transcripts were rated as secure, with a fourth being a difficult judgment call based on only a few lines of text. This transcript is included with the secure transcripts due to a final judgment call regarding main-gate classification. Two transcripts were classified as preoccupied, and two others were classified as dismissing. One of the transcripts that was classified as dismissing also had an elevated score for preoccupation. It was determined that dismissing characteristics outweighed preoccupied characteristics; however, a rater with more experience with transcripts in the cannot classify category might have considered that placement.

One participant who completed the narrative interviews could not be reached for the member checking procedure in the study. While the data from this narrative was consistent with conclusions drawn, the associated narrative could not be included in the results.

Measures

The Adult Attachment Interview. The AAI is a 20-question semi-structured interview that is generally completed in an hour to 90 minutes (Hesse, 2008). The interview is theorized to “surprise the unconscious” so that the level of integration of early attachment experiences can be measured. Higher level skills that are demonstrated while the unconscious is caught off guard are considered to be indicative of higher levels of integration. Because the current study does not utilize the predictive qualities of the AAI, but merely uses the AAI for the selection of participants, the discussion of the predictive validity of the AAI appears in the literature review section above. The AAI was found to have a test-retest reliability index of 78% over a two month window, $n = 83$ (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn, 1993). Some of the participants whose

scores changed during that time stated that they had thought about their answers to the questions in the interim. The answers on the second administration tended to be more coherent. Multivariate analysis also showed no between-category differences regarding secure, dismissing and preoccupied classifications on tests of autobiographical memory, intelligence, or self-report of social desirability.

The structure of the AAI begins with warming up to the topic, followed by a discussion of early childhood (Hesse, 2008). During the discussion of early childhood, the participant is asked for adjectives to describe early childhood relationships with caregivers. The participant is then asked to describe specific events from childhood that are connected with the adjectives chosen. The interview also includes questions about possible trauma or losses of important attachment figures in childhood. The interview then reorients the participant to the present day, and ends with a discussion of hopes for the future.

Procedures

Administration of the AAI. An initial meeting was utilized to collect demographic information to facilitate contact and provide a frame for the qualitative data to be collected. Upon consent, the AAI was also conducted at the first meeting. Digital recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim by a transcriber. Thirteen AAIs were administered in phase one. A second AAI was administered at the beginning of phase two for one individual who indicated a recent traumatic experience in the first AAI. The researcher coded the AAI transcripts for classification according to *the Adult Attachment Scoring and Classification System*, an unpublished, proprietary manuscript (Main et al., 2002). The researcher attended a 2-week institute for training in the administration,

coding and classification of the AAI transcript protocol in March of 2009 offered by a certified trainer in this system. She subsequently passed reliability certification with a score of 80% or above for inter-rater reliability with certified trainers on classification of the three main categories. This level of reliability is in line with scores for inter-rater reliability in other studies in the field of psychology.

Narrative interviewing. Phase 2 data collection included a semi-structured interview and a follow-up meeting with an invitation to share related artifacts, such as memorabilia, artwork, journal entries and poetry. The semi-structured interview was to be the first step that was likely to lead to a narrative regarding the information that is being sought. Examples of questions that were asked included:

- What emotions would you say that you were feeling as a child in conjunction with your experiences with your mother/father?
- Did your feelings about your childhood experiences change during childhood? Adolescence? Adulthood? If so, how?
- Have there been experiences that seemed to feed or maintain negative feelings at various times?
- In the last interview, you described a time when [brief reference to subject's prior report]. Do you remember your feelings at that time? Did your feelings about that event change during childhood? During adolescence? During adulthood?
- How has the strength of these emotions changed over time?
- Do you think that your experiences with [reported trauma/loss] influenced how you processed feelings about these events at any point in time?

- What role, if any, has spirituality or religion played in how you have processed these emotions over time?
- Have there been events that increased or decreased the strength of your feelings about this early experience?
- Have there been separations or reunions that changed how you feel about these events?
- What motivated you to continue to address these strong feelings over time?
- Have you participated in any kind of therapy that you feel impacted your feelings about these events? If so, can you describe the therapy and how the experience changed your feelings?
- Why did you seek therapy?
- Have there been forms of media that have influenced how you feel about your childhood experiences with your mother/father? If so, can you share some examples and how they changed your feelings?
- What goals, if any, do you have for your personal development in the future?

After the initial narrative interview, the researcher set a follow-up appointment with each participant to address any questions raised in the narrative. The researcher also invited the participant to make further comments and share artifacts related to the processing of the emotions discussed in a follow-up meeting.

Narrative interviews were conducted either in person or by Skype®, an online conferencing platform. Follow-up interviews were conducted by phone unless the follow-up questions appeared to be sensitive or complex. Eight transcripts for continuing participants were identified as having positive indicators of angry preoccupation (scores

above 1) on the AAI. All eight consented to continue with the second phase of the study, including the four individuals whose transcripts were identified as either earned-secure or approaching earned security. Follow-up interviews were conducted at a mutually agreeable time and quiet location.

Data analysis. Coding was done in NVivo 10® for Windows in an iterative process with the study of theoretical constructs from published literature. Initial categories were designated based on areas of literature and theories that were likely to be related to the constructs under study, specifically (a) states of mind with regard to attachment, (b) characteristics of the secure state of mind, and (c) processes that might be related to development toward earned security. Long-standing grand theories were anticipated to lend structure and provide one meter for the trustworthiness of the narratives. However, some of these theories were found to be too broad for data reduction purposes. A few were difficult to apply because interview questions did not specifically target investigation of those theories. Final selections for applied theories were based on the goodness of fit in relation to format of the data and the opportunities for the differentiation between categories.

The participants' descriptions of how growth experiences took place were expected to support the trustworthiness of the narratives by tying subjective experiences to constructs associated with earned security. An extensive study of these areas was performed and coding schemes were developed for the main theoretical constructs on an iterative basis. It was expected that patterns of change should emerge in participants' skills for emotional regulation, perspective-taking, forgiveness, and the quality of

empathy. It was also anticipated that growth in these areas would progress from the explicit to implicit, and from consciously mediated to some level of automaticity.

The main references used in the development of coding schemes regarding attachment were Erik Hesse's (2008) chapter on "The Adult Attachment Interview" in the *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications*; the *Handbook of Emotion Regulation* (Gross, 2007); the *Handbook of Implicit Social Cognition: Measurement, Theory and Practice* (Gawronski & Payne, 2010); "The Capacity for Understanding Mental States: The Reflective Self in Parent and Child and its Significance for Security of Attachment" (Fonagy et al., 1991); and *The Forgiving Life: A Pathway to Overcoming Resentment and Creating a Legacy of Love* (Enright, 2012). Coding of reflective functioning was discontinued as it became clear that the scale was custom-designed to be used with the AAI. Specific questions on the AAI contain demands and invitations for complex reflective thought. Many transitional experiences in the narratives applied to narrow contexts and did not match well to the levels of complexity outlined in the article. Coding became uncertain regarding transitional and exploratory experiences that did not appear to scale along with the available categories. Coding for the forgiveness model was discontinued as the identified steps often overlapped in the narratives, providing little opportunity for data reduction. Also, it was noted that almost all participants, both secure and insecure stated that they had forgiven their parents. The construct of interest became individual differences in the forgiveness process—rather than commonalities—as is the basis for Enright's work.

Intersections with various skill levels, processes, or categories identified with the major theories were expected to establish structure and trustworthiness for participant

narratives. Conversely, experiences that emerged outside of the above areas of normative development or those areas anticipated to be associated with earned security would require further exploration and reasonable explanation. *The Handbook of Life-Span Development, Volume 1: Cognition, Biology, and Methods* (Lerner & Overton, 2010), *Volume 2: Social and Emotional Development* (Lerner, Lamb, & Freund, 2010); *Moral Development and Reality: Beyond the Theories of Kohlberg and Hoffman* (Gibbs, 2010); and *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (Perry, 1968) were utilized to identify applicable theories. Coding was also developed for intersections with Bandura's theories for social cognitive learning (Bandura, 1986) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) to provide a framework for the learning process.

Cognitive development was coded using Piaget's (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966) stages of cognitive development and Perry's (1968) scheme for intellectual and ethical development. However, Piaget's model was quickly discontinued as all participants demonstrated the use of formal operations, the highest level of cognition recognized in the model. The focus was then shifted to the quality and characteristics of adult reasoning. Moshman's (1990) model was adopted and expanded to apply the principles that he outlined for deductive reasoning to other types of reasoning identified in the literature. The development of empathy was coded using Hoffman's stages of empathic distress. Kohlberg's (as cited in Gibbs, 2010) stages proved impractical to code as interview questions did not specifically explore the motivational factors behind the participant decisions. The narratives were then compared with the large body of research related to the social domain approach to the development of moral judgment (Smetana, 2006; Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2014; Turiel, 2010).

Coding for Erikson's stages of psychosocial development (Newman & Newman, 2012) and Maslow's (2013) hierarchy of needs quickly became overwhelming and provided little opportunity for data reduction. Stages related to psychosocial development were often re-addressed iteratively and tangentially in combination with other stages. Maslow's hierarchy was mainly addressed at the levels of love and belonging, although there was also evidence of considerations regarding safety and esteem. In some cases, it appeared that all three were being addressed at the same time. Therefore, the major references that were used for the final coding process were Perry's (1968) scheme for intellectual and ethical development, Bandura's (1986) social cognitive learning theory, Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, Hoffman's (2008) stages of empathic distress, and Smetana et al.'s (2014) and Turiel's (2010) overviews of the social domain approach to moral judgments.

Trustworthiness of narratives was also explored through triangulation between AAI classification, narrative interview data, memorabilia, artwork, poems, and media influences cited. The AAI is essentially a behavioral observation that yields a score for state of mind with respect to attachment in terms of maintaining discourse and overall coherence (Hesse, 2008). It was anticipated that AAI transcript scores associated with current or prior preoccupation would include the identification of sustained subjective anger. Earned-secure transcripts would be expected to identify sustained subjective anger, as well as clear narratives that would identify mechanisms by which negative experiences were integrated. In addition, it was anticipated that participants would be willing to share photos and creative projects as well as songs, movies or other media that hold significant meaning in relation to the processing of the events that they described as

problematic. Triangulation among the related narrative accounts, artifacts presented, and AAI results supported the trustworthiness of these narratives.

The trustworthiness of the narrative process was enhanced by the use of open-ended, chronologically oriented, questions in the first narrative interview. This permitted the interviewees to name their early emotions and freely describe how their emotions changed over time. The term anger was not used in follow-up questions unless the participant had previously named it specifically. Additionally, questions pertaining to specific processes or events, such as therapeutic interventions, the generation of artwork, and spiritual understanding were held to the end of the first interview. These items were used as a checklist to make sure that participants had discussed everything that they thought was pertinent. It also helped to establish a hierarchy in their responses. Topics discussed as afterthoughts were likely to be less critical to their processes than information that arose based on chronological sequence. Participants were asked about sharing artifacts of their processes after the completion of the first interview. Artifacts that related to their initial interview could be deemed to be more related to how their feelings toward parents had changed than if they were asked about these items at the outset. Very few artifacts were produced that were not connected to participant feelings regarding attachment relationships.

The trustworthiness of the process was enhanced by the use of categorical-form methodology. Narratives were analyzed based on criteria that are not easily manipulated, either consciously or unconsciously. While an extensive literature review might bias a researcher to only look for specific constructs, it also provides a checklist of areas and ideas to consider. Concepts that emerged in the narratives spurred additional research

into new areas, thus the process for analyzing the data in the current study was iterative and expansive, rather than limiting. Discontinuing coding in some areas was based on two types of reasoning. The first was an observation of an excess of applicability (as opposed to a lack of applicability). Over-coding data, in some respects, is the same as not coding the data at all, as it does nothing to differentiate between key concepts and minor details. The second reason for discontinued coding was related to the research methodology behind the source documents. For example, the Reflective-Functioning Scale was specifically related to questions on the AAI, an instrument that has well established psychometric properties that are far removed from face value. The narrative questions were designed to encourage free-flowing thoughts, with little structural demand. The questions did not contain the task demand of the AAI that provides the data for rating on the Reflective-Functioning Scale. Neither of these reasons for discontinuing coding is a serious impediment to the trustworthiness of the process.

The main identified threat to the trustworthiness of the process utilized in the current study is the strength of the links between the narrative and the analysis. Extensive narrative information is provided. The reader can and should independently evaluate the strengths of these links. Ideally, the results of this study are not an end-point, but provide a starting point for additional discussion and research into the construct of earned security.

Findings and Interpretations

The narrative interviewing process inquired about how emotions related to negative childhood experiences had changed over time. Interview questions started with the earliest recollections about the participant's relationship with either parent, and moved forward in time with inquiries about if and when their overarching feelings about the relationship had changed. Participants were encouraged to explain any events or circumstances that led to changes in their feelings toward the parent. These inquiries led to a rough chronological order for events that took place and the associated emotional responses. Due to the relaxed, semi-structured format, participant responses were candid attempts to answer the questions asked. As such, they may contain restarts and grammatical errors generally not found in written source documents. In order to preserve the integrity of participant responses, these types of errors are not marked with the traditional designation of [*sic*]. Quotations were chosen to demonstrate how participant emotions progressed over time. However, due to the volume of data, it is not practical to present data for all participants for every topic discussed. An attempt was made to present each quotation only once; however, there are some occasions where quotations crossed over between important topics. The reader is likely to note that portions of a few quotations are included under more than one heading, and that quotations selected for a given topic may support aspects of experience that were previously discussed under another heading.

Emotions in Childhood and Adolescence

Because preoccupying anger was the topic to be explored for the present study, it was anticipated that participant narratives would describe how interactions in their early environments contributed to their anger, and how they might have come to feel that parents were to blame for their circumstances. A review of the literature regarding topics that might be relevant to this trajectory was conducted to find theoretical foundations with substantial associated research to support the exploration. The social domain approach to the development of moral judgment, and Bandura's theories regarding social cognitive learning (1968) and self-efficacy (1997) were selected to be compared and contrasted against participant narratives. It was also anticipated that narratives about early experiences that are well matched to specific findings in the developmental literature would contribute to the trustworthiness of the narratives. Conversely, narratives that were sharply misaligned with normative development trends would raise concerns about intervening factors, such as inaccuracies of memory, attempts at impression management, or threats to the validity of self-report.

When asked about their earliest emotions, most of the participants did not name anger as part of their earliest emotions. Matthew described wanting to be close to his father and continuing trying to impress him, even after his attempts at connection led to events that frightened him. He also described a growing resentment toward his mother after his parents' divorce regarding her choices of partners.

My happiest memories involved either being on the lake or up at the mountain. I just remember always being excited when we were doing something like that, because I could actually see my dad, I remember being really young.

I remember sitting at home not knowing if dad was going to be happy when he got home, or if he was going to be pissed off. And if the things that I did

that day were going to piss him off or would go unnoticed, or if he would actually appreciate it.

Um, he picked me up by my shirt collar and threw me across the living room, which he always made sure I landed on the couch because he didn't want it to be abuse, you know. He just wanted to get his point across. I didn't always land on the cushions. You know, I didn't always hit the couch and he didn't, you know, he didn't always just grab my shirt you know, I, um and I, and it never stopped me from trying to show him how strong I was.

After my parents got divorced, for a long time when we saw him every weekend and it n, no longer seemed like father-son. It was father with, you know, kids he had to take care of for the weekend.

And summer vacations had changed. Because it used to be mom, dad, brother and I, you know, in the camper out at [Lake Name], playing on the boat, playing in the sand, hiking up into the woods and trying not to get, you know, trying not to come across rattle snakes, to you know, me and my brother and my dad and his girlfriend. She wasn't really a big fan of camping, we were just kind of along for the ride cause, well, you know, it is part of the visitation agreement that we are with our dad for two weeks out of the summer and this is what we are doing. Um, but it was still, you know, it wasn't ever family-oriented anymore. It was a bunch of adults getting shit-faced for a week at a time and my brother and I trying to find other kids to play with who were dealing with their parents doing the same shit.

Um, when I was sixteen, um I ended up talking to my mom and dad and asked to live with my dad, and they agreed. I just, I wanted a relationship with him. I thought if I lived under his roof the whole time, then maybe that would help, and it kind of ended up driving a wedge between us even more.

Part of it was just the fact that, you know, I was sixteen and I moved in with my dad and stepmom. . . . I think I was in [elementary school] grade, that she never wanted to be a mom, never wanted kids, but she loved my dad. Thanks.

I didn't trust that if I were to tell her something that it would get relayed to him exactly how I said it. I didn't trust that if I said something to him, she would even know anything about it.

The anger grew; I think the anger ended up being my survival. It kind of grew to cover up the pain, 'cause I was really hurt by the fact that my dad ultimately expressed that without the exact words, ultimately expressed that holy shit I made a mistake.

You know, I ended up getting really resentful towards my mom throughout time because of that, you know, different guys in and out of my life, um; I never had any say on when they came or went.

And my mom, when I got home from school started unloading on me about stuff, and I looked at her and said, "Why are we here? No one is happy. I hate this house. I can't stand [Stepfather], and you can't either, and he is not even nice to any of us. He cares more about his dog, his . . . car, and his jeep than he does about any of us three. We don't need that kind of security." I was in fourth grade. [How did she respond?] I basically got a promotion. I took care of myself, and my brother, and my mom. We weren't there whole lot longer, but we

had already been there too long, and I kind of became the responsible male figure in our family.

I spent a long time wishing I could do more because it hurt so much to see what my mom was going through. You know, she was going to school, working two jobs, trying to raise us, um, and, yeah, about every other week we barely had enough food, and she tried to hide how she really felt about it. Which is interesting; I don't know if that made it more or less painful.

And she came and picked me up and brought me back to her house. And at the time it was just her and my brother, so they had a little two-bedroom apartment in [City]. And I had a mattress on the floor in the living room. And when I finally started to feel better, I looked around and realized that there was no place for me here, so I left again.

I figured that was why they didn't take care of me the way that I needed was because I was depressed and disappointing. . . . I spent most of my life thinking that the reason I got crapped on by my parents was because I wasn't good enough. . . . You know, it's one of those things, like um, my whole life I've consciously known that my dad loves me. A conscience thing, I'm his son, of course, yes, he loves me. I've never felt it. And I think in a lot of ways I consciously knew that my mom loved me, and she was able to tell me that she loved me, but I don't know that I ever really felt that either. I think I was so shut off by the whole idea of love, and being loved, and giving love that I just, I wouldn't accept it, even if someone was genuine. I wouldn't have known what was genuine anyway.

Karen described how she adored her mother in early childhood followed by a time when she describes her mother becoming withdrawn. She also describes both adoring and fearing her father.

When I was really young, you know, I think, I really, there was a period of time when I really kind of adored her, you know. . . . I was, say, four or five years old. Um, I don't have a lot of warm memories after that that are—she made attempts at warmth but it was . . . I think it was harder for her. Her mother died when she was [early age]. I think [that] was kind of an age she knew how to respond to, and then after I was close to that age she just kind of shut down in a way. But warm, she would—she would do things like she would, when I was little she would just scratch our heads, or just, you know, we could lay in her lap and she would just cuddle us, you know?

You know, and, uh, like if I was sick she would always bring me toast with, cinnamon toast, cinnamon sugar toast with tea, you know, and just sit with me, like I remember having the measles and she would just sit with me.

Yeah and I was [Role in Family] and also a traditional [Region 1] role for the oldest girl. So, and I think, you asking about things that we've come to understand later, one of the pieces that I've come to understanding in the last few

years, relatively recently, is how much anxiety I had that I just covered up with being competent and acting like nothing was wrong.

I was the co-mom, not kid. So lots of times when I felt like I felt like my sister and brother got a lot of attention and I was expected to be watching them, or just, uh, not part of it. . . . I was supposed to be like a little grown up, and I wasn't. And then I'd get in trouble, because I didn't know how to act.

Most of the time, I had no . . . idea what I was supposed to, there was no one saying here's how, can I help you with this? You know, just from going to school to understanding what is a six-year-old or seven-year-old going through in school and you know being you know able to be supportive.

I was more of a tomboy. But I loved, like, cooking with her. And we would sew together and, you know, I would imitate her, you know, being able to make dinner.

I made, we made jellies and jams in the summer together. So I would just follow her around and try to learn how to do that stuff. And she always helped me. She was, that was one of the times probably that we bonded or that we spent time together and really, I felt her attention, was when we were doing stuff like that.

It always felt like, uh, with me, um, that her, there was a certain point her interactions with me were just really controlled and kind of monitored. I don't know how to say that, but, and then, she also tried to, you know, really control me. Because I was not your classic [Culture 1] girl. I wanted to climb trees and ride horses and, you know, generally just raise holy hell.

They are running him off to the ER. So that was kind of how it was. Um, I would, I was, and that was really frustrating, and you know, I was pissed. I was like, I remember just being furious, like I am all in pain here and nobody is paying any attention. So that often was how [it was]. . . . Oh, it wasn't an isolated incident. It was pretty much how things were. I mean, you know, I was the parentified child. I was the kid who was supposed to, if something happened to my brother, if something happened to somebody, it was always, you know, I should have taken care of him.

Yeah, she was there, but once dad started erupting, um, she was pretty helpless in the face of that. She just would not, not—she would say, [Father's Name]? You know? But, yeah, she was not in the, in the action. She was pretty terrified of any kind of physical thing happening or any, any yelling she would just kind of go into herself.

Well, I adored him and I was also terrified by him . . . I just generally thought he was the cat's meow. I just thought he was wonderful. . . . And, uh, I would just watch and create these images and I just, uh, I adored him. I just thought he was a magician.

He was, oh, my God, he could just blow up. He never physically, never hit anybody. But, you know, there were times when you didn't know if he, what he was going to do. And usually he would stomp around and leave. But, um, he could scare the snot out of you, and didn't mind doing it, didn't have any compunction about it. So yeah, he could be terrifying.

And when I got, started to get sick, of course mom would tell dad to pull over and the whole time that I'm, like, being sick, dad would be, you know, swearing and carrying on and, you know, and, mom would just give me a [type of soda] and, you know, he, but he would be, freak, just totally pissed. He would shut up after a while, but you could see the steam just coming out of his ears, so. You know, he was, he was, uh—he would get mad when he was working on stuff.

If something went wrong you would just hear the garage just erupt and things would start flying, . . . If he is working on a car, didn't matter, you know, you did not want to be the kid that got picked to help him work on the car. That's for sure. . . . Which was more often, thank God, my brother than me.

Well, you know, as a teacher, to have, dad was impatient. I mean, he wasn't, he could get frustrated if you didn't pick it up pretty fast. . . . So sometimes I just, you know, pretend like I knew what he was talking about and then wait 'til he forgot that I didn't know, and you know, go back and or else just watch and just observe him, so.

I didn't feel like mom saw me as the person that I am. She saw me, what I, what she thought I should be and wasn't. And so, um, and she would be quite punishing about that.

Like I didn't fit, you know. . . . I wasn't, I wasn't the kid that, particularly with my mom, that, um, that she wanted. . . . And I think my dad wanted a boy and, um, so I don't know. I never really felt like I fit. I didn't fit really the job of being the big sister; I wasn't that.

I think I was angry before, but I wasn't, I didn't act it out very much. You know, and I think I started to be more oppositional at that point, saying, no, I'm not going to do this, or no, I'm not going to do that. For instance, I think it was right around sixth grade that I announced that I wasn't going to [religious services] anymore. And that was a huge deal in my family. I said, you know, so you can kill me, what are you going to do? And I knew they weren't going to send me away to like reform school or something, so I figured it was a safe bet that they would probably put me on restriction, but that would be about it. But that was a big rupture between me and my mom, not, not going along with her [belief system].

I would feel very anxious around being separate. . . . It wasn't soothed in any way. There wasn't, I didn't have any way to ever calm down in sane ways, you know, also there was also, part of the anger came out of all of the stuff that I did, I was expected to do without any kind of, it wasn't that it wasn't acknowledged, it was just here's this expectation.

Self-efficacy. As their subjective anger increased, these participants described ways that they were able to impact their environments. According to Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory the individuals' beliefs about their ability to attain specific goals impact the amount of effort they are willing to expend toward attaining those goals.

People are not motivated to strive for goals that they believe to be out of reach, regardless how much they might value the attainment of the goal. Various factors impact an individual's self-efficacy beliefs. Among these are their beliefs about themselves, their environment, and what is required to attain the goal. Accurate assessment of these factors is posited to be adaptive, while misconstrued information is posited to lead to missed opportunities or wasted efforts.

It appears that in instances where the participants, as children, were able to effect change, they believed that it was relatively safe to make an initial stand. Beliefs about the likelihood of success are unclear; however, the individual's initial effort was minimal. Indeed, these actions may have been impulsive responses to frustration, rather than motivated by goal attainment. Matthew was able to change his environment by influencing his parents. The first change was the apparent result of an angry outburst when he questioned his mother about why she was staying with her partner. His narrative indicated that he gained influence with his mother after he pointed out deficiencies in the arrangements. He also stated that he believed that if he lived with his father, they would have a closer relationship. These factors may have motivated his efforts to discuss the situation with his parents and ask to move in with his father. Matthew believed that his actions would lead to attaining his end goal; however, his beliefs about what it would be like to live with his father and his own abilities to facilitate a close relationship proved inaccurate. Similarly, Karen's initial refusal to comply with her parents' wishes may also have been an angry outburst. If that resulted in success in avoiding something she did not want to do, that success would be likely to increase her self-efficacy beliefs about her ability to successfully refuse to do something at other times. None of the other

participants indicated that they had made attempts to change their environments. Emily described difficulties in her relationship with her mother prior to her mother's death, as well as anger with her mother about dying. She also described a lack of connection with her father and their separation during his divorce, which occurred around the same time.

I think I know now it might have been confusion, but the feeling sense I have was I was angry, mad at them. . . . I think there are some other memories I have where I think I also feel hurt by my parents.

I just know something happened to me. I don't know what exactly, but I just remember kind of blacking out and not knowing what happened. . . . I think that my mom raged a lot, and I couldn't put words to that when I was younger, so there is not a lot of talking involved. It is more of a communication that happens from the parent to the child, me being the child. Just kind of like, don't do that. You know, not to do that. Kind of the nonverbals. And with my dad I think he kind of avoided a lot of confrontation so my feelings for him were like, well, he is here, but there is not like a lot of feelings that I would describe about, like towards him. It is like he is there. He is around.

I felt like she was leaving me a lot. Like, I was left behind. So I can't say that, you know, that it was, I just want you to know like I had that feeling of being left really early. So it is a little convoluted, but it has always been there. So it got more exasperated or more accentuated when my mom left by death.

And I lived with my mom up until about [age] when they moved me to my dad and [his wife]'s with my sister because my mom wasn't able to really take care of us. She was working . . . and she was over sleeping, you know, I was taking care of my sister. [Did that change how you felt towards your mother with having that responsibility?] I just think it is more like not understanding, not being able to access what I felt. It was like, well, I just have to take care of stuff. . . . Kind of a distant like she can't handle it either, so we are going to have to go live over here. . . . Just sad because I wasn't going to be with her, and I would rather be with her no matter what was going on, because I felt, I think, safer with her for some reason than with my dad and [his wife].

And then my mom was like the weekend parent. It felt more fun and just now she had a little bit more time when we were there. We went to the lake. I remember going to the lake, I remember walking to [convenience store] to get a [drink]. You know, just those little memories of talking and walking, they felt positive. OK. I didn't know what love was, so I wouldn't say that, but I felt like there was caring.

[And then so did your relationship change with your mother at that time?] I think it became more treat incentive. Like fun, you know, when I am going to go see her, we are going to play cards and eat chocolate Fudgesicles, and she had dogs. So I remember just a lightness and getting to play. [So was it less fearful at that time?] Yes, I would say yes.

I was pretty pissed off at her for dying and leaving me. . . . She had been remarried and she was going to have us come live with her. . . . My dad left and went to live with his brother. But he would work and try to see us. But I was just really angry because I felt like he abandoned me, too. First my mom died, and now this!

So my feelings during that time are very, I guess, you know, sad, angry, disappointed, confusing, that feeling nobody wants me, nobody cares.

I was so sad that I couldn't be, I couldn't show it. So initially I feel like I was really angry, upset, and frustrated just to the core, like I couldn't describe how I was feeling. So as I look at it, it is more like a numbness, too. So now I can sort it out and say I was angry, I was disappointed, I was frustrated, I was mad, I was grieving, you know, I could pretty much put everything, you could talk about a lot of different emotions, but I can sort them out, and I could see now that I just didn't, nobody knew what to say or do to help me at the time. They just thought, well, she is fine. She is just, seems the same. You know, she is just fine. She doesn't need any help.

Eric described how his mother was the provider, but also called upon him to intercede between her and Eric's father. Eric also described how fearful he was of his father.

She supplied the finances that it took to, you know, put clothes on my back. I remember one time she took me shopping, school shopping. I was very, very, I was so happy. I was so elated because we didn't have much money I could tell as a kid, but I remember this one particular time she took me out clothes shopping for school before it started and she bought me these, at that time there was, I don't know if the still have these clothes around called [brand name].

I just remember him blaming my mom for something, and I was so fearful of him and I had that memory etched in my mind so clearly. I was standing at the end of the hallway looking, looking in his direction, looking at him, and like, and her kind of crying and saying, "I haven't done anything." Or something to that effect. And so that's where the fear comes in, yeah. [So as far as a feeling word, what kind of a feeling word might you put on that?] Probably sympathy. And also, I think sympathy is the first one that comes to my mind.

I was very young, and we were talking about my dad's drug addiction. And she asked me to ask my dad—and she actually even scripted it for me, she said, say this to your dad, why do you, why do you get drunk or why do you take drugs, or something to that effect. And I remember feeling this sense of like, of this total responsibility that I didn't want to take on. And I shouldn't [have] had to take that on. And I don't think I ever even asked him because I was so scared of him.

I remember my mom telling me that, or calling me, she would call me from work at a certain time and say, "Is your dad up?" And I would be like, no, and she would be like, well, go wake him up. You know? She would prompt me

to go wake him up and I remember one time I had the phone in my hand and he was laying in the bed and I remember walking down the hallway to the bedroom with the phone in my hand and have, and just kind of nudging him to wake him up, because I think my mom said, "I want to talk to your dad. Put him on the phone," or something like that. And I was like, you know, I was so scared to nudge him. He was like knocked out, just like, hchhk, you know, and I had to wake him up and I remember just being so fearful of having to wake this, this guy up, you know to, to take me to school or do whatever.

[In response to a query about when his fear began] I think it always has been that. I don't know if it really started, there was moments, of course where that fear and that anger broke, where the clouds kind of parted and the sun shined through. But for the most part I think the fear and anger pretty much was there as much as I can recall. But there were moments where that lightened up. Then I began to kind of like the man. At that time, I am referring to him as the man. You know, liked him. But for the most part I think the fear and the anger just kind of was there. It was there. It was part of the aura of my household. It was part of the aura of what was going on inside of me towards him.

There were times, but those times were mostly whenever like my dad would make me laugh, or when he would do something silly. Or maybe when he wasn't drunk or high. But then the feelings weren't fear and anger, but then it became a feeling of probably ambiguity, of really not knowing whether I should like this guy or whether I should be scared of him, because I didn't know what was going to happen next. . . . Apprehensive is a really good word. Yes. Very apprehensive to let him in to my, you know, let the feelings of wanting to love him in. Because I believe I wanted to, yeah, I wanted to love him at that time, but I just was very apprehensive.

But yet she was very distracted by the issues that were going on with my dad. And that's when I can, I don't know if I really thought of it that much in that much detail at that time, but it did have a sense of feeling like there was so much more for her.

I began to, by that time my mom had divorced my dad, and I think when it really kind of began to take a turn . . . that is when I became very cognizant of this feeling of co-dependency and so it kind of turned a little bit into resentment. Yeah, a little bit of resentment that my mom had stuck it out living with him for all those years, and then right, I think it was right after I left home then she divorced him. . . . You know, so it turned into resentment.

I was probably, yeah, resented my mom, and probably was a little disturbed by that. And I believe it was around the time of late adolescence, you know. And then as an adult it I has now kind of tapered off, and it doesn't really come up much, any of the sympathy or compassionate or resentment. It just comes in little spurts every now and then, but it is not consistent.

The feelings pretty much stayed with me all the way up until I probably left from home, and then I felt a sense of freedom and relief from him, and just from the household in general.

So when I came back home, I moved away from [City], and came back home and I moved in, back in with my dad and my mom for a short period of

time. But then my dad made me leave. By that time when I left at [age] and came back, I actually had a little bit more confidence in myself and life; so I didn't really fear him much, but I was angry with him.

I think the anger increased more when he put me out the second time when I came back home, because I really had nothing to sustain me. [So you felt like he didn't have your best interest at heart?] I felt like he didn't. But looking back on it, I believe that he did. I think he was fearful in a lot of ways himself. And he was still dealing with drugs and alcohol then. Or alcohol. [Why do you think he put you out?] Because that is what his dad did.

These participants seemed to be overwhelmed by their circumstances in their parent-child relationships. This is not surprising as many environmental factors are likely to be overwhelming to a child or outside the scope of a child's influence. When all of the above narratives are considered, they present data that is consistent with Bandura's (1997) theory. Events were largely influenced by environmental factors which children would not be anticipated to be able to heavily impact.

The social domain approach. The social domain approach to the development of moral judgment has led to numerous investigations into children's and adolescents' judgments about right and wrong, and their reasoning under different circumstances. In the social domain approach, moral considerations are viewed in distinctly different ways from considerations of convention and personal preference. *Morality* is connected with justice, rights, and the welfare of individuals. These principles are seen as universal across culture and context, are not generally subject to revision, and are recognized as independent of authority. Authority independence indicates that a harmful action is judged to be wrong, even if there is no rule that forbids the action or the relevant authority figure allows it. *Societal* concerns (or matters of *convention*) pertain to social mores and customs, and are generally considered to be subordinate to moral concerns when other factors are held equal. *Psychological* concerns center on the *personal*

domain, which is comprised of areas of personal preferences, such as choices about activities or friendships. *Prudential* matters are a subset of the personal domain, and include potentially self-injurious behavior, such as drinking or smoking (Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 2010).

Even young children are able to separate moral judgments into distinct social domains of moral or conventional and apply specific reasoning relevant to each domain for familiar situations (Nucci & Turiel, 1978). Children understand that moral actions are not subject to alteration, are not wrong across different contexts, and are not authority-dependent at a young age. Children generally have the cognitive ability to make moral judgments when a situation appears unsafe or unfair to them. However, older children are better able to utilize an abstract schema of parental responsibilities for protection and beneficence of their children. Ruck, Abramovitch, and Keating (1998) interviewed 69 participants between 8 and 16 years old about vignettes designed to evaluate differences in how children of different ages think about situations requiring nurture. Younger children's responses tended to focus on the potentially negative consequences for the child that might result from a lack of support in the situation presented. Discussions regarding conceptualizations of parental duty in relation to children's nurturance rights increased significantly with age between younger children (8-year-olds) and older children (14- and 16-year-olds). Smaller increases that did not meet statistical significance were also found for between-group comparisons at 10 and 12 years old.

Participants in the current study often reported neutral, ambivalent, and even positive emotions toward parents in early childhood in spite of recalling negative experiences. Although they were angry at times during these early experiences, anger

was not necessarily reported as the overall valence of early relationships. Some participants' narratives described continuous similar behavior on the part of parents that seemed to have a cumulative effect of reaching a point of sustained subjective anger in to adolescence. Other participants described specific stressful events that appeared to create a tipping point such that anger became the predominant feature of the relationship. However, not all of those who described negative early experiences in addition to stressful events remained angry with the parent involved; some returned to previous states of ambivalence, anxiety or confusion. Those relationships are not included in this section because they did not result in reports of sustained subjective anger.

Reconfiguration of the family through the divorce, separation, remarriage of the parents, and long-term or permanent separation between parent and child were recognized as precipitating the major stressors reported across the narratives. Short-term separation, divorce and remarriage were not directly connected with sustained participant anger. Rather, it was secondary issues related to changes in the dynamics of the relationship with the parent and/or ongoing difficulties with interactions with a new romantic partner that lead to sustained anger with the parent.

Some of the above narratives indicate elements of trauma within their primary attachment relationships. The above narratives appear to represent a childhood perspective on episodic events that contributed to angry, frightened, confused, anxious, or sad feelings for the participants as children. These narratives are consistent with the literature for the social domain approach regarding children's capacities for processing moral judgments (Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 2010). Parental actions that participants describe as having contributed to feelings of anxiety, anger, or sadness are moral

concerns that children typically understand to be universal and inalterable at a young age (Nucci & Turiel, 1978). Participants' narratives focused primarily on the negative impact of events on them as children, as might be predicted based on Ruck et al.'s (1998) findings about age differences in making moral judgments. The narratives of Matthew, Karen, Emily, and Eric described their strong feelings in childhood about multiple negative experiences. Some of the narratives described trauma, while others did not. However, only Emily, whose mother had died, indicated feelings of subjective sustained anger prior to adolescence. This departure from the literature regarding moral justice is consistent with John Bowlby's (1969) research on grief responses. Bowlby, who conducted extensive studies on separation and loss, described anger as a normative grief response in both children and adults.

As participants became older, their narratives began to incorporate conceptualizations about children's rights to nurturance. Matthew moved in with his father in an attempt to improve their relationship. Karen became angry about having too much responsibility and being separate from the family. Other participants described intrusive parenting or favoritism toward a sibling. All of these narratives described the accumulation of experiences over time that contributed to an overarching valence of sustained subjective anger as the participants approached adolescence. The emergence of sustained subjective anger in adolescence is also consistent with Ruck et al.'s (1998) findings that the capacity for conceptualized schema regarding parental duty in relation to children's nurturance rights typically emerges during adolescence.

Subterfuge. Although participants were not asked about subterfuge, a few participants volunteered information about hiding their activities from their parents.

[Participant 1] I started drinking in ninth grade summer. . . . The [sic.] shenanigans with boys and drugs and alcohol and sneaking out. My parents were pretty strict, and so the cat and mouse game began.

[Participant 2] I started doing as many drugs as I could, drinking as much as I could, sneaking out of the house four or five nights a week 'til two, three in the morning, coming back either high or drunk, get an hour of sleep and go to school, and do it all over again the next night.

Anna described feeling that she needed to hide her consumption of sweets from her mother.

I would feel intimidated by my mother, got to be careful about coming home from school on time. I was into having my own money and spending. . . . I had a candy bar and left the wrapper in the trash can in my room; it was pinned to the bulletin board when I got home. . . . She was strict with the sugar, although we had it, there was scarcity on it. There was a note on the wrapper, "Whose candy wrapper is this?"

Perkins (2004) analyzed Caucasian teenagers' responses to hypothetical scenarios when perceived transgressors were either parents or peers in two age groups. The younger group consisted of seventh and eighth graders, while the older group included teens in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. Responses regarding different scenarios depicting moral or personal choice situations were compared between age groups on whether adolescents thought it was acceptable to lie to parents and/or peers. While the majority of teens from both groups endorsed honesty overall, they overwhelmingly endorsed that it was acceptable to lie to parents under circumstances where parental pressure endorsed unacceptable moral actions. When asked about personal issues, such as parental directives about who to date or choices of activities, there was an age difference in the responses. While 62% of the younger teens thought that it was acceptable to lie to parents about personal issues, that figure jumped to 92% for older teens. These findings indicate that both children and adolescents tend to accept parental

authority in moral judgments when the parents' actions reflect concern for moral principles. However, as age increases, adolescents may judge that lying about personal issues is acceptable when they perceive that parents are limiting their personal choices. Similarly, Perkins and Turiel (2007) also found that older adolescents found it to be more acceptable than younger adolescents to lie to parents regarding personal choices. Significantly more older adolescents than younger adolescents also thought it was acceptable to lie to parents about matters of prudence, such as choosing not to finish homework or riding a motorcycle. However, these were the minority at 30%, even in the older group. These narratives indicate that the choices made by the participants as teens were likely to have been based on combined considerations of personal choice and prudence. These narratives are consistent with Perkins' (2004) data regarding indirect forms of resistance as a response to the power differential between parents and teens in matters of personal choice. Although the findings regarding prudence are not as strong as those regarding personal choice (Perkins & Turiel, 2007), data regarding the acceptance of parental directives in matters of prudence is not contradictory to the narratives.

Arguments. Further information about these relationships can be gathered by reviewing participants' narratives regarding arguments that they had with parents and comparing the content of those arguments with the literature. Some participants described specific arguments that they had with their parents. These arguments did not appear to directly address the moral concerns described as contributing to their subjective anger above, nor did they appear to lead to any lasting resolution.

[Matthew:] I started getting really angry and my brother kind of ended up being the brunt of most of it. But my mom would step in and it would flip a switch and it would go from, you know, mother and son, to just enemies. [How old were you, do you think?] Twelve. Um, I think that was around the time I actually had

just gotten so fed up that I, I don't know it was probably 8:30 at night, I just walked out the front door and didn't come home for like three to four hours.

[Janet:] She would say, you are being impudent, go upstairs, my room was upstairs, go to your room and don't come down until you can be civil. So I would go up literally two steps and then come right back down because I wasn't the one that wasn't being civil.

I hated it and I wouldn't do a very good job. . . . I didn't see why it should be my job . . . she would say things like, you know, "You didn't do a very good job." And I said, "I just don't feel like it." And she would say, "Well, I noticed that. You know, you don't have to feel like it to do it." . . . And on and on and on.

They were all things that, either good girls didn't do that, or it wasn't safe.

And so I was bleeding. And mom yelled at me . . . and she completely ignored the fact that it was my brother that had jammed it into my mouth—which should have been a pretty serious offense, I think. . . . She made dinner and it was time to eat and she didn't want to have to deal with anything like a crying child. He could get away with so many things that she didn't see.

[Jessica:] I used to yell and scream at my stepfather because I was like she wouldn't stand up for herself. And he was not, he was, um, he had . . . children who were older. . . . Um, he would treat them very differently than us.

And my anger became more pronounced and more conscious and more, and I even told my mom I hated her. I was so angry, enraged with her.

[Karen:] I just remember vividly, God, like she doesn't get me at all. I just remember thinking that. I can't remember what it was about. . . . I didn't like it at all. I was probably about sixth grade, maybe and she was probably trying to get me to do some girly thing. . . . Nine or ten, right in there. Yeah. There was always that kind of conflict between my being a tomboy and her desire to kind of make me be more feminine [laughs].

When I got home, my dad was mad at me because mom had decided to mop the kitchen floor and I had, I mean I was in school. And his philosophy was if you had cleaned the floor, and it didn't need cleaning, then she wouldn't have had to mop the kitchen floor. And it was like, I always mop the kitchen floor, I did all that cleaning on the weekend when I am not in school. So I really felt like that was pretty unfair.

I did things to like piss them off, things that would, I mean, I remember when I stopped going to church and I just kind of dared my mother to get upset with me. I mean, I'm not going to church anymore, and that was her bedrock. It was just like, you know, whatever you guys, if I don't have to do it I'm not going to do it was my, I was a defiant little shit.

[Anna:] I went out for a run early in the morning. I was living at home at the time. I was 16 or 17. . . . Anyway, he made an assumption that because my bed was made . . . I had spent the night out. He wouldn't hear my response. I had a resentment about that for a long time. He didn't believe me.

Smetana (2011) asserted that moral issues are rarely identified as the basis of conflict between Caucasian and African American parents and adolescents. Rather, arguments tend to revolve around more mundane daily interactions, such as getting along with others, completion of assigned chores or homework, the state of the adolescent's room, and time spent on chosen activities. Smetana, Braeges, and Yau (1991) examined adolescent-parent conflicts in 102 middle to mid-upper class Caucasian families. Categories of conflict were identified, and arguments were analyzed under two separate conditions, with the teen explaining his or her reasoning to an interviewer and during a discussion with other family members. Statements made under both conditions were classified by domain of reasoning. The quantity of justification statements for each domain was standardized by dividing the number of justifications by the total number of justifications made by that individual. Across both settings, differences were found between parent and adolescents in levels of personal, conventional, and prudential/pragmatic justifications. Conventional reasoning was offered more frequently by parents in personal interviews; however parents offered more personal choice justifications in family discussions. On the other hand, adolescents made more prudential/pragmatic statements in family discussions than with individual interviews where their reasoning was more likely to focus on personal choice. Adolescents also offered more counterarguments in the conventional domain, while parents offered more personal domain counterarguments. This pattern suggests attempts, by both parents and adolescents, to utilize the others' perspectives for purposes of the family discussion. Furthermore, Smetana, Yau, and Hanson (1991) found that Caucasian parents were more

likely to concede to adolescents' personal choice arguments with the adolescents' increasing age.

Smetana, Daddis, and Chuang (2003) studied adolescent-parent conflict in 77 middle-class African American families. Issues of conflict were identified and adolescents and mothers were interviewed about these conflicts. Similar to the above study, the categories of conflict were day-to-day issues about chores, getting along with others, cleanliness of the bedroom, completion of schoolwork, and choice of activities. The number of personal domain justifications that adolescents made also increased with age. Mothers' justifications tended to be most frequently conventional or pragmatic; however, conventional justifications declined over time. A higher reliance on pragmatic reasoning appeared to correlate to increases in conflicts about homework and academic achievement. Smetana et al., (2003) attributed these differences to cultural differences and parental concerns about facing future discriminatory practices. Although most conflicts in African American families ended with adolescent compliance, the frequency of compromise increased and the frequency of punishment decreased with the adolescents' age.

The above narratives suggest that participants and their parents did not communicate openly about topics directly related to the issues that participants' cited as the source of their subjective sustained anger. Taken as a whole, the content of these adolescent-parent conflicts, as well as those that are described in other sections, appear to revolve mainly around daily issues rather than overarching moral concerns as was found in the studies of Smetana (2011), Smetana et al. (1991), and Smetana et al. (2003). Participants' narratives describe arguments in childhood and adolescence that appeared to

center on topics such as getting along with others, doing chores, who they should see, and how time should be spent.

One participant rejected her mother's religion as an adolescent.

[Karen:] I'm not sure what the emotion was, there was anger, and I didn't like [specific religious practice]. . . . I don't know that I knew why I wasn't going there, but I just knew that's not my belief.

In studies of adolescent moral reasoning about religious matters, it was found that the majority of the adolescents made distinctions between types of actions that were likely to be harmful to others (for example, stealing, or murder) and religious rules and conventions (Nucci, 1985; Nucci & Turiel, 1993). The majority of subjects across all religions studied endorsed universality and inalterability for actions that were likely to harm others. In contrast, other religious rules were viewed as being linked to either the authority of religious leaders or scripture passages, and were not considered as immoral acts in the absence of a prohibitive rule. When children and adolescents in groups where religious leaders were charged with the authority for interpreting the scripture, less than half of the subjects responded that it would be wrong for church authorities to alter these rules. These data indicate that many adolescents view church rules as alterable, and therefore having characteristics more similar to conventional rather than moral acts. While it is not clear what religion Karen's mother wanted her to participate in, Karen did not appear to view the choice to participate as a moral act. Her response indicated that she felt that church attendance at her mother's church was part of the conventional domain, as did many adolescents in the study cited above. Therefore, her narrative with regard to this issue is also consistent with the literature on the personal domain and the literature regarding religious matters.

Parenting styles. Additional comparisons may be made based on indications of parenting style. The following excerpts from participant narratives contain indications of the type of parenting that occurred in the households.

[Matthew:] Those two didn't really communicate their um expectations of me. Um, so one day I would get the talk from my stepmom of oh, you know, I was a teenager once; I understand you're going to experiment with things. You might try weed, or you might drink, might even try cigarettes. It's all good; just don't do more than try. Then I've got my dad saying you know, I'd much rather find out you're smoking marijuana occasionally than cigarettes on a regular basis. And then maybe a week later, I hear from stepmom if I find out you've tried anything, I'll kick your ass out of this house myself. And it just kept going back and forth.

I didn't want to disclose anything to him, you know, because I didn't know what they did communicate about.

But it ended up getting to the point where one of the last conversations that we had before a good couple of years of talking very little, you know, he got a call from the school that I had been skipping class, and his exact words were, "If I find out you're skipping school again, I'm just going to kick the shit out of you. I can't deal with it anymore." Um, three days later, I was driving my [make of car] through [City 3] and passed my dad, I went to school in [City 1], and I actually saw him down [Arterial 1] in my rear view mirror with his head looking back out the window, cussing and screaming and shaking his fist. So, I drove home, packed up my clothes and left and ended up living in the car for about a month and a half, until it broke down and then spent the rest of my six months homeless, living on the streets.

I just shut him out. If anyone asked me about him, I would get pissed off, I would scream and cuss and go into a rage at times. I'd make jokes about wanting him dead. Anyone that will do it, I'll come up with money if I can. I hated him.

[Janet:] She got different. She got more cryptic, I guess. I mean, there were all these family secret things going on that they thought I was too young to be included in the conversation, so they didn't tell me what was going on, but clearly there was some big something going on. And they so believe in privacy and secret keeping, that they really didn't discuss it with any of the kids. I have since found out, and it was pretty detrimental to everybody to not know the truth of what was going on.

And it seems like she could have done more to maybe teach us a little bit about how to protect ourselves in situations instead of just being afraid.

There were no answers to that. No reasons why. Just you are not going.

[Karen:] And my dad basically said you take care of the house. I'll pay the bills. That meant I did the shopping and all the cooking and making sure the younger

kids were doing what they needed to do and I was still in school and doing whatever a sixth grader does.

It was pretty scary to be in sixth grade taking care of you know planning the shopping, going and doing the shopping with dad, making sure I had all the meals done, you know all of that stuff at that age.

[Anna:] So she was stretched pretty thin . . . frustrated impatience, angry, "You kids, you need to pick up your clothes. You kids, you need to do this. You kids, you need to do that."

But the real deal of being angry slash resentful towards him came [in] high school and policing the boys.

Diana Baumrind (1989) identified four styles of parenting in middle-class Caucasian families along two dimensions, demandingness and responsiveness. Measurements of these constructs were based on direct observation, structured interviews, and psychological testing. *Authoritative* parents tended to be age-appropriately demanding in terms of standards for behavior while being responsive to the child's needs. The reasoning behind standards was explained and children were encouraged to give their input to resolve the situation. *Authoritarian* parents tended to utilize an absolute standard of behavior and make unnecessary or excessive demands. In addition, they tended to be more coercive in their discipline and demonstrated values for obedience and compliance. *Permissive* parents encouraged autonomous behavior and made fewer demands on their children. They were available as their children wished, but did not utilize their power in the relationship as a means of control. *Rejecting-neglecting* parents tended to be uninvolved and unavailable to children.

Taking Baumrind's parenting styles into account, Smetana (1996) re-examined the data from three of her prior studies of parent-adolescent conflicts to identify three patterns of conflict, based on frequency and intensity of their conflicts. *Passive* (also referred to as *placid*) families had lower levels of both frequency and intensity in family

conflicts, and their conflicts tended to lead to resolution. *Easy-going* families had high frequency, but moderate intensity conflicts. Unlike the passive families, conflicts often remained unresolved after a discussion. *Tumultuous* was the term given to a small percentage of families that had frequent conflicts of high intensity. Parents in tumultuous families were more likely to endorse an authoritarian style of parenting, and were higher in intrusive parental encounters and teen detachment from the family. Fewer issues were recognized by parents as personal choice issues, and the findings also indicated increased intensity and frequency of conflict about substance use or abuse. Conflicts in these families often went unresolved, and teens tended to make decisions without parental input. Adolescents were more likely to look to peers to support decision-making on multifaceted issues.

The above narratives indicate that several of the participants experienced the parenting that they received as demanding and/or unresponsive. In addition to being unclear about parents' reasoning, some of the perceived demands seemed arbitrary, inflexible, or excessive, considering the age of the child or adolescent. Some of these reports also contained statements about coercive strategies for discipline. These elements in the narratives point to an authoritarian parenting style within the context of these conflicts. The lack of communication about underlying issues may be partially accounted for by the above research on authoritarian parenting styles (Baumrind, 1989). The above narratives describing arguments and authoritarian parenting styles correspond with Smetana's (1996) findings with regard to the structure of conflicts in tumultuous families. Many of these conflicts appeared to be intense and unresolved, with parents deemphasizing considerations of personal choice. Furthermore, combined with the

examples of subterfuge, it appears that the adolescents of these narratives made many of their decisions independent of parents, in spite of vehement parental input at various times.

Other participants described that parents were overwhelmed by circumstances and were less available at times. Recall that Emily talked about being left alone to take care of her sister when she was still quite young. Jessica also indicated that her mother had little time for her.

[Jessica:] I couldn't count on her. I couldn't count on her, I had to count on myself. . . . I don't think it was until later that my anger surfaced.

I don't remember many limits, because she just wasn't aware what I was doing. I was very, very depressed.

The narratives indicate that these parents may have been overwhelmed by their circumstances. Emily's narrative indicated that she and her sister were left alone because of her mother's work schedule. Jessica indicated that her stepfather was abusive toward her mother. Although the parent may have been loving and responsive under other conditions, these narratives appear to correspond to a rejecting-neglectful parenting style for at least part of these participants' childhoods.

Participant narratives describe growing resentment over time; however, concerns about parental disregard for one or more principles of moral judgment are not overtly reflected in reported arguments. Some participants described situations that were violations of a moral standard for safeguarding their welfare or the welfare of others. Others described situations that they believed to be unfair or violations of their perceptions about rights to choose their activities or beliefs. Throughout these accounts there are also undertones of welfare concerns regarding maintenance of the parent-child relationship. Most of the narrative accounts from participants' childhoods indicate that

the situation was likely beyond the child's scope of influence along with indications that the child may have been frequently overwhelmed. Sameroff, Seifer, Baldwin, and Baldwin collected longitudinal data indicating that parental attitudes regarding parenting practices tend to be stable over time (as cited in Sameroff & Fiese, 1992). Where participants did appear to judge a lack of self-efficacy for change, these are likely to have been accurate judgments in light of the finding in the literature regarding tumultuous families and the stability of parenting styles over time.

Anger in Adulthood

A few participants indicated that the valence of their relationship with the parent reached sustained subjective anger in late adolescence or in adulthood. Note that these narratives reflected similar moral concerns to the above narratives; however, the participants seemed to feel that the issues were subtle yet pervasive in childhood. Janet describes having idealized her father in childhood, but becomes very angry with him in adulthood about not intervening on her behalf in her conflicts with her mother. Although she is very upset with him, her anger is not fully sustained.

He fell off the pedestal a long number of years ago, but he has continued to keep falling off of it. . . . Oh, there is sadness in there because he was this—not ideal, but not in a perfect kind of way, but I just really thought the world of him. I thought he was really the wise, fair, understanding person. . . . And wondering how much of that was there. How flawed was my perception of him when I was younger, when I thought he was really above the fray. I mean, I really thought he was wise to all these things. I thought he had answers. I thought he had wisdom about life. And it turned out he has this little tiny box, and if it doesn't fit then it is garbage.

I still think he is a pretty cool guy, actually. . . . I think he has his little hidden shadow side that comes out that is just mean for no apparent reason, and that starts to make sense if you understand psychology, . . . that he has been tamping this down, putting a lid on it, to present something different, and to take care of mom and all of her issues . . . it has got to be getting, you know, seeping out in certain places, cracking that container.

Anna describes how she recognized her anger for her father as an adult, when she entered therapy.

Dad's had a different cycle, because dad's was a little bit more perplexing because I couldn't quite name it until later and in therapy getting like, oh, OK, there is this competition with my sister.

Although Jessica has little memory of her father from early childhood, she describes her increasing anxiety and confusion after reconnecting with him. Other family members intervened on her behalf, but Jessica's anger is precipitated only later in adulthood when she reconnects and feels ignored by her father.

He was violent. My mother was scared half to death of him. There was no contact, except we learned years later that we lived across the street from a park that he would sit over there in the park, he was from [State 2], so we were in [State 1]. And we learned years later that he would do that.

At about age 18 . . . I had this longing. I mean it was really a strange longing to be with him. And it was tumultuous. I went and visited him. It was very, the boundaries were very, very foggy. I went back and met, we would go to plays together; we would drink a lot together. This is my father. And I remember, I didn't know how to drive. I remember driving in [City]. I don't know why we weren't killed. He let me drive. I wanted to move up with him and quit [Profession 1] training, and my grandparents came and I can't remember exactly what happened, but they said "You're not going to do that." And I was so unhappy.

But one time he came out and I got panic, I got anxiety attacks and I never had that before. I couldn't be in enclosed places. I had to get out of the restaurant that we were sitting at. And my husband . . . was great at that time and he, I think he said, you aren't coming back, or something like that.

I was the middle child, and was not wanted I don't think. And he was absolutely awful, he's despicable. And I've since forgiven him, too, but he only would talk to [Sister's Daughter] and [Sister] and not [my daughter] and I.

It appears that some participants' subjective anger emerged in adulthood as a combined function of new events and their continuing cognitive development in the ability to self-define increasingly complex schema. Even so, the anger seemed to be very strong at times and then appeared to recede as they spoke. Participants also described events that took place in adulthood that contributed to their subjective anger from prior

interactions being sustained. The pattern between Jessica and her father appeared to have been sustained until his death.

And then, he was in the hospital dying and I happened to be over in [that City]. . . . And the first thing he said when I walked in was “where’s [Sister’s Name]?” He didn’t even say hello to me. So that was it.

And they wanted us to all go around the circle and say something good about him. At the time I couldn’t. You know, I can’t pretend.

Matthew described an occasion when he worked with his father on a project where Matthew had expertise.

Then my dad tells me on Saturday we’re going to [type of work]. I said, Oh great, I know all about it. He says, “Oh, I’m sure you do.” And Saturday came along and we started working on it and he wouldn’t listen to a word I said. The . . . truck driver wouldn’t listen to a word I said until I finally lost my shit and started screaming and cussing at both of them. . . . “If you’re not going to listen . . . I’m going to walk the hell away. You can do this shit yourself.” And my dad looked at me in shock. I said, “Look, I do this shit for a living five days a week. Do you think maybe now you can listen to my input? Or would you rather it’s all done wrong.”

Anna described ongoing conflicts with parents that centered on concerns about acceptance and approval. These concerns appear to have begun in childhood.

And to this day my mother will not tell me directly that she loves me. She won't say, "I love you." It will be maybe something else like, like in an email she will say . . . "Love, Mom." She doesn't say it out loud.

So what I remember of my twenties was a constant, "What are you going to do with your life? She said, "Stop living the life of a Bohemian ski bum. You need to come back and finish school." The judgment about my lifestyle and about not finishing school was pretty constant.

Regarding both of my parents, I feel sometimes I minimize what I do, and they don't exactly know the scope of my [Profession]. My dad, when I explained to him what was going on and what was happening he said, “Oh, wow, I am so proud of you.” And I was like, “Oh, I've arrived. I made it. He's proud of me.” I felt like I was 10 or 12 . . . She may be the favorite, but he is proud of me. And then I ran that by my therapist. And he said, "Oh, [Speaker’s Name], that is so manipulative." He put a different spin on it. Then I was like, oh! He said, "Why can't he be proud of you without all the bells and whistles?"

Eric described how his father's behavior continued to undermine their relationship, even after Eric became an adult.

Because my dad always did not know when my birthday was. I mean, it was like that was a part of him that would really piss me off, but then at the same time I was like, really Dad? So one day he stopped by my house, and I was fixing something outside of my house, and my dad was like, hey, how's it been going, you know? And I think he was drunk. And like how's it going. I am doing good, Dad. How are you? I said, "You know what, Dad? Today is my birthday." And he is like, it's your birthday? And I was like yeah. He was like, oh, man, hold on for just a minute. So then he goes to his car and he pulls out a frickin' [item] that he had just bought from the hardware store. And he says, "Oh, happy birthday. Could you use this?" And I was like, Dad, thanks. Thanks, Dad.

The above narratives represent a small sampling of the events that contributed to the continuance of sustained anger in adulthood. Other examples will emerge in the analysis of participants' attempts to grapple with their experiences and integrate them in ways that lead to adaptive behavior.

Emotional Regulation Prior to Therapy

Proactive strategies. Levels of adaptive functioning are likely to be reflected in the success of emotional regulation strategies, self-efficacy in goal-directed behavior, accurate empathy for others, and areas of personal growth. Each of these domains will be discussed in conjunction with therapeutic progress as it relates to the course of sustained subjective anger with regard to early relationships. Participants' narratives contained information about strategies used to regulate emotions prior to the identified start of therapy. However, relationships do not consist of a series of isolated events; rather, as time passes, a history evolves with each individual taking a different perspective. The events that participants reported as discrete events most likely occurred in the wake of prior events in the same relationships. Actions described may also be in the service of ambiguous or undisclosed motives. Therefore, differentiating between proactive and

reactive strategies can be unclear. For the purposes of this study, reductions in interpersonal stressors through physical distance will be considered to be avoidance, unless otherwise indicated by the participants' narrative. Additionally, a few of the participants described substance abuse in adulthood. Whether one considers this strategy as avoidance or self-distraction, these participants did not find it to be an effective long-term strategy. Due to confidentiality considerations and the limited value of a superficial discussion, portions of narrative that describe substance abuse are omitted.

In spite of the above caveats, a review of strategies used before therapy will facilitate a comparison to strategies described in and after the identified start of any type of individual and/or group therapy. The following are examples where the strategies reported by participants prior to therapy that were primarily proactive strategies of avoidance, self-assertion, and self-distraction.

[Emily: Self-distraction] I did not feel like my parents could be there for me as a teenager, so I got a boyfriend. And I felt like that boyfriend was my family. It is not uncommon, but at the time I would rather be with him than with the rest of my family.

[Matthew: Self-assertion] Um, when I was sixteen, um I ended up talking to my mom and dad and asked to live with my dad, and they agreed. I just, I wanted a relationship with him. I thought if I lived under his roof the whole time, then maybe that would help, and it kind of ended up driving a wedge between us even more.

[Avoidance] I actually saw him down [Arterial 1] in my rear view mirror with his head looking back out the window, cussing and screaming and shaking his fist. So, I drove home, packed up my clothes and left and ended up living in the car for about a month and a half, until it broke down and then spent the rest of my six months homeless, living on the streets.

[Self-assertion] I went from being a pretty happy-go-lucky guy to like, honestly, like the first time someone said Oh, you're going to be a daddy, like I think a switch got flicked. And, I changed. . . . I just automatically went, I need a real job, I need benefits. I need to provide. And it sent me down this whole new rabbit hole, of being a provider. That was my job. I worked commercial [Profession 2] five days a week and my family was miserable, so I started

working Saturdays. Family was still miserable, so I started working seven days a week.

[Avoidance] I tried to get a vasectomy when I was eighteen. 'Cause I did not want to have kids. Everything in my being said, do not be a dad. [Did you have a reason in mind?] Well yeah, the only father I knew was mine, and I wasn't willing to be that.

[Avoidance] I could make any situation horrid by deciding this is what we are doing, this is how it's going to turn out, we're going to have a great time and we're not having a great time so this is miserable, so . . . I'm done, I'm pissed off and the rest of the day is going to be ruined.

[Avoidance] I recognize that I had the ability to take care of myself, I wasn't looking for someone else to do it anymore, so it kind of eliminated any want of my dad being nurturing or caring or anything other than just what he was.

[Avoidance] I was kind of relieved. I would have been more worried if he had said let's get together and have dinner and talk. I wouldn't have wanted that. But, OK, a car is good. [Laughs]

[Self-distraction] I compartmentalized everything. I wouldn't have been able to survive six months on the streets in [County Name] if I was feeling everything that happened.

[Avoidance] I used to be scared to death of talking to people. Even just the idea of meeting you would have sent me into a panic. Asking a boss for a raise, or even bringing up concerns, those things were absolutely out of the question for most of my life. Because there was another guy that I worked for that, I think he's five foot five, and standing on even ground, I felt like I was looking up to him, like this [demonstrates looking upward] and "can I get a raise?" I just, I felt like I was completely insignificant and just nothing next to him.

[Avoidance] You know, it's one of those things, like um, my whole life I've consciously known that my dad loves me. A conscious thing, I'm his son, of course, yes, he loves me. I've never felt it. And I think in a lot of ways I consciously knew that my mom loved me, and she was able to tell me that she loved me, but I don't know that I ever really felt that either. I think I was so shut off by the whole idea of love and being loved and giving love that I just, I wouldn't accept it, even if someone was genuine. I wouldn't have known what was genuine anyway.

[Eric: Avoidance] I am pointing at myself right now in the fact that that is what I did for a number of years. So I didn't speak out. I didn't talk about I don't like this, or I don't want to go along with that. So that played a huge part into my, all the way through my adolescent years, into my years of being married.

[Self-distraction] I moved to [City] and was spreading my wings, and I was rapidly going through all these life experiences of meeting new people and hanging out and getting in trouble, and drinking, and doing all the, not to say that those things are exciting, but it was like I had this chance within this short span of period to make mistakes. And thank goodness those mistakes, again, they didn't land me in jail. They didn't land me, you know, dead anywhere.

[Jessica: Self-assertion] But my anger probably softened a bit, but it was still there. It was underneath, because I remember times later when I would yell and scream at her.

[Self-assertion] I've always tried to deal with my feelings, emotions. . . . Just who I am, because I don't like feeling unresolved or I don't like the feeling of anxiety or dissention within my family. I don't like that at all.

[Karen: Self-assertion] I think the anxiety and anger might have just been separate tracks. . . . I had the anxiety and the anger allowed me not to notice it as much. I could be like righteously angry. . . . It was a great coping mechanism. It allowed me to, you know, that kind of anger can be very energizing. So there was that. And it allowed, there was something about being separate that if I'm angry I can just be separate and be okay with it. I think through adolescence it was a great answer at least in relationship to my family. . . . There was my mother who was pretty passive and kind of sad and seemed kind of like a victim. Then there was my dad who was angry and in charge. That seemed better somehow to me.

[Self-assertion/self-distraction] I made a lot of really unskilled efforts to make myself feel better. You know, I got married at a fairly young age. . . . So I think for a few years I was just very lost. . . . You know I had a job and I was doing things and I was writing and I was involved in a lot of things. . . . I think all of that was in like a search for like of who am I? What am I supposed to be doing? How do I get to a place where I feel okay, feel okay with myself with the world? . . . I didn't know what would make me feel whole . . . relationship? Would I get something published, would that work? Would this job make me? . . . I wanted travel around [State 1]. If I get to travel all over [State 1] will I feel you know will that be it? So it's like pursuing something, you know, and I just didn't know what.

The above narratives demonstrate how participants utilized proactive strategies, such as self-distraction, self-assertion and avoidance. While many of these strategies may have been effective for temporary emotional regulation, they do not appear to have contributed to participants' long-term goals. Therefore, these narratives suggest that participants' use of proactive strategies was not adaptive prior to therapy.

Reactive strategies. Participants also described the use of reactive strategies. Distancing and suppression were the most common strategies. There were also a few instances of cognitive reappraisal, consisting of attempts to think differently about the issues. These are quotes from participants that involve distancing, a strategy that is

utilized to make emotion-provoking relationships or events seem less important or less relevant (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

[Emily:] I would just say relationships with men that I would get betrayed, feel that betrayal and they are going to leave me again, you know, somebody is going to leave me again. You know, why am I even attaching? Why would I even bother with that stuff? It is just, you are just going to die or you are just going to leave me. So those were definite, you know, I have specifics in my brain. I have enough to say it is, you know, primary relationships.

[Matthew:] I just shut him out. If anyone asked me about him, I would get pissed off, I would scream and cuss and go into a rage at times. I'd make jokes about wanting him dead. Anyone that will do it, I'll come up with money if I can. I hated him.

[Eric:] I think I felt as though I was better than him, yeah, I was better than him, and he had no right at all to give me any advice whatsoever. I think there was moments where he tried to tell me something, and I was like, this is coming from where? . . . So I felt like I had a one-up on him in life. . . . I think it was my anger. I think it was my anger in a different package.

I did have . . . a very short conversation with my dad before he had passed away on my feelings about what it was like when I was growing up, my dad apologized. He actually cried. And he cried and apologized and even at that point I was still very, very kind of like, my attitude towards him was I don't know really know if I want to accept this right now.

[Janet:] I couldn't trust her. I couldn't trust her to do what I thought was the parental, logical thing to do. . . . I think by then I knew that she was not somebody to trust. I mean, she was not somebody to go to.

Suppression is the attempt to ignore the feelings associated with upsetting emotional events (Gross & Thompson, 2007). This strategy was also utilized by some participants in attempts to avoid thinking about prior upsetting events.

[Matthew:] I had never cried in front of another person other than you know my mom or my brother when I was little and I couldn't stop. And it made me so angry. [Angry?] That I couldn't stop crying in front of someone. Then I was sure she was going to get frustrated with me and tell me to leave, and instead she just held me. That pissed me off even more 'cause I didn't know that I wanted. I didn't know what was happening. I had never been in a situation where I experienced someone who just genuinely cared.

So, hearing that song, having it connect with something that I couldn't control, and having someone actually show genuine affection and love for me, all

together, probably made that one of the most difficult days of my life. Yeah, it was, it was powerful.

[Eric:] I had learned to keep my mouth closed and not to say anything, because, and I know we will get to this later, but the relationship with my dad . . . you learn how to be quiet and keep family secrets. You learn how to, and I do remember, actually, my dad one time telling me what goes on in this house stays in this house.

I am pointing at myself right now in the fact that that is what I did for a number of years. So I didn't speak out. I didn't talk about I don't like this, or I don't want to go along with that. So that played a huge part into my, all the way through my adolescent years, into my years of being married. And then came the time on the way out the door and divorce, it was just so liberating. It was very, very liberating.

Yeah, and you know at that time I wasn't really dealing with anything, but I was and I didn't really recognize it. I think I had gotten really good at over the years just kind of suppressing it.

I began to realize later on in life I set up this kind of righteous persona. Yeah, it did. It set up this very righteous persona that fed the religious part of me, and the good dad, and not to say that I don't think I would have been a good dad, but I think it definitely fueled the fire in me to set up this very righteous persona. And also being the husband that I was and all that really fed into that.

Some participants indicated that they had tried to suppress their feelings of fear, anxiety, or sadness regarding various issues, but that over time the feelings they suppressed later emerged as aggressive outbursts. Matthew described how suppressed feelings became disconnected from their source, and how these feelings were expressed as anger as they spilled over into other areas of his life:

I was , you know, getting upset over little shit, um you know, the guys at work that were kind of jokesters from time to time, they went from being funny to "I want to kill you. It's not funny. Knock this shit off."

I had the worst road rage. I mean if someone cut me off, I absolutely took it personal, and sought anyway I could to cut them off in turn. Or I would scream loud enough that they could damn near hear me, even if we were driving down the freeway. I mean, I would just get so pissed off at just stupid stuff.

I could make any situation horrid by deciding this is what we are doing, this is how it's going to turn out, we're going to have a great time and we're not having a great time so this is miserable, so . . . I'm done, I'm pissed off and the rest of the day is going to be ruined.

And starting out it was fine, things were going great and then a couple of years into it, things got to be more expensive and you, know it got harder for me

and I so badly wanted for her to be able to stay home with my kids that I just wouldn't say anything, I wouldn't admit that I can't do this by myself. After the third year, I finally blew up and I was like, you need to get a job, this isn't working.

Karen described how her anger helped to suppress her underlying feelings of anxiety about being set apart from the rest of her family.

I would feel very anxious around being separate. . . . It wasn't soothed in any way. There wasn't, I didn't have any way to ever calm down in sane ways, you know also there was also, part of the anger came out of all of the stuff that I did, I was expected to do without any kind of, it wasn't that it wasn't acknowledged, it was just here's this expectation.

I think the anxiety and anger might have just been separate tracks. . . . I had the anxiety and the anger allowed me not to notice it as much. I could be like righteously angry.

It was a great coping mechanism. It allowed me to, you know, that kind of anger can be very energizing. So there was that. And it allowed, there was something about being separate that if I'm angry I can just be separate and be okay with it. I think through adolescence it was a great answer at least in relationship to my family.

The participant narratives indicate that the above responses followed the original dysregulating events, suggesting that the reactive strategy of suppression was utilized in response to negative emotional states, such as fear, anxiety, or sadness. While some of the participants indicated that they had perhaps been more successful in suppressing negative emotions, none of the participants indicated that this strategy had been beneficial to meeting their long-term relationship goals. Eric indicated that suppression had impacted his marriage, while aggression was later identified as a focus of therapy for both Matthew and Karen.

Aggression. Bandura (1986) incorporated Berger's (1962) findings on vicarious emotional learning into his theory. Berger demonstrated that individuals who repeatedly observed models reacting to a neutral tone as if it had caused them pain began to exhibit a similar amount of pain when exposed to the same tone. Bandura and Rosenthal (1966)

extended these findings by demonstrating that the strength of vicarious learning was related to the level of arousal experienced by the observer. Higher states of arousal were associated with stronger and more persistent associations. Bandura (1986) also demonstrated that aggression can be learned vicariously through an experiment where children observed models who demonstrated aggressive acts on a doll. The children who witnessed these actions showed startling increases in aggression toward the doll when left unattended in the playroom. Their aggression was not confined to the actions that they witnessed, but escalated through aggressive acts of their own device. Further experiments showed that children's aggression increased through vicarious learning when models either benefited from or were not punished for transgressions.

The anger and aggression described in some of the above narratives are consistent with social cognitive learning theory regarding aggressive behavior (Bandura, 1986). Those participants who reported their own aggression as a focus of therapy also reported that the aggressive actions of their parent went largely unchecked in their family of origin. Both participants reported that their fathers had been the aggressors, while their mothers had seemed overwhelmed.

[Matthew:] You know, my parents were my role models growing up, and I watched my dad be angry and volatile and abusive. And I watched my mom be enabling and tolerant and pretty vacant.

[Karen:] There was my mother who was pretty passive and kind of sad and seemed kind of like a victim. Then there was my dad who was angry and in charge. That seemed better somehow to me.

And I also think, you know there's a level of real sadness and disappointment in there. I mean I think that I was never when I was living in the family home, there was no place to go with that. I mean if I identified with it, if I let myself feel it, then I think the way I saw the world, I would be identifying with my mother, who was a victim.

In contrast, those who did not indicate that aggression became a central focus in therapy described some type of censure directed toward the individual who modeled aggression in participants' early relationships. One participant reported that his mother left his father on several occasions due to his aggressive behavior. The other participant reported having stood up to her stepfather in defense of her mother. In both cases, the aggressive acts met with disapproval. While there may have been instances where these aggressive actions resulted in some kind of gain for the aggressor, it appears that these participants either witnessed or participated in disapproval and/or consequences on multiple occasions.

[Eric:] I also was comforted by the aura that my mom would bring in the sense of she—when there were times where we would leave, we left my dad, um, I felt protected like she, like she really, um, was protecting me. We moved out and although we would go back, but, during the times where we moved out and we lived somewhere else with like family friends or something like that it just felt so, so comfortable.

[Jessica:] I used to yell and scream at my stepfather because I was like she wouldn't stand up for herself. . . . I stood up to him and told him to stop treating my mother like that, or something. Because he would, he would get pretty rough with her, I think. Or, yell at her all the time. That I think I was frightened. And I think he had a threatening tone. But other, other specifics, words, I don't remember.

There are a few narratives that indicated attempts at reappraisal before therapy.

The following reappraisal seems to be based on a comparison between his father's childhood and his own. Veridical empathic distress and deductive reasoning about his father's actions are demonstrated.

[Matthew:] I think somewhere in my mid-twenties, my mom started talking to me about what my dad had grown up with. . . . If anything happened wrong around the house, my dad would end up with black eye, broken nose, cracked ribs, I mean, all from grandpa. I mean he would kick the shit out of him. You know, at one point, when my mom was telling me this, I looked at her and said I'm glad he just threw me across the living room and scared the shit out of me.

One participant described trying to transform his anxiety into faith. Some might also label this as suppression or self-distraction, but it appears that there is an attempt to transform the emotions rather than to ignore them.

[Eric:] I guess it was just so compounded, and then with the stuff going on at home, so this pastor had recognized, he is like, well, you are having this issue because of your problem with your cousin. And I remember at that time my assignment from the pastor was to read a whole bunch of scriptures over and over again, and eventually it will go away, this anxiety, and it never went away.

Some participants used reappraisal to balance the positive and negative features in the relationships, so that the issues and events were averaged out.

[Jessica:] Because she helped me a lot. I had no clue what I was doing as a mother. No clue. So she helped me a lot, I mean, she probably, there's something with grandkids . . . just, you're free from your own shit sometimes. And I remember my stepfather being really kind to my son, too. I mean he really kind of mellowed a bit. . . . But my anger probably softened a bit, but it was still there. It was underneath, because I remember times later when I would yell and scream at her.

While these attempts at reappraisal may have provided some small amount of emotional regulation, the participants did not indicate that they made a substantial contribution to either their relationships or their healing processes.

Therapy

A few participants reported having engaged in brief therapy regarding specific incidents prior to entering the therapeutic relationship that they identified as addressing subjective sustained anger. When they entered therapy, participants were experiencing various difficulties that were associated with emotional dysregulation. An examination of the presenting problems when therapy was started may give some further indications for overall adaptive functioning for that time period.

[Emily:] So as a couple, we went to her and she pretty much said, well, you are going to do what you are going to do, but, but I said, "Would you see me

independently, if he is not here?" And she is like, well, yeah that would be great. So it kind of helped me bridge, like, well I got more work to do. I don't want to keep making these kind of mistakes. Why am I choosing these people? So anyway, I got to go to see her for individual therapy.

[Matthew:] At the time, I wasn't sure what to think. I just realized that I needed to make a change. You know, I actually contacted, I only ever contacted one person. . . . And left him a voice mail. You know, he didn't answer the first time I called. I left him a voicemail and probably five words into it, I was crying and blubbering to the point that it was all I could do to get my phone number out so that he could call me back. You know, I was asking if he could help me anger management, 'cause that was what I thought that I needed. You know, that was what my wife said that at the time, "You need anger management. You need help with your anger; you're so pissed off that we can't even talk to you."

Yeah my relationship with [Therapist Name] has, above all else been a positive influence on my changes. I kind of knew that from the get go. The first time I met him, I was able to open up to him. And I'd never been able to really open up to anyone. I'd had some pretty bizarre thoughts and emotions most of my life that I didn't really understand, and in a lot of cases even connect with. Meeting him, actually sitting down and talking to him the first time, I knew I was with someone that was going to be really good for me. I think my relationship with [Name], my ex-wife was absolutely instrumental. If it weren't for her, I wouldn't have gotten to the situation of recognizing that I needed to do something to change. Same with my relationship with the boys. My relationship with the kids was instrumental in the changes that took place.

I was absolutely convinced by her that one of the problems was that I had anger control issues, so I started counseling for anger management, until a couple of months into it, [Therapist's Name] looked at me and said "Are your starting to figure out that this isn't about anger management?"

[Eric:] And what was so interesting about it was that she automatically picked up on something that I had been hiding for years in the sense of this stuff that was going on inside of me that I was keeping secret, and this and that. And she picked up on it right away.

[Jessica:] And my father was this great big monster and he was violent. And I remember the psychodrama around that and that I was feeling completely helpless and out of control with that. And I think that over time the psychodramas that I did . . . it was . . . powerful. I dealt with him leaving and so forth. [Was there some piece of it that you felt . . . changed the way you felt about that relationship?] I think maybe the beginning of some insight about not only was it okay to express to be vulnerable, which I worked on for years, but that it wasn't mine. It wasn't my problem. It was when I was younger, but the insight that that was who he was and I survived that in very good fashion.

[Karen:] I had a partner who was you know I mean at that point in my life, my biggest quandary about people was why are so many crazy people attracted to me? [So that was a couples counseling?] Uh-huh, but she never came. She didn't show up. So that's how I ended up in counseling, the therapist said, "It looks like you could use some counseling."

I told [Therapist], this is not all that unusual in my life to have somebody that's crazy in my life and I don't want any more crazy people in my life. I want to figure out why there's so many crazy . . . people in my life. . . . So, I'm okay, they're messed up.

[Anna:] And then through [group] work and also through individual therapy [I] really worked hard on re-establishing my own autonomy and boundaries and cutting these psychological strings. So it was just sort of like OK, I am responsible. A lot of the strings attached had to do with financial support and getting bailed out from things from time to time. Or getting advice about what to do. Or getting approval.

Not all of the participants of the current study identified family of origin issues as the primary concern when seeking therapy. Some of the participants identified precipitating concerns about current relationships or ongoing patterns in their relationships that they found unsatisfying. Overall, emotional regulation with regard to attachment relationships appeared to be matters of habit, rather than flexible, contextual application of strategies. At the start of therapy, these strategies appeared not to be effective, either for emotional regulation, or the successful promotion of goal-directed behavior in their relationships.

Fortuitous interpersonal encounters. Although Bandura recognized that chance encounters play a role in peoples' lives, he also identified circumstances that contribute to the likelihood of these events changing the life course trajectory of the individual (Bandura, 1986). He posited that fortuitous or chance events are most likely to change the life course trajectory when the individual possesses the skills to operate in the environment, when the encounter is satisfying, and is well matched to values and personal standards.

Some participants seemed to ascribe their willingness to enter therapy to a fortuitous event. Some of the narratives show an element of chance combined with an element of frustration or desperation that pushed the individual to ask for help. The recognition of a need for help with personal relationships could be considered an entry skill for therapy. Some participants chose to start individual therapy as a result of meeting with the therapist when a partner did not arrive at a couple's counseling session. One participant seemed to feel that finding a good match on his first and only phone call was a fortuitous event. It is hard to say what would have happened if he had not reached a therapist who reflected his values and standards, as this individual also reported prior negative experiences with therapy. Connecting to a therapist who they found to have specific qualities that aligned with their personal values in the midst of their struggle with other issues appears to qualify as a fortuitous interpersonal event as identified in social cognitive theory. These elements, along with help received from therapy in the form of understanding and co-regulation, combine to create the circumstances that Bandura (1986) identified as most likely to change the life course trajectory.

At the beginning of therapy, some of the participants' narratives indicated a perception of the therapist as an expert who would provide correct solutions for their relationship problems. The questions they asked at the start of therapy were about the choices they were making, how to manage anger or anxiety, and the type of people that they attract into their lives. In general, participants were asking the therapist to dispense information about relationships and lead them to find the right answers. These descriptions are consistent with position 1 in Perry's (1968) scheme of cognitive and ethical development. In these early stages of therapy, participants relied on the

therapist's expertise for guidance on how to proceed toward their goals. The following descriptions include subscripts about participating in therapeutic relationships that promoted feelings of safety and support, as well as including information about early expectations regarding therapy.

[Emily:] I think what helped me was that [Therapist] was pretty understanding. Took a long time to get to know me. Did not push me. She challenged me, but she did not judge me.

You know, she was like, oh, yeah. That is tough. You know what I mean? Not pity. That kind of stuff. It was really understanding so I could get it. I understood it and I felt it in my heart.

I had the opportunity to have people play roles for me so I could actually have [the] experiences that I needed, that [missing] kind of interrupted my development. So to me it is a really rich experience that I had over several, you know, trainings or workshops where I was able to be able to work with where I was stuck. And I needed to. . . . So I was able to talk to her [my mother] in the past, as if she was still alive, or . . . feel that connection, so I could express what I would have got to if she was alive, and was able to, I guess, move forward. I think that had to do with grief of her leaving that I couldn't get past.

[Matthew:] Yeah my relationship with [Therapist Name] has, above all else been a positive influence on my changes. I kind of knew that from the get go. The first time I met him, I was able to open up to him. And I'd never been able to really open up to anyone. I'd had some pretty bizarre thoughts and emotions most of my life that I didn't really understand, and in a lot of cases even connect with. Meeting him, actually sitting down and talking to him the first time, I knew I was with someone that was going to be really good for me.

Learning that you know the belief that I was raised that you know strength is doing everything on your own. That was what I was raised with, I'm supposed to be stoic. Show no weakness; ask for nothing. I am the provider. That's my job, that's how I make everyone happy, that's how I take care of myself and everyone else. I don't count on anyone else, everyone counts on me. So, finally being able to come across poems that told me, songs that told me, and a group . . . and a counselor that were able to tell me as many times as it took that there was so much more strength in actually opening up and being vulnerable and asking for help. I was convinced that was the ultimate sign of weakness.

Being part of a . . . group where I do feel safe, and can go through and do psychodramas and role-playing, whatever . . . new thing [Therapist] has learned. Having that support network has above all else something that I've really valued and continued to look forward to.

[Janet:] So there is a lot of safety in the parameters that the director puts on it. So the first thing the director does is say there is a time constraint. And there is a

clock. And you know, you can get more time. It is not a hard-ass kind of thing, but there is something so comforting to me to know that we are going in this, and there is an end in sight

And I also know that if I offer something that isn't helpful, either the protagonist or the director will just ignore it. And that is OK. It doesn't derail the whole thing. The other participants are strong enough to not be derailed and that is not the direction we are going to go.

The ideal ally. Yeah. Get to have that person with you. And you get to have others, if you want. You can have as many people on your team as you feel you want. So it is very empowering to go into it. One time I know I had somebody stand in front of me like a shield so that I would not get hurt anymore from doing this work. That I could do this work without, and I could look at these issues without being crucified. Without being stabbed in the heart.

Every single piece of work hit something. Even the ones that kind of fell flat and didn't quite do it did a lot towards identifying what I wished had happened or what I know was missing.

[Karen:] She helped me kind of with just being, I don't know how to understand the world. She's just very, she's really lovely and methodical. She said to me, "You know you've learned not to depend on anybody, but there's a good kind of dependence." And I remember saying to her, "You're insane. I don't really get that. Why would there be good kind of dependence? What's that about?" So she had her work cut out with me and she put me in a therapy group.

I began to realize that . . . there were things I was doing that were like not, were not okay, that my world view wasn't necessarily right and that I caused harm to other people. You know, it was a very gradual process.

One of the unsettling things about that for me in my realization about like group process was that other people could see things about me that I didn't know were true. Not only that, but it could be helpful. And I think that was an experience that I never really had in my family of people giving that kind of supportive you know criticism where you're doing this, it's not helpful, what about thinking about it this way kind of thing. That never really happened, and so learning to be graceful about that was hard, but it was like a little lightbulb went on.

It's so simple, but you know, my therapist was consistently present for me, and consistently available.

I was fortunate in this respect, the small town that I lived in was different than down here where I can have a therapist and never see that person outside of that container of therapy. In [State 1], I would be nominated to be on committees, you know, serve in various activities [and you were sitting across from your therapist?] and we would negotiate that. You were in, you know, the grocery store.

We negotiated what parts of our lives would be, you know, kind of shared and what would be private. But it was kind of like having this healthy parent, you know, all the time.

While all of the participants indicated a positive connection with their therapists, there appeared to be some structural differences in formats for therapy among participants. Some participants described working with a therapist who organized their therapeutic experience toward an overall improvement in self-regulation. Most of these experiences appeared to have included individual therapy integrated with group work. Other participants described attending therapy in conjunction with goals that were associated with specific presenting problems. If they attended a group, their group work may or may not have been processed in individual therapy. Similarly, some participants' narratives describe a long-term therapeutic relationship, while others appear to have multiple starts and stops in therapy. The reasons for multiple starts and stops were not clear from the narratives.

Presenting problems. Upon entering their chosen mode of therapy, participants began the process of identifying difficulties in their current relationships. Each participant described an iterative process in learning new ways to explore and process their feelings. Some methods were incorporated into therapy, while other methods may have originated outside of therapy. The following are participant narratives that describe processes associated with naming thoughts and feelings that were linked to presenting problems in therapy.

[Matthew:] Role-playing. [What did role-playing do?] It gave me a safe way to be in the situation that triggered me and got me all activated and pissed off and just really, really anticipating going to group so I could just tear into someone imaginary. Where, once I actually got into group, I was able to get into that role-playing scenario and go from being this guy that's pissed off to okay, now I want you to be the person that pissed you off. Oh shit! Really? I have to be in their shoes?

[Janet:] And the psychodrama work was fabulous to get to re-enact things, scenes, traumas, whatever, and do it and be in charge of it. You know, you can

change the outcome. You can have it, you can run it the way it went in my mind and how it went in reality or you can change it so it has the ideal outcome. You have . . . this is what I think should have happened, or here is what I wish had happened. And there is a lot of control in that. It just feels really good like it puts it back in my court to have an effect on the outcome.

It is more bodywork. And in the blended model, psychomotor you get to have ideals. And so you get assigned, you know, if I am doing work about my mom, I get to have an ideal mom, like a little angel on my shoulder kind of thing, helping me deal with real mom that is out there. So you get to hear the messages that you wish you had heard all along.

Every single piece of work hit something. Even the ones that kind of fell flat and didn't quite do it did a lot towards identifying what I wished had happened or what I know was missing.

[Jessica:] I said, you know, I don't think I was held in awe and specialness as an infant, as a wondrous being. And that just came out of my mouth. And I said, and she says, I talked about that for a little, I don't think I was special. Somewhere in my remote memory as an infant, I didn't feel special.

And she said, you know, I bet your mom didn't feel special either. And I said, that's true, that's true, she didn't feel like she was a miracle when she was born and her parents were too busy with all their kids.

[Karen:] But we kept getting kicked out of group because we would laugh, 'cause people would be talking about really intense stuff and we couldn't keep a straight face. We would start laughing, like this is funny, I don't know. So we were like the clients from hell, I think.

I was in the moment addressing whatever was up, you know, right now, but I was also doing therapy, you know individual and group therapy, so I was also going back and looking at the old stuff as well. So I was doing about four years there pretty intensively.

[Anna:] I remember him taking me back to imagine a room in my house and the kitchen. . . . These huge "emotional hairballs" would come up. I learned how to do deeper emotional work through that method. It has really been fantastic. And out of that came an awareness of a deep, deep grief about not getting my needs met. And that was when the conscious attachment repair work started, I think,

So when I started doing this work . . . the teachers shared, "You are really mean. You are really angry." I started to pay attention to it then. That was like the first conscious, like, OK. Oh, I get that. However, I have a reason to be angry. I had this great role model of anger, my mother. And my father with his locked down anger.

Hot executive function. The above narratives directly address participants' areas of concerns about their relationships. Although there is likely to be some insight or

catharsis that arose from processing these thoughts and feelings, the current literature on emotional regulation suggests that such processes are likely inadequate for emotional recovery (Rimé, 2007). Emotional recovery is associated with finding ways to adapt to how emotional events have changed the individuals' circumstances, life-course trajectory, and world view. These narrative histories—described in the first person—have a high emotional valence that appeared to create challenges for the participant in processing the events. Zelazo and Cunningham's (2007) theory regarding hot and cool executive function suggests that processing of these types of events might be limited to lower levels of consciousness due to the immediacy of the emotions. Reflection and higher-order reasoning are posited to be less accessible if events are processed with hot executive function (hot EF).

Cool executive function. In contrast, there were also many narratives about how participants addressed relationship concerns at an abstract level or with symbolism.

One participant uses movies as a form of media for processing her own life events. She notices parallels and uses them to find words and connect ideas. She also uses drawing to externalize her ideas into a form where she can notice different properties and work toward her goals.

I think the poetry, just other people's poetry helps, and songs help just give words to the things I, you know, couldn't. . . . And I don't know why but the doodling just came out of me. So it didn't make any sense, but it flowed. I could create something. And then it is more, it is one of the main coping strategies I have now. I can just start creating something that I feel like it just is me, you know, it is me, and it is my feelings, and I don't have to explain it. It just comes through me. It just happens. There is no thinking involved. It is kind of like more of a tapping in. And I think it is also that just relief, like there is a lot of pressure to figure things out and to sort them, and I don't have to think when I am drawing or coloring, it just kind of, I like gel pens and I just start making things. They are very abstract.

I can concretize it outside of myself, so it is not stuck inside of me. I can move it, I guess. . . . I might not be able to talk about it, and I can maybe feel it or I can see it outside and then I can feel it or something, you know, getting it out. Not holding it in. So I think a lot of it is just that expressive, just not knowing how to express it in a, you know, articulate, logical way. It just gives me that avenue to work with it outside.

I came home, and then I started this picture, which I started drawing this shape first, here. And I have drawn that shape before, but I really didn't know what was coming out of me, but I did this picture in four hours and I would not stop. I sat down and I just, I could not do anything else. I just had to, like, get it all out of my, out of me. And I kept working on it, and working on it, and I was smearing, you know, there are some smearing techniques you can do. I don't know what they are, but I was doing them. And then I kind of got to a point where I was really struggling with the truth of what happened. Just whatever happened to me, what does it mean? How can I really understand it?

I was supposed to do something about a defense, so this is my invisibility defense. And because my pen had exploded the day before with this one . . . I decided, well, I am just going to lay it on there thick, which helped concretize the memories of grief I was feeling. . . . Because it felt like I could take the intensity of what I was feeling and I just saturated the paper. You know, I could just, ugh, that's how I was. You don't want to see me. You could maybe see a tiny bit, but you can't see the rest. . . . Just you know, if you are really quiet and you remain unseen, then nothing will happen to you. Really, nothing will happen to you. You will not live.

So it has kind of helped me understand, too, there is a place just like, you know, circle of life in *The Lion King*, [1994]. I think of *The Lion King*, you know, where Simba didn't quite figure it out, he wasn't like his father, but he had to find himself. And that is kind of, that feels like that is my process of finding myself. But who helped him? All these characters in the story that weren't his family but they were, you know, they were kind of helping him find himself. But in the end he had to do it on his own. So I am thankful for the village and the world.

It was like a foreign film and it was about a mommy camel giving birth to a baby camel, but the birth was really traumatic. [It was called *The Story of the Weeping Camel*, [2003]. And I was literally crying the whole time. And because there was no language, it was all the native language of the people in the movie. But basically, you know, the camel was born and it was traumatic on both the mother and the baby and they couldn't attach. So the village gathered around and did whatever they could to help these two camels attach and it took quite a while. It took lots of work. . . . They had to call in somebody from out of town to come, like a shaman. . . . But I didn't know why I was crying the whole time, and I felt sick, and my stomach hurt, and oh my God, it was torture. And I didn't know what, I did not have a clue at that time. . . . My dad said, "Oh yeah, I don't know why I never thought of this but you know when you were born your mother's milk didn't come in. So for like the first two weeks you didn't have any milk." And I just remember going, oh, my God, that explains so much about me!

I can't integrate until I have written something that is meaningful or poignant or until I have done a piece of art. But I don't know what it is going to be. It is not like I finish and go, oh, I'm going to go do this. Or I'll write these sometimes during the trainings or during the psychodramas, and then I'll go back and I'll look at it and go, oh, that was really important. That meant something to me. Once again, so I can share it. So somebody will see what I have gone through. Someone will know. You know, there is witness. It is crucial to have someone else bear witness. Then the healing can happen.

I was telling you earlier about when my dad told me that my mother's milk didn't come in and I had this huge insight like wow there is so much, explained so much about me. And this poem I wrote right around then:

Emptiness, there is a part of me that decided to stay in my body.
 Deep gratitude and then growling angst,
 Feed the hunger, just wait a little bit more.
 Wait. Wait. Wait.
 I will never feel full. Instead, I am numb.”

And for many years I was always hungry, physically hungry, emotionally and spiritually hungry. . . . And the realization that I didn't get milk in the first couple weeks of life really helped me with this thinking that there is something wrong with me that I am always hungry, I am always hungry.

Matthew also uses media to examine his experiences. In some instances, these appeared to validate his feelings or provide a medium to interrogate his thoughts. Music and television also highlighted areas of his life where he wanted to make changes.

It's almost a cliché, but *Cat's in the Cradle* [1974] always jumps up there. . . . 'cause you know that song is all about not being able to break the cycle. I recognized the first time I heard it. Oh yeah, I want to grow up to be just like my dad. Oh yeah, I did grow up to be just like my dad. Oh, if I'm not careful my son's going to grow up to be just like me. Um, through that song, that kind of connects me with the fact that my decision to even get better was a selfless decision. I did it for my kids and for my wife. And it was a while before I recognized that it was for me.

I actually have several copies of a book; it's called *A Vagabond's Sketchbook* [1980], by Cephias Crockett Buck. It's fairly simple. It's a collection of poetry. . . . I started reading it and like really every poem spoke to me. You know, prior, in high school I was kind of the reclusive beatnik poet and just never really got beyond stuff that I felt like writing for myself. Never really shared with anyone until years later, I came across my poetry books and went Oh crap! Not that again! But finding a book that was a collection of all kinds of different poems, different topics, I mean riding the rail trains to being a kid breaking a window with a baseball, I mean all kinds of stuff. It just, there was so much resonance throughout the book. . . . You know, I, by age 16 I had run away from home and lived on the streets in [County Name], and just the idea of being out

there on my own, living off of whatever means I could come up with, and being too damn stubborn to ask for help. Ultimately, I think that was kind of what caught me, even just the name of the book got me in the beginning. . . . Um, it gave me a sense of a little bit of normalcy to what I had been through. I mean I wasn't, in my family I'm kind of the black sheep, and among my friends I'm you know the crazy hard core guy that ended up living on the streets by the age of sixteen. . . . You know, so, coming across something that had a perspective that I shared, was really helpful. . . . Yeah, more like learning that old Mrs. Jones, you know, if you were down on your luck, baked an apple pie every Tuesday and would eat a slice and share the rest with vagabonds that came through town.

You know, movies always showed happy families. Even dysfunctional families in movies and TV shows showed affection. I think it's one of the reasons that people love sit-coms so much is that as screwed up as those people are, they still have a hell of a connection. I mean *Roseanne* [television series, 1988–1997] was probably one of the most asinine sit-coms ever, I mean, just ridiculous stuff happening, but it still showed a chemistry of a family that absolutely loved each other.

Janet described thinking about a movie in terms of how it contrasted with her relationship with her own mother.

Oh, I imagine every time I watch a movie . . . [a] therapist telling me that *National Velvet* [1944], that the mother was just this wonderful mother. So I watched *National Velvet* and it was kind of like, mom didn't have a really big part at all. And he goes, yeah, exactly. She was the quiet supporter in the background that always believed in the girl, but . . . it wasn't her story. It was the girl's story. And I thought, oh, I get it. Moms aren't needing to be front and center in a kid's life. A kid is the center of their own story—their own life. . . . It made me more aware that she didn't have the same job description that grew up thinking mothers have.

One participant describes herself as a kinetic learner, noting that she also processes information about herself in roles that she has played for others. She also uses media to process her thoughts. She transforms various forms of media into what is meaningful to her as well as writing her own poetry and prose.

Psychodrama really helps me to have an arena to kind of work it out with, to kind of figure it out or to . . . often for me there is a gap . . . I was always so in awe of people who can just sit and say, “oh yeah, here's what I'm feeling and I feel this about that.” I don't work that way. . . . I come from the kinetic into the felt sense of how things are, or from writing or doing art or something like that. I don't just sit and then suddenly I know what I feel. It never happens that way. I might

know if I'm in the gym and working out or something, but it just never happens for me that I'm really just sitting and have an insight.

I had a couple of other roles over the years where I was, I did dramas about dreams that I had, that I totally didn't get. I, they were very powerful dreams, but I didn't know at all what it meant for me. So I thought, I want to enact the dream, just so I can play each role . . . and feel it, and then I talked to my analyst about it and you know one of the things that came out of it is that these were all dreams about anxiety, and anxiety as a helpful defense that I don't need anymore. That part of me says, you know, anxiety jumps out there and does things for me in a way that I don't need it anymore.

That's what poetry does for me. I can't put it in words why it makes sense this way. This is a found poem. These are two found poems. You know, found poems are poems that you find, they're something, like these were probably from a newspaper article or a one was from a newspaper article I read somewhere, and one was from a label on a tent.

I found the actual words somewhere, the actual words. I took the words and put them into a context. It's sort of like taking pictures of a magazine and making a collage, it's like that, but it's a poetry version, I would say. So these are two found poems.

The first one:

Give people like that a stuffed animal.

They don't need something with blood in it. [Author and date unknown]

The second:

The ground should be cleared of all sharp stones, twigs, etc.,

Avoid depressions, which could collect water. [Author and date unknown]

And this is one of my more angry poems.

Last night the moon was full of my desire

To smash the walls with bloody fists

And scream to the cold hands of night.

So those are some early poems. They kind of, one of the ways that I used poetry was to kind of, either directly or tangentially just be able to express emotions and feelings in a way, in an lang, that language made sense for me. And I think I still do that with poetry. But I translate experience differently.

These narratives are consistent with examples of psychological distancing purported to support higher order reasoning attributed to cool executive function (cool EF). The descriptions of personal exploration that are connected to therapy and the timeline for emergence of these events suggests that participants may have been encouraged to develop habits for scanning their environments for information about relationships and/or processing with cool EF. Several of the above descriptions move

back and forth between theoretical hot and cool EF. Based on Zelazo and Cunningham's (2007) theory, employment of cool EF may contribute to the accessibility of higher order levels of reasoning as therapy progresses. Learning to utilize cool EF in tackling relationship information is likely to have contributed to beliefs of self-efficacy in problem solving, by providing a platform for identifying the issues and evaluating possible alternatives. These activities also highlight a cognitive developmental milestone in Perry's (1968) scheme. Some participants appear to have begun these practices in the form of exercises of the therapists' design, while others may have begun to use their areas of interest with more intentionality during therapy. In position 2 of Perry's scheme for cognitive and ethical development, multiplicity pre-legitimate, individuals engage in exercises designed by an authority figure with the expectation of learning to find the right answers for themselves.

Proactive emotional regulation strategies aligned with goals. As therapy progressed, some participants began to use methods for emotional regulation in ways that were not demonstrated in the narratives associated with earlier periods. They used proactive strategies, especially self-assertion in more sophisticated ways that were more likely to contribute to reaching their goals. Emily was able to understand that her habit of dissociation was a protective factor and not be afraid of it. It allowed her to utilize strategies for self-assertion to address deeper issues.

And then, so in this psychodrama we tried to go back and figure out like what happened to me when I was three. And so we weren't able to patch it all together, but some kind of violence, that is what we were proposing, because I was upright one moment, and I was down the next.

One of the main reasons I do the drawings is they are very calming to me. And when I can't cope, or I am having a hard time coping or focusing I can do them,

And it kept me really grounded and in the room.

Because what I tend to do is dissociate. So that wasn't really helping me. You know? But this helps keep me in my body and calming and also I get bored or agitated or frustrated and I am able to put it here instead.

Matthew also used self-assertion as a strategy toward organizing his behavior in pursuit of his long-term goals.

It wasn't until I'd done a couple of sessions of EMDR . . . that it made no sense to me, because you know I would do the eye movements, and a different image would come into my mind. Just all of a sudden I've got happy images coming into my mind, and everything's good, and I left his office going, OK, that was weird. And he told me, he said you know it's going to take some time. Just doing a couple of sessions might be enough, and all of the sudden something's going to click and your outlook has the potential to change just like that. I thought, OK, fine, I'll give anything a try. I want to be healthy. I want to be the dad that I deserved, so that my kids have a dad that they deserve. I was so adamant, that having kids was instrumental in me getting better.

Janet also used self-assertion to examine her past interactions with family, and recognize what she had wanted or needed at the time.

It was really hard for me to learn how to function in a microcosm, you know, in a family group, essentially. It was like having siblings and a mom again, and since that hadn't worked very well for me before, it was very hard for me to learn how to be in a group like that. I know one time I was up and on my feet; I was headed out the door. I was done with them. I was so hurt and so mad and it was the silliest thing. . . . And she said, "Don't. Don't. This is your life. Don't walk out on this." So I very reluctantly came back, and it was a huge turning point.

Karen used self-assertion to address issues in psychodrama that she was not able to access in talk therapy.

And I did psychodramas on and off for a couple of years and those were really helpful, because for me, sometimes sitting and talking in therapy, I can like talk my way out of a lot of stuff, it seemed like. . . . That whole hour, it's really easy to avoid saying what I want to say, what I need to say. It's very easy for me to do that.

These narratives demonstrate how participant strategies for emotional regulation became more aligned with their long-term goals through therapy. Self-distraction was used to moderate affect without abandoning objectives. Avoidance was sometimes

tempered with recognition of the value of relationships. Self-assertion was used to find ways to increase self-knowledge and self-awareness and look for new ways to address the issues. Prior to therapy, participants reported utilizing a single proactive or reactive strategy at a time. Many of these interactions were unplanned and did not contribute to their long-term goals. They also did not lead to adequate long-term affect regulation. In therapy, with scaffolding, participants began to learn to utilize proactive strategies, especially self-assertion, in working toward their stated objectives.

Reactive emotion regulation strategies. A review of the reactive strategies used during or after therapy will facilitate comparisons among the efficacies of each method.

Distancing. The following are participants' comments that were tied to the strategy of distancing. Eric has noticed that he sometimes becomes irritated when he feels his independence is being challenged. At the same time, he holds the people that he keeps at a distance in high regard, and sometimes feels guilty about his irritation. He also notices a similar dynamic between himself and his children, and describes concerns about his therapy becoming a co-dependent relationship.

But then there is that other part that is like, well, I am cutting a path. I am doing my own thing. I am standing on my own two feet and so when you are questioning me and asking me these things, don't you see that I am this strong adult that is doing it?

It is almost as if I kind of hold that a little bit as my own little thing and feeling like I shouldn't. Because if I do engage her and tell her, then I feel like somehow, maybe, I am checking in with her. And I don't want to feel like I am checking in. And that is, I have noticed that that also kind of spills over into my relationships now with my partner now, and letting her know that, and I have actually become so aware of it I have let my partner know, I tell her there are moment where I have this feeling like, I don't really want to check in and let you know, really, what is going on in my life.

I realize that I came into this existence for a reason in a sense that all the stuff that I went through as a child had to be for whatever it was in order for me to become or become what I am striving to become, but how that plays in with my feelings with my mom is that I understand now that she has to go through

whatever it is that she had to go through in order for her to grow in greater awareness.

Maybe . . . in having my children, that really helped me kind of look at the role that my [mother] played in my life. Being able to understand what it is like to be a parent. Now sometimes I find myself with my daughters kind of being that, maybe not intrusive, but sometimes it just comes out of me where I ask a question of them, and they are kind of like, yes, dad. You know what I mean? Yeah, a little role reversal piece. But it has also helped me be able to free my daughters more and not be so, I mean, I am active in their life, but more or less like an observer who kind of stands from a distance now, and allows them a little bit more of that space to be able to say, hey, I need this from you, or whatever.

There have been sometimes where I will kind of sit back and I'll think, oh, do I really need to keep going [to therapy]? I want to make sure it is not a codependent kind of thing like I have to see my therapist. So I choose to see her and I am very conscious of why I go see her, and sometimes it is because I want to share something that, some revelation or something that is really great that has happened with me. And then we will begin to talk about it a little bit more. We will go back and begin to talk more about childhood or certain things that took place in my divorce and during my marriage that still come up.

Janet decided that she would parent differently than her mother had parented her.

She describes the ways that she consciously structures her children's experiences.

However, her relationship with her mother continues to be strained.

So there are things that I am really very good at, and she gets some of the credit for that. Either because she taught me to do them, or like my parenting style I saw how I did not want to be, and I think I am a much better parent to my kids because I can see that you don't need to be in competition with them for their friends, and you don't try to one-up them.

Something I think contributes to my growth is [not] putting myself in the position that my mother was in, having kids making demands and not knowing how to be true and take care of your own self when you have these little parasites that need more than you possibly can give them. So the first thing is I didn't have [family size]. I had [fewer]. Some of the other things are that I employed all kinds of talking to the kids from the time they were little. So just telling them what I am thinking and how I am making decisions all along. So it doesn't matter if you are making cookies and you are saying, "Oh, I think I would like to put some raisins in here, too, so maybe I will cut back on the chocolate chips and put in half raisins and half chocolate chips, because I like both. Do you like both? Oh, I like both. OK." Just reasoning development.

So there are things like that that I think I have learned that have helped me just not setup this narcissistic thing where everything revolves around me. So that made the transition from mother of a young child to mother of an independent

child much easier. Or more aware. It wasn't really easy, but it was different. I had more tools.

It just makes it really clear to me that I can't put people on some sort of a pedestal . . . they are just fallible people.

Karen describes ongoing difficulties with her relationship with her father.

It's just really not hard to be angry with him sometimes. To step back and go, sheez, I cannot believe you are doing this. I mean he's a completely impossible person who gives a rat's ass what anybody else needs or wants. That's my dad. You know he was maybe less so when I was a kid, but as he's gotten older it's kind of distilled in he's really impossible. And he's a pretty angry person.

Anna describes noticing how she has emotionally distanced others in the past.

As a result of doing this deeper work, [this] emotional work and starting to really get how I am walking around [as] this angry person, very arrogant, feeling superior. A lot of this was projected towards men that I was with. But it was also kind of just a subtle I am better than, or am I less than .

In some cases, this strategy was reported to work in conjunction with the proactive strategy of avoidance. Conclusions drawn in these examples are based on deductive reasoning; parental behavior A leads to harmful effect B upon the child; therefore, harmful effect B can be avoided by avoiding parental behavior A. This reasoning also reflects participants' capacities for internally generated empathy regarding different developmental trajectories for their children. Deductive reasoning, combined with empathic distress beyond the situation for their children led participants to conscientiously choose different parenting practices in raising their own children. This strategy appears to have been reasonably effective in regulating emotions in relationships between the participants and their children. However, this emotional regulation method was not necessarily linked to repair of the participants' relationship with parents.

Suppression. Not surprisingly, specific indicators of emotional suppression were not described in conjunction with therapy. Unsuccessful suppression of emotions would

be likely to be addressed in therapy. Successful suppression would be unlikely to have been reported in this study. However, some of the participants showed characteristics associated with dismissing states of mind with regard to attachment on the AAI. The emergence of dismissing states suggests the likelihood that there may have been some unreported emotional suppression. Because dismissing states of mind are linked to subtle refusals in discourse (Hesse, 2008), such as a lack of memory, idealization of a parent, or minimizing the effects of negative events, it seems reasonable to conclude that some suppression may be involved in this process. This likelihood is also supported by the studies discussed above that linked skin conductance reactions to deactivating responses on the AAI (Dozier & Kobak, 1992; Roisman et al., 2004). Although some AAIs in the present study were classified as dismissing, participant narratives did not lead to significant new information about processes associated with the development of dismissing states of mind. Also, because the disclosure of individual participants' attachment status was not included in the Human Subjects proposal authorized by Institutional Review Board, these narratives will not be identified here.

Deductive cognitive reappraisal. While cognitive reappraisal is discussed in the literature as a single strategy of emotional regulation (Gross & Thompson, 2007), there are many possible variations on how an event might be reappraised. The content of cognitive reappraisals is limited only by the range of cognitions emerging in the consciousness of the individual. Although reappraisals may share characteristics that allow them to be assigned to a category, such categories are not mutually exclusive, nor are they likely to be exhaustive. Each category of reappraisal is likely to have different implications for long-term emotional regulation and the development of empathy.

Metalogical strategies for exploring one's history may vary widely. Strategies such as attending to one's own patterns of behavior, identifying parallel situations in media, feedback from others, and behavioral observations may be thought of as metalogical strategies.

There are also different parameters for the basis of empathy. Emotional empathy is associated with a felt sense of another's happiness or distress (Suchy, 2011). It is the visceral intersubjective experience that arises, in theory, from the firing of mirror neurons. In contrast, cognitive empathy is an extension of theory of mind that includes the development of reasoning about how the environment impacts the individual. As discussed above in conjunction with Hoffman's (2008) stages of empathy, the quality of cognitive empathy is likely to be impacted by the degree of familiarity with the other person's circumstances, as understanding contextual cues is likely to contribute to more accurate cognitive empathy.

Each category of reappraisal that was identified for participants will be discussed in terms of adaptive functioning in overall emotional regulation, as well as the type of reasoning used, the empathy generated, and any metalogical strategies that were reported to have been associated with it.

Rule-based reinterpretation. One type of deductive reappraisal that participants described was based on the application of rules acquired through psychoeducation or self-generated based on life experience.

Janet utilizes rules to coach herself tough situations. Some of these rules she has learned in therapy, while others appear to be life-lessons.

I am not my mother. And how she interprets my actions, and what she thinks I mean by them don't necessarily have anything to do with what I meant by them, or what my intention was.

A great therapist. Just laid it out in a way that I could grasp the idea that essentially I guess it would come down to just because she said it was that way doesn't mean that is how it is. That is, you are a person that can think for themselves and you can have a different opinion and you can see it differently and it is OK that you are not your mother.

There were lots and lots of lessons. One is ask before you offer help. Ask if it is wanted before you give it or take it. And all this other stuff, such as that some things were about the other people and their feelings. It didn't mean that I did anything bad. They can have their feelings about it, and it might not have that much to do with me. . . . Not be such a quitter that I didn't stand and face the music or stand and fight. Just—don't let other people or my perception of what other people think that I am be so important. My thought was that they all thought I was bad and horrible and that I should just leave because I wasn't contributing anything positive, and I didn't need the pain and I was just going to go. And so I learned to check it out first. . . . And helping draw some lines between what I actually can affect, and what isn't mine to deal with, but the big one was to not let my discomfort overrule my capacity to work it out.

There was . . . a couple's counselor guy that his thing was whoever is talking, that's who it is about. That was a very hard one for me. He was a very calm kind of guy; he wasn't real in your face, whereas the first woman was really confrontive, I guess you could say, but this [was a] quiet thing, and it was just sort of this soft little mantra; if my husband said something that really set me off, it was just try to remember that first, whoever is talking, that is who it is about. It doesn't mean it is the truth. It doesn't mean he has perceived the situation accurately or fully, it is just his truth. So that was a very helpful one, but it is a harder one, it is a softer message. It is hard for me to remember sometimes because I am real reactive.

The longer I live and the more people I know, the more frail I understand people to be. . . . It is a watering down of the betrayal of it all when I realize that other authority figures and people who I had hoped would be more cognizant of their own way of living in the world and that sort of thing, when they do the same kinds of things it is like, oh, I guess that's how people are.

I believed somebody again. Haven't I learned that yet to not trust these people? And then usually there is another part of it that has some more sense of I guess it is more differentiation that just says, well, you know, I don't have to do it that way. If I see something I don't like in somebody else in a person that I like and a behavior that I don't like, it is a chance for me to learn to deal with it so that when I get to that age or that stage of life or whatever that I don't do the same thing.

Jessica described how she has adopted spiritual practices associated with meditation, gratitude, forgiveness, and acceptance.

Work on myself and knowing that everybody does the best they can in their life. . . . I mean my second year of . . . class, which has been transformational for me, so we forgive ourselves every day; we forgive anybody else that's harmed us.

I said, "Well, he did bad things to me. And she says, what did she say, well you know, he's, "You are so hard on men, [Speaker's Name]," she said, "He's forgiven himself and you need to forgive him too." And he was dead at that time. And so that was like, I let go of everything then. It was like it didn't matter. It didn't matter. Poor guy, he was raised terrible and um, you know, we all do need to forgive ourselves and others and so I have. And that was probably the time that I consciously did it. That was just last year or this year, actually.

I worked a lot on judgment of myself and others. . . . And not attached to the outcome. . . . Whoever shows up is the right person to show up. And if it's over, it's over. So that's been my work, to stay in the present, not only to stay in the present moment, but not be attached to any outcome. That's really hard for me.

I give gratitude not only to the birds which I love, and the earth and nature which I love, but to all of the people including my family who have been in my life. And that they were each there for a reason.

I think it's been a gradual process and this kind of culminates in my opening to my heart. Yes, it's changed my family relationships, yes it has. Not just the meditation, but everything that I can see that each one is beautiful and I don't criticize and I'm not angry so much at them.

Anna describes a set of rights that she has accepted from her therapy and how they contribute to her interactions in close relationships. She also describes her struggle with balancing those rights against how she can claim those rights without hurting others.

[So what did you get out of the rage work?] Being able to express my anger and get that my rage is covering up my despair and hurt. The hurt first, hurt . . . I didn't get my fair shake. I didn't get the love I needed. I didn't get, I didn't get, I didn't get. [Name] brought forth the fear of alienation is really my worst fear, and then fear of annihilation. Like we really, it is not allowed, energetically, to exist. . . . There is the right to exist. The right to love. The right to authenticity. The right to your own spirituality. The right to your own sexuality.

I am me. I get to exist. I get to be myself. . . . All those crazy little screaming things. This is "the little one." She is pissed off. She screams. And she is learning to roar. So, and then it is like, holy shit. So I was picking that up as I was coming through the other side of this wave of rage. So then I take a deep breath and I said, [Name] some young part of me doesn't feel supported. . . . It wasn't until the next day or two that I was able to get clear about . . . this is a huge projection of me not trusting that I am going to be able to really authentically carry myself, navigate with myself with "little one" through this commitment to really go for life the way I really, really want to, rather than selling out to the safety and security of the old story, the survival story.

The guilt is bugging me. The guilt and shame piece, I don't want it anymore. . . . there is nothing wrong with my anger. There is nothing wrong with my anger. And it is not OK to hurt other people with my anger. It is not OK to use my anger to hurt other people.

It is not OK to be me as an angry person. It is not OK to be me as an angry person; therefore I got to be a better person, not an angry person. Hence mindfulness, and right action, and whatever else might come with. And then the superiority, inferiority impression management of all the codependent amusement park rides that show up.

This is where I am catching the thread now, we are in this spiritual piece and this is dropping into how do I navigate my anger? How do I transcend? How do I transform? How do I evolve? How do I grow so I am not hurting with my anger?

Participants in these narratives applied rules for challenging thought processes that they believed to be maladaptive, and made efforts to look at upsetting events through the lens of an accepted premise. These narratives identify specific causal attributions that are linked to outcomes, such that a given premise A necessitates a given result of B. In general, these rules applied to reframing the meaning of events or the way that events are processed. The above rules appear to be based on deductive reasoning regarding what participants have accepted as universal truths, based on their learning in therapy, life-lessons, or spiritual practice.

These rules appear to differ in the ease with which they are incorporated into daily living. They also differed in flexibility under differing circumstances. In circumstances where the rule was easily applied (e.g., forgiveness, gratitude) or flexible (e.g., whoever is talking is who it's about) they did appear to lead to emotional regulation and to meeting goals. However, many appeared difficult to apply when facing upsetting situations where supports for executive function were not available. The capacity to move toward a resolution for future emotion-provoking events appeared unreliable. In some of these examples, difficulties in utilizing rules appeared to lead to greater

dysregulation in terms of frustration or decreased self-efficacy beliefs about being able to apply the rule.

Averaging the behavior of others. Another strategy for reappraisal that was included in participant narratives was to look at a bigger perspective regarding the other family members' behavior. Janet has tried to improve her relationship with her family through recognizing the positive elements of their past relationships.

I didn't actually enjoy talking about the negatives without the balance points in there. If it had been well, what were some of the bad things and what were some of the good things, that might have been easier. . . . So dredging up and trying to remember, and then getting to the point of grasping what it felt like. It was like I went back into that hole. So that part wasn't fun, but because of all the therapy I have done, I knew how to turn that around.

I keep making sure that I say out loud that I know she isn't always like this. I know there have been times in my life where she was much more attuned with me and helpful to me. . . . And I recognize that this is not all of who she is, but she is leaving behind the good parts of herself as she goes down this path. . . . I am thinking what I got out of doing that psychodrama was being able to split her into two and say, yeah, but she does still have a side that I understand.

I am actually trying to find ways to use more understanding and compassion and tolerance instead of being more angry. I mean, she did what she could do. And she certainly made lots of things, she did a lot of things right, too, but just interpersonal interactions just are not her forte, cooking, sewing and stuff like that, she is excellent with. But she just has very limited interpersonal skills.

Karen has also made an effort to explore the positive side of her relationship with her mother.

One of the things I've explored in my poetry is my relationship with my mother and kind of what the positive, what is my mother's legacy, the positive aspects of my mother's legacy. So that's something that, it will start with picking something that I felt connected with my mom, and then pulling those images together.

The metacognitive strategy associated with this recognition appears to be the recall of direct experiences of the other individual that counterbalance what is happening in the moment. Again, deductive reasoning is applied to reappraise for a more balanced view of interactions to override an unbalanced perspective associated only with more current

upsetting events. The strategy of taking a larger perspective appears to be adaptive in providing some degree of emotional regulation regarding past events. However, the above narratives do not indicate that these observations add either predictability or control for future events. While they show some emotional empathy during positive events in the past, it is unclear how taking this perspective might increase self-efficacy or capacities to facilitate empathy in future interactions. It may also prove difficult to remember balancing points in the heat of ongoing interactions.

Miscellaneous deductive reinterpretations. Other examples of deductive reasoning were also identified that did not incorporate rules for interpretation, balancing positive against negative interactions, or the identification of parent behaviors to be avoided. These narratives describe coping strategies involving thinking about cause and effect relationships and finding ways to address the issues that arise.

[Eric:] She is just being concerned. She is doing what she has pretty much actually probably always done my whole life. But now it is really all about me when I have to turn the mirror and look at myself and say, "What are you dealing with on the inside that you feel like this person who has birthed you, and raised you, and done all of these wonderful things for you, and now all of a sudden you are getting upset because she is asking you a simple question.

But now I can look back at that child and see him differently, through a different lens, and actually be happy for him. [What kinds of thoughts make you happy for him?] Some of the things that make me happy for that child is the sense of resilience. Even though he would get into trouble, he didn't get into trouble, you know I was not locked up or any of those type of troubles. It was like doing mischievous stuff.

[Janet:] I just think that is the best she is capable of, and mores the pity, but that's her loss. . . . I have realized I don't have to keep, you know, reaching for that thing that isn't going to be there.

I feel like I was steeped so much in fear and convention and the way it has always been and all of this stuff that didn't prepare me for life is really this dance and the lighter you are on your feet, the more you can react quickly and appropriately to the impacts. And get through it a little less scathed. . . . That is what I am thinking.

[Jessica:] I was . . . in the middle of a horrible marriage, not horrible, horrible, but it was . . . so I think that maybe that helped me realize that we all learn from where we came from and all gather wisdom and that maybe she did have some wisdom.

[Anna:] I didn't learn how to fail. I have a huge problem with procrastination as a result, waiting for somebody to rescue me to do it for me. Because she did it, rescued me. Why couldn't she have just let me fail? And then, the part of me that is like, yeah, but you got rescued, [it was] easier for you.

I find it fascinating that this is what I am working through, exploring, surrendering to, and the way that it is unfolding with the parental approval dance is a good indication to me that it is worth diving deeper with this and going slowly into the surf, so to speak, with the intention of getting clear about what I really, really want to be up to. Yeah. For myself.

These narratives for deductive reasoning reflect perspective-taking based on the immediate situation and those factors immediately in evidence. Empathy based on deductive reasoning appears to be tied to specific situational factors that are familiar parts of the lives of most people. Experiences and the constructs about how these experiences lead to specific thoughts and feelings appear to be culturally constructed and generalized across individuals and situations. The above examples of deductive reasoning suggest that participants' perspective-taking skills did not arise from their own internal experiences, but the explicit teachings from external sources. The accuracy of the cognitive empathy is uncertain, and does not appear to contribute to the repair of the relationships.

Transition to abductive reappraisal. The above narratives consisted of deductive reappraisals. Deductive reappraisals are based on reasoning structures where condition A is thought or assumed to always lead to condition B. Abductive reappraisal is represented by reasoning that proposes a best fit for the circumstances. Abductive reasoning carries a built-in inference that conclusions are tentative.

Firsthand experiences in parenting. The opportunity for participants to become parents themselves and also to observe their parents' interactions with grandchildren provided metacognitive opportunities for discovery through observation and direct experience. Emily described how facing the challenges associated with parenting her own children has contributed to her understanding of the pressures that might have been on her mother.

Well, you know, I think it is a variety of things. I think one is being able to understand development and maturity. I had to come to an understanding that she did the best she could. I mean, I think it is with the help of therapy and part of my journey in life.

I think just being a mom myself and having to face just the most ridiculous things sometimes as a parent. Having to deal with being an adult and growing up.

I realized in the last couple of years that, you know, that my dad is getting older and I don't care anymore like what happened. I believe also that he did the best he could. And once again, I think that is my role as a parent, having a lot of compassion for myself and understanding, maturing. And I don't know how long he is going to be alive.

This participant described gaining new insights about the challenges that her parents might have faced through direct experiences in her own life. She identified parallel situations between her adult experiences and their parents' experiences that she felt were related to negative childhood experiences. In this narrative, thoughts about others' behaviors are interpreted in terms of the immediate situation with regard to perceived needs, wants, or abilities. These narratives are consistent with Hoffman's (2008) description of veridical empathic distress with regard to the parent. The narrative describes how the participant utilized her current experiences to reimagine herself in the parent's past circumstances. Experiencing circumstances that parallel parents' experiences appears to provide an opportunity for attainment of this developmental stage with regard to parents.

Identification with the parent. Some of the participants see themselves as being very different from their parents. However, other participants identified with a parent with whom they reported significant conflict. They noticed at some point that their own behavior or circumstance resembled that of their parent. This participant utilized a number of cool EF strategies to process the links between her experiences and those of her mother. She also linked these experiences to her grandmother as well.

So it felt so bizarre that here my dad says my mom's milk didn't come in, I didn't get the proper nourishment, and so they gave me formula. They didn't know for the first two weeks because they were both . . . young and they both didn't have parents to help them and it was bizarre. . . . It didn't really hit me until I watched [*The Story of*] *the Weeping Camel*, [2003] like the third time I watched it. I kept going, God, what is it? What is it? And then I got it. And I was like, oh, my God. . . . That was my [story], and my dad shared with me a little bit later that my mom felt bad because she didn't know what was supposed to happen with her body. She didn't know that the milk wasn't coming in. She could feel it was there, but it wasn't coming out. And I am like, what if I knew some of this stuff, because when I was also nursing my own kids I was having all sorts of problems. . . . It gave me a lot of compassion and I thought she must have felt really guilty, like she could have killed me or something bad could have happened. It helped me have more empathy for her. . . . It helped me have empathy and just like for all women, too. For my mom, but just how tough it is to become a mother when you are motherless.

I feel like body work, massage is number one. And the people I have worked best with have been energy workers or healers. And people that have been intuitive and helped me connect to myself. So I wrote this one after she worked on me one of the first few times. And it is:

Living into my bones, impossible. Painful.
 My mother didn't inhabit her bones. How can I inhabit mine?
 The world breaks everyone,
 and afterwards some are strong at the broken places.
 Thank you Ernest Hemingway.
 Power is not taken. It is given.

Like I feel like she understood I wasn't in my body. And then using words like home, which were charged, you know, they were words that were like I am not at home in my body. My mom wasn't at home in her body. Her mom wasn't at home in her body. You know, that is clear. So feeling that intergenerational angst started to make me realize I can actually heal myself and how can I heal my children. How can I contribute to the world and my children in a healthy way? And like almost breaking the family curse.

So sometimes when I am really struggling and I think I don't have what I need, I feel like it is my mother's story. I don't know if that makes sense. It is like my mother has become such a part of me so young that I almost feel like I lived some of her stuff. And then I think I live some of my grandmother's stuff.

Matthew recognized that he had become frightening to his son, just as he had been frightened by his own father.

She slid a note under the door for me to read because she didn't feel she could say it to my face. And it was obviously something that was thought out. It was typed out and printed and it wasn't warm, so it was something that she'd had for a while. And I started reading it and half way through it, I thought I was going blind, but it was just that I couldn't see through the tears. I was sitting there . . . reading a letter that my wife wrote telling me she was going to leave me and take the kids and that was the only way they would all be safe. I absolutely hated the idea that my wife and kids were scared of me. Especially my kids.

Hitting rock bottom or what I felt was my rock bottom. The idea that my wife got to a point where she felt that the only way my kids would be safe is if she took them and left and then they never saw me again. That was my rock bottom. . . . I grew up to be just like my old man, and I was a monster. You know and I've shared that with my current partner, the fact that I considered how I was towards the boys and absolute monster. I mean, I had no patience, quick tempered, and so inconsistent that I even confused myself sometimes. 'Cause one day they could do something and it would just absolutely set me off, and the next day they could do it and I'd be doing it with them and laughing along. I mean it just, I was confused.

I remember a lot of the time before I was thirteen, but very few fond memories. I mean, I remember living in fear. I remember feeling sheer terror at this certain tone in my dad's voice. It could be loud or it could be quiet. But I knew that if he said my name or said any words toward me in that tone I was in a lot of trouble. Never knew why, I just knew that that tone meant I was in a lot of trouble. And the idea that I may have traumatized my son to not remember a situation where he expressed being fearful of me, yeah, that that brings up a hell of a lot of guilt.

Probably, not so much on a conscious level, you know, now that I think about it, yeah. I mean a lot of it, a lot of my interactions with the boys before hitting rock bottom ultimately ended up awakening something that I was reliving and you know kind of helping me understand my whole family of origin and where all of this came from, you know, 'cause I absolutely love my kids and I didn't understand why I was so angry with them. 'Cause I didn't feel angry towards them, but I got angry with them all the time.

One participant described how she was unaware of her anger until her therapy group approached her and challenged her about how uncomfortable her anger was making them.

And my group confronted me one day . . . I said, “What’s wrong with sarcasm? I’m funny, what’s wrong with you guys, you know.” They said, “No, you’re not funny, you’re angry. Sarcasm is just anger turned sideways.” And I was dumbfounded. I had no idea. I was completely like, oh my God! Really?

I am very aware that there were many of those moments where I realized that it wasn’t just that crazy people were attracted to me, but it was that I was doing something too. That was pretty wild. . . . It was kind of frighteningly accurate, and it was very unsettling. . . . I really, I knew that anger, most of the time for me was about hurt or fear. And I needed to like back up a little bit before and just stop and sit with what is going on, what am I actually feeling here.

I was pretty aware that I had pretty much two choices in feelings. I was angry or I was sad. And so I knew that if I was angry, I was probably sad and I needed to be with the sadness, which was hard, but . . . I didn’t want to be like my dad. I didn’t want to visit that on other people.

The source of information regarding the impact of the participants’ behavior on others is not clear for all of the participants who described this identification, but one important source of this information appeared to be from the feedback of others. This feedback did not necessarily point out the comparison to the participants’ parent; rather, it reflected a direct and strong emotional response to the participants’ behavior. Those who identified with an aggressive parent indicated emotional empathy toward those affected by their behavior, followed by recognition of behavior that was similar to the parent. Empathy for those affected by their behavior is described as an important factor for the participants’ motivation to change. The veridical empathic distress of being in a similar situation to that of the parent provided richness and complexity about possible motivations behind parents’ behavior. For participants with children, there was also an explicit recognition of empathic distress beyond the situation for the child. Bidirectional exploration is likely to give fuller insight into both the causes and the effects of the same

behavior that participants found to be troublesome in their relationship with their parents. This new understanding was generalized to other relationships where the participants saw an opportunity to end negative intergenerational cycles. These motivational factors were identified relatively early in the treatment process and provided the impetus for ongoing efforts over an extended period of time.

Mediators and moderators. Attachment theory posits that the attachment state of mind consists of implicit working models for relationships (Bowlby, 1969). Conjecture, based on this theory, suggests that the earned-secure individual's task is to replace early implicit models with more adaptive models; therefore, it may be fitting to look at other areas of research where implicit learning is decoupled from behavior. It is plausible that lessons learned in these areas might be applicable to state of mind with regard to attachment. One such area with an associated body of research is racial prejudice. Motivation to control is identified as a moderating factor in links between implicit learning and behavior in prejudice (Cunningham et al., 2004). This research suggests that a strong motivation for behavioral control in attachment relationships may moderate the impact of implicit attachment associations. Direct evidence for this moderating effect can be found in participants' narratives about consciously controlled behavior that differs from their parents', as was demonstrated above under reactive strategies with narratives related to distancing. When combined with a high need for cognition, this motivation may also serve to sustain efforts through emotionally challenging processes, such as recognition of behavior similar to that of the parent. However, neither need for cognition nor motivation to control point to a specific course of action. Executive function

supports, such as a treatment plan, are likely to be needed for interim and long-term goal attainment.

Linking past and present. In Hoffman's (2008) stage of empathic distress beyond the situation, the individual recognizes that behavior is based on an amalgamation of past and current experiences. In participant narratives, what Hoffman identifies as a single stage presents as an iterative two-step process with thinking beyond the present situation for self as an intermediate step. Siegel (1999) refers to a similar self-referral process as noetic consciousness, noting that insecure individuals tend to have difficulty in accessing this information. Some participants recognized overt behavioral links between early history and their own current behavior prior to therapy; however, they appeared to gain considerable practice in making these links during the therapeutic process. The following quotes relate to participants' growing awareness of how early history shaped their behavior.

[Emily:] I just, if he remembers something I am just like, oh, I just want to know. I feel like it helps me understand who I am. Just helps me with some things I haven't always been able to figure out. And he will come up with new stories. So that helps me feel more connected to him. You know? Like I am really trying.

So when I did the psychodrama I was able to have access to what had happened to me and then I was able to start working with that, start remembering, start feeling, start having access to more of myself. It, in the psychodrama it was very much more primitive elements. . . . There was one person, my mother, my real mother. My birth mother. But the way it affected me felt like I was able to go back and get myself back. So you know, when they talk about soul retrieval and those kind of things. And since [Mentor's Name] was the one helping me with the psychodrama facilitating, she kept labeling it kind of like intuition. So a huge part of my intuition that I had blocked off from. So anyway, it was a pretty powerful psychodrama, but I really didn't feel that powerful at the time. But now, of course, reflecting back I could see where a lot of my creativity started flowing after that. . . . And then, so in this psychodrama we tried to go back and figure out like what happened to me when I was three. And so we weren't able to patch it all together, but some kind of violence, that is what we were proposing, because I was upright one moment, and I was down the next.

I guess I realize that I also am human and fallible and I was having, I was experiencing like the “all good” syndrome. You know, where you do everything just perfectly right and you never get into trouble and you stay invisible, and you are compliant, so I think it changed me in that then I realized you can’t be all good or bad. You know, there is some, we are different. We are all things. Or we are all a variety of things. We are human. So I think it just, it feels to me like, it helped me understand without my mom being there, it helped me understand her, too. Instead of her being a martyr in my head, projection of this perfect person.

If I . . . dissociate on any given day, I am like what was that? It is like a hiccup. But I used to feel like when I was working with [Director’s Name] I felt like I was, when I first started working with psychodrama I felt like, I thought, oh, everyone does this all the time, right? Everyone dissociates all the time. No, no. It helped me go, oh, that’s what’s happening to me. It’s not my fault. I am not broken and there is not something wrong with me. It is nothing to be ashamed of. It was adaptive and necessary for my survival.

[Matthew:] After a while, in working with him, um it took probably a good four months, to go from I have an issue with anger, to actually, mindfully connecting with the fact that I’ve, I was hurt a lot. I was abandoned, neglected. I didn’t get what I needed the people who were supposed to give it to me, and I’ve got a hell of a lot of pain inside that I’ve never really touched because I just got angry all the time. Once that door opened, the anger just kind of stopped.

Once I connected the anger with that it was really a survival mechanism, it was protecting me from actually feeling what pain I had gone through, and the sorrow, and regret, and you know, stuff that I considered weakness. You know, my dad was aggressive, angry and abusive, so of course, men don’t cry. Men are stoic; they don’t emote. Crying is for women.

Like the anger, once I figured out that it was just hiding me from everything else, I wanted nothing to do with it. So I kind of went opposite extreme for a little while, like just not angry about anything. That lasted like maybe a month [laughs]. [So what did you tell yourself during that time?] Don’t let it happen, just no matter what don’t get pissed off because that’s not what’s really happening.

It took some time, you know, but the actual mindful recognition that the anger is protecting me from everything else combined with a hell of a lot of continuing work, on everything else that had been hidden, I mean it was probably a couple or three years before my anger was really something that I felt when it was appropriate. . . . I recognize when I’m getting angry. Um because previously, I, I didn’t know what was going on. [How did you build that skill?] A hell of a lot of practice.

A lot of it was with [Therapist Name] you know, teaching me how to kind of get out of my head, you know, it was one of those things, you know, in the psychological profession, if people could think their way out of a situation, you wouldn’t have a job. But it doesn’t stop us from trying. You know, logically, if life was based on logic, I would have been way out on top a long time ago, ’cause

I can solve problems. This isn't the problem. So actually being mindful and just using my brain to interpret what's happening and recognize, okay, when this person calls me an asshole this is what gets triggered, which isn't a whole lot. When someone says I'm a liar, this way up here gets triggered and I get really pissed off. People can insult me all day long and it doesn't really bother me until it has something to do with calling me a liar, not trustworthy, anything like that.

Learning compassion for them as well as the person that I am in the sense that starting out this role-playing with okay, I'm [age] years old, this guy pissed me off. I'm going to deal with this and then finding out, okay this guy isn't what/who pissed me off. Who really pissed me off was my fifth grade teacher. So okay, so this was back from when I was ten. So, let's bring my 10-year-old self into the room and see how he's doing, and, actually getting compassion for that person. Feeling compassion for who I am now is one thing, but actually feeling compassion for that kid who had no one to feel compassion for him, that was what helped me recognize triggers as, you know, the stuff I'm working through currently isn't what's pissing me off, it's not what's hurting me . . . isn't what's happening. It's triggering something that happened to me a long time ago that never got resolved.

I mean, I've had a whole range of emotions through all of these different experiences but it wasn't until I had to get through the first one, the strongest, the protector emotion, the one that kept me from losing it or just feeling so hurt that I couldn't survive. Once I got through that, it would open up a new emotion. . . . I don't know that I'm done, that I'm down to the bottom of all the emotions that I've felt through these experiences.

Every day I grow, but . . . in particular I go to . . . group and leave having learned something about myself, feeling better about a situation, or you know having a connection to another trigger, or another trauma that I get to work on and get things figured out. 'Cause I know that every time I do this, I know that I'm closer to where I want to be.

[Eric:] I had learned to keep my mouth closed and not to say anything, because, and I know we will get to this later, but the relationship with my dad . . . you learn how to be quiet and keep family secrets. You learn how to, and I do remember, actually, my dad one time telling me what goes on in this house stays in this house.

[Janet:] And what I know about my anger is that it is fear that is underneath the anger, fear of what, I am not ever real clear on, but I suppose fear of losing love and losing my place in the family.

Just in general I know that my first response to many, many things is anger. And if I go a little deeper, it is usually I am afraid of something. So I don't know how pure anger can be. Because mine always seems to be based in being afraid of somebody betraying me or turning [on] me, you know, just disowning me sort of thing.

I'm really, really on the outside, and I am frustrated and this isn't working. And by the time we were driving home I was going, OK, I just have to get out of

this pity party thing where I am falling back into always identifying myself as the problem. . . . And when I spend a lot of time thinking about it, I fall back into that way of seeing myself as the problem, the troublemaker, the one that didn't fit in. And then I go through all the feelings of, "but I am trying so hard," and "I am really such a nice person" and . . . so it has been a process of pulling myself back out of that and going OK, let's put the, not exactly barriers, but sort of the boundaries on things again, so that I build myself back up.

[Karen:] And I also think, you know there's a level of real sadness and disappointment in there. I mean I think that I was never when I was living in the family home; there was no place to go with that. I mean if I identified with it, if I let myself feel it, then I think the way I saw the world, I would be identifying with my mother, who was a victim.

I began to realize that . . . there were things I was doing that were like not, were not okay, that my world view wasn't necessarily right and that I caused harm to other people. You know, it was a very gradual process.

In psychodrama, you know, you're setting up a drama and it has a life. It seems almost like there's a built-in kind of truth-teller in there, and a built in feedback mechanism, like with auxiliaries. If you're the protagonist, you're seeing your auxiliaries, you know, playing you. You're seeing your auxiliaries playing your, say, parents. Or even more powerful for me, and I think Moreno has said this about psychodrama, the most powerful process is for the auxiliaries. And I always found that to be true, that if I'm playing somebody's mother, somebody's another role, and I'm playing it for them, they picked me because I have something, there's something about me that speaks to that role. And you know, Moreno calls it tele, but there's something. You know, I, I, there's a richness to that, and often I find. [Reader's note: tele is a psychodrama term that indicates an unconscious perception regarding intersections between personal attributes or characteristics among individuals that is the basis for rapport (Blatner, 2000).] I've found being picked for roles that were really about stuff I needed to, that was unconscious. It was about what other people saw in me that I didn't see. And often uncomfortable, I didn't want to be picked for this role. And here I am getting picked for it again. And so, I had to kind of say okay, why, why am I getting picked for this role. What are people seeing? What is it that I'm not knowing about myself in this? And you know, and often it would happen, like I would be picked as a auxiliary who was very angry, who could do anger. And I found over a period of time in doing psychodramas that I got tired of carrying that.

I deliberately chose a male therapist to work with for a number of years to kind of . . . I needed to understand my reaction about what is masculine and what is male anger and how do I feel about that. I needed to try to transform that for myself and have an internal understanding. 'Cause I feel like I never really experienced male gentleness, gentle masculinity. And I needed to and I longed for it. And I feel like one of the things that I've gotten after making that decision is a real, a comfort with it, that I do understand that. That I've had that healing relationship.

And it was very helpful to me to just practice knowing like when I'm anxious, this happens. The anxiety is a kind of energy that I don't have to, it doesn't have to be the background noise in my life. I can choose a different sound track. . . . I had some practice with a hypnotherapist, he's an Ericksonian, so working from that paradoxical model sometimes really works well for me. And the hypnotherapy was really helpful, very helpful in just having a tool that I think really hypnotherapy, hypnosis reaches a level that its like it reaches a level that it goes to that you know meditation, other things don't do. So that kind of helped me to be able to switch to turn it off to be able to work with it in various ways.

[Anna:] So the anger containment, this is perfect. Turned inward and stuffed, because what was up was my relationship with food? . . . It was fairly disordered. Disordered enough that the therapist, well, she, the first therapist that I worked with felt that the weight gain was a symptom of depression.

Participants explored their primary relationships both inside and outside of therapy with regard to how those experiences affected the self. The above narratives demonstrate increasing awareness of links between childhood experiences and attitudes and behavior in adolescence and adulthood. Participants' acceptance of a degree of uncertainty about the meaning of their discoveries as they explored their early relationships signals a transition to position 3. Position 3 is characterized by a realization that some truths remain beyond reach, even for authorities. In spite of uncertainties, there is no evidence of a change in expectations that there is an absolute to be uncovered in terms of either truth or determining factors to judge right and wrong.

Information gathering through guided mastery. Bandura identified a three-pronged model as the most effective for guided mastery learning (Goldstein, 1973; Rosenthal & Bandura, 1978). This approach includes modeling, guided enactment, and self-directed practice in performance of new skills. This method requires that complex targeted skills be broken down into a hierarchy of supporting skills. These underlying

skills are also addressed using the same three processes before being combined toward the mastery of the more complex target skill.

While the therapist can guide the exploration, highlight the salience of certain features, and co-regulate with the individual, the strength and credibility of the identified links can only be established through contextual, subjective comparisons. The therapists' role transitions from an authority figure to a co-researcher who utilizes his or her more extensive experience to structure the exploration. These narratives serve to highlight the steps outlined in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive learning theory for optimal learning through modeling with guided mastery. In psychodrama, a protagonist has usually observed other dramas in the past where the skills were modeled. The director structures a guided enactment to explore the protagonist's concerns. This may include a variety of elements, such as the use of props and auxiliaries to set the scene. The director monitors the protagonist's affect and co-regulates with him or her throughout the drama. Self-directed application of the desired skills is supported through opportunities to practice emerging skills before the drama is ended. The three stage model of psychodrama incorporates these features into guided mastery for skills in exploring how past experiences influence current behavior and providing an opportunity for the protagonist to reevaluate his or her current situation and respond in new ways.

Increasing self-efficacy with this skill set is demonstrated in many of the above narratives. Consistent with Bandura's (1997) theory increases in self-efficacy beliefs are likely to have helped to motivate participants in looking for new information about the early histories of themselves and their parents. Note in the excerpts below how some of the participants appear to actively scan their environment for new information about prior

events. They connected with family members who might have information, looked at old photographs, and observed parents in their present setting.

Emily has made observations as an adult that inform her thinking about the events that she recalls from childhood.

I am trying to connect more. Assert myself more to connect to the real person today, my dad. Because I realize that now that my second stepmom, [Name], served as a kind of go between. She was the mediator. . . . You know, there is this kind of ownership weirdness.

The day, the first day I saw him with my daughter . . . she was a baby and he just, the way handles her is quite, you know, this little baby you don't put down on the floor, but he puts her down on the floor. He feeds her the bottle and he just put her on the floor and he is just looking at her like he didn't know what to do. And I knew right then, oh, my God, he didn't know what to do. He still doesn't know what to do. You know, he did what he thought was right. But my daughter just started puking milk up everywhere and I was like, "Dad!" I picked her up and cleaned her, and he was like, "Well, I didn't know."

Eric found out information about his father as a child from his aunt and contrasted what he saw in family photos against what he knew about his father.

I began to have this empathy for my dad, and I mourned his life in that sense of, and I have these pictures of my, and at that time my [aunt], after my dad died and I was going through this journey my [aunt] had revealed these pictures of my dad when he was a little boy, these beautiful pictures of my dad when he is happy and just so joyous.

I recall there was this moment where I was really into spewing out all this like, at that time when I think about it, it was negativity about my dad. And she helped me recognize the beauty in who he was. And that is when it struck me when I told her how old he was when going off to the war, she said, "Oh, my God, just think about what he was going through." And I was like I hadn't thought about it up to that point. Up to that point it was all about me, like all this stuff happened to me, and this is what I was going through, and this and that, which was very great in a sense, but then there was a pivotal time where, during the session where she was able to help me take a look at through his lens of what he was going through. And that was very, very pivotal for me. And that's when I began to change my outlook on him.

Jessica described awareness about how her mother might have struggled to raise her children after she and her father had divorced.

I mean, under the circumstances that she was under, and divorce back in the [reference to decade]; divorce was not a pretty sight. She couldn't, didn't have the financial means to raise us, and she did the very best that she could with a very violent, two very violent men, actually.

Karen described how her writing process contributed to what she knows about her parents, as well as looking at whatever physical evidence is available in new ways.

The other day I was driving down the road and I saw one of these little [Type of Vehicle] parked on the side of the road and I just came to a stop. I went back and I stopped, and I'm walking around the car, and I'm, God, I can feel myself in that backseat in that thing. And it just made me laugh. I thought, man, you know, we went from [State 1] to [State 2] in the b, you know, I was a 4-year-old in the back of one of those things. God knows how often my parents had to stop. I mean, what a circus that was. My [mother] was pregnant. It just really made me think about what, you know, the reality from the point of view of a 4-year-old versus an adult left me thinking, "Holy crap, I don't think any of us was having that much fun. At least not during the driving part."

It was fun because I was really trying to find a way of expressing it that wasn't, that was more kicked back, more, not so angst ridden, you know what I mean? I just wanted to talk about kind of the immediate experience of it and so writing it was kind of fun. It was challenging in that way. . . . The challenge for writing, you know there's a level as a writer that I'm watching the process. So I am thinking that I can feel this, I can feel my feet on the floor and there's, I remember the newspapers. I want to translate that experience so that the reader has a bit of a sense of it. And so, it was fun to just kind of go back and be in that place and think about it. I'm not there, so I don't have to move in and live there. I'm just writing about it. . . . Yeah, and to write about it in a voice that is more my authentic voice than, I think I don't want to, how can I say this, I liked that I could describe myself as a little [unflattering description]. You know, I was.

I may have one other piece that I explored the separation that I felt in my family as [Role in Family], that came out of a photograph I found. And even the process of writing that piece it was just, it was observation of it. I am trying to convey the experience that I felt, but I'm also looking at it. I am in both places simultaneously, and I'm not so, I mean in writing it, it's cathartic, it just gets it out. And I can kind of be finished with it. I don't know if that makes sense, but that's kind of how I feel about it.

And the same thing happens to poetry. I'll write poems these days . . . about experiences and I'll see the experience differently than I did. So it's a different way of understanding things.

I did things to like piss them off, things that would, I mean, I remember when I stopped going to church and I just kind of dared my mother to get upset with me. I mean, I'm not going to church anymore, and that was her bedrock. It was just like, you know, whatever you guys, if I don't have to do it I'm not going to do it was my, I was a defiant little shit.

I look like such a grumpy little, I'm like I'm mad in that picture. I just love that picture; it's like looking at my brother going I don't want to be in this picture.

Regardless of source, new information was processed from an adult's perspective that incorporated adult experiences. The emphasis on context signals entry to position 4 in the Perry (1968) scheme, multiplicity subordinate. In position 4, multiple contexts are recognized and acknowledged; however, true relativism is blocked by the absence of strategies to critique conclusions drawn, or thinking of the topic as a special case or an exception to the absolute. While there is no clear evidence of either of these blocking factors in the above narratives, the transition to the stage of empathic distress beyond the situation (Hoffman, 2008) with regard to the parent indicates a more sophisticated integration that is more consistent with what Perry (1968) describes as relativism. This increased level of sophistication can be noted in their quotations. One participant observed how her father interacted with her infant daughter and made some inferences about how her father may have interacted with her as an infant or child.

So I realized, it made really sense to me anyway that he did the best he could with me, but perhaps there were times I was probably laying on the floor throwing up. You know, because I couldn't speak up, because he said, "You used to hiccup a lot." . . . I want to have that connection to him and I want to hear about his childhood. I want to understand, what happened to him, because I don't think he got what he needed.

So it felt so bizarre that here my dad says my mom's milk didn't come in, I didn't get the proper nourishment, and so they gave me formula. They didn't know for the first two weeks because they were both . . . young and they both didn't have parents to help them and it was bizarre. . . . It didn't really hit me until I watched [*The Story of*] *the Weeping Camel*, [2003] like the third time I watched it. . . . It gave me a lot of compassion and I thought she must have felt really guilty, like she could have killed me or something bad could have happened. It helped me have more empathy for her. . . . It helped me have empathy and just like for all women, too. For my mom, but just how tough it is to become a mother when you are motherless.

My mom wasn't at home in her body. Her mom wasn't at home in her body. You know, that is clear. So feeling that intergenerational angst started to

make me realize I can actually heal myself and how can I heal my children. How can I contribute to the world and my children in a healthy way? And like almost breaking the family curse.

Matthew describes his adult observation of his father's behavior and how many realizations came together for him after a session of EMDR.

I'm still angry with him. . . . Nowhere near as angry as I was. I recognize that he did the best that he could. You know, I've forgiven him. . . . I had done a couple of sessions . . . in EMDR and I think I always met with him on like Tuesdays or something, and probably the following Saturday . . . I thought I'll just see if my dad is working . . . I took the [Street Name] exit off [Highway Number] and saw a guy sitting there with a sign that says, "Anything helps, God bless." And I thought, maybe I'll give him five bucks, and all of the sudden I had this really weird snowball of images just race through my head, all of this stuff jumped out of my subconscious and [I] went "Okay, you've got me!" And I thought, I am absolutely doing the right thing right now. You know, I need to go stop and see my dad and give him a hug. Um, the whole time I lived on the streets, I pretty much had to fend for myself. I refused to ask anyone for anything. I wouldn't even ask anyone for spare change. If I happened to end up with money from someone, it was because they initiated it, not because of anything I had done. 'Cause I felt that asking for help was weakness. That one moment, where I thought maybe I should give this guy five bucks, I mean he's sitting out here, he could probably use it. That was all it took to realize that holy shit, I am stronger for asking for help. I can forgive my dad. I can compassionately recognize that he did the best he could. Given what he got, he did a hell of a lot better. You know, as far as I remember, he never actually hit me or I mean, I never got a fat lip or a broken nose or ended up bloody and bruised from him. I'm not negating the fact that what he did was extremely abusive psychologically, physically, emotionally, but he didn't go to the extreme that his dad did. He tried.

All of it took maybe a half second. And I had probably twenty different realizations that just in the blink of an eye all made sense. And as I left that exit, I got so overwhelmed with emotion and you know admiration of my dad at the same time as I was disgusted with him, like all these different feelings came in at the same time. I was able to, instead of just being pissed off, or just being hurt, or just feeling alone, I had all of it. It actually opened up whatever my mental block was to allow me to really feel the whole situation, my whole life at once, versus I'm pissed off right now, that's all I am, or I'm in love right now, that's all I am, or I'm happy or I'm depressed. The, it opened me up to the possibility of loving and hating somebody or something at the same time. Prior to that I didn't have that.

Another participant, who has done a great deal of writing about her experiences, has gained a great deal of insight about her parents' personal resources and how the context shaped their behavior.

I think because of her own history we really were kind at opposite ends of the way she saw the world and wanted me to be safe and wanted me to behave in order to be safe was at odds with who I was. And you know in her life experience, it made sense for her to want me to act in certain ways. And she was very traditional [Region 1] woman with religious beliefs and all of that. I just wasn't that kid. So there was a fair amount of conflict as I got older about our world view, our, I think she thought it was about values, or was I going to be a nice girl kind of thing. And I just felt her world was so rigid and narrow, I just couldn't join her. So we had a lot of conflict and just missed each other.

I think one of the things that therapy has helped me is to also get to a place where I understand more about who they were. There was a phase . . . where I was just unable to see them as separate. I was mad at them. And, I think I've over the years, therapy has helped me to see that you know there was stuff that was passed down to them. They had horrible, horrible childhoods and they might not have become spectacular human beings, but there was some reasons for that. And so I have less blame for them. I may not choose to hang out with my dad, but I have a better understanding of like he is the person he is. And I think therapy has helped with that.

I do believe that he's done the best he can. And he's an extremely you know irascible, difficult person. . . . I could go back and fix that, that would be great, but I can't. I can forgive him and do what I can. . . . I am absolutely certain that there's a level of pain and confusion in my dad about why he's so unhappy. And he has no clue what that is. I don't know if therapy had been available to him back in the day if he could have availed himself it would have made a difference. But I'm positive that my dad has no, he knows that sometimes he steps over a line and people go away. But I don't think he really has much insight in that respect, so sometimes he's like dealing with a 2-year-old in a way. He just wants what he wants—right now.

Well, it gives me perspective for myself primarily. You know it helped me to understand on a felt sense who they are. It helped me to uh, you know it wasn't going to make me any more mad at my parents, I mean, it just really emphasized that they were, I began to have a felt sense that they are clueless.

And all of that work, it wasn't just like one moment, it was all of the work that I did around that issue helped me to realize that it happened, they were clueless, it wasn't intentional, I don't think they intended to do that, they had no idea what they were doing. So it allowed me to have a little room for forgiveness about that. I mean it doesn't change my relationship in the present, my dad, my mother passed, but to my dad, you know, he's still clueless and you know he's pretty mean. So, I'm realistic about who he is.

Reiterative abductive reasoning, increased self-awareness, and information derived from multiple sources have become integrated into a much more coherent narrative. Participants' internal experiences in building noetic consciousness have become generalized to others, including parents. Perspective-taking skills are honed to recognize the importance of context and disruptions to parents' developmental trajectories. The above narratives reflect increasing skill in exploring behavior bi-directionally, starting either with a topic of past concern and exploring how it impacts current behavior, or starting in the present and tracing the behavior backward in time. According to self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) individuals are motivated to take action only when they perceive that their efforts will lead to success. The skills gained through guided mastery in linking past and present behavior and addressing stressors iteratively between hot and cool EF appear to have combined to create beliefs of self-efficacy. Participants have begun applying these skills independently to explore issues and problem-solve in their close relationships.

The most striking feature of the above narratives demonstrating empathic distress beyond the situation for parents is the emergence of internally generated cognitive empathy and a reduction in subjective anger. Narratives included assertions about having forgiven parents for their part in past events as a result of new understanding about factors that may have contributed toward the events. Participants described parents as not having access to important skills or knowledge related to parenting. They discussed the role of trauma in their parents' lives with compassion for the effects that such trauma might have on their development. They described parents as having done the best they could under the circumstances.

Non-causal self-attribution. Some participants were able to combine information from multiple sources to make inferences that directly informed their current relationships. For some participants, the realization that they were not responsible for the parents' behavior came early in the therapeutic process. For others it appeared to emerge from a much more comprehensive understanding of the relationship. The narratives in the above section indicate an implicit awareness that the participants were not responsible for their parents' behavior. There were also some explicit accounts of how participants concluded that they did not deserve the way they had been treated as children, and that they had not been causal in their mistreatment. Emily described how a movie combined with a psychodrama made it clear to her that she was not causal in her parents' behavior toward her.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower [2012]. . . . There are moments where I think in that movie the main character's experience was not understood by his family. So I think it just really resonated with me, like they don't get me, my family doesn't get me. . . . So that experience of growing up and someone not getting it, they are not attuned, they are not attentive; it is barren. So his experience in the movie, I related to the character. . . . Just, it just helped me understand it is not just me, and that, you know, I am not alone. That there are a lot of people that have these experiences and, I don't know. Just that there is a greater range of things that happen to people. And that movie just resonated with me.

[So seeing your mother as a balanced individual allowed you to feel that anger and to process it?] Yes, and realize that I, too, can't be perfect and I can't be like 100% doing everything people want me to do, because that's not really who I am. So it helped me, I felt like it helped my just realizing once again the truth of who I was rather than these things that have all happened to me. This is just who I am and that's who my mom was and she had a bad day and I was on the other end of it and in a way that helped, I also learned that I needed to protect myself from things that were happening to me, and thank God our bodies can do that sometimes, thank God that our minds can check out.

One participant noticed that his parenting was not based on who his children are, but rather on who he has become as a person.

I wanted someone that could teach me to fish, that could throw the ball that had the time to say, “Yes, let’s go play out in the yard.” And, you know, a dad that valued tucking me in at night, and waking me up in the morning and having breakfast together. All this stuff that I didn’t have, I looked at my kids and went . . . “You have what I always wanted.” And then recognizing that I’m the reason they have it. That recognition, it wasn’t because of their doing that I was being a good father. They had nothing to do with it. . . . Their actions haven’t determined how I parent them or how much I care. Their actions just determine whether or not they get into trouble and whether or not I have to do something to try and fix that.

Karen drew her conclusions from a variety of sources, inferring that if her parents did not have the skills to parent, she was not to blame.

I do think that she, there was a kind of narcissistic identification that she had, that in some way I was supposed to be in the world a certain way for her. . . . And therapy has also given me permission not to try to be, like to accept that I don’t have a, my parents are like not, they’re not the people I wanted them to be. And to just accept that’s who they are. And it’s still upsetting, but I don’t have to like live in it the way I used to, if that makes sense.

I have a picture of my dad and my mom and my sister and my brother that I took. And then in the psychodrama, the director had me switch places with my dad, had my dad come out and show me how the camera worked, you know, spend some time with me and then had me get into the picture and take the picture with me in it, so yeah, that’s I think that’s how it worked. . . . I realized in doing that drama that you know, the way that my parents, my dad interacted with me was not the only option. I mean, he could have been different. He could have been inclusive, like what does a dad do? And that it wasn’t like my fault that he wasn’t that person. I think for me, it helped me separate out that my separateness from my family wasn’t me, it was them.

One of the things that I know about my parents, I mean like now, here, is that they had terrible childhoods; terrible abuse and that they didn’t pass that on to us. That was, they were really trying not to do that. But they didn’t get the play book, you know, what . . . to do instead. They had no idea. And so, they did, they in other ways they were pretty dysfunctional. And particularly in that aspect of being able to be gentle with us or being able to do those kind of “here, here’s how to do this,” or “why don’t I get a picture with you in it too.” They didn’t know how to do that. And I think one of the things that I got from that psychodrama and other dramas is that there’s a range of possibilities and it was really healing to just sense that it could have been different, and it wasn’t my fault. . . . This whole thing, it wasn’t about me. It wasn’t that I was somehow defective and unlovable, it was that my parents are you know a little goofy. Dad in particular was just emotionally clueless.

I wish there had been a model in my life of gentleness, I mean, that was absent. And I wish that my dad could have found that consistently in himself. He really couldn't, really can't.

In spite of the early subjective anger that participants had described toward parents, some participants indicated that they had harbored concerns that they were deserving of their earlier treatment. While some participants' narratives stated these concerns explicitly, it is likely that others might have possessed implicit memories that cause the individual to doubt his or her self-worth. Theoretical support for this assertion can be found in Freud's description of basic processes such as introjection or ego defenses such as denial or repression (Sandler & Freud, 1985). Some participants did take responsibility for contributions to conflicts with their parents. Realistic assessment of one's own behavior is just one more factor to be considered for integration.

Vicarious learning through the work of others. Bandura (1986) posited that one's self-efficacy beliefs for the achievement of goals for change are enhanced by vicarious learning when the individual observes others he perceives as like himself making progress toward attaining similar goals. The following excerpts discuss how other group members impacted their learning.

[One participant said,] I think working with my clients and seeing the distinct humanity and seeing that other people have to go through tremendous loss, and I guess just seeing how they overcome it and how I help them to overcome things. So it kind of reinforces that I can do it, that if I could do it, it could lead someone in how to do it, I could do it, right? And I think we teach what we most need to learn. I think that really simple statement, it is true. It is like I know the answers. I know what needs to be done, but I just need to remind myself that I need to do it. [Another participant said,] You know, one of the things that actually did help was watching my mom go through what I considered a healthy and positive transition in her life.

So to have one of my parents later in life kind of turn things around and go from being this kind of codependent, weak, you know, enabling human being to actually taking charge of her life and taking positive steps, seeing that example helped. . . . It helped me recognize that I really could start anywhere. Just 'cause

my childhood was shitty didn't mean my whole life had to be. You know, and ultimately, I never thought every day, you know, my life is shitty, but every once in a while I'd have a wakeup call and realize wow; this isn't where I want to be. I'm nowhere near where I want to be. But never really had the drive or determination or interest in doing anything to change it, 'cause I didn't believe it was possible. I figured, I'm already on this path, I might as well just keep going and hopefully something happens.

You know, that group, no matter who comes through the doors, there's a connection and some sort of relevance or resonance in anything that any one of us talks about. . . . You know, I was scared of the idea of opening up and being emotional in front of a room full of [group members], but you know what, every one of us in there feels the same way.

[Another participant said:] Yeah, and have somebody, like somebody who was just willing to listen to my, to allow me to be vulnerable and who were also being vulnerable themselves, seeing that as an option, as a source of strength. I think one of the revelations for me was that there was real power in vulnerability that I had never realized. That healthy vulnerability is not a bad thing. And that there was a difference between being vulnerable and being a victim. That I could choose to be vulnerable, I could choose humility versus being humiliated. That was a really great part of that process. 'cause I never thought about vulnerability before that as an actual like something that was possible, that I would embrace, that I would ever want to embrace. . . . You know, like within this family of choice. Within this like family of choice, the way I think of it is I had this family of choice, which included the women that I was in [group] with and my therapist and there was a whole community . . . that I was involved with. There was all of this available in kind of a small community where I knew everybody. I was quite safe. For me, that was very healing.

These quotations support that vicarious learning was an important part of participants' group experiences. Not only did they learn new group norms from what others were modeling, but they also appear to have experienced closure of the attachment script with others who were not their therapists. These experiences were likely to have promoted not only learning, but generalization of lessons learned to relationships outside of therapy.

Abductive cognitive reappraisal. The multiple metacognitive strategies cited above led participants to multiple conclusions about how behavior patterns may have been influenced in different ways by different events. Also, some of the information that was

gathered is likely to be deemed more reliable than other information. Integrating these multiple determinants into a coherent narrative requires making multiple judgments about the credibility of different sources of information and the likely weight of each factor's influence. Each piece of new information leads to a revised assessment that may change the viewpoint with regard to any or all of the other factors.

Due to the limitations for accuracy and completeness of human memory, especially in early childhood, there are likely to be significant gaps in the information available through the metacognitive strategies that participants have shared. Family members may be unwilling and/or incapable of sharing an accurate family history. Their histories may be distorted by trauma or altered by defensive strategies around information they would prefer not to discuss. Gaps in available information are likely to undermine the individual's confidence in conclusions drawn through deductive reasoning. Abductive reasoning produces a "best fit" explanation for the data, while requiring the individual to suspend final judgment, at least until the volume of information supporting a conclusion reaches some tipping point. Under these circumstances, a working hypothesis is generated and updated as new information emerges.

Proficiency with metacognitive understanding supports the process of making judgments about information gathered from various sources and recognizing that many of the conclusions are tentative. The abductive reasoning that is required for this type of metacognition reflects position 5 in Perry's Scheme of Cognitive and Ethical Development (Perry, 1968). In Position 5, relativism, the individual recognizes all of these factors in drawing conclusions. Conclusions are not considered absolute truth, but a set of contextual factors that lead to better understanding. The conscious practice of

abductive reasoning is a plausible explanation for a transition from the authoritative speech commonly found in preoccupied AAI transcripts toward a more flexible point of view in earned security.

Evidence of Secure Attachment

In addition to classification as secure on the AAI, indications of characteristics associated with securely attached individuals would be expected to be found for earned-secure participants. Among these would be a balanced perspective, proportional responses, and self-awareness regarding behavior, along with strong valuing of attachments. One would also expect to find evidence of providing secure script closure for children, as well as mutual secure script closure with romantic partners.

Commitment to values. Although increased control in the relationship more closely meets the criteria of a coping strategy than an emotional regulation strategy, several participants' narratives indicated that they had gained a measure of control for circumstances when interacting in these relationships. One important component in Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy is gaining confidence in one's ability to manage the situations that are likely to arise. The gain of control over one's own responses in parental relationships is likely to promote this confidence and support continued engagement in these relationships. One participant has taken the lead with her father. Although she is uneasy at times and understands that he is not likely to understand her point of view, she continues to connect with him in a positive way.

I was like, well, I appreciate you bringing me the pictures. You know it was just kind of like he wants to talk about it and share it with me, and I am thinking I get all of these other reactive things going on. So it is a little bit problematic in that way, but I feel like I can talk to him about it, you know? I just need more time. It is hard to, I don't get to really process with him or he doesn't really know, I feel

like he doesn't really know me. Like I have kept, this certain way of being with him, and we talk about peripheral and surface kind of things.

You know, it is almost like I almost have to be the parent. I always have to be the older one. I have to be the more mature one. I have to be, but in the end I feel like I need connection to my dad and I guess that is my job now, if no one else cares. I think my dad cares. He is the kind of person, very avoidant, and you got to pull, it is just harder.

I feel better about my connection with him. It feels more honest and like I want to try. And if I try and he didn't reciprocate, then I would have tried. . . . So it is kind of like my own little side project, like while I am trying to connect and figure stuff out, then we will see. It is a discovery. It feels . . . healthier and authentic.

I don't know, just forgiveness and kind of more like a loss or grief that they are never gonna get, they are probably never gonna get it. So why hang onto that and be upset. Like as a child, I understand why I did that, but as an adult, kind of like what is the purpose anymore? I am only hurting myself, and, you know, they don't care. They don't really know the impact it had. If they ever ask me and really want to know, I would probably come unleashed probably just because of opportunity to just say, yeah, as a matter of fact, blah.

[Matthew:] Recognizing it's okay that I'm pissed off at my dad, and it's okay to love him and forgive him, and it's okay to hope that he gets help and one day can accept who he is.

I stopped by out of the blue. That surprised him. I don't do that that much. Just said hey, I was on my way to see [Brother's Name] and thought I'd stop and say hi and give you a hug. Then I was back on the road. I don't know, since that happened, I feel like something was even triggered in him. It could be something that I'm putting out there. I feel like he's kind of opened up more. In maybe the last year and a half, two years, I am actually recognizing when we get off the phone it's, he says I love you. I don't remember him ever saying that when I was a kid.

[Another participant said:] I was having some reproachment with my parents at that point. We were still, you know my mother and I were always distant. And you know, both my parents were just a pain in the butt. But I came to this place where I knew how much I could do for them, do in relation to them, and how much, where I needed to not do things.

Yeah, some of that was trial and error. 'Cause they expected me to do things like plan their vacations. . . . And then they went and stayed with my sister and barely talked to me the whole time they were there. And I said screw you. . . . At that point, I realized that I really need to have as little contact with these people as possible. . . . I found that around my parents, it's just much better if I had not very much contact with them, because they never changed. . . . And when I get too engaged, I want them to change, and I don't think, I'm convinced about my dad that you know he's not going to change, you know he's pretty narcissistic.

But what I've learned is I have to like, I don't stay in the same house with my dad when I go to see him. I stay in a hotel. Sometimes I'll bring, it works really well to bring somebody else along. . . . I don't understand it. I mean I really don't. Dad has to fight with me. He just has to pick fights with me. If I'm in the room, he's going to try to find something to fight with me about. And I just have to leave. That's what I do now. Get over it, I'm not doing it.

And part of that is recognizing, yeah, I don't have to do those things. I do it because I think it's the right thing to do. And I do as much of it as I can without causing too much harm to myself. But I don't feel like every so often I get this therapy reflex back to me the reality of my family and that I don't have to try to make it better. And maybe, you know on a deeper level that I can't fix it. I mean, I can't, my dad's not going to change suddenly and become this loving human being and it will all be better. My fantasy, my wish—not going to happen.

He has to have limits, 'cause I mean I'm sure he'd be perfectly happy if I was down there making sure everything, you know, works so he could keep doing what he wants to do. Whatever dumbass decision he wants to make, I should just be there making it right for him—not going to happen.

Reframing the situation in accordance with reappraisals and creating interpersonal boundaries supported participants in continuing to interact with parents and make observations that support further cognitive reappraisal. These narratives describe gaining control in the relationship as the end product of considerable deliberation involving multiple contingencies. Boundaries set with parents, such as limiting one-on-one encounters, or staying in a separate location, reflect empathy skills in thinking beyond the situation. The intermediate step where participants are experimenting with the relationship can be viewed as position 6 in Perry's scheme, commitment foreseen. As the participant begins to take the lead in the relationship—with care and concern for all those involved—criteria are met for Perry's position 7, first commitment. In the narratives above, this first commitment is in regard to taking action with integrity toward a set of values and beliefs. The needs of both parties are weighed in decision-making with accurate empathy for the other.

Mutual secure script closure. Waters and Rodrigues-Doolabh's (2001) study found a relationship between familiarity and automaticity with the secure attachment script and a secure state of mind with respect to AAI classification. Reaching position 7 in Perry's scheme suggests vicarious learning of the secure attachment script. However, the demonstrated use of this script in relationships with parents may not be fully automatic. Anger appears to reemerge at moderate levels from time to time. Like other skills, familiarity and automaticity are likely to result from repeated exposure to the script. It follows that the more often this pattern is encountered, both inside and outside of therapy, the more automaticity the individual will have in accessing the script. These narratives suggest that these participants have experienced closure of the secure attachment script in other relationships.

[Emily:] I am creating quite an elaborate internal world in order to survive. So now I feel like I have a few key people in my life that I can relate to and I am still working on those relationships with my parents, the ones alive and not, you know, they moved on.

I could accept it from her as my friend. I could hear things she was saying when I couldn't hear myself. . . . So I could hear [Name] talking to me and talking me through it. She also happened to be there at the birth of my son. So it was like kind of another midwife, a feeling of midwifing. She is really good. . . . You can do this, she kept giving me those messages.

I feel like even if I don't have parents, like I don't have my real mom . . . to say that's my mother, I feel like I parented myself through the connections to other people, the village or the world is parenting me. So it is all right. I don't have to worry about attaching like I should have attached better to my mother. I have created a kind of collective mother out of so many important women.

The people that really mentored me first were more the women that I came into contact with that were like my mother's age or between me and my mother's age when I was a [prior profession].

And then I feel like I really got the mentorship with my professors and other women in my life, now, and just mothering. Learning how to nurture yourself and take care of yourself and, so that I could connect long enough to myself to take care of me, to actually mother myself.

[Another participant said:] And currently my relationship with [Partner's Name], she's the first partner that I've had that's done a lot of work herself and a lot of

digging deep and recognizing there's more to life than surviving. . . . Having a partner who supports the work I'm doing is really good.

And finally looking at my wife and saying, "I'm scared, I could really use your help. I can't do this on my own." And that was the first time we'd had open communication in probably two years. Like, heartfelt, mindful, constructive, and it kind of caught both of us off guard. You know, I didn't know if I would have the ability to ask and I sure as hell didn't know what answer . . . I would get. And at that point in our relationship, I wasn't banking on it being a positive response. So the fact that it was, was just astounding to me that . . . oh my God, I'm exposing my weakness and instead of getting crapped on, she actually is connecting to me and you know feeling the same emotions, you know, sharing compassion; it was new.

[Another participant said:] I mean, there were people, I had this wonderful community in [State 1] who were family. And if I was having a bad day, there was somebody there. And we were kind of the blind leading the blind a lot of times . . . but I was able to trust.

I had several people in my workplace that were kind of like, they acted like parents. . . . My boss, you know, he was just a wonderful, kind person who would call out my strengths and let me know when I was making mistakes, you know, supported me to do things I wanted to do.

Although presumably quite different from a therapeutic relationship, the above participants described social relationships in their lives where they found encouragement and support in day-to-day interactions. The above narratives include self-awareness of the mutuality of the attachment script in adult relationships. They demonstrate a pattern of turning to others for support in times of stress, receiving support and regulation, and becoming emotionally regulated. Further evidence of vicarious learning of the secure attachment script is found in participants' narratives about providing regulation for others.

[Emily:] And helped me understand all the developmental traumas that people have gone through. And people go through their own trauma, and it just helped me start to understand that that is just the way I reacted and was shaped, but it is not a life sentence. It is a gift. Because now when I work with people that are dissociating, I so understand what is going on with them and I know that they can come back when they want to. I know there is some consciousness about it, but also it is not like you have to be here now all the time. You don't have to. Don't let them tell you that.

And everyone tells me I am a really good mother. So obviously I am able to do that for other people. And I feel that about myself. I am, I know I am a really good mother.

I felt cut off and I could only receive positiveness from very limited places, and connection. And now I feel more like I can do that with people when I meet them and I have a genuine connection. I can actually connect to them and to myself, and share who I am . . . that is what I think by the world, the village, all the people.

[One participant said:] And then my greatest healing tool of all was my kids and actually looking at my boys when they were one and five. And my 1-year-old didn't really understand what I was asking other than let's play, but looking at my boys and saying "Please can you help me? I don't know how to have fun. I don't know how to play." And just opening up that dialogue and then following whatever they said, whatever they wanted to do and giving them that time with me was . . . they thought that they were getting the greatest thing ever.

I think it was just having the connection with them. In the past, I didn't connect with them. I was the father. I was the caregiver. You know, I was whatever I needed to be and didn't know what I needed to be, so it was whatever I came up with. Actually, just opening up and connecting with them, more than playing or learning how to have fun, just sharing you know actually feeling that felt connection, knowing that when I'm feeling this, they are too. It's not explainable; I just know I feel it. They feel it. And they feel that I feel it.

I tuck him in, I do what I can to help him get comfy, I tuck him in, and then I rub my fingers on his scalp for a while. I know it feels good. It helps him relax. . . . And he looked at me and finally says, "I thought I was in trouble." "Well you are." "But you're still being nice." "Well, I still love you. I still care about you. And you're still the most amazing [Child's Name] I've ever known. You are son; you're everything I could ever ask for."

But there was just this weird rising intention that I felt towards my kids. I mean, I loved them, I was nurturing, compassionate, dotting, I mean all this stuff, and frustrated and irritated at the same time, but didn't really fully understand what was going on. And I forget how I even made the connection; it was just sudden that I realized, "I'm jealous of my own children because they have the father that I wanted when I was their age."

The relationship I'm in now, is with someone who has also done a whole lot of work, you know, a lot of digging into who they really are and how they can be healthy. She absolutely respects the work that I've done on myself. I respect what she's done with herself and we're completely supportive of anything that may come up that either one of us might feel helpful or want to look into. You know, we have completely open communication.

[Another participant said:] I think my partner is really helpful. You know, he's a very, he doesn't get very angry. I mean, he gets angry in different ways from me. But he is very steady, . . . we have a very solid relationship. We've worked really hard. We did a lot of couples counseling at various times in our relationship, and

I think that couples counseling was really helpful for me. It is so different than any other kind of, I mean here I am with this person that I have this conflict with, that I am so mad at sometimes, and I am in a room where I have to like see his point of view, too. Like I, it's not just me in the room telling my story. There's his story, so there's room, both of us are in here working on this other thing that's our relationship. That's been very powerful.

I feel a responsibility to bring my best self to that work. And I'm often working with people who have trauma, people who grew up in alcoholic families, and I just want, I felt like I really need to know that I am in a place myself to bring my best self to that work.

I'm very active with my nieces and nephews and take them places and do things with them, give them a different voice. . . . I've had the opportunity to talk to them about that and have a role in their life. I understand that family legacy and they talk to me. So I feel really grateful for that, that, cause there was nobody like that for me. It took me a lot longer to figure it out.

The above narratives not only support vicarious learning of the attachment script, they also indicate increased automaticity in script closure in relationships outside the original parent-child dyad.

Generalization and automaticity. Participants also commented on how the skills they developed generalize over other aspects of their lives, demonstrating gains in automaticity for applying skills learned in empathy beyond the situation for others.

[One participant said.] But she is still very difficult and I am trying to work with the actual person now, the persons before her, the internal [Name] is lots more psychodramas. But the real person I am just trying to work with her now and that's pretty, it is pretty hard but I feel more, you know, like I want to. And I want to connect with the real person, not all the things I got in my head.

And when I reach one of those people that is just a little bit bothersome to me, I go, oh, God, I got more work to do. Negative, negative, there is some negative energy. Like, you know, I kind of check myself and I think, well, you know, I didn't really want to be around that person. I don't really want to. And I don't have to. It is not a requirement. And that is something I could never do before, good self-care and differentiating my needs from others around me.

[Another participant said,] I will occasionally get angry about something, but it's not very long lived, and it's something that I'm in control of. It doesn't take over and lead me down any crazy paths anymore. It doesn't hide me from what's really going on.

Instead of just jumping ahead and you're grounded for the next week, no TV, no computer, no electronics, no fun, if I even see you smiling, you're

grounded for another week. . . . Instead, working with my partner [Name], and she and I discussing everything, you know, co-parenting, and actually researching, finding all of the wonderful tools online, as far as there's this parent's website.

A lot of it had to do with learning to let go of attachments, to things and get really pissed off if something that I had got broken or stolen. That also was kind of like taking it personally when people cut me off. Once I was kind of able to step back and recognize that you know, the things that I have spent so much time taking personally are really just in a lot of cases, people expressing their own trauma and recognizing that, I was where you are, I am, through learning psychodrama, I can put myself into that other person's shoes more readily in the situation. You know, I can kind of step outside of myself and any confrontation with someone and actually not be confrontational back to them. I can recognize that you know, they're dealing with their own crap.

I don't blow up anymore. I don't fly off the handle like I so readily would years ago. And I am able to voice my anger positively if that makes sense. I am able to express to someone that I am angry without expressing things at them and accusing them of stuff. I am able to just look at someone and say hey, you know your actions make me feel kind of angry. I don't appreciate what you're doing. I would really appreciate it if either one, you let me walk away or you walk away.

[Still another participant said,] You know it was a long process for me with anger, because you know I still held on for a long time to like being righteously angry. If I was righteous about something, then it was okay. If somebody was really wrong, especially with institutions and things, you know if I worked for an employer that was a jerk or something, you know it was okay to be mad about that. But my process about anger began to change and I began to realize you know and it was a long process, every so often, I think of it as every so often I would titrate this piece of anger and I would become less angry, less that way.

I still struggle with my own anger. I wish I didn't, but I do. Because that was the way people communicated, the power in my family communicated. I have to intervene on myself sometimes. Most often it's going back and saying I'm sorry. That happens much less often than it used to, much less often, thank God!

The above narratives suggest that participants are proficient in applying their skills; however, these skills may not be fully automatic. Self-monitoring appears to be a habitual, conscious process, sometimes incorporating situational supports. One participant delayed decisions about discipline for his son and looked for suitable resources. His decision-making is supported by additional time for processing, focus on the desired outcome, and appropriate consultation. Another participant reported taking

the lead with her father, in spite of ongoing difficulties. She also identified plans to address other past relationships through psychodrama and that she “checks” herself when she meets negative people. Another participant reports that she continues to struggle with anger sometimes and expends energy to “intervene” on herself from time to time. All of these narratives indicate an expenditure of forethought and effort in maintenance of their relationships as well as strong executive function. Attention, self-monitoring, and inhibition are readily apparent in ways that were not present in emotional regulation strategies prior to therapy. They also represent a refining process consistent with Perry’s position 8. Skills are being generalized to other relationships at a similar level of integrity. A relativistic approach to relationships has become integrated into their personalities.

Many of the above comments also echo identified moderators for the predictive power of implicit measures of behavior. Situational moderators such as processing time are manipulated by extending the time for decision-making. Although promotion focus and self-actualization are defined as situational moderators, these participants deliberately build these factors into their decisions to the point that they become more trait-like than situational. In earlier stages, using processes theorized to be supported through hot and cool EF in an iterative manner, participants incorporated bits and pieces of contextual information that fit with the overall gestalt of their past experiences. Each fitted piece appears to bring an increment of resolution and self-understanding. The amount of effortful exploration and the level of detail recalled in some of these narratives suggest that a high need for cognition, combined with motivation to control, may have

contributed to sustained attention regarding these issues. This is also consistent with the literature regarding mediators of implicitly learned behavior (Petty et al., 2005).

Absorption, Dissociation, and Spirituality

Hesse and van IJzendoorn (1999) explored the relationship between the lapses surrounding trauma scale of the AAI and Tellegen's Absorption Scale (Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974). The AAI scale for lapses surrounding trauma measures cognitive distortion and loss of self-monitoring in discourse connected to traumatic events, such as abuse, violent crime, or natural disaster (Hesse & van IJzendoorn, 1999). The scale is also applied to discussions regarding the loss of important persons through death. Lapses in reasoning and/or monitoring are indicated when the individual conveys distorted representations regarding death, or causality, describes vivid sensory experiences, or describes the event in excessive detail during the AAI. In contrast, Tellegen's Absorption Scale measures the trait of becoming fully involved in thoughts, feelings, or sensory experiences to the exclusion of outside stimuli. Hesse and van IJzendoorn found a modest correlation between scores for the lapses surrounding trauma scale and measures of trait absorption, with a significant increase in absorption scores in relation to classification in the unresolved category.

While lapses in monitoring seem to correlate with absorption, a causal relationship has not been established. It could be that individuals high in the trait of absorption are more prone to disorganization, or that disorganization contributes to absorption. In any event, these findings indicate that signs of absorption are likely to be relevant to the discussion of earned security; to become secure one must have resolved traumatic experiences to the extent that lapses in reasoning are not found in the AAI

transcript. In their concluding remarks, Hesse and van IJzendoorn (1999) point out that prior research on absorption has linked this construct to both heredity and experience. Higher correlations for levels of absorption have been found between monozygotic twins than dizygotic twins, along with a higher heritability rate for females (Finkel & McGue, 1997). Additionally, elevated scores for absorption have been linked to experiences of abuse and trauma (DiTomasso & Routh, 1993) and more general indicators of overall psychological distress (Leavitt, 2001; Levin & Spei, 2003). However, there remains much debate over the role of absorption in dissociative symptomology, and what constitutes normative dissociation (Leavitt, 2001; Levin & Spei, 2003).

Residual trauma symptoms. In spite of all of participant accomplishments in resolving their anger, participants described awareness of intermittent challenges in emotional regulation, especially with regard to trauma-like symptoms.

[One participant said,] With the situation with my dad it was, it was almost like I was nine years old again, sitting on my bed, scared to death that my dad's going to be home and I don't know if I'm in trouble or not. And I need to get this little boy out of here, because he doesn't need to be a part of this. . . . My protective instinct was running and I'd never felt that before. I never been in a situation where I thought that I had to protect myself and thought that the appropriate thing to do was run. I always went at it. So to actually have a complete opposite reaction with my son involved was really weird.

[Another participant said.] I still hate it when people blow up. You know it's like when my husband is working in the basement and he gets frustrated with stuff and he gets angry and is yelling, I leave the house. I don't have very much tolerance for that. You know, I've learned that if something's not working, just walk away and come back. I mean, it's not worth getting that upset over, especially; it's not going to make it any different if I get mad at it. So I, one of the realities is that still really like I don't have energy for that stuff. I hate it. And so I think my dad's, you know, when I was young, I couldn't walk away from it. I couldn't say I don't want to be around this. He was like right there at that time. It's still there for really angry people, like being, if I am at home, I don't want to be around really angry people. I still have that. My sister and I were talking about it this summer when I was up in [City] and we both feel like it's like PTSD

or something. We just go to a different place. We are just like not in our body for a minute.

I just choose not to be around people who are out of control like that. Because I don't believe, there's a gut level that I don't believe that they are safe. I mean, I think they're probably not. And I don't want to be in the line of fire. I just choose not to be.

Although the AAI has a scale that measures specific types of incoherencies related to cognitive distortion (Hesse, 2008), it does not directly correspond to the diagnostic requirements for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as specified in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). While it is not clear if participants' symptoms meet the requirements for a PTSD diagnosis, the above narratives describe ongoing symptomology, without evidence of significant cognitive distortion.

The trustworthiness of the narratives is further supported by the literature on PTSD. Correlative evidence is offered in several studies of a link between anxious attachment patterns and symptoms of PTSD (Declercq & Palmans, 2006; Rothman, 2003). However, once again, these studies do not establish causality; furthermore, the authors of other studies suggest more of a circular relationship between anxious attachment and PTSD symptomology (Ferrajao & Oliveira, 2015; Solomon, Dekel, & Mikulincer, 2008). While a possible history of preoccupied attachment corresponds with the reported PTSD symptomology, there appears to be a gap in the literature about the relationship between earned security and the remission of trauma symptoms.

There was, however, one study available that may be relevant to the topic of earned security. Thomson and Jaque (2012) compared the attachment patterns in 51 professional and nonprofessional artists to absorption characteristics and dissociative symptoms. This nonclinical sample, with a mean age of 27, was taken from the

communities of Cape Town, Toronto, and Los Angeles, and included actors, dancers, writers, musicians, and directors. All of the artists exhibited overall adaptive functioning in their environments; none of them were being treated for issues related to mental health. The Dissociative Experiences Scale, Version II (DES-II) (Bernstein & Putnam, 1986) is generally used as a screening tool for dissociative disorders. The scale includes items that ask about both pathological and non-pathological dissociation. It also contains a scale for absorption. As expected, the non-pathological scale for absorption/imagination was elevated for this sample as a whole. Non-pathological dissociation also exceeded pathological scales for dissociation; however, pathological dissociation above the cutoff score was found in 33% of the sample. These figures suggest that pathological and non-pathological dissociation might be related to engaging in artistic processes.

While Thomson and Jaque (2012) also found there was substantial overlap between the pathological dissociation scales and unresolved trauma on the AAI, only 66% of the transcripts scored for unresolved trauma were associated with pathological dissociation. The remaining 34% were not related to pathological dissociation, suggesting differences between these two constructs. Interestingly, this sample contained a substantially higher percentage of secure transcripts than average (68.6% for 4-way classification), as well as a higher percentage of unresolved transcripts (27.5%). Comparison figures from a meta-analysis of over 10,000 AAIs indicated a distribution of 52% for the secure classification and 12% for the unresolved and cannot classify classifications combined, for individuals from a European cultural background (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn, 2009). Thomson and Jaque's findings suggest not only that artistic endeavors may attract individuals high in dissociative traits,

but that artistic pursuits (cool EF) may have played a mediating role in the integration of childhood experiences for those who were classified as secure.

Experiential approach to spirituality. In 1990, Kirkpatrick and Shaver conducted one of the earliest scientific studies of the use of a universal power as a secure base for attachment. They noted that maternal caregiving sensitivity predicted specific patterns of religious practice, and made the first links between insensitive caregiving and sudden religious conversion. This study became the groundwork for the development of a theory about two attachment-related trajectories for religious practice (Granqvist, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2010; also see Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008). One trajectory is based on *correspondence* with the parents' religious beliefs. They presented evidence that individuals with positive childhood experiences tend to accept their parents' religious beliefs and to conceptualize a loving God. They also theorized an alternate trajectory based on *compensation*, where individuals suddenly adopt religious beliefs as a coping response during or following a period of extreme distress. Several previous studies are cited that link self-reported insensitive parental caregiving to sudden religious conversion (e.g., Granqvist, 2005; Granqvist & Hagekull, 2003; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990).

In 2007, Granqvist, Ivarsson, Broberg, and Hagekull conducted an additional study that linked spirituality to AAI experience and state of mind scores. These findings indicated that high scores for maternal loving supported the correspondence theory, while low scores supported the compensation theory. Elevated maternal rejection scores were linked to abrupt changes at later ages with explanations related to compensation. Elevated paternal rejection scores were also associated with compensation reasons, but not with the other variables. In a later study, Granqvist, Fransson and Hagekull (2009)

found that unresolved/disorganized attachment predicted New Age spirituality three years after the interviews were conducted. They proposed absorption, the capacity to become fully absorbed into one's thoughts to the exclusion of other stimuli, as a mediator in this relationship. They also asserted that absorption might be linked to both dissociation and high levels of creativity.

When asked if their spiritual beliefs changed their feelings toward their parents, participants indicated that their beliefs were an important part of their integrative experience. They also indicated their spiritual beliefs were different from those of their parents.

[One participant said,] I think that spirituality is at the core. I understand and work from, developing my own spirituality. Not based on organized religion, but realizing I don't fit into a box so I am connected to something greater than myself. And so spirituality is very, very important.

I think I understand that those things were there to shape and guide me and now I have, spirituality makes sense to me. It gives me some hope, so [my] suffering was not for nothing. It gives me a system to kind of, "Oh, wow." You know, what happened here was not just because bad shit happens to people. It gives me some, gauges or marks, places I can mark and say, oh, well, you are not just a human. You are more than that. You are connected to something unseen.

So I feel like part of my, maybe my way of giving back is to, and my family, is to help heal my family behind me, like the idea that we effect seven generations forward, and I believe seven generations back.

[Another participant said,] Mom made me go to church every weekend, made me be a part of the youth group. I really had no interest in it. Um, at a very young age I recognize[d] people's willingness to scapegoat a deity for the bullshit that happened in their lives, and I in no way wanted to make my trials and tribulations someone else's responsibility if it was my decision. Years later I recognized some of the Eastern philosophy, Buddhism, things like that, fit more along how I felt I could live. And through that, yeah I think it has kind of helped me understand and kind of recognize that anger isn't always the correct response.

If I were to identify with any religion, Buddhism would be the closest fit, but for the most part, you know as far as spirituality, I value life, I value living morally, and don't necessary need a 3,000 year old, poorly interpreted book telling me how to do it.

A lot of it had to do with learning to let go of attachments, to things and get really pissed off if something that I had got broken or stolen. That also was kind of like taking it personally when people cut me off.

[Still another participant said,] I wouldn't be where I am without some kind of spiritual religious understanding. I mean, there are lots of days when I have just, it's very simple. There's a God, and I'm not it [laughs].

I think that having faith has really, and I don't, you know it's funny because there's a continuity between my mom and myself, although her faith was really structured, you know, that I still have that sense that faith is really important, although mine is very different. It's still, it informs a lot of my actions and values.

I don't know why I had the parents I had or the family I had. It just was. You know maybe one day I'll get to have a discussion about that with whoever was in charge at the time, but it allows me to have a certain kind of forgiveness for my parents and my dad, be able to offer what I can for him.

For some of these individuals, their belief system appears to have changed considerably from that of their parents', becoming more cross-cultural. Note the elements of Eastern and Native American spiritual beliefs that are evident in these narratives, yet the participants do not appear to have fully adopted a new religious doctrine. The above narratives are consistent with the compensation trajectory of the attachment-as-religion theory (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Granqvist et al., 2010). These narratives also indicate that spirituality has evolved away from the sectarian religious teachings based on life experience, suggesting progress toward position 9 in Perry's scheme. These participants have generalized their experiences into a spiritual understanding. While these examples may not demonstrate full adoption of a position 9 world view, they do highlight other areas of their lives where they have applied skills in relativism.

Barr (2010) investigated the links between absorption, attachment, trauma, and spirituality in a study of correlative evidence across several measures for 389 undergraduate students who had experienced a loss within the prior 5 years. His study

differentiated between internalized versus externalized continuing bonds with the deceased. Externalized continuing bonds were associated with hallucinatory experiences, while internalized continuing bonds were associated with feelings of closeness and to utilizing the deceased as a secure base. The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996) measures positive outcomes associated with trauma, such as creating new opportunities for understanding, expanded personal capacities for compassion, and increased the valuation of one's own life. Barr found that internalized continuing bonds with the deceased were uniquely linked to personal growth after trauma. Internalized continuing bonds were also linked to connectedness and universality scales on the Spiritual Transcendence Scale (Piedmont, 1999), although the author notes that there appears to be some overlap in face validity for these two scales.

Even though Emily's mother has passed away, she has gained experiences of being mothered through psychodrama, and continues to access what she has internalized from those experiences. She is consciously aware of the connection that she feels toward her mother, which is also consistent with her stated spiritual beliefs about being connected to ancestors.

I still feel what I consider her presence for whatever that means, wherever she is. It is like, not a visual or anything. It is more like a feeling or a sense that she knows how I am doing and she cares about how I am doing, and she is somewhere in the universe evolving herself, but there is a peace. I guess there is a peace or a sense of calm. It is the most bizarre thing, to be honest, to talk about. Because you don't walk into therapy and say, oh, this is how I am feeling, but it is an understanding that somehow she lives on, whether it is in me or in my mind or whatever, that she did the best she could and I forgive her and if I am in trouble I will just consult her. So it is kind of, I think those things have been allowed me when I have done psychodrama. Like I have been able to grow her out of my head and then grow myself up. . . . And in that way I know I have a full experience of my mom rather than just the loss of her, right?

Emily is conscious of how her spiritual beliefs connect to her experience of internalized continuing bonds with her mother. It appears that these internalized bonds have contributed to her growth and allowed her to resolve her grief. While her belief system was evident in her AAI, the consistency between her conscious spiritual beliefs and the discussion of her loss did not indicate disorientation or loss of monitoring.

Conclusions

Almost all of the participants reported full or partial forgiveness of parents that resulted in improved emotional regulation. However, explicit forgiveness was not necessarily linked to the classification of the AAI transcript. This is an important distinction because it is the classification of the transcript that predicts infant security. Attainment of empathic distress beyond the situation with regard to parents appeared to be an important step toward attachment security, suggesting Hoffman's stages as a possible pathway toward the higher levels of reflective function described by Fonagy et al. (1991). While empathic distress beyond the situation regarding individuals other than parents was also found in narratives associated with insecure transcripts, it appeared to be limited to individuals whose histories overlapped with participant experiences at the same developmental level. Participants had knowledge of what it is like to be a child, and they were likely well informed about their children's experiences. For some participants, empathic distress beyond the situation was demonstrated for children by participants that did not demonstrate this skill with regard to parents. Participants are farther removed from their parents' childhood experiences, as well as the challenges that their parents had faced as adults. Even as parents themselves, participants raised their children in a different environment than their parents had parented them. Narratives for insecure transcripts were limited to veridical empathic distress for the parent and tended to be linked to external factors rather than internal processes.

Narratives associated with secure transcripts demonstrated empathic distress beyond the situation with regard to the parent. There were two important precursors for this level of empathy for parents. First, participants appeared to recognize how

circumstances might lead to specific thoughts and feelings in the self. Secondly, participants identified similar circumstances in the parents' histories that were linked to parent behavior through abductive reasoning. These circumstances tended to be related to the lack of opportunity for the parents to build personal resources, rather than to external circumstances. The transition to a higher level of empathy for the parent did not appear to be the result of a single event or a simple process. Gains in Perry's (1968) stages of intellectual and ethical development and supports for executive function facilitated extended exploration of unknown circumstances. Significant gaps between what was known about parents' histories and what was unknown about their internal thought processes were filled in over time. Identification with parent behaviors likely facilitated this process by providing experiences of bidirectional emotional empathy. Multiple iterations of abductive reasoning for both the self and parent appeared to promote the development of relativistic thinking. With each iteration, participants became increasingly aware that the list of factors that might contribute to internal thought processes over an extended period was likely to be inexhaustible. As participants gained complexity in their knowledge about how circumstances contributed to parents' lack of personal resources, the blame they assigned to parents was lessened. Participants began to realize that parent behavior was not due to malicious intent. They also realized that they as children were not deserving or causal in their parents' behavior. Forgiveness appeared to be a result of decreased blame due to conclusions regarding lack of intent.

Increased self-awareness combined with empathic distress beyond the situation with regard to parents appeared to support a level of integration that created self-efficacy beliefs about future interactions. After considerable deliberation, participants were able

to coordinate their behavior toward parents with integrity toward their own personal values. They identified strategies that balanced their own needs against their empathy for parents, resulting in behavior that was respectful of both points of view. Those who had reached this stage of commitment produced transcripts that were either classified as secure or appeared to be approaching security. The participant narratives that correspond to the four transcripts that were either secure or judged to be on the edge of security contained many similarities. All four of these contained the following elements:

- Utilization of metalingual strategies that incorporated abstract and symbolic processing, consistent with criteria for access to the theoretical construct of cool EF;
- Progression through Hoffman's (2008) stage of empathy of beyond the situation for both the self and the parent;
- Identification of behavioral characteristics in the self that participants had previously identified as contributing to sustained subjective anger toward the parent;
- Direct or indirect inferences about being non-causal in how they were parented;
- Demonstrated skills for relativism leading up to the development of integrity toward a set of values associated with position 7, first commitment, in Perry's (1968) scheme for intellectual and ethical development;
- Closure of the secure attachment script through the therapeutic relationship, as well as in other aspects of their lives.

The proposed pathway from preoccupying anger to earned security is identified in Table 1. Explicit processes are identified, along with proposed neuropsychological components and correlates. Theorized implicit processes and likely moderators are also identified. Progression through the phases of the model indicates a general direction for change; however, in participant narratives, some of these changes were iterative and prior learning was readdressed at new levels. In general, strategies for emotional regulation shifted from ineffective proactive strategies toward combinations that included reappraisal. Empathy skills regarding parents showed development in Hoffman's stages of empathy through empathic distress beyond the situation with regard to parents. Intellectual development advanced beyond formal reasoning to stages of relativism, commitment foreseen, and first commitment in Perry's scheme for intellectual and ethical development. Abductive reasoning and supports for executive function played significant roles in the development of these skills through self-directed activities that included attending to environmental cues, creation of mental representations, private speech, and mental rehearsal. The utilization of strategies associated with hot and cool executive function also appeared to play a significant role.

The main analysis of participant narratives was based on the categorical-form method of analysis. This method tied the narrative to corroborating information from outside the interview and placed it in an ordered progression. While the categories might seem somewhat predictable to the reader in hindsight, the researcher was surprised at the intricate ways that they combined to influence the state of mind with regard to attachment. Originally, the researcher thought she might find a steady progression stemming from an empathy-provoking event. On the contrary, participants sometimes

seemed to draw on information that they had held for a long time, as the skills for integrating that information in adaptive ways emerged much later. For example, Mathew's mother had told him in his early twenties about his father's childhood. However, he was not able to incorporate that information into empathic distress beyond the situation until much later.

There were also some interesting elements found in the narratives that did not appear in the literature. One such element was the way that participants consciously manipulated situational modifiers to support themselves in acting on their personal values. Emily makes conscious choices about who she wants to be around. Matthew delays disciplining his son until he has thought it through. Another was that emotional regulation strategies might change over time as a function of moving toward security. Participants described very little use of reappraisal strategies prior to therapy; however, all of them described extensive use of reappraisal after participating in therapy. The researcher had also expected that progression in Perry's (1968) stages would be closely tied to the level of education, and increased flexibility in relationships might be a product of generalization. However, the narratives did not support this assumption; rather, this progression appeared to be much more closely linked to learning to use abductive reasoning through the therapeutic process.

Table 1
Proposed Pathway From Preoccupying Anger to Earned Security for Study Participants

Explicit Processes	Proposed Neuropsychological Components / Correlates	Implicit Processes Identified	Process Mediators Identified
Motivation for Therapy	Emotional Dysregulation Ineffective Strategies for Maintaining Relationships Veridical Empathy Limited by Experience w/ Emotional Content	Proactive Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance • Self-Distraction • Self-Assertion Reactive Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissociation • Distancing • Suppression 	Motivation to Control
Individual and Group Therapy	Treatment Plan Integrating Group & Individual Therapy	Extrinsic Emotional Regulation	Repetitive Secure Script Enactment
Identification With Parent	Gains in Veridical Empathic Distress	Bidirectional Empathy	Need for Cognition*
Incorporation of Methodological Strategies: Scan Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media • Observation • Direct Experience Expressive Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic Processing Self-Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness • Somatic Markers 	Iterative Processing Between Hot & Cold Executive Function	Cognitive Empathy Supported by Emotional Empathy	Motivation to Control*

Explicit Processes	Proposed Neuropsychological Components / Correlates	Implicit Processes Identified	Process Mediators Identified
Incorporation of Abductive Reasoning Supported by Metalogical Understanding	Improved Processing in Prefrontal Cortex Increased Availability for Working Memory Capacity	Gradual Shift Toward Bias for Cognitive Reappraisal in Processing Relationship Information	Habit for Reappraisal
Cognitive Reappraisal	Internalized Executive Function for Processing Social Information		
Increased Forgiveness & Tolerance	Development of Empathic Distress Beyond Situation Regarding Parents	Increased Automaticity in Self-Regulation	Manipulation of Environment for Access to Situational Modifiers
Integrated Commitment to Values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment • Compassion • Balanced Perspective • Autonomy 	Development of Cognitive Bias for Relativism in Relationship Information Processing		

Note. The columns in the above table represent the proposed pathway to earned-security. Progressive steps are indicated vertically, with associated processes identified horizontally. Horizontal lines are added to group processes that appear to be related between columns. Line breaks indicate transitions between processes.

Discussion

The narratives of the current study point to a process toward security that is in some ways fundamentally different from those who are judged continuously secure. Attachment theory posits that the characteristics of continuously secure individuals are the result of implicit learning associated with a secure working model. Attachment security can be identified from very early ages, including infancy, childhood, and adolescence, although its measurement takes different forms depending on the age group. Security at early stages of development occurs independently of reaching the milestones identified in this study's narratives. Continuously secure individuals can be identified through other measures long before capacities for abductive reasoning are developed and Perry's (1968) stages are reached. These differences suggest that earned security and continuous security may be different constructs, in spite of similarities in coherence and predictive validity for attachment status for offspring.

Due to difficulties with identifying earned-secure transcripts in retrospect, it may not be feasible to reliably parse out earned-secure versus continuously secure transcripts based on the current AAI alone. The processes that were identified for earned-secure individuals in this study may contribute to our ability to differentiate between these AAI transcripts in the future. Perhaps follow-up questions could be added that inquire into how the individual knows that the parents did the best they could or how the individual might be like (or unlike) the parent.

These narratives highlight contributions to metacognitive skills from multiple domains, including emotional regulation, executive function, empathy, and cognition. Taking a developmental approach, we might consider that the emergence of a specific

skill set may depend on acquisition of multiple prerequisite skills. The learning curve for continuously secure individuals is likely to be correlated with typical development in a secure environment. However, if requisite skills are absent due to atypical development or unenriched environment, differences are likely to emerge. Contrasting the histories for earned-secure and continuously secure individuals, one may speculate that skills arising from parallel processes, such as Hoffman's stages for both groups may be related to common developmental constructs. Hoffman's hypothesized stages of empathy in typical development and developmental stages of empathy for self and parents in earned-secure study participants suggest a common pathway between implicit and explicit processes toward mature empathy. However, empathic distress beyond the situation requires an understanding of links between circumstances and emotional states.

Assuming a typical developmental trajectory, earned-secure individuals might have experienced a delay in a common process due to limited experiences with some other fundamental underlying component. For example, a dysregulated child may be less likely to notice links between more complex or distal cause and effect relationships under conditions of hot EF. Empathic distress for the child, but not the parent, suggests an issue related to repertoire rather than skill sets.

In the current study, participants also identified supports for executive function that assisted in linking distal antecedents with complex feeling states, such as treatment plans and cool EF. Many of the reappraisals of those whose transcripts were judged earned-secure were linked to information that was previously missing or inaccurate regarding themselves or their parents. With supports for executive function regarding the processing of relationship information built into treatment, and exercises incorporating

cool EF, participants were able to consider the evidence with more complex reasoning and take more contextual factors into account. Individuals with earned-secure transcripts not only gained understanding of parents' behavior, but also became much more self-aware. The prominence of the role of having identified with the parent in becoming secure, suggests that earned security has at least two separate facets. One is integrating childhood experiences in a manner that promotes self-efficacy beliefs in relationship skills, such as accurate empathy and setting appropriate boundaries. The other is a growing self-awareness about how the participants' experiences with parents impacted their world-view as they grew up. This self-awareness appears to promote vigilance in self-monitoring for departures from explicit values.

Differences in formats for therapy suggested that some participants directed their own efforts in psychodrama, while others identified a secure base for exploration in individual therapy. Some participants indicated that their psychodrama or other group work was integrated with individual therapy. In most of the narratives associated with earned-secure transcripts, a therapist appeared to provide a secure base. A treatment plan is usually developed in the first few sessions of therapy. It is used to identify interim and long-term goals and the activities that will contribute to meeting those goals. If additional therapeutic activities were to be utilized, the treatment plan would identify these activities and coordinate them with these goals. Individual therapy would include an allocation of time for the discussion of group work and/or expressive projects. Although participants did not specifically discuss the use of a treatment plan, it would constitute an important support for executive function if used in this manner.

The central role of supports for executive function in the current study suggests that executive function may be equally as important in secure attachment for continuously secure and earned-secure individuals alike. When considering the developmental path of those who are continuously secure, we might speculate that supports for executive function are provided by the parent, especially when the child is overwhelmed. Parental support for executive function appears to be a likely candidate for a mediating effect on the role of attuned parenting as a predictor for secure attachment.

In contrast, the current study data suggest that earned-secure versus continuously secure individuals may not share a common pathway toward the development of flexible thinking. Security arises independently of intellectual development in continuously secure individuals. For participants in the present study, this flexibility was linked to the development of post-formal cognitive development through Perry's (1968) stages as a compensatory process. Of course, the role of a compensatory process neither rules out nor implies a causal relationship between that process and a trajectory for optimal development. However, the developmental level associated with skills required for that process points to the unlikelihood that the same process is utilized for skill attainment below that level. While Perry did not consider attachment status in his study, it appeared that the majority of college freshmen that he interviewed had not mastered relativism. His theory is predicated on the supposition that normative development of relativism takes place in the college years. The participants in the present study are adults with varying levels of academic experience. Although a collegiate academic environment may have promoted intellectual and ethical development for some participants, educational

advancement was not necessarily linked to progression through Perry's developmental positions. Some of these participants have a high school education, while others have pursued advanced degrees. The therapeutic environment is similar to the educational environment in that it provides a forum for learning. It seems reasonable that post-formal cognitive development might be similarly promoted in both learning environments, especially considering the cognitive aspects of progressions in abductive reasoning indicated in the narratives.

Although participants' narratives identified an ongoing relationship with an individual therapist as an important factor in their development, it is unlikely that the associated treatment plans specifically addressed the pathways discussed above. These specific pathways to earned security have not been specifically proposed in previous research. However, participant narratives provide valuable insights into how specific therapeutic experiences are likely to have contributed to a secure state of mind with regard to attachment. It appears plausible to recreate these steps in treatment planning for other individuals, but caution is warranted. The narratives of a small number of individuals from a close community, mainly engaged in a single type of therapeutic process, do not assure that these findings are generalizable to the general population. Additional research will be needed to determine what populations might be well served by interventions arising from this research and explore best methods for achieving these goals. It will also be important that needed skills are developed ahead of challenging defensive processes. For example, it could be re-traumatizing to direct clients to identify with an aggressor. Additional considerations are likely to be relevant for ethical treatment of individuals utilizing various defensive strategies. Personal and situational

factors that are identified as mediators and moderators for changing behavior associated with implicit learning in other areas may provide insights for treatment development.

Additionally, these therapeutic goals are not well situated in any one therapy tradition. While psychodrama seems to have made significant contributions for these participants, there were also some psychodrama participants who did not appear to reap the full benefits. For example, some participants indicated that they derived great benefit from role-reversal, while others did not. Also, psychodrama appeared to play a different role for each participant. It will be important to consider the client in terms of development and culture. Psychodrama also may not be suitable for clients who are not ready for group work.

This is an exploratory study of one specific area of attachment, meant to identify areas for research evidence-based practice. Because only preoccupying anger and sustained subjective anger were addressed, there are large areas of attachment that were not investigated. Although we might make educated guesses about states of mind prior to therapy based on these narratives, there was no objective measurement of the attachment state of mind. Based on this limited retrospective information, one may surmise that different developmental trajectories will apply to therapeutic processes, regardless of AAI transcript classification.

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