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A study of men in non-traditional male occupations

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**A STUDY OF MEN
IN
NON-TRADITIONAL MALE OCCUPATIONS**

BY

FIONA RAEWYN KELLY

Dip. Ed.

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of**

Bachelor of Education with Honours

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Abstract

In the past the majority of occupations were very clearly divided into 'men's work' and 'women's work' and such attitudes persist today. The man who crosses over into an occupation traditionally considered to be a female occupation upsets society's gender assumptions. Some research indicates that there are many advantages for these men; others have found that it is a difficult transition creating many problems for the men involved, one of the most significant being the persistent questioning of their sexual orientation.

This research takes a close look at the experiences of four men in non-traditional male occupations. The subjects studied are working as a nurse, secretary, early childhood educator and a sexual assault counsellor. The purpose of this study was to investigate the barriers, difficulties and highlights in the experiences of the subjects in their chosen non-traditional male occupations. A case study methodology has been used and the experiences of the subjects documented as they presented them. It is intended that readers have the opportunity to draw their own conclusions from the data beyond those identified by the researcher and it has therefore been presented in a format that incorporates much direct quotation from the interview transcripts. Comparisons between the cases and with the literature have been made by the researcher and the relevance to counselling and future research discussed.

Three of the four men are very happy with their chosen occupations and intend to continue in their line of work. They all feel that although they have encountered some difficulties because of their gender the benefits far outweighed them. It was of significance that sexuality was an issue rather than gender with two of the candidates indicating that there is need for further investigation into this issue.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature

Date.....19/4/95.....

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

We live in a society that has strong gender related biases that are manifested in so many ways. Men and women are socialised to believe that they are most suited for different types of work, that is, women predominate in the more caring, expressive occupations whereas men dominate in fields where technical proficiency and decision making abilities are required. It is not that long ago that there were many occupations that women, or alternatively men, were not allowed to enter. A clear example of this 'gendering' of occupations is provided by Williams (1993, p. 5) when discussing the division of labour between doctors and nurses:

Prior to this modern division, both men and women performed diagnostic, curative techniques as well as care giving functions (although on very few clienteles). Separating these functions involved barring women from schools of medicine, and excluding men from nursing programs. In other words, assumptions about gender were built into the elaboration of these two separate professions.

Although there are no longer rules preventing men or women from entering the profession of their choice, there are societal biases to overcome. How influential are they?

When consideration was initially being given to the need for research in the area of men in traditionally female occupations it was decided to get a general feel for

the attitudes that may exist towards such men. Three men at random were asked the question:

What do you think of men who work in traditionally female roles such as pre-school teaching, nursing or home economics teaching?

They each replied:

"Bloody Poofers"

"Instinctively I admire women going into men's jobs but cringe at men going into women's jobs."

"I don't have a problem with it. I think there is a position for them in those jobs. I think it's sad that they're given a hard time."

Three women were similarly asked at random and this is what they said:

"I think good on them. I think they are brave and gutsy because other men will scorn them and women will think it is good but wonder if they are gay."

"I think it's a bit odd. I'd wonder a bit about his sexuality."

"I think that it is wonderful. I think that they would be warm and sensitive guys who are probably very good at their jobs because they have chosen to do something they really want to do."

If these comments in any way reflect the range of attitudes of society, is it any wonder that men moving into these careers may encounter problems and

difficulties? Is this really the case?

Much progress has been made over the years helping females overcome the many barriers and prejudices that prevented them from participating in traditional 'male' career options. Accordingly, the presence and acceptance of women in non-traditional female roles is now well established (e.g. law, medicine) and is much more readily accepted by society than in the past.

In spite of this move toward equality there are a number of jobs that are still highly female-oriented, for example, nursing, dental nursing, child care, home economics teaching, social work and secretarial work to name a few. According to O'Neil (1982) men are conditioned to perceive career success and achievement as primary measurements of manhood and masculinity. Traits such as gentleness, expressiveness, and responsiveness, often associated with traditionally female jobs, are considered feminine traits and therefore put men's masculinity in question. Despite the gender role socialisation that Australian males receive throughout their formative years, a few do choose to pursue traditionally female oriented jobs and hopefully, as society moves further towards equity, men will re-examine their roles, beliefs and values and consider 'female' jobs when making career choices.

As a prospective careers worker, the author chose to closely examine the career paths of a number of men who have risked potential ridicule and societal disapproval and moved into careers that are not traditionally chosen by men.

It was hoped that it would be possible to develop an insight into the difficulties

faced, help and support received, major influences on and personal gains and losses of having followed their chosen career path. The intention was to produce a document that portrays the experiences of the participants and their perspectives upon them.

1.2 The Problem Statement and Purpose of Study

The movement of men into traditionally female occupations is still only a trickle in today's society. This is in contrast to the situation that has been brought about in respect to women, where in recent years there has been a strong flow of women taking up what has been regarded as traditionally men's jobs. This poses the question as to why this should be. The strong trend toward equality for women in the employment arena has been accompanied by a substantial body of research; whereas the same cannot be said about the movement of men in the other direction.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the barriers, difficulties and in turn highlights of four men who have moved into non-traditional male occupations. This investigation looks closely at the experiences and reflections of a male nurse, ECE teacher, secretary, and sexual abuse counsellor with respect to various aspects of their working lives: the initial decision, the training process, the working environment and future career plans.

1.3 Research Question

The major research question is:

What issues have men in non-traditional careers encountered at different stages throughout their career path; what strategies have they adopted to resolve them; and what have been the consequences of that experience?

In this question the term 'issue' refers to any difficulties, problems and dilemmas the individual has faced. These could be the result of any number of influences in their lives at different points in time, such as family, friends, peers, colleagues, and/or the environment.

A non-traditional career has been classified as one in which there is less than 30% participation by members of one sex (Kadushin 1976, Lemkau 1984, Williams 1992). In this respect the occupations selected for study have a participation rate for men that is significantly less than the specified 30%.

The stages of each individual's career path that the research was intended to focus on were: (1) Initial decision; (2) The training process; (3) The working environment; and (4) Future career plans.

1.4 The Significance of the Study.

The information collected in the report may well help in the development of strategies to encourage more males into non-traditional careers and prompt the

development of support and counselling processes for men already studying and working in these areas. There is always the chance that this information may coincide with the beginning of a changing societal attitude toward the distribution of jobs for men and women, to one where people are less influenced by gender expectations and more by personal desire to work in occupations to which they are most suited.

With the intent to collect data rich in description and reflective of the true experiences of the participants, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of theory in the area. Clearly, by itself this single study will not generate sufficient data to prompt major changes in thinking, however, it can form the basis of further research by others.

Also, the information gathered should be of significance to career counsellors as it may provide an insight into the highlights and advantages these men have experienced and provide knowledge that may help other men make the decision to enter these occupations. The data also identify the difficulties they faced and how they overcame them providing valuable lessons to others.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

A review of literature is always something of a balancing act - overcoming one's natural desire to indulge oneself in areas of general interest, whilst at the same time, recognising the compelling need to pursue in depth specific areas of greatest importance to the intended study.

The balance in this case is such that the review of related literature presented below is focused in two main areas: literature addressing studies of non-traditional male occupational choice, and methodology in the areas of qualitative research and case study. In reviewing literature on men in non-traditional male occupational choice the researcher's intention was to locate common findings, areas of agreement and disagreement and possible deficiencies in the research that has been done to date. In reviewing methodological literature, the aim was to gain knowledge that would assist in the most suitable approach being adopted for the intended research.

2.1 Literature addressing studies on Non-traditional male occupational choice.

Previous research and literature in the field of men in non-traditional careers have concentrated on two areas of interest: the characteristics that make them different which results in them choosing their occupation; and/or issues faced once in the working environment.

Common themes reoccur. Lemkau (1984) reported that men in non-traditional jobs, as compared to men in traditional jobs, are more likely to be members of

racial minorities, have more education, are more often the product of divorced family environments or had lost a parent or sibling when growing up. Hayes (1989) does not agree with this and suggested that, contrary to previous research, men in non-traditional occupations are "not more likely to have experienced the loss of a parent due to death nor to have experienced father-absence" (p. 206). Hayes (1989) did find however that these men were "more likely to have been living with their fathers than those in male concentrated occupations" (p. 206). Much of the research concentrating on the background of non-traditional men considered these issues, and although the research is by no means extensive, most findings failed to support the contention that men who enter female concentrated occupations have experienced inappropriate gender formation due to the lack of a father or other adult males in the household or due to becoming 'sensitised' by the death of a parent.

Research on men working in these occupations often found common areas of concern. The term 'tracking' is used by Williams (1992) to describe a process by which men are promoted rapidly into positions of administration because they are considered more appropriate for men. Many may not see this as a problem as they are promotional positions and earn more money; however, often the men involved are not interested in administration but feel they are pushed into these positions because society still believes in a patriarchal division of labor that assigns women to supportive roles in the workforce and men to leadership roles. (Harris, 1981). Heikes (1991) reports that this rapid acceleration is due to the high 'visibility' of these men and therefore the pressure to perform and to be high achievers is greater. Heikes (1991) also believes that once in these occupations the men still wish to protect their masculine identities and focus

their efforts on promotion and choosing specialities in fields with more men (eg. psychiatric nursing).

Social stigma is mentioned in many articles as being a major issue for men in these occupations. Heikes (1991, p. 396) with regard to male nurses found that "because nursing is a traditionally female occupation, it is often assumed, especially by those outside of the profession, that any man who chooses to become a nurse must be something less than fully masculine". Williams (1992) commented that:

Men often encounter negative stereotypes when they come into contact with clients or 'outsiders' -people they meet outside of work. For instance, it is popularly assumed that male nurses are gay. Librarians encounter images of themselves as "wimpy" and asexual. Male social workers describe being typecast as "feminine" and "passive". Elementary school teachers are often confronted by suspicions that they are pedophiles. (p. 261)

Another social stigma found to be attached to men working in female identified occupations is that much of society considered these occupations to be less prestigious because "it is generally accepted that 'feminine' occupations pay less than 'masculine' occupations" (Chusmir, 1990, p. 15) and until this changes the occupational status of these jobs will remain lower than 'male' occupations. According to Zunker (1990) many researchers have found:

... men are conditioned to perceive career success and achievement

as primary measurements of manhood and masculinity. These researchers suggest that a man's work represents his status in society and is the primary base for measuring success over the life span (p. 405).

The most significant problems faced by non-traditional men seem to be coming from factors external to the actual occupational environment, in fact several of the studies have found that there are several advantages for men in these occupations. Hayes (1989) found that "compared with men from gender-traditional occupations, men in female concentrated occupations were significantly more likely to have been satisfied with their physical surroundings, to find their co-workers friendly and to consider their jobs less dangerous" (p. 209). Kadushin (1976) found that many men considered the 'faster-than-normal track to promotion', preferential salary treatment, and monopolisation of prestigious positions to be one of the benefits of entering female occupations.

The themes in the research are consistent although in some research they are presented as advantages and in others disadvantages. In all research the social stigma of working in a 'feminine' occupation is considered an element that both prevents men entering these occupations and is an on-going concern once in the field. The researcher could not find any research that addressed issues faced during training or any that considered the future career moves of these men. There has been very little research conducted in Australia in this field and very little using case study methodology where the men are encouraged to reflect deeply on the emotional factors involved in issues that appear to be quite emotion

provoking and psychologically effecting.

The literature review summarises several articles on subjects relevant to men in non-traditional occupations and the concepts that these researchers have or have not supported. It was evident from the literature that there is limited research in the area of non-traditional male careers. There are many discrepancies in the existing research and consequently a need for further studies in the area recognised. With this in mind the researcher hoped to produce an account of the experiences of the four subjects that was an open and accurate reflection of their perceptions of their atypical occupations.

2.2 Methodology

There are various methods of data collection each with their own strengths and weaknesses and degrees of suitability to particular research topics. In this section the methodology literature is reviewed and an examination made of the appropriateness of a qualitative approach to this proposed study.

A case study strategy was identified as most appropriate for the goals of this research and therefore, literature related to this method of data collection has been reviewed. Areas of strength and appropriateness have been highlighted as well as ways in which weaknesses of this strategy can be avoided.

Qualitative Research.

"Qualitative research is concerned with meanings as they appear to, or are

achieved by, persons in lived social situations" (Greene 1988, p. 175). The environment is not invented or modified, it is the *natural setting* in which events evolve. "Nothing is pre-defined or taken for granted, [it is the study of] contexts in process " (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 5).

There is another clear message from literature on qualitative research; qualitative researchers want the individuals who are being studied to speak for themselves. Most qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 372).

With this research the author aimed to present the experiences of the four men selected. In order to get below the surface and discover the deeper meanings of the experiences these people have faced, the intention was to conduct a number of in-depth interviews. This approach was preferred to the quantitative methodology which by necessity would have required a much larger sample group which would not have allowed the in-depth study of individuals preferred for this research.

Case study.

The intention of this research was to study the social situation of men in predominately female occupations. The case study was identified as the most appropriate method of attending to all the features of this experience from the time of conception of the chosen career path to the present occupation and plans for the future.

The distinctive need for a case study arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena.....Case study allows an investigation to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events - such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries.

(Yin, 1989, p. 12)

The researcher hoped to encourage the participants to look inwardly and reflect on the influences and significant points of decision making, in the career paths they have followed, to the present time. "The qualitative sociologist must turn their subjects inside out and discover the private as well as public selves" (Campbell, 1988, p. 59).

Rodgers (1984) recommends that:

...case studies are especially appropriate when there is no clear hypothesis to guide the investigation. In adult developmental studies an in-depth analysis of a few carefully selected cases can yield generalizations or patterns within or between individuals.....Data can be generated from combinations of individual interviews, self report instruments, and behavioural observations in natural settings (p. 482).

In the circumstances confronting this study where there is no recognised body of theory the case study approach would have much to recommend it.

There are three common criticisms of case studies. Firstly, there is the risk of biased views of the observer and their influence as to the direction of findings and conclusions. With this in mind it was the intention of the researcher to show the interview transcripts and analysis to the participant after each interview. With the participant's approval that the account is faithful to their understanding of their experience, there is no need to be concerned with the concept of bias.

Secondly, there is a concern that case studies provide very little on which to make generalisations. Yin (1989) suggests:

The short answer is that case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a "sample," and the investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalizations) and not enumerate frequencies (statistical generalizations) (p. 20).

It was the researcher's intention to present the 'whole story' of a few individuals. This information is not enough from which to make generalisations or to build theory, nor is it intended to be. This research will be of value to supplement other similar research undertaken by others and for theory building and generalising in the future.

The third problem is that case studies are often too long and become massive, unreadable documents. It is important then, in order to produce a useful case

study document, to select what is considered to be the most crucial and relevant material, and to compose portions of the report early and have it reviewed by informed persons. In this research it was decided that the informed person should be the interviewee and that reviews should be done throughout the data collection process as a fundamental part of the interview methodology and as a crucial step towards avoiding interviewer bias.

Having carefully reviewed literature addressing the advantages and disadvantages of case study methodology the researcher was able to confirm the appropriateness of this methodology to the intended research. Criticisms associated with using a case study approach were identified enabling the researcher to address them accordingly.

Chapter Three

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

3.1 Theoretical Framework

When reviewing the literature it became apparent that the intended research did not 'fit in' particularly well to any established conceptual framework or theory. The researcher wanted to look at aspects of social behaviour and this naturally lead to the field of sociology which Thomson (1985) defines as the study of "Why people act as they do, what factors in society affect their behaviour, how groups of people in society organise themselves and come to be as they are" (p.1).

There are a number of different approaches to the study of sociology. The main distinction is between those that consider the patterns and characteristics observed in society as things into which people fit or are fitted [Positivism, Functionalism and Marxism belong to this group] and those that see these characteristics as the consequences of actions and interactions of individuals [Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology and Symbolic Interactionism] (Thomson, 1985).

It was appropriate for the researcher to locate the study into a particular field of sociology. The different approaches as listed above are based on different theories of society and these in turn have adopted their own methods of investigation. An examination of the different methods was undertaken and the sociological approach of symbolic interactionism identified as that most closely aligned with the beliefs of the researcher and the requirements of the intended research. The characteristics of the different methods from which this choice was made are defined here under.

was made are defined here under.

Definitions of Sociological Approaches.

Positivism stresses that sociologists must base all their explanations on empirical investigation and eliminate all value judgements from analysis.

Functionalism is an approach in which the sociologist believes society is a system made up of separate parts that when functioning properly work together for the benefit of the whole. Functionalist sociology analyses the functions of the different parts of the system and questions how they relate to the whole.

Marxist Sociology is very difficult to define briefly as it has had such an influence on contemporary sociology and aspects of Marx's ideas and methodology appear in many approaches. Thomson (1985) has outlined the following aspects as those that best describe what is distinctive and most valuable in Marx's contribution to sociology:

- economic* factors have the most influence on how people behave;
- historical economic* factors need consideration when studying a phenomenon to understand how factors developed and what caused them to change;
- revolutionary breaks* in social development frequently cause changes to society; and
- there is a link between theory and practice, referred to as *praxis*, meaning that action must first be reflected upon intellectually and then carried out consciously.

Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology place emphasis on 'interpretation' and 'understanding' (Weber in Thomson 1985, p.14). These approaches concentrate on small scale investigations of aspects of everyday life and stress that "nothing is to be taken for granted, to question the commonplace and the ordinary, to treat even the most simple things as 'problematic'" (Thomson 1985, p.14). Phenomenological sociology is concerned with how people come to construct the meanings, attitudes and responses to society that they do.

Symbolic Interactionism, the sociological approach most aligned with my intended research examines the behaviour of individuals and how they have become the persons they are by interaction with others. Symbolic interactionists believe, and indeed sociologists generally agree, that whilst some physical and biological characteristics are inherited by human beings, most of their behaviour is learned and considerably influenced by the social environment in which they grow up. (Thomson 1985).

The meanings and interpretations people make of actions and events are crucial to the symbolic interactionist approach. An individual's past experiences and present identities create different social realities to what may appear to be the same experience. It is the view of Symbolic interactionists that people interact through meaningful symbols. Meanings evolve over time from social interactions. (Hutchinson, 1988).

Symbolic interactionism is the philosophical foundation of grounded theory.

Grounded theory is research that goes beyond existing theories and conceptual frameworks in search of new understandings.

Grounded theory was collaboratively developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss "Data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge."(Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23)

With this in mind it was proposed to use a grounded theory approach to build a number of case studies which would capture the reality of the experiences of a number of men engaged in their particular fields of occupation. Accordingly, the theoretical framework for this study is that of symbolic interactionism.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) outline four central criteria for a well constructed grounded theory and these were incorporated in the approach taken in the study now being reported upon. This research was conducted in a manner that would provide data that, perhaps when supplemented with the future work of others, could form the platform on which to build a sound theory. The criteria which have been adopted may be summarised as follows:

- the theory must be faithful to the everyday reality of the substantive area;
- because it is intended to represent that reality it should make sense to both the persons studied and those practicing in the area;
- the data upon which the theory is based must be comprehensive and the

enough and include sufficient variation to make it applicable to a variety of contexts related to the phenomenon; and finally,

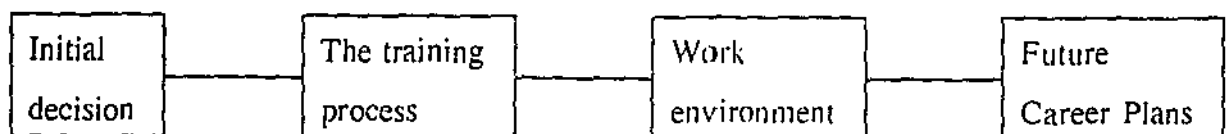
-the theory should provide control with regard to action toward the phenomenon.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

A grounded theory study does not involve itself in locating the conceptual framework into which the study fits. Its purpose, in fact, is to:

faithfully describe and reconstruct the world of those he or she is studying from their subjects point of view without the encumbrance of theory or methodological techniques.....any training or grounding of the researcher in social theory of any kind is irrelevant, and possibly disadvantageous, since it does not defer to the authority of the empirical world (Rock, 1979, p. 170).

It is possible that a conceptual framework may well emerge from the work of this study, particularly if the data base is complemented and extended by others; this, however, will be a subsequent development. As a preliminary notion the following is a framework representing the conceptual elements that guided the researcher's thinking and development of questions.



Chapter Four

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, case study research methodology. Stakes (1988, p. 256) suggests that "the principal difference between case studies and other research studies is that the focus of attention is the case not the whole population of cases". This research aims to provide a document that accurately reflects the views and beliefs of the four participants; thus the focus is on four men each in different non-traditional careers.

The following is a diagrammatic representation of the research design which was followed:

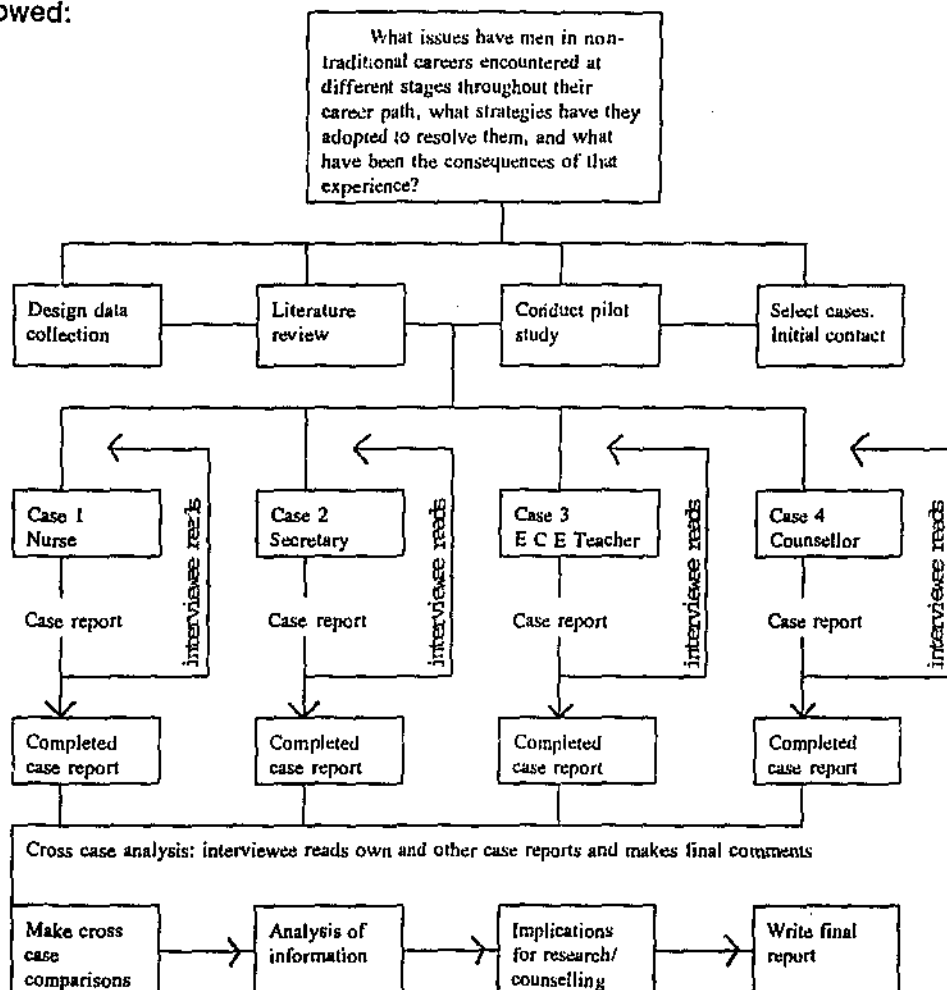


Figure 1. Research Path.

4.1 Subjects

The research subjects were chosen simply on the basis that 'somebody' knew them or knew of them.

The four subjects were:

Stuart - Qualified Psychiatric and General nurse working as a lecturer in nursing and at a psychiatric hospital.

Terry - Qualified Psychiatric nurse working as a counsellor in a centre for victims and perpetrators of sexual assault.

Simon - Qualified Early Childhood Educator.

Justin- Secretary for Clinical Psychologist and Management consultancy firm.

All subjects were willing to be involved and showed no reticence when being interviewed. They were all willing to participate in follow up interviews and telephone conversations and to review their own and the other participant's case studies.

4.2 Data Collection Technique

Pilot Study.

Before commencing the interviews with the four subjects, the author completed a pilot study with a male beautician. This enabled practice of interviewing techniques and the refinement of the most relevant and appropriate questions. The content base for the questions was established from the literature focusing within the areas of background, training, work environment, and the future.

It was a very interesting interview and there was a lot to be learned from the experience. One of the most important lessons was that unless the interviewer is prepared to take risks and ask questions that may be a little uncomfortable (that is, taking both interviewer and candidate out of their zone of comfort) then very little information will be gained. The beautician was an amicable candidate but other than a fairly brief and guarded description of his work history little other information was gained, especially information of a personal nature such as feelings and emotions.

The author conducted the pilot interview with a draft list of questions. On completion of the pilot study and in judging the results of it, a few additional questions were added. A valuable lesson learnt from the pilot study was that although the planned questions were suitable, when posing them to the subject it was necessary to not only get the candidate's literal answer but to follow up with emotion seeking questions, such as "How did this make you feel?" and "How did people react to that?". These questions prompted the subject into revealing the true feelings and emotions of the situation being recollected. The pilot study was a valuable exercise and established a good grounding for the interviewing of the four selected candidates.

Initial Interview

The author aimed to have as little influence as possible on the information that the subjects gave, conducting the interviews in an open ended and conversational manner. The interviewer followed techniques of attending and responding to the subjects as suggested by Nelson-Jones (1992) for counselling, hoping to

encourage the interviewee to talk freely and without inhibition. The questions comprised the initial set as subsequently modified by the outcome of the pilot study (Appendix A).

The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then used to write each subject's case in a manner that followed a logical/sequential path. The subject's own words were used whenever possible to allow readers to develop their own impressions of the subjects. It was done this way to follow the approach described by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 22) who state "it is the aim of the researcher to give an honest account with little or no interpretation of - interference with - those spoken words or observations made by the researcher". This is also closely aligned with Layder's (1993) Descriptive / Anti-formal approach which prescribes that findings should be presented in the language that reflects the commonsense world of the subjects being studied and that the value of this type of research is in the coherence of such accounts rather than in substantive or theoretical issues.

4.3 Case Studies

Miles and Hubermann (1984) suggest that "qualitative studies call for the continuous refocusing and redrawing of the parameters of the study during fieldwork, but some initial selection is still required" (p. 37). Qualitative research is an investigative process where one makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the objects being studied (Miles and Hubermann, 1984). When developing the focus of the research question it was decided, that in order to incorporate the

different stages of an individual's career, the study would need to focus in the areas of: *initial decision, training, the work environment and the future*. As the study evolved it emerged that the subjects *background; reactions to stereotypes; and the advice they would give to other men* considering a career similar to their own, were also important areas to consider.

Thus having transcribed the interviews, the data from the four subjects were organised into a matrix and categorised under the abovementioned categories: background, initial decision, training, work environment, future, stereotypes and other men.

With the information organised in this way it was possible to write the case studies in a sequence that was consistent across all four subjects. With the information organised in this manner it was also possible to quickly recognise gaps and to ask the candidate concerned to elaborate on a particular issue. On several occasions when writing the case studies, the author spoke to the subjects on the telephone and they were happy to clarify comments they had made or answer questions where it was felt elaboration was needed.

4.4 Subjects review cases

A copy of the results of all four cases was given to each candidate. With respect to the results of their own interview they were invited to make any changes, add any information or delete anything as they wished. With the copies of the other subjects they were asked to highlight areas with which they empathised, or disagreed, or to add anything to their own that may have been sparked by reading

the other accounts. They were given the option of replying in writing, having another interview, or both. (Letter - Appendix B).

All four candidates indicated that the accounts were a true reflection of their experiences. Very few alterations were made to content apart from instances where the subject may have felt that they were recognisable by what they had said or from a reference they had made. Minor changes were made by individuals to correct colloquialisms (e.g. Kids to children). A summary of the subjects' responses is presented in Appendix D.

The information gathered at this point in the process was also collated into a matrix under the same heading as the first stage. A few adjustments were then made to the case studies and they were returned once more to the subjects for a final proofing. No further changes were necessary. Contact was made and final approval received by telephone.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

It was essential that all ethical considerations associated with the study were identified and stringently addressed. To protect the interests of the participants all information has been kept confidential and pseudonyms for the individuals, places of work and locations have been used in all documentation. All participants were treated with respect and dignity and any desires they had with regard to confidentiality and inclusion (or exclusion) of data respected.

Additionally, participation in the study was voluntary and the participants

reserved the right to refuse to answer any question and withdraw from the research at any time. (Appendix C). Finally, the information presented in the case studies was not manipulated in any way by the researcher and was reviewed at each stage by the participant whose story it reflected.

4.6 Limitations of Research

In the literature review there were references to the weaknesses associated with case study methodology and how these could be overcome. Limitations specific to this particular research can be identified as - representativeness and generalisability, interpretations of colloquialisms.

Interviewing a limited number of candidates cause weaknesses with representativeness and generalisability. The researcher addressed this problem by producing accounts that are rich in direct quotation and that have been approved by the subjects as representative of their own reality, as seen and experienced by them. The generalisability of each account is left to the reader and the provision of the data in such a raw form allows the reader access to enough information to make value judgements about the researcher's interpretations.

In representing the data in the words of the respondents problems may have arisen with the interpretations of colloquialisms. In seeking the approval of the candidates of their study any interpretations made by the researcher were proofed by the individual and corrections made when necessary. Frequent contact with the individuals by telephone also allowed for immediate clarification as the documents were being produced.

Chapter Five

Case Studies

5.1 Case Study - Stuart

Stuart (age approximately 35) is a qualified psychiatric and general nurse who is currently working part time as a lecturer in nursing and at a psychiatric hospital. He requested that his interview be conducted at home. It was a relaxed environment with the interview taking place in the lounge room as his partner prepared the evening meal and the pets (three dogs) wandered about. Stuart relayed his story fluently. Having been requested to start with a description of his family and upbringing he continued through his studying and working history with very little interjection from the interviewer. Stuart spoke in an open manner sharing personal experiences, opinions and emotions willingly.

Stuart grew up in the country town of Swanton, the youngest of four children. His parents, both English, emigrated to Australia with their first born when they were twenty five. Stuart's family is very close-knit and supportive and he spoke several times of occasions when not only his immediate family but Aunties and Uncles played a role in family decision making.

I come from a very big family, there are four hundred
In the family, although I don't see all those. My mother
and father, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews and
some of my aunts and uncles and cousins are all very
close and we deal with things within the family. I learnt
nurturing from them.

Stuart's parents are from a working class background. His father worked as a plumber and is now retired; and his mother worked as a homemaker bringing up the four children. Both of Stuart's sisters are nurses.

Stuart's initial decision to take up a career in nursing had very little to do with the actual job he would be performing.

I actually wanted to be a school teacher; a science teacher; but at a very young age I knew I was gay and living in the country I felt very isolated; so I did a lot of reading and picked up that if you went into nursing there were other gay people in nursing.

Stuart discussed his plans with his parents who were not at all keen on the idea, his mother telling him "no you're not going to be a nurse". His parents' major concern was that nursing was a woman's job and his sexuality would be questioned (they did not know of his homosexuality at this point in time). Stuart was determined so he continued to look into nursing and became aware of mental health nursing where the ratio of staff was 50:50 male to female. Although never having heard of mental health nursing before he thought the concept of it sounded interesting and that the male/female ratio would keep his parents happy.

When in Perth for the Country Week Sporting Carnival, Stuart visited Marsh Memorial Hospital (where the school of psychiatric nursing was located) and sought more information. They were quite keen for him to participate in the programme and asked him to return after he had finished his leaving. In 1977 he

began at Marsh Memorial Hospital training to be a mental health nurse and "loved it".

I didn't have any idea what it would be like. I sort of knew what nurses did but I didn't even know if I liked blood or gore or poop and all that sort of stuff but having got into it I really enjoyed it. I got a real buzz out of it. Particularly mental health nursing which I did first because there wasn't all that blood and gore and you were dealing with people who were crazy and for some bizarre reason I found craziness fascinating. In mental health nursing you spend a lot of time with people so it becomes really intimate. You may look after the same person on and off all their life so you get to know them well, as you get to know your own family. I found that really good. It was a nice sensation getting to know people really well.

Although Stuart enjoyed working and training as a mental health nurse he found that by the time he had completed his three years he was burnt out and decided to take six months off. He then returned to do his general nurse training at Hotchin Hospital. By this time Stuart had told his parents about his sexuality.

By the time I went to do my general nursing there was no discussion about it [sexuality] because I had come out and was quite happy and I think they realised and had had most of their questions answered. And they had seen

that I was really good at mental health nursing, at nursing as such because a couple of people who had been up here [from Swanton] who I had nursed had gone back and said I was very good.

When training at Marsh Memorial Hospital Stuart encountered few problems with regard to his gender or sexuality. He found mental health nursing a comfortable and rewarding environment.

I didn't know any [gays] in the country and mental health nurses, being bizarre as they are, it was actually a good environment to be in because so called deviants were acceptable. It blended in quite well. There were lots of gay people there and I was able to feel quite comfortable and I came to terms with my sexuality, although I had done in the past anyway.

Both issues of sexuality and gender were not as accepted at Hotchin Hospital when Stuart chose to train as a general nurse. Firstly, he was confronted with quite strong resistance when trying to enter the training programme.

When I went for the interview I was actually put off because the director of nursing said that they don't like male nurses. She discouraged my nursing and said that I would be the only male in the whole hospital and that she would advise me to go elsewhere.

The director of nursing tried her hardest to dissuade Stuart from continuing this line of study but having already waited two years and having applied to do general nursing during his second year of mental health nursing, he was determined. Although Stuart was entitled to complete the general nursing course as a post graduate in two rather than three years he was told that if he insisted on doing the course he must do the full three years. He knew she could only try to talk him out of continuing and therefore resisted the negative reception and commenced training. On arriving the first day he found other male nurses on staff and that three other men in his group had been through the same process as he.

Throughout the training the men in the group found that the pressure was on them to not only be as good as, but to be better than, the female nurses.

We had to be better than the female nurses because they were always looking at us. The female nurses gave us a hard time as well as the teachers and lecturers. The interesting thing was that one of the guys I trained with who looked quite similar to me at the time (we both had long hair, moustaches and goaties to rebel against the system), won the award for best nurse. He got the gold medal for best nurse and I got the award for best practical nurse at our graduation which really stumped some people because we were male nurses.

During his training as a general nurse Stuart found one of the most difficult

times the midwifery clinical placement (a compulsory section of the training course).

The clients didn't like it nor did the other midwives. The caesarian rate increased tenfold because they were sitting there with their legs crossed I think, and the child was going to be born one way or another!

But then once I had worked with women they found that I was quite compassionate: with my sister being a lot older she had three children by the time I was nursing so I had a lot of experience. I was very empathetic with the clients and some of the midwives had no children and were quite isolated, they had no empathy with them at all.

Stuart found that he had a mixed reaction from female patients in general depending upon their age.

When I was doing my general nursing I found that the teenage women were a problem and the older women were a problem. The women between thirty and fifty didn't care as long as you were there and did what you had to do. With the teenage women I tended to not deal with them if possible because I thought it wasn't fair, or I would deal with them in the presence of a female nurse particularly if it was something to do with a gynaecological problem.

They are at a very difficult age, they don't understand themselves. With the older women I used to have to go very slowly with them but once they realised I was OK I think they actually preferred men for two reasons. One is that we did care about what we were doing and also we were stronger so when it came to things like moving them on and off bedpans, walking them to the toilet, they felt a lot more secure if I did it rather than someone half my size and very thin who they thought might drop them.

Although Stuart found there were a few barriers to overcome because of his gender he believes he has had many more issues to address with regard to his sexuality, especially when seeking promotional positions.

I've had more problem with my sexuality than I have with my gender. Certainly in mental health nursing, that is one of the reasons I'm out of nursing as such. In mental health nursing which is the area I really enjoy it is mainly male oriented. The male staff were mainly from an army background and were quite intimidating. I applied for all the jobs when the director of nursing was on holidays because I wasn't getting anywhere when he was there! I know I was one of the most qualified nurses because I have two qualifications. I threatened that if I didn't get a promotion I would take them to court, not on gender or sexuality grounds but on equal opportunity

grounds. I finally got a job as a clinical nurse specialist. Although I was never told directly I wasn't getting promotion because of my sexuality the feedback I got from other people in the area was that this was the case. Apparently the director of nursing was quite intimidated by my openness of the fact that I am gay.

Another incident at Hotchin Hospital indicated the threat people felt from Stuart's openness.

Every year they have a Christmas pageant for the children's ward and this one woman who was the deputy director of nursing came and saw Gary and myself and asked if we would dress up as the ugly sisters. So we dressed up as the ugly sisters and the matron found this very offensive. I didn't find this out until I had resigned and went to say goodbye to the deputy director of nursing. She said "I have to ask you a question. Were you gay before you dressed up as an ugly sister?" I said yes and she told me that the matron was really worried because she thought that was actually the turning point. And the thing that makes me laugh is that the matron is a lesbian and has been living with someone for eight years now. Gary has got married and had two kids so it didn't do any harm to him! They were told by the matron that that was never to happen again; her male staff were not

allowed to dress up in women's clothing.

After resigning from Hotchin Hospital Stuart went to work in the country at the Bromley Hospital for a short period of time. The matron at Bromley Hospital was also a little concerned by Stuart's sexuality.

When I went to Bromley the matron there was interesting, again very old school. The thing that she was worried about was the fact that I had long hair. We negotiated that and she said I could keep it (which I knew was my right anyway) but that I was not allowed to wear any bows in it. Which is not something I would do anyway!

Being a male nurse required extra work to make people feel comfortable. The effort required in the country was even more than in the city.

When you got out of the metro area and into the country things were a little bit different. The number of male nurses in the country was very limited. The impression was that all male nurses were poofers anyway, so I already had that. The amount of work you did up here [in Perth] with nurses and clients to get them to feel at ease was twice as much down there [Bromley].

Although he may have had difficulties at first Stuart found that his current

qualifications and experience, especially in mental health, were greatly appreciated and that people soon realised the benefits outweighed the fact that he was male.

Now mum and dad can walk down the street in Swanton and people still stop them and ask how I am going and where I am. The fact that I was linked to one of the local families and people could fit me into the picture probably put a lot of people at ease as well.

The socialization aspects of nursing take on a different light and meaning from a male perspective. At times Stuart felt isolated being an only male in a room filled with women.

As a male when you socialise you tend to socialize with all women, so if you want to talk about men's things, you can't. For eight hours a day I will be surrounded only by women and that is really interesting. It taught me one thing: that women are much the same as men, they still talk about rubbish and they still talk about filth. The other side of the coin is that they will talk about babies, and like, I'm allergic to babies! Some of the time I just couldn't get into the conversation. It meant nothing to me. I would go down there and have a cup of tea and a biscuit and have no contact with them because I couldn't get into what they were doing. And if you do that

every day for five days of the week it can be quite isolating. They talk about their husbands and stuff so I just talked about my lover. It's either that or sit there and say nothing. Being surrounded by women all day every day is quite draining, particularly if some of them are in a bitchy mood.

Ideally Stuart would prefer to work in an environment that is pretty much an even male/female ratio but given a choice of all female or all male he would opt for the female alternative.

To work in an environment where there is half and half is great. To work in an environment where there is all men is also awful. I hate working with men. They only talk about sex and all that manly stuff whereas women get in a conversation and they become really quite normal, they are not one-sided and biased.

Being a male nurse also altered the working relationship with other professional staff.

Being a male nurse the nursing socialisation didn't affect us as much. We weren't subservient, we refused to be. We had been suppressed because we were gay men: we certainly weren't going to be because we were nurses. So things like our relationship with other professionals and medical staff is really different, the

sort of things like we don't get your cup of tea and we don't wash your cup. Sometimes it has got to do with the doctor/nurse game: you know the doctor is male and the nurse is female and there is a little bit of eyelash fluttering and flirtatious behaviour. It still occurs, not so much as it did in the past but probably because a lot of the doctors are women. It's only the male doctors who expect the cup of tea. The female doctors will make their own and will often make you one.

Being a male I'm not intimidated by the high echelons of nursing either. A lot of females, because of their socialisation, are intimidated by the charge nurses and the deputy directors and the directors of nursing. I think that's rubbish.

When Stuart began nursing most promotional positions were held by females. As his career has progressed he has seen a change.

Most of the promotional positions are held by men now which is really strange. When I was a student they were held by women. There was a lesbian in charge of Hothlin and Kensington hospitals and their work was really strong, and they didn't like men either, whether you were a gay man or a straight man they didn't like you and that was all there was to it.

Although this would seem to be the environment for female progression, men seem to have moved into these positions of authority. Stuart believes that men's expectations with regard to wages and a career are reasons for this.

The disadvantage of being a male in a female occupation is the wages. They are always dreadful because women always get paid less than men so that was the incentive for me to get on and get further up. Certainly now in academia I get paid the same as an academic whereas I could go back to nursing and get nurses wages and because they are female wages they are certainly less than for a lot of other professions.

Being a male has given me the incentive to go on further because being single I haven't got a lot of dependants and things that a lot of the women in the profession have. And the fact that I need to keep going because of money and also I find it stimulating to learn new things whereas a lot of women would get married and they would direct their attention to their homes and their families.

The males are (and I'm not being sexist) good at their jobs. A lot of the females are too but they go into it saying that I'll just do it, get married and I don't care whereas the men go into it knowing it is a long term

occupation.

From Stuart's experience the social stereotype that all male nurses must be gay is prevalent yet untrue.

It is huge. Most male nurses must be gay. But, it is very false, particularly in general nursing.

Stuart's belief that men make good nurses is partly based on the fact that this stereotype exists.

I think that men go into nursing now after deliberating about it for a while so they have decided that's what they want to do so when they get there the majority of them really apply themselves. They have thought about it because they know that there is going to be opposition and most of them are straight and they know there is going to be some question about their sexuality that they will have to tackle. The men that go into it have identified their nurturing side pretty early in life and are able to work with that.

Despite issues of gender, sexuality and a comparatively poor pay scale, nursing is a profession that Stuart would recommend to other men for a number of reasons.

The thing that is good about nursing for men is that they will have a lot of variety. You can actually do your general nursing and then go off and work in the community, you can work in a hospital, you can do mental health or midwifery or specialise in ICU or theatre, follow an academic career. There is such a huge range of places you can work after obtaining the one qualification. And now that you can do it at university and get a Bachelors degree you can then go off and do post graduate studies in anything.

Stuart's own career path has varied from one of strictly nursing to one that is more education related, not because of gender issues but because of sexuality issues.

It came up before in promotions where sexuality was an issue. It is still the same. I have chosen not to go into clinical nursing because I found that I could not get any further. I got to the level I am, level three; the director of nursing is a level five; and they won't let me any closer. I have now chosen to go into academia and that was a huge decision because I loved clinical work. It is only just recently that I have felt comfortable to say I am going to go to university and work full time next year and stay there and do my masters, be an academic. The reason I have chosen that

Is that there are no barriers there [In academia]. They can't - they are an equal opportunities employer, some of the staff are lesbians, the ones that aren't are aware that their careers are important, they don't put anything in their way. It is a much bigger institution, a much bigger organisation. There is support there for staff and students that are gay. That's the way I will go because I won't be beating my head against a brick wall anymore but I will still be linked into the hospital system. [Doing some clinical work and working from home]. That contact is very important to me.

5.2 Case Study - Simon

Simon (age approximately 35) is a qualified early childhood educator currently working in this field.

Simon's interview was conducted in his place of work. He was very quietly spoken and although quite willing to participate, was guarded in his responses. It was necessary to guide Simon through the interview with questions. He appeared to make a concerted effort to ensure that all his responses were 'politically correct' and would in no way support the notion that there was anything untoward with being a male in an early childhood classroom.

Simon is from the Eastern States, the second eldest of seven children. Simon's mother worked as a teacher and his father as a law clerk. With financial support from their parents, Simon's brothers and sisters have all been encouraged to

follow the careers of their choice. There is a diverse selection: his eldest sister is a triple certificated nurse specialising in midwifery; he has a brother who has a masters degree in fine arts and is a qualified horticulturalist; another who is a master (skipper) of a ship; and another qualified in computing. One of his younger sisters is a "domestic engineer" (house duties) and the other is currently studying biology.

When Simon finished high school he was unsure as to what he wanted to do so chose to work for a number of years doing a variety of jobs such as working for the forestry department (Commonwealth Public Service) and as a fisherman. At one stage he began an accountancy course and later enrolled in arts at university. He completed the arts degree still without any firm idea as to what he wanted to do as a career and found himself unemployed.

I completed an Arts Degree way back in the 70's -1978 and then found myself unemployed in between going fishing and other jobs. My first daughter was of pre-school age at the time and I found myself at home a lot being a domestic engineer or whatever you call them. While her mum was studying we watched 'playschool' and both enjoyed it. We got into singing and making things and we enjoyed doing that together. I thought " Maybe I should pursue a career in this area, working with young children. It seems like a rewarding job."

Simon also feels that the environment he grew up in helped him to develop an

understanding of young children.

I feel I was brought up to be sensitive to the needs of young children. There were seven children in our family so I guess I was used to being with other children, as a child myself and as a person growing up.

A variety of factors led Simon into the area of pre-school teaching. When he approached the university to enquire he was advised that he could undertake a one year diploma in education in addition to the normal course to become a four year trained teacher. He was unable to train as a high school teacher because he didn't have the necessary prerequisite subjects. At the time, in 1979, there was a surplus of primary school teachers so he was encouraged to steer away from that area and it was suggested that he consider Early Childhood Education (ECE).

At the university they said "In early childhood education we think there is a good future for males because there is a big imbalance in the number of males and females working in that area."

Simon followed the advice and completed his training in ECE. He found that the members of his family were supportive of his decision but he had some less accepting reactions from other associates.

My family has always been very supportive of my choice of career however I must say I associated

socially with people, in the sailing field and playing squash who were not so accepting. It takes a bit of breaking down that 'ocker' image. Occasionally having a beer after playing or sailing I'd get comments like "Oh, I see, is that type of work really suitable for a man?"

Whilst training Simon was aware that he and the few other males were in the minority but does not recall any difference in the treatment they received or any difference in expectations. He did notice that he was only given practicums in the higher age groupings of the ECE stream (year two's) but could not say whether this was by chance or deliberate placement.

Being a male in the ECE course was unusual when I did my course. I think there were about thirty students doing the course and about seven of those were male, which is actually quite a high ratio compared to the ratio in W.A. I have spoken to people at a university in Western Australia and have been informed that there is generally only about one male per year studying early childhood education. If that is so, it's strange that there were seven the year I completed the course.

I was allocated the higher grades of early childhood on both pracs I completed. I don't know if this was an intentional thing, I was too naive to work it out at that

stage, but it might have been that that's just the way it worked out at that time.

After completing his training Simon visited Western Australia on a holiday and ended up taking on a relief teaching job and staying.

I was offered a relief teaching position in pre-primary. I got on well with the principal from the start (he was interested in sailing too) and when the year was over he wrote letters of commendation to superintendents and things like this. (I'm not sure if it was my skills or if sailing was the key!)

Although Simon wasn't aware of it at the time the parents of his first class were quite surprised when a male teacher took over. By the end of the year they had come to accept Simon as their ECE teacher and were quite willing to tell him what they had originally thought.

I never gave a second thought to how parents reacted until at the end of the year I met the parents on an informal social basis and they said that they thought I'd certainly be gay when they heard that a male teacher had been appointed as the pre-primary teacher. Which is not true, I am not gay.

Simon taught for seven years in the early childhood system and has had a lot of

positive feedback throughout that time for a variety of reasons.

During that year and all the other years I have always had lots of positive feedback from the parents. They said it was great to have a male in the pre-primary scene because it provided a balanced environment for the children. Usually there is a female teacher and a female teacher aid in the pre-primary. It's the mums that bring the children in, and usually there is a female cleaner and often a female gardener and the children don't have any exposure during that period to males. The parents picked up on that and thought that it was really good to have a male there to get that balance. And also, some of the children they said, and I believe too, relate better to males than they do to females, so the children there had the opportunity to approach the male or the female depending on who they felt comfortable with.

Others thought it was quite good having a male around for fairly stereotypical reasons and Simon recalled comments such as:

"Now we can get jobs done around here like fixing the chairs, painting and pruning the trees" [ie, at the pre-primary centre].

"I'm really pleased that my child has got a male teacher

at this young age because dad is never home and he doesn't have any communication with any other males"

"It's really good that there's a male teacher because now my child will get some discipline."

Simon also found the principals and colleagues to be very supportive although at times a little surprised.

I remember the first teacher's aid being surprised when I walked in; surprised that a male had been appointed as the teacher at the pre-primary centre. In fact, as I moved around to different places it has been a common reaction that they didn't expect a male and that's fair enough.

He could only recall two occasions in the seven years where he met with disapproval.

On one occasion a person in an administrative position said to me she did not think that it was appropriate that I work in early childhood. She thought I should be in the primary system and that early childhood was for females. I asked for that statement in writing, which of course was never forthcoming.

In one school the administrator pulled me aside one day and said some of the parents were unhappy for some reason. I think they were saying I should do more art and craft activities and that I didn't do enough worksheets and stuff. Even though that is what she said I suspect she was really saying that it would be better if I was in the primary area 'where males belong'.

As when Simon was studying, a few friends reacted in such a way that implied they thought his choice of occupation was not quite right.

A couple of times people have asked what I do for a living and when I respond that I am a pre-primary teacher they have given me a funny look or they have looked a little bit embarrassed. It's water off a ducks back to me. I don't try to explain it to them or make an issue of it.

Simon admitted that initially he had some conditioning from his own socialisation to overcome.

I found within myself that I had to break through a bit of a barrier. You are required to do a lot of different activities as a pre-school teacher: you have to sing, dance, conduct drama activities, put band-aids on kids knees and things like that. I found I had to break through a bit of a barrier because it was not the Australian male

Image, but I believe I did that successfully.

Although Simon is comfortable in his role as a pre-school teacher there have been times when he has felt a little uncomfortable. An example he gave was of a time when he was away from the school environment with a class of children.

Sometimes I felt a little uncomfortable, for example if we went out on an excursion and all the children would holding hands. I would be holding the hands of a couple of children at the front and the cars would come past and sometimes I would feel just a twitch of feeling a bit uncomfortable in that situation. I would wonder a little what people might be thinking, me walking along with twenty kids and the council workers going past with their shovels.

Simon believes there is a big future for men in early childhood education. It is a role that needs filling for the benefit of young children but that there are three main reasons that men don't go into the profession. These reasons have been reinforced through his experiences.

The first one is that men generally see it as a woman's role, the caring and educating of young children. It is still a factor in society I think. Secondly, up until the last fifteen to twenty years the pay was actually less for pre-school teachers compared to primary teachers so

that was a big disincentive. In addition to that the promotional opportunities for early childhood teachers are not there. Thirdly, with the cloud of law suits hanging over teachers in America, and I think Australia isn't far behind - lawsuits against teachers for physical or sexual abuse of young children. It may be the case that actions such as putting your arm around children could be misconstrued as some form of abuse. This may steer males away from the field.

This third issue, physical proximity to children, has had an effect on the manner in which Simon teaches, an effect he believes would be different if he were not male.

Women may feel comfortable putting their arm around a child or holding a child's hand without it being misconstrued as some form of abuse. I'm quite happy with children sitting on my knee and kids love lap reading. With my children at home I do lots of that but I always made sure at pre-school that the children only sat next to me. I always made sure that if a child fell over in the playground and grazed their knee that I would put my arm around them and say "You'll be alright", but I wouldn't linger on with that. I did find it a bit restricting I guess but I was comfortable with the situation and I never had any problems in that area.

Simon enjoys teaching in early childhood education, and intends to continue his career in this field of endeavour.

I've been very happy with my choice of profession and I think there is a big future for males in the area of early childhood. I would like to see it balanced right up so that there is 50:50 male to female. In fact, I think that having a male in a pre-primary centre is beneficial to the children and I agree with the parents that if there is a female teacher and a female teacher aid and the mums are the ones bringing the children in, then the children don't get exposure to males and surely males have got something to offer young children. Some children have no contact with a stable male figure from birth right through until they have their first male primary teacher which I don't think is a very healthy experience for children.

Simon would support an active campaign to encourage men into the ECE field. He believes that discrimination in the past is partly accountable for the imbalance now and also that males do not seem to be actively encouraged to become ECE teachers.

I believe up until about 1976 males were unable to enrol in the ECE course. When the pre-school board was

overseeing the pre-school teachers training course in WA at the kindergarten college. It was not open to men, so that was discrimination at its highest level. And even though now you can be a male ECE teacher if you want, I don't think it is actively promoted. Maybe we need some affirmative action type programs representatives going into schools and actively promoting the value of men in early childhood education.

5.3 Case Study - Terry

Terry (age approximately 30) is a qualified psychiatric nurse currently working as a counsellor in a centre for the victims and perpetrators of sexual assault. His interview was conducted at the centre over a cup of coffee in the staff room. Terry was quite forthcoming with most information although was determined to hold back on particular details of his background and was quite prepared to inform the interviewer on the occasions when his personal boundaries had been overstepped.

Terry is a counsellor at Travis House, a service for victims and perpetrators of sexual assault. He is a trained psychiatric nurse and is completing post graduate studies in counselling.

Terry seemed reluctant to discuss his family. When speaking of his past he referred more frequently to the school he attended. Terry went to a private boys school and mentioned on various occasions how this environment and subtle pressure from his parents (although at times he contradicts this belief), led

him to select subjects at school and later at university, that were not necessarily relevant to the type of career he was suited to, and has eventually pursued.

I had to make decisions and career choices in Year 9 and 10. When I had made my choices I had chosen all the science units because I was told, or thought, that would give me the most options for things like medicine and that traditionally male oriented stuff. But they didn't give a lot of options in terms of nurturing, supporting type occupations. But that wasn't really an issue. It was always going to be that you did Science and Maths and Physics and Chemistry and that kind of thing, with the assumption that it would be better that I went into engineering or medicine or something like that. This assumption was probably from my family although it was never said. I made those choices, I made the value judgements of what was the better choice. It wasn't a case of my father sitting me down and saying "No, you're not doing English, you're not doing home economics, you're doing calculus". I made the choices: it was an environment, an upbringing that encouraged those choices. My parents were an influence but it was the whole culture, the boys I went to school with. The school I went to didn't offer home economics; it was an all male school. The culture within there was that these things weren't suitable, it

was never talked about it was just known. This culture was very limiting. The interpersonal stuff like showing your nurturing side was definitely not there, say crying, a trite example, was not allowed- even just supporting people in an all male school. It was very competitive and the way that you competed was to put other people down. There was just no way you could show any sign of weaknesses. There was always this harsh image, this front of being capable of being strong, of being cool and sort of hostile. The fact is that behind that image there might have been loneliness, there might have been fears, there might have been even anger, you know, you've got to be in control. It's perfect breeding for the lawyers and doctors that these sort of schools are producing.

Terry described his upbringing as:

Very much the male stereo-type, the rock-ape type image.

During his school years Terry was one of the group. He did all the right things to fit into the crowd and to keep his parents happy. When he had finished school he did not know what profession he was interested in so chose to do arts knowing that he could justify this move.

Probably because I could rationalise it by being able to

say I wanted to get into law. A good thing that all the boys should do. Thank God I didn't get the marks!

Terry's time at university was valuable for his personal growth. He became involved in the gay social scene establishing his own identity and also became aware of the type of career he was really interested in.

Probably the process at university that was important to me was the social interaction. I started getting involved in the gay scene, gay politics which is tied up with a lot of feminist politics. I studied anthropology and in Arts there were a lot of people with ideas that gender is more than just being hollow and aggressive. I became attracted to the idea of men being different than just harsh, aggressive and cold.

Terry became involved in people oriented work. A job had come up running a work centre for young unemployed people. He had done a counselling course and was doing telephone counselling so his experience fitted in well with doing youth work. He liked working with and helping people so decided to train as a psychiatric nurse. Compared to nursing, psychiatric nursing is much more of a male, 'macho' scene and Terry's experience was that the men doing the course were very defensive of this.

For men who do 'psych' nursing it is very much an offence to be called a nurse, like the feminist stuff,

there is a lot of, I wouldn't call it aggression, but macho stuff. A lot of men who do the course are very afraid of being called feminine, the idea that a male nurse is gay or deficient somehow. I think there is a lot of displaced emotions. What happens is a lot of the guys in 'psych' nursing aren't very compassionate, and certainly working in the system for a while, whatever sense of compassion that is there, the idea of going 'that extra step for someone', goes very quickly. The psychiatric system discourages compassion anyway, but certainly for males I think it is partly "If I'm compassionate it goes against my role". It becomes a big struggle thing, a lot of guys lose that very quickly and become very black and white; "This patient is a no hoper". The compassionate and caring side goes because a lot of the guys fear being considered effeminate, of having their male role challenged. The nurturing role, the mothering role, in this society are female roles, traditionally I mean. I don't agree with that but that's traditionally the area and guys who are afraid of being seen as mothering become very cynical very quickly, a patient comes back in and it's "Oh God, here comes Mary Smith again, what's that useless piece of shit done this time?". Very, very callous.

Terry describes this loss of compassion as a conflict the men feel between what

they have been socialised to believe is their role in society, the needs of a caring profession and their own desires to be 'sensitive new age guys' yet still be masculine.

I think that the socialisation that occurs since birth reinforces the inherent idea that males are harsh, a male doesn't cry, a male doesn't feel, a male does things rather than experience things. A male is gauged by the fact that he has a job, earns a wage rather than by what he is, that sort of stuff. The house in the suburbs, the facade is the way that men, as males, we all judge ourselves.

Terry's friends are mostly gay and hold similar beliefs as he does with regard to gender roles so the fact that Terry works in an occupation that is considered non-traditional for a male is of no relevance. In fact, several of his friends are also in caring nurturing career roles.

I'm gay, and all my friends are also gay so the issues of what are male roles are being challenged in a whole lot of areas, so it's not as if I come from a social network that relies on typical gender roles. A lot of the males I mix with, the facade or front of having to be different or having to be strong isn't an issue. I mean it's an issue because it's part of male socialisation but challenging male roles, gender roles is much further down the track

with gay men than with straight men because of the issue of sexuality. Because of this, because our roles are being challenged anyway, the issues of working in a supposedly woman's job isn't a problem.

Terry went on to explain more specifically why he thought that gay men are more open to working in nurturing, caring professions.

I think being gay and the process of coming out, coming to terms with being gay for a man is the recognition that roles are not right, the roles of a house in the suburbs and the wife and three kids.....what a lot of men accept without challenging, has been challenged with gay men as part of the coming out process. Some men only just do it in terms of their sexuality but the whole concept of roles has changed. You've got two men living together, just the question of who does the cooking, I can't say "Well, I don't cook because it's not a man's thing to do" and then the man I live with say "I don't cook because it's not a man's thing to do", we'd starve! Because you can't just slot into an expected role you have to think about them and this can become relevant to career choices as well.

Terry's family do not appear to have been very accepting of his sexuality and therefore issues of his career choice have not been discussed. He spoke very

little of either of these issues and the following comments seem to indicate it is an issue that has been avoided by both Terry and his family.

They don't interfere, my family doesn't talk about things [career choices] like that.

I'm not aware of pressure coming from my family about that.

Yes, my parents know I'm gay, they don't like it. They'd rather I wasn't.

We're a family that doesn't talk about a lot of things, so I actually don't see much of them. I guess I'm quite far from my family even though they live here. I guess having broached that area [his sexuality] with them working in a counselling, nurturing area isn't really an issue.

Terry's current work is the counselling of sexual assault perpetrators. He finds that generally people do not react to the fact that he is a counsellor, or that it may be considered an unusual occupation for a male, but instead to the knowledge of the clients he is counselling.

I say that I counsel sex offenders and it is the clients I work with that cause the reaction rather than the work I do with them. "Wow, that would be hard work" or "Guys like that should be strung up".

Part of Terry's job is education. Recently, Terry and his colleague, a female counsellor, gave the same talk, two days running to two different groups of high school students. They had a youth work student attend both lectures to sit in the audience and gauge the reaction to the different presenters.

Maggie got a lot more heckling and the guys switched off, seeming to think that they could do that, whereas they didn't seem to think they could with me. On the other hand a girl was heard saying during my session, "What would he fuckin' know about rape", which is quite a legitimate comment.

There was one girl in my group who was quite outspoken and almost aggressive about woman's issues and rape and I'm not sure that she would have been quite so outspoken if Maggie was giving the talk. She was confronting me and saying how unfair it was that girls couldn't walk certain places and wear certain clothes, the implication that it was somehow the woman's fault if she was sexually assaulted, they should have the right to do whatever they wanted, as much as boys.

Men educating about sexual assault receive a different response than a woman doing the same job. It has a different effect. Travis House decided that it was going to look at the prevention of sexual assault rather than concentrating purely on the counselling of victims as it had done in the past. It was considered

preferable to have a male in this role as most sexual assault perpetrators are men.

The vast majority of sexual assault victims, male or female, prefer to talk to women, which is understandable given that men are the perpetrators so they are going to be hesitant to open up to a man. Whereas, with the perpetrator it is probably better that the counsellor is male. It is almost like for example, an aboriginal person. If I was to go into a group of aboriginals [as a white caucasian] and lecture to them about getting a job and getting on with their lives, it would be offensive and rude and pointless. But on the other hand a person who is from the same culture has a different effect. I can talk about guys, about growing up, I can talk about the idea that some guys are aroused and so turned on that they can't help themselves and I can explore their rationalisation with them and look at issues like choice and responsibility that maybe a woman couldn't.

Terry is the first male to have worked at Travis House, an organisation that is founded quite strongly on feminist principles. He comments that it has been a very supportive environment unlike what he believes to have been the experiences of many women trying to break down the barriers in traditionally male professions.

I guess I compare my experiences to the testimonies of women who have started off in supposedly men's jobs. I saw a video the other morning about a woman who started a job as a journalist and the guys used to hide her camera, open the back of her film, do anything they could to sabotage her work. It was an equal opportunities case and they were talking about the sort of discrimination she faced being the first woman journalist for this specific newspaper. Or women who work as mechanics talk about the ridicule they get and how they always have to be harsh and be competent all the time. Working here has been the opposite, it has been a nurturing and supportive environment. It's not just that Travis House is an agency that happens to employ women, it is an agency that has quite a feminist background because of the nature of its job, so being the first male employee and being received so well has been great.

Terry has found working in a caring profession to be a valuable experience.

It has been a very positive experience. The personal growth. If I had left school and got a job in a bank or an insurance office I don't know where I would be now. I suppose after 10 or 15 years I would be high up in something yet I'm sure more of an emotional cripple than

I am now! The personal development has been important to me, it has been to my benefit in terms of my relationships to partners, and friends. When I am faced with a crisis in my life I have a lot more resources with which to examine them, so there has certainly been benefits there.

Terry's experience has been a positive one and he believes other men could enjoy similar work with the same benefits both personally and for the client/ patient/ student (whatever may be the case), but that the incentives are not there for men to break with tradition as women have and challenge the typical gender roles of men and women.

Initially the motivation for women to change was stronger because women's position traditionally is much more powerless. Men have power and there is no incentive to look at the personal stuff. Men haven't looked at being soft, that caring side hasn't been looked at. Men need to change and look at that but there isn't the pressure to do that. Men can go along quite well until they are 30 or 40 or 50 before they suddenly realize "Hey, I've been selling insurance for thirty years now, I'm good at it but I'm not happy". It's not until much later that the pressure is there, the "what am I doing with my life?" becomes so big that they want to do something about it. Whereas with women I think the

roles were destructive for them: they were very restricted so they forced the issues and now they are doing so much more. The incentives aren't there for men to change and what's happening is that the guys are being left behind; the challenges of the women's movement aren't being met. Examples of men taking on jobs such as midwifery are just the tip of the iceberg; the big issue here is that of men looking at their nurturing side. Women have looked at their power side or their assertion side and are learning, but guys aren't.

As well as the fact that the incentives are not there, Terry also believes that another important reason that men do not choose counselling (or other caring jobs), as a career, again relates to social conditioning.

I think men feel that they shouldn't be nurturers, the male role is to 'do things'. You go out there and you are a lawyer and you win cases and you get your filthy, massive pay cheque at the end of the week and you buy your BMW and your house and you get yourself a wife and kids and it's doing things, that's how you achieve. When you're dying you look back on your life and you can say you built this building, you held this prestigious job as a lawyer, you did this research as a doctor. It's not a case of what you were like as a person. "Jo Bloggs was a caring, supportive person", is not looked at. So

counselling, the process of nurturing somebody, giving someone the space to look, to talk about insecurities and to talk about fears isn't a male thing.

Unfortunately, funding for the current counselling position that Terry holds has been cut and therefore the position he holds will no longer be available. He has the option of going back into nursing, which is probably what he will do for a while, but ultimately plans to continue with a career in counselling.

5.4 Case Study - Justin

Justin (age 24) is a secretary working for a clinical psychologist and management consultancy firm. He was not happy to be interviewed at work or home but quite prepared to come to the interviewer's house. Justin was a talkative interviewee, very happy to talk about all aspects of his life, often providing irrelevant information and anecdotes making for an entertaining but very long interview.

Justin describes his parents as "the original 10 pound immigrants". They emigrated from England before he was born although they subsequently made many trips back and forth. It was on one of these trips back to England that Justin was born. They remained in Adelaide during Justin's school years but then made another move back to England, back to Adelaide again and then to Perth.

My parents still want to move. They are just movers.

The members of my family are never satisfied with their

lives. They keep on moving looking for something better.

Justin does not describe his time at school as a happy part of his life. He hated school and only stayed and completed years 11 and 12 because he didn't know what else he wanted to do.

I was an incredibly average student. I was not a very confident teenager - pimply and very geeky. I did not have a good time. The friends I had disappeared: people were bullies. When I was a kid I had a real social justice attitude, "Don't pick on him, he's smaller than you", which changed in high school to "fend for yourself". I basically hated the entire attitude of people there and the feeling of the place and not being a popular person there you certainly figure out quickly that human nature is not the nicest thing in the world. I just didn't like the general attitude of the students and teachers at school. I didn't enjoy the social aspect, the sport or the school work. I just felt "Why am I here, I don't want to be here". In the same respect I didn't have the courage or stupidity, to leave and go and do something else; I thought I may as well stay and finish school because I have no idea what else to do.

Justin finished school and shortly afterwards his parents decided to go back to

England to live. It had always been the plan, since Justin was in primary school, to return to the U.K. so he went with his parents. It was in England that Justin got his first job and with on the job training began to develop office skills.

When I went to the UK I managed to get a job as an office junior in the London Borough of Croydon, the education accounts and finance section. It was a good first job; it was running about doing office junior work, filing monthly reports and being a general dog's body. Eventually they started giving me more and more stuff to do, stuff that actually had to be done, not just stuff for a junior to do because no one else will do it.

Justin held the belief that he was in England on a working holiday so when they offered him a permanent position after three months he suddenly thought "that means I could be stuck here". He resigned and came back to Australia. His parents stayed in England at this point in time.

Justin applied for the job he had in England because he liked the idea of working in an office.

I had no idea what I wanted to do but I sure as hell didn't want to do what my dad did. He worked for Telecom doing lots of manual labour type stuff. So I thought that I could find a job in an office; wear a suit and tie was the idea.

Justin went back to Adelaide because he thought that he liked it more there and that his friends would be pleased to see him. Unfortunately it wasn't the welcome home that he had expected and found himself wondering what to do next.

I worked and stayed in these self-contained holiday apartments that my aunt and uncle owned. They also had a car rental company so I sometimes did the office work but my uncle is a fairly fascist human being and that was his throne, so not many people were allowed in there. I did just about anything for seven days a week, 24 hours a day from programming videos to picking people up and dropping them off at the airport, making beds, cleaning cars.

During the time that Justin was working for his uncle he continued to apply for office type jobs.

I used to apply for secretarial positions because I basically had worked in an office and I had a good reference from the boss there [the Croydon job] and not really knowing what I wanted to do or how to go about finding out what I wanted to do it seemed like my only option.

Justin's dad returned from England and he was no longer welcome to stay with his

uncle. He and his dad moved out and the quest for a job continued. He became very bored and disheartened as nothing came of his searching and trips to the Commonwealth Employment Centre (CES) became more of a habit than an actual positive move toward finding a job. He found the CES an unhelpful organisation and recalled a time when it had been suggested that he did a furniture upholstery course; he still wonders as to the relevance of this suggestion.

To me it [being unemployed and on the dole] was the most emotionally traumatic experience of my life. I think it is because you have to face up to yourself. You have these dates of when you actually worked and what you had actually achieved right in front of you - your life is reduced to a form filled out in triplicate.

Justin's mother returned from England at this point in time and his parents decided to move to Perth. Not having any reason to stay in Adelaide, "What the hell, it's got to be better than here", Justin moved to Perth with his parents. He did not apply for the dole again but spent six months living off his savings and not really doing very much, applying for jobs occasionally without any success. Justin then decided it was time to do something and enrolled in a computer operator course.

What they did was firstly teach you how to touch type. While they were doing that they taught you office procedures such as basic accounting, balancing books and ledgers, telephone techniques et cetera. There were

three sets of students doing the course: one set of students who were doing the commercial travel agents course, the computer operators and the secretarial course. Once we got to forty words a minute we were allowed into the computer room. It was a bit of a shock actually because the equipment wasn't that up to date. They just taught us how to use programs like Wordperfect and Attache which is computerized accounting. They were just packages you would use in an office. You didn't really come out as a computer operator.

Justin found that the course he had done was pretty much a secretarial course without the shorthand and dictaphone usage. It just had a different name, possibly to attract people with different attitudes.

The secretarial course was geared a lot more toward very female attitudes in the workplace, if there is such a thing anymore. We [computer operators] didn't do any of those things: no shorthand, no dictaphone, which was good. The secretarial course was a lot more oriented toward the typewriter and we were oriented toward the computer, which is fairly stupid because you don't get many offices with typewriters anymore. There weren't any men doing the secretarial course. It didn't actually cross my mind to do the secretarial course, I suppose

subliminally I thought that that was a girl's job. If the course I did had been called a secretarial course I wouldn't have done it. My thinking at the time was that I needed to get a job and being able to use a computer was another skill to have - a job skill not a career move.

Justin was sent out on a practicum as part of the course only to find out that the office he was sent to thought that because he was called a computer operator he would be able to programme a computer for them; unfortunately he couldn't and spent the two weeks operating the phones. When Justin began to apply for jobs after completing the course he received a similar response.

I started applying for anything in an office because basically you start applying for computer operating jobs and you end up being told that you are not qualified enough because they want you to be able to do stuff you haven't done. So I applied for receptionist jobs, secretarial jobs, office juniors until I thought I was a bit old to be a junior, office person, person Friday anything like that because I figured that I had the training and a bit of experience with my jobs in Adelaide and England, so basically that was where I was headed, like it or not.

To Justin's surprise, he found that often when he went to an interview the people would be surprised that he was male.

Occasionally I would get an interview and they would say it was surprising to see a male applying for this job which shocked me because I had always thought that secretary/receptionist was always going to be female dominated but office person, surely men work in offices, are they all just accountants? Do they immediately become bosses as soon as they put on a suit and tie? That shocked me, I really didn't realise there were less males applying for positions in offices, maybe they just get jobs in banks. I was quite unsuccessful at applying for these full time jobs.

Although surprised Justin found that generally the reception he received was good and only on a few occasions the fact that he was male was met with a negative response.

Mostly people were very positive, they were pleasantly surprised. Occasionally it was the other way, it depended on their attitude. Basically, if you met with a really stodgy traditionalist, male or female, you really got the feeling that they would be thinking that they needed a female for the position. But other times you would get "Wow, it's great that you are doing that", it depended how open-minded they were personally and how open-minded the company was. I always thought that the

law was that all companies had to be an equal opportunities employerWrong!

In the end that fact that Justin was male helped him to get his current job.

I found an ad in the local paper for an office person and rang it up. I got an interview and the guy told me that he actually had discussed with his partner (female) that they should look at employing a male because they don't believe in traditional male/female roles, as such, in the workplace. So it was a bonus for me, it definitely helped me get this job.

Justin's job is with a clinical Psychologist. It started as a casual job, a few days a week, where Justin wrote out invoices, paid bills and typed up letters. The Psychologist asked Justin what he wanted to call his position.

He said I could call myself his assistant, secretary, administrative assistant, whatever I wanted. I decided on Admin assistant because that is what I do, I help with the administration side of things. I could call myself a secretary but I don't actually take shorthand or dictation so that reduces my qualification.

With the help of Jobstart, a government employer assistance scheme, the job has increased to four days a week and Justin does a lot of work on computers, mail

runs, the banking and a combination of general office work. The psychologist works in partnership with an organisational consultancy firm and Justin also works for this side of the operation.

Justin didn't really consider his position to be untraditional. It was only the reaction of others that indicated to him that it was.

When my employer first said that it would be good to employ a male in this position I always thought that males did this type of work as well. I also think that it shouldn't matter. I have a friend who used to work in a mine and she has got more drivers licences than I have shoes. She drives those massive machines and she is also the most feminine person I know, which is great.

Justin prefers to be called an administrative assistant although he accepts that some people would consider the job he is doing a secretarial job. He doesn't like the idea of being called a secretary because of other people's reactions and feels the need to defend himself.

My first reaction with being a secretary is what would other people say. A couple of my friends say I'm a secretary and I tell them that I am not. I know they are just having a go but a lot of them don't really know what I do. They ask me and I say that I work for a clinical

psychologist as his administrative assistant. I fear people's attitudes. They will think that I am a shella. I suppose I do get defensive because it is a natural process of being an Australian male. Basically it is my social programming. The reason why I applied for this type of job is that I didn't really think it was a female dominated area, I thought all genders worked in offices. I needed a job so I thought I would go and work in an office.

Having said all this, Justin is very glad he has a job and will continue to say he is an administrative assistant but if called a secretary, so be it.

It really depends who says it, I kind of don't mind because it is an unusual job really and it's paying the rent, getting me out of the house and giving me a start which is something I haven't had in ages. It's a job, money and self respect.

Justin is still applying for jobs because he is currently only working 20 hours a week and needs more money, he still lives with his parents because he cannot afford to do otherwise.

I usually apply for jobs that are listed as clerk because I think that is a more male sounding name. I think I will have more of a chance of getting it, with secretary I don't think I have much of a chance.

Justin still gets the feeling that a lot of people think that office positions are for women.

They occasionally say that it is really good that a male is applying for this because it is the nineties, but the thought that it is a woman's job is really in the back of their head, which to me is stupid, I can't figure it out. I mean I figure that this office work is just office work, I'm not actually going to sit on my boss's lap and wear a miniskirt.

Justin's job is just a job, it is not a career. He talks of changing track, mentions media, acting (he is currently taking classes), something possibly in the visual type medium. He also makes comments such as the following that seem to indicate that he really doesn't have much of an idea but that the type of work he is currently doing doesn't really sit comfortably.

I'm trying to change track, maybe to a more male job, maybe deep down inside I really want to dig ditches.

Justin believes that office work is office work, and finds it curious that it is considered gender specific. He would recommend that other men should take on this type of work but warns that work is hard to get because although people like to think they are open minded, unless they are truly progressive thinkers, who own their own companies, tradition wins in the end and the female applicants will usually get the job.

Chapter Six

Data Analysis

In order to make sense of the information presented by the four case studies it was necessary to condense the information and compare the experiences of the candidates across standard areas of interest. As outlined in the methodology chapter it was intended that the data be examined in the areas of *initial decision, training, work environment* and *future*. The interview process naturally provided additional information in the areas of interest that were common to the four subjects. Accordingly it was clear that interesting issues could be derived from a comparison of their *backgrounds*; their responses to society's *stereotypes* of men in their chosen atypical occupations; and also their own opinions as to whether *other men* should enter their chosen occupation. With this in mind the information was organised into a matrix form with the above seven headings (being the original four and the supplementary three) on one axis and the four subjects on the other (example given Appendix E). Into this matrix the information received during the interviews was classified in note form and analysed. The following is a discussion of the information under each of the headings, highlighting similarities and differences in the experiences of the four subjects. The observations and interpretations of the author deriving from this analysis are also shown (in italics).

6.1 Background

In three of the four cases, the parents took an interest in their son's career choices; however, their attitudes varied as did the effect of their interest. Stuart and Simon had parents that encouraged their children to strive for higher education but were happy for each child to make his/her own choice. Stuart's

siblings are all working in professional careers, as are five of Simons's six. Their career choices cover a wide array of disciplines.

Terry's parents expected him to achieve a higher education and appeared to have been interested only in his pursuit of traditional male, high income careers such as medicine, engineering or law.

Justin's parents were of nomadic disposition and although they remained in Adelaide long enough for him to complete high school, they soon after returned to England, happy for him to go with them if he chose, but on the understanding that given his schooling was now complete, it was time for him to work. Justin had difficulties obtaining work and his parents provided him with a home for as long as he needed one but the push towards a career with university qualifications was not present as it was with the others.

Stuart, Justin and Simon all spoke of their families as caring, supporting units who would not interfere with career choices that they made even if they did not approve of them; although as with Stuart (who changed from general nursing to psychiatric nursing), attempts to guide them towards something else were made. Fortunately, all three have found their parents to be supportive of the choices they have made.

Terry has distanced himself from his family, only having contact with them for official occasions such as birthdays and Christmas. His parents were not happy with his sexuality and this issue seemed to overshadow any disapproval they may have felt over his career choice, (which has not taken what would appear to have

been their expected path).

At the point in a person's life when they are making their initial career decision it is clear that the influence of an individual's background is strong. Firstly, a parent's interest in their child pursuing higher education and the support that they are willing to provide is a big factor as to whether individuals continue their schooling or not. Secondly, although parents may try to allow their child to be an independent decision maker and to make their own choice of career, the upbringing an individual receives inevitably encourages certain fields of endeavour and the need for parental approval will influence the choices made. It was evident that a major concern of these parents was that the profession their child was interested in could be interpreted as feminine and that their child may be gay or considered gay by others. As an individual matures this influence lessens and changes to career paths may be made.

6.2 Initial Decision

Terry and Simon both began Arts degrees at university knowing that they wanted to continue their educations but not knowing what they would like to pursue as a career. Terry's indecision stemmed from the fact that the school and family environment in which he grew up was very focused on particular career plans that he was not really interested in following. Terry used the time at university to establish his own identity and interests. He was attracted to the humanitarian, social type subjects and was keen to work in a field that was a helping profession. At this point in time he was aware of the stigmas that went with various helping professions and that they tended to be considered more female jobs and this guided him towards psychiatric nursing, a stream of nursing

that is more readily accepted as a male career. This view stems from the perception that psychiatric nursing demands the physical strength to deal with difficult patients and to cope with highly emotive and perhaps violent situations. These characteristics are seen to be more appropriate in men than women.

Simon finished his arts degree and was still unsure of what he wanted to do. It was not until the arrival of his first child and he realised how much he enjoyed learning and teaching with his daughter that he considered following a career in education. His choice to go into early childhood education (ECE) was largely influenced by the fact that he could not pursue a high school job with his arts degree subjects and that the lecturers at the university thought that ECE for a male was a great opportunity and career move. Simon had not thought of doing ECE because it was a non-traditional role that simply was not considered to be a field of education for men; however, he is very happy with the choice he made and believes that the presence of men in ECE is very important.

When Stuart made his initial decision he was more interested in the social aspect of the job he was pursuing. He wanted to move from the country town he grew up in and the isolation of knowing he was gay but not knowing any other people who were, to a more open and accepting environment. He had heard that there were gay people in nursing so decided to pursue that path. His decision to do psychiatric nursing was largely influenced by his mother's reaction to his career choice when he mentioned that he wanted to do nursing. She did not like that idea that people would think her son was gay, so to keep his parents happy he went into psychiatric nursing because that was more acceptable for men to do. Three years later when he changed and did general nursing the issue of his sexuality had

been discussed and accepted by his parents.

Justin's decision making has differed from that of the other three. His basic need was for a job. He did not plan to pursue a career, as such, but to find a job that paid reasonably well and that did not involve physical labour. He had an idealised image of office work - suit and tie, clean and quiet and subsequently directed his job searching and training choices in that direction. Justin did not even consider the non-traditional role of being a secretary because he mentally dismissed it as a woman's job - a similar thought process to Simon.

For both Stuart and Terry the fact that they were openly gay and comfortable with their circumstances, helped them to overcome the stigma attached to nursing, that being, that all male nurses are gay. Although this generalisation was not threatening to them because of their acceptance of their own sexuality, they were both still defensive of the fact others might consider them to be feminine, a perception that seems to go hand in hand with the gay stereotype. This situation is described by Buchbinder (1994) who said that in the past it was considerably easy to define heterosexual men as feminine or effeminate, or at least non-masculine. Now, machismo "aggressive maleness or hypermasculinity" (Buchbinder 1994, p.1) is as much a part of homosexual culture as it is heterosexual. Because the 'gay' tag had a different meaning to Stuart and Terry it was less influential upon their initial decision to pursue the career that they desired. With Stuart it was one of the major reasons he chose the profession, although, he did start out in psychiatric nursing rather than general to initially avoid the label for his parent's sake.

As pointed out previously, the individual's background and upbringing is one of

the major factors affecting their initial decisions as to career choice. It has also become apparent from this research that sexual orientation is also an influential factor. Stuart chose his particular career hoping to find a social network of gay people; Terry was not put off by the 'gay' stigma of nursing because he was gay. It is also clear that not one of these men had any solid idea as to what he wanted to do with his life at the age of seventeen when these choices need to be made which may well be the situation with most of this age group . Do we need more guidance in schools and exposure to the choices that are available or is this a matter of maturity?

6.3 Training

When discussing training with the subjects they directed their recollections to any training - study at an institution or 'on the job' - that they had undertaken since leaving school. The three men in their thirties mostly referred to the training they had undertaken in their early twenties, between five and ten years ago. Justin's experiences were much more recent, making reference to his last five or six years.

Issues that arose during the training stages of the men's careers were usually related to society's expected roles of men: the socialisation that the individuals received themselves and that of other people. Stuart recalled the difficulties he had being accepted into the general nursing course and the great lengths the matron went in trying to talk him out of enrolling. These tactics included extending the length of the course he would have to do and misinforming him about the number of other males in the course. Once having persisted and gained entry he found the expectations upon him to achieve and prove that he could be a

good nurse, despite being male, were high. This pressure from both female peers and teachers was to his and the other males' benefits in the long run as they achieved all the awards for excellence at the completion of the course.

Terry talked of the loss of compassion in male psychiatric nurses as the pressure to maintain their male identity within themselves, to the patients, to their colleagues and society in general became too much to maintain. It became easier to act the tough macho who didn't care about the feelings of the patients rather than to lose their sense of masculinity and show the necessary compassion. Is this a reflection of the pressures an individual feels when 'living' in a non-traditional role?

Simon always took care to be politically correct. There was always the desire to promote the image that he was no different to anybody else. He therefore did not recall any incidents during training where he was helped or hindered because of his gender - except the fact that he did both of his practicums in the higher age grouping of ECE children. This may, or may not, have been caused by others giving consideration to his gender and he was quick to point this out.

Justin selected the computer operator course over the secretarial course because he believed that it was more suited to men. This was not a conscious decision at the time: it just did not cross his mind to consider doing the secretarial course. Although knowing now what each course contains, whether or not the secretarial course was more suited to his needs, he would still choose the computer operators course unless the secretarial course had a different, more gender neutral, name. Justin was concerned with being called a 'sheila' and would where possible avoid

giving people the opportunity to do so.

Stuart's problems during training were often based on his sexuality. The issues ranged from questions of whether he was going to wear bows in his hair to whether or not dressing up as an ugly sister for the Christmas pageant was what caused him to be gay. People were threatened by his openness and although at a training level this did not directly hinder any progress he was to make, he later found that in the working environment, when it was time to gain promotion, it was to become an issue of contention and a barrier to his progress.

A major issue that came to light during these interviews was that sexuality causes greater difficulty within training and work environments possibly than does gender. For both Stuart and Terry who are gay, their own sexuality and peoples' reactions to it was often an issue to be faced. With Simon and Justin, it was people's questioning of their sexuality that was their concern. For all four, gay or straight, the notion that people would think they were in some way feminine was an issue.

6.4 The Work Environment

Stuart has found that throughout his career the issue of his sexuality has caused many more problems than gender, although he did discuss some positive and negative aspects of being male. His physical strength was a positive aspect of working with old people. He found that once they had overcome their initial inhibitions that he was male, they were happy that he was the one lifting them on and off bedpans and helping them to walk because they felt a lot safer than if it was one of the smaller and weaker females. He did find though that the younger

females were uncomfortable with his presence. Stuart believed that being male was also to his advantage when working with other staff. He could demand more respect and was not intimidated by his male colleagues, particularly doctors, who seemed to use their exalted status to their advantage when dealing with female colleagues. Stuart's major tensions stemmed from being gay. During the training stages of his working career the difficulties caused by his homosexuality were not major and looking back on them often he found them to be quite amusing. It was later when he was fully qualified, with a double certificate (and awards of excellence) when he began to apply for promotional positions that the problems began. Stuart believes and has been told, although not directly, that his being gay is what prevented him being granted any promotion. At times he fought the system and threatened legal action but it has eventually forced him to alter his career path. Stuart hopes that he has found a new direction (in education) that will be more accepting.

Terry seemed to indicate that when working as a psychiatric nurse, being male eventually altered the attitudes of himself and his colleagues. They lost their compassion and hid their nurturing characteristics because they found that their masculinity was threatened. His experience at Travis House was different. He found the environment to be very supportive and his colleagues (all female) worked as a team. He has found that the experience of working in this environment, counselling clients along with the extra study he is doing, to be very fulfilling and personally rewarding.

Simon has found, as has Terry, that the rewards of working in a caring and nurturing occupation have far out-weighted the negative experiences. He recalls

times when an individual in a position of authority informed him that pre-school was not a man's place; and another occasion when the administrator of a school passed on parental criticism of his teaching style, which indicated to Simon that they really thought he should have been in a higher grade. Fortunately, these experiences have been few and far between. He recalled many more occasions where comment has been made along the lines of how wonderful it is having a male in the early years of a child's education and of children being enrolled into his pre-school because he is male. Simon has found all of the staff, principals, teachers and teachers aides that he has worked with to be supportive.

Most of the experiences discussed with Justin stemmed from his time trying to get work and the training course he did, rather than being related to the actual place of work. When working for the clinical psychologist he was generally in the office alone and when clients came in to the reception area he was required to leave the room so as not to make them feel uncomfortable as they waited. It was therefore quite difficult for him to gauge the reactions of people to his job other than the reactions of his friends. He did however describe the Borough of Croydon (U.K) office he worked in and how it was "filled with middle-aged women" and how this was not good for his social life.

Mostly the experiences of these four men in 'female' occupations have been positive. The men have found the work to be challenging and fulfilling. The environment has predominantly been supportive and restrictions due to gender have not been highly evident. Personal inhibitions of feeling that they are doing a woman's job have been overcome in a number of ways; Justin through the name of his position; Terry by moving from the psychiatric setting to a more supportive

environment at Travis house; Stuart through confidence - he has never felt out of place; and Simon by knowing that the job he is doing is very important and therefore necessary that he leads the way.

6.5 The Future

Stuart, Terry and Simon who have all chosen non-traditional careers are all happy with the choices they have made and all intend to pursue the areas they have chosen. Justin has not yet established a career path and is looking for change.

Stuart intends to move into academia and private work - still nursing yet in a more educational role. He believes he has been forced out of progressing through the ranks of nursing within a hospital because of his sexuality not his gender but is content to continue his work in other ways.

Terry has found counselling to be very rewarding and plans to develop his skills and qualifications further and continue in this line of work.

Simon feels he has a very important role to play in the education of young children and plans to continue teaching in the early childhood area. He is also studying and will further his qualifications in the ECE field.

Justin is looking for alternative work. The job he has is not full time and he wants to find full time work. He hopes to find something more traditional, more masculine.

Stuart, Terry and Simon who have all chosen and plan to continue their careers in non-traditional male occupations mentioned the fact that because these jobs are predominantly done by females the wages are lower than they would be if the jobs were male dominated. They all referred to this as one of the pitfalls of the occupations they had chosen. Justin at this point in time was happy to be working, getting out of the house and not being a recipient of unemployment benefits.

It seems quite clear that any problems caused by gender during training and in the workplace are minimal and of little significance when the issue of future career plans are considered. Sexuality is another story. As yet unrecognised in laws of discrimination (in Western Australia) it is apparent from Stuart's account that he has made significant career decisions because of discrimination (actual or potential) that he has experienced.

6.6 Stereotypes

Often during interviews the men mentioned their own gender socialisation as either a cause or an excuse. They mentioned other people's social conditioning as something they had to accept; they would like it to change but could not really see that happening. On several occasions the anecdotes also reflected that although the subjects were pleased they had broken from tradition at times their new role may not sit as comfortably as they would like it to.

Stuart spoke of his mother being against him doing nursing because people would think he was gay. The director of nursing at the Hotchin Hospital tried extremely hard to prevent men entering the general nurse training course at the hospital

because nursing was a woman's job, and his female peers presented this attitude as well. When working in the hospital environment Stuart was aware of the subservience of the female nurses to the male doctors, the role playing, the doctors and nurses game. He also mentioned the conversation in the staff room was often about "women's things" which at times made him feel excluded. Babies and relationships were two of the topics that Stuart described as female.

Simon was also able to recount incidents that reflected both his own and his associates gender socialisation. He recalled his sailing mates asking if ECE teaching was really a man's thing to do. He mentioned his first boss giving him great references but not being sure if this was really due to his teaching ability or his sailing ability, and pondered on whether this was a case of helping out "one of the boys". On hearing that there was a male teacher in their child's pre-primary school: many parents were sure that he would be gay; others were happy that there was now someone about to fix up a few things on the building and grounds; others thought that a male would be good for their child's discipline. Simon also mentioned having to overcome his own inhibitions and feelings at times that singing and dancing with little children wasn't quite the male thing to be doing or the occasional feelings of embarrassment when seen in public holding hands with 30 little children. Simon described one aspect of his work that has had to be adapted because of the stereotype that male pre-school teachers are paedophiles. At all times he must take care that his proximity to children is kept at a safe distance, never allowing children to sit on his lap or to linger too long if he is comforting them. He believes this is not such a risky issue for female pre-school teachers.

Most of Justin's conflicts with stereotypes are internal. He wouldn't do a secretarial course because it is geared toward 'female attitudes in the workplace'. He applies for jobs that say 'clerk' because that is a more male sounding job. He calls himself an admin-assistant, not to be confused with a secretary. He fears being called a 'sheila' and defends this by saying that it is a natural process of being an Australian male; it is his "social programming". He explains different attitudes that he has with comments such as "I'm not going to sit on my boss's lap and wear a mini-skirt" and "I have a female friend who has more drivers licenses than I have shoes. She drives those great big trucks and is also the most feminine person I know". Justin is clearly uncomfortable in the role that he is occupying and describes this quite aptly when he says "Maybe deep down inside I really want to dig ditches". He doesn't really believe this but it would be a good way to show his masculinity.

The stereotypes produced by the gender socialisation of all Australians (including those that have in some way challenged them) indicates that many of the characteristics necessary to be successful in occupations such as those chosen by these men are not suitable for a 'real' man to display. Being warm, caring and nurturing; showing an interest in the development and care of young children; selecting a career for personal fulfilment rather than financial gain; are all characteristics foreign to society's stereotype of a 'real' man. The subjects interviewed for this study have not only been affected by the expectations placed on them by other people, that is, to behave as the stereotype demands, but also from within. They too, have been brought up with the traditional expectations and this has caused varying degrees of internal conflict for these men.

6.7 Other Men

Despite some difficulties the three of the four subjects who chose careers in traditionally female occupations would agree that the positives far out-weighed the negatives and all would recommend that other men pursued similar careers.

Stuart recommended nursing because of the diversity of areas in which you can work. He has had much personal satisfaction working in a helping profession. He believes that although the gay stereotype often stops men entering the field, those who overcome this issue make very good nurses because they are determined to use their nurturing skills and this determination is reflected in their work. He does state that one draw back is the relatively low pay scale and he attributes this to the fact that nursing is still considered to be a female occupation and that despite the women's movement and great gains in equality women's jobs are still more lowly paid than men's.

Terry also believes that until the wages of workers in caring professions are improved there is very little incentive for men to consider taking on jobs in these areas. He finds this to be disappointing because he believes there is an important role for men in these professions and the benefits to both the care giver and receiver are great.

Simon is also in support of more men becoming involved in his profession. He strongly believes that there is a need for men in the education of children in their early years to provide a balanced environment for them. Simon would encourage an active campaign to get more men into the ECE programmes. He gains great

enjoyment from teaching the young and feels that many other men would do the same.

Justin's response was different from the other three. He thinks his job is satisfactory but is looking elsewhere because he is uncomfortable in the role. He doesn't really understand why more men do not do jobs such as his but he wasn't very enthusiastic about encouraging other men to follow the job path that he has to date. He believes that it is difficult for men to get jobs in the office area because although people indicate that they are equal opportunity employers most places are really very traditional and will employ females for the positions.

Despite a variety of difficulties expressed at the various stages of their career paths, the three candidates who are in professional occupations would all recommend other men follow in their footsteps. They all regard the benefits personally, and to those they care for in their various occupations, to be much greater than any of the difficulties they have had to overcome.

Lower wages may be somewhat of a deterrent, yet often people who chose these types of occupations are more interested in the people they will be caring for, educating and assisting than in financial reward.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

7.1 Discussion

The results of the interviews with the four men subjects were summarised in Chapter Five. In Chapter Six this information was analysed in a matrix approach which enabled a number of observations to be made about areas of similarity and difference. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these observations further, to compare and contrast them with relevant literature and to identify and explore the themes that arise.

In discussing the findings of this research the author has attempted to take a detached view and to look at the broad picture. Discussion centres around themes which recur from case to case as well as in the literature. Many areas where research would be beneficial to broaden the understanding of men in non-traditional roles come to light and the nature of this is a matter for comment.

The analysis of the information presented by the four men subjects revealed several major themes which may be summarised as follows:

Theme 1: Problems created by the gender roles that Australians, both male and female, have ingrained in them during the socialization process, particularly in their formative years;

Theme 2: gender and sexuality can become closely entwined concepts, and often indistinguishable when encountered as an issue in society and the workplace;

Theme 3: **discrimination** on the grounds of sexuality is occurring in our workforce; and

Theme 4: **poor pay** in traditional women's occupations discourages men from becoming involved in these careers.

Despite these discouraging themes it was clear that the positive aspects of working in non-traditional male occupations were strong enough to retain the subjects in their chosen careers and for them to encourage other men to pursue similar careers. The advantages for men working in non-traditional occupations revealed by the research were:

Theme 5: working in areas predominantly staffed with females provides a supportive, non-competitive, **work environment**;

Theme 6: many '**female occupations**' are **personally fulfilling** as they allow the worker to use the nurturing and caring aspects of their nature to help and educate other people.

All of the above mentioned issues are explored further in the discussion that follows.

Theme 1: Problems created by gender roles

The dominant societal expectation of a man is that he be: a breadwinner, head of the house, participate in male-type activities such as football, and always hide his emotions. He is expected to be tough and strong and any deviation from these expectations will raise questions as to his masculinity. Participating in an

occupation that is dominated by females and requiring the development and use of traditional female characteristics such as nurturing, or caring for young children, creates a threat and tends to cause a reaction of defensiveness, for example, male psychiatric nurses developing an uncaring front to counteract colleague and patient expectations.

In her book Real Men Helen Townsend (1994, p. 248) describes the different values placed on characteristics of masculinity and femininity:

The threat lies in our narrow definition of masculinity. Femininity allows a little girl to be a tomboy. It allows a woman to wear male clothing for fun. During this century male clothing has become part of female dress. The definition of femininity allows women to 'drink, smoke and swear like a man'. Such behaviour is rarely an imputation of womanliness itself. Yet any hint of femininity in males puts men on guard. The little boy who likes girls' games, who cries too much, isn't cute, he's wimpy, a sook. Only highly paid male entertainers can wear even the asexual caftan without having their sexuality imputed. Real men don't talk about their feelings, get too emotional, call each other darling, or cuddle other distressed men. It's okay to cry into your beer (not too often), but it's not such good form to cry at your father's funeral.

Williams (1989, p. 3) discusses society's popular prejudices:

The man who crosses over into a female dominated occupation upsets [society's] gender assumptions embedded in the work.

Almost immediately, he is suspected of not being a "real man".

There must be something wrong with him ("Is he gay?

Effeminate? Lazy?") for him to be interested in this type of work.

Working and living with attitudes such as these are bound to affect the way in which the individual manages his gender identity. Is it any wonder that all four subjects in this study and most men in similar studies feel that their masculinity is threatened by the occupation they have undertaken and feel the need to defend it?

Although the definitions of masculinity are changing and softening in the nineties with descriptions such as 'Sensitive New Age Guy' coming to light, the occupation that a man has is still an integral indicator of his masculinity. When a man is asked to reveal something about himself he will usually begin by describing his occupation. It is therefore quite a risk, a statement, for a man to go beyond the expectations of family (parents particularly) and friends and take up a career in a 'female' occupation. The men interviewed for this research have done that and three of them have found that they have overcome any initial concerns they may have had and have found great satisfaction in their careers. They have also found, importantly, that their families, seeing the satisfaction they gain from their careers and that they are good at their jobs, have been supportive. This finding is reflective of Brown's (1984) research that suggests men in female dominated professions tended to have parents that supported their choice. Similarly, they all expressed the view that friends, if they are true, are not judgemental and also that generally other associates once hearing more about their particular jobs, become more interested in the people they were helping (e.g. psychiatric

patients, sexual abuse perpetrators and small children) rather than dwelling on the fact that they were in an unusual job for a man.

The attitudes of young people are changing. One father is quoted by Helen Townsend (1994, p. 238) as saying:

I was worried about my son because he wouldn't play football or cricket. But he does roller blading and rap dancing. They aren't traditional, but after much soul searching, I can see they have a lot of the same elements. You need to cooperate with others, develop skills, get your aggression out. My one consolation is my daughter is captain of her soccer team.

If young people can be encouraged to pursue their own interests despite the dictates of tradition, the attitudes of those who are close to the individual may well change as illustrated by the reaction of the father in the above example.

Although socialised to categorise jobs into 'men's' and 'women's', the feminist push toward equal access to occupation has created an acceptance of women entering traditionally men's professions (Bradley, 1993). It stands to reason that when roles change for one sex there will be pressure for a change in the other. Young people are beginning to accept the changing role for women and are questioning the sexual division of labour with which they are confronted. All subjects in this research disapproved of the sex-typing of their occupations and hoped that in the future it would discontinue. Chusmir (1990) revealed that men in female-dominated occupations are:

...generally comfortable with themselves and their masculine

sexuality. They have a well balanced gender role identity, most scoring lower on the Bem masculinity scale than traditional men, a few displaying both feminine and masculine behaviours (androgynous) and many others displaying neutral gender behaviour (undifferentiated) (p.15).

The three subjects in this research who are comfortable and happy in their occupations displayed characteristics similar to those described by Chusmir. To change gender stereotyping in all areas will ultimately lead to changes with regard to careers. The biggest threat today is to an individual's sexuality, yet if young people of both genders and sexuality are encouraged to be confident and assertive and pursue their interests the lines between what is now deemed to be appropriate male and female activities will become blurred. This is supported by the belief of Buchbinder (1994) who states that if masculinity was genetically written into male bodies it would not be necessary for parents to tell a tearful boy that "big boy's don't cry". Indeed, the idea that performing, or not performing, particular tasks would 'make real men' of boys suggests that what we do in order to be acknowledged as men/masculine and women/feminine is learned. Clearly, in our contemporary society, male and female Australians have strong attitudes towards what is, and what is not, the role of each gender; however changes are afoot and it is likely that society's established norms will be altered and a more androgynous workforce will emerge.

Theme 2: Gender and sexuality issues

Threats to masculinity are often voiced using such terminology as 'poofster' or 'fag'. If an individual acts outside the boundaries of the contemporary concept of

masculinity he may illicit these insults from his 'friends'. The usual meaning of such a taunt is that the recipient is acting like a woman and therefore is either non-masculine or non-heterosexual which in the eyes of the person making the taunt amounts to the same thing - that he must be gay. Neither of these accusations sits well with a heterosexual man, who wishes to be considered neither gay nor feminine. For the homosexual man who is not feminine, the problem still occurs. The 'poofte' tag is relevant to his sexuality yet is incorrect if it infers that he is feminine. This entanglement of sexuality with gender specific behaviour acts as a barrier preventing men from considering occupations that require 'feminine' characteristics. It could be suggested that to encourage young men into non-traditional jobs, counsellors (and influential others) could point out that the stereotype that men in these jobs are all gay is changing (as is happening to some extent with nursing). Yet, it could be said that such an approach is denigrating gay men, that is, it's okay to be a male nurse as long as you are not a gay male nurse. As found in this research some gay men are participating in these jobs (but not necessarily in the majority) and although gay they are not feminine. They may demonstrate traditionally female traits as part of their job and nature but it is a changing masculinity not the acquisition of femininity.

Society's attitudes to the relationship between sexuality and gender is confused. To educate and change people's attitudes to one of gender equality represents a difficult task. It would be necessary to tell boys at school that it is alright to do cookery because they will still be 'male' and 'macho'; and to encourage girls to take up, for example, women-only football without it meaning they are a lesbian. These views are potentially too progressive and still unacceptable to a wide range

of people today. At the same time, such assurances are at the expense of gay people, are sexually discriminatory, and ultimately may reinforce gender stereotypes. This echoes ideas from Townley (1993):

....the majority of those working for change in perceptions of gender in schools and colleges have not acknowledged the connection between sexuality and gender. In fact, work on expansion of girls' subjects and boys' subjects has reinforced conventional heterosexuality. This results in the maintenance of the *status quo*. It is imperative that we open debate on the relationship between sexuality and gender, and use our discoveries as a base for action in schools. (p. 324)

Theme 3: Sexual discrimination in the workforce.

Based on the information collected in this study it is somewhat bold to make such a generalised statement. This study has found only one candidate who speaks of his own experiences as to discrimination of this nature. What can be said is that he believes his experience to be real and that others, especially those working in the same field as he, may be experiencing similar problems.

Levine and Leonard (1984) provide the following statistics from five studies done in the United States:

31% of the Lesbians surveyed anticipated employment discrimination because of sexual orientation, and 13% had actually experienced it; 8% of women had lost their jobs or nearly lost their jobs because they were lesbians. In order to avoid discrimination, 72% of the lesbian community remained at least

partially hidden at work, with 28% completely closeted. The only comparable estimates for gay men reveal that 29% of all gay male workers have had their jobs negatively influenced by their sexual orientation and 17% have lost or been denied employment because they were gay. (p. 708)

If similar research were to be done in Australia it is likely that similar statistics would emerge.

Theme 4: Poor pay is a discouragement

It was found in all four cases that low pay was an issue for these men. The three in professional occupations referred to it as a disincentive for other men entering their chosen occupation and the secretary was looking for other work, one of his motivations being that the pay he was receiving was not enough.

Equal pay is still very much an issue of contention for women. Sue Warpole, the federal equal opportunity commissioner is paraphrased in The Australian Newspaper (McIntyre 1994) complaining that in the decade since the Sex Discrimination Act became law the average earnings of women have only increased from 82 cents to 84 cents in the male dollar.

The findings of this study support the notion that because the occupations embraced by the study are generally accepted as feminine they receive less pay. This in turn results in a lower job status, thereby making it less attractive to men seeking careers, keeping in mind "men are conditioned to perceive career success and achievement as primary measures of manhood and masculinity"

(Zunker, 1990, p. 405). This in itself creates a Catch 22 situation. Men will not enter these occupations by reason of the lower pay and status, but until they do, the status of many female occupations may not alter. Bascow (1986) found that the entrance of a large number of men into female dominated occupations usually results in increased occupational status and correspondingly higher pay for both male and female employees. This provides yet another valid reason for the encouragement of the desegregation of occupations based on gender.

It has been established that poor pay discourages men's entry into 'female' occupations. On the other hand, many researchers have indicated that promotion for men in non-traditional careers is rapid and subsequently so are increases in pay. Kadushin (1976), Chusmir (1990) and Williams (1992) all supported the idea that men in non-traditional roles were often helped or encouraged to move into positions of authority by "a faster-than-normal track to promotion, favoured salary preferences and monopolisation of prestigious positions" (Kadushin, 1976, p.441). The subjects involved in this study did not personally support this idea. Although, it was noted by one candidate that when he started his career in nursing women mostly held the promotional positions but that now, fifteen years later, most of these were held by men. Research has found a similar position in education; Allen (1993) states "Large elementary schools with only one male classroom teacher are not unusual. On the other hand, men continue to hold 70% of positions as elementary school principals" (p.113). It is not possible to speculate from this study as to the cause of this, although the subject who made this observation suggested it was not due to favoured promotional treatment but to the attributes of men that encourages them to strive for these positions - a need for status and financial reward to

support their masculinity. This opinion is supported by a recent article in the Australian newspaper where McIntyre (1994) reports:

An investigation into a leading American company by Hoffman Associates to find out why the company was not promoting more women came to the conclusion that the disparity between the sexes 'was due entirely to motivation. Women were not prepared to make sacrifices to their other interests that promotion to the top would necessitate'. (p. 14)

This seems to be quite a narrow view in that it may be the case in that particular company, but would be disputed as a reflection of the situation in the workforce at large. It was alternatively suggested by McIntyre (1994) that "reaching the top in most professions takes 20 or 30 years of single-minded uninterrupted effort. This is how long we will have to wait to see the changing pattern of university enrolments reflected in the top ranks of the professions" (p. 14). This still does not explain the decline of women in these positions in the ranks of nursing and the low representation in education and should be an area of concern for women in these professions.

This research did not find evidence to support the claim that men received favoured treatment. Career advancement was made by these men through changing jobs and further study. Lower pay in female occupations is supported as representing an impermeable barrier. Until true equality is established and the average wage for 'female' occupations is equivalent to that of 'male' occupations, any movement there is of men into these occupations will be slow.

Positives

Theme 5: The attraction of 'female' work environments

It has been suggested by Hayes (1989) "that men who enter gender-atypical occupations may be tolerating lower pay for better working conditions" (p. 209). This research found that all of these men were happy with their working conditions and found that their co-workers provided a friendly and supportive working environment.

O'Neil (1982) pointed out that men are conditioned to be overly competitive and ambitious and status seeking because these are qualities associated with a successful man. These characteristics often make for a working environment that is guarded and uncooperative, where men will resist situations that may reveal a weakness and therefore avoid, where possible, participation in co-operative tasks that could expose their vulnerability (Goldberg, 1977).

Although the men represented in this study who have chosen to pursue careers in their chosen occupations (three of the interviewed four) demonstrated ambition, the researcher would be hesitant to describe it as overly competitive or status seeking. These three men believe they are providing important services and are furthering their studies in order to be more competent. They are all aiming to eventually move into promotional positions and see this as a natural progression in any career - male or female, traditional or non-traditional. This is reflective of the expected masculine trait of ambition but does not appear to have caused any difficulties personally or with colleagues. The subjects have found a happy balance between these masculine characteristics and the female characteristics that are necessary for efficient and successful functioning in their jobs.

For more efficient work practices and decreased stress levels it would be beneficial for men to develop some of the traits perceived as feminine and recognised as valuable by men working in female concentrated environment. Traits such as gentleness, expressiveness and responsiveness, caretaking and nurturing would contribute to the establishment of productive interpersonal relationships and in turn, productive stress-reduced work environments.

Theme 6: The fulfilling aspects of 'female occupations'

By the nature of the work involved, the majority of occupations typically classified 'female' involve elements of the above mentioned characteristics. Research (Stein, 1982, Soloman, 1982, Balswick, 1982) has shown that gender-role conflict limits men's emotional, interpersonal and physical lives. Therapists working and researching in the field of gender-role conflict and strain see the following as questions that need conceptualisation and examination:

- (1) How might therapists intervene to help men experiencing restrictive emotionality; problems with control, power and competition issues, restricted communication patterns and difficulties in initiating and maintaining intimacy with women, other men and children?
- (2) How can therapists help men explore and resolve gender-strain and conflicts related to sexuality, homophobia, and career and family conflicts?
- (3) What traditional interventions will be useful in solving these problems and what new approaches are needed?

(O'Neil, 1982, p. 37)

It is clear that the restrictiveness of the masculine role has an effect on the

emotional and physical well being of many men and therefore has inspired the need for research into, and the development of, counselling strategies for men in this area.

For those who are prepared to challenge gender roles, there are many reasons for men to enter 'female' occupations. The recognition and promotion of these advantages could be beneficial to the 'happiness in life' of many young people.

The men interviewed for this research all found that working in the occupation they have chosen allowed for their own emotional growth and the expression of feelings and abilities otherwise not considered appropriate for men. They felt that this was an attractive aspect of their work and a positive contribution to their personal well being.

As mentioned above there is a recognised need for the development of such characteristics in men. Knowledge that 'female' occupations offer an environment in which these characteristics are valued and developed could be advantageous in a number of ways:

- career counsellors could encourage men recognised to possess these characteristics into such occupations;
- careers in these fields can be promoted and encouraged highlighting the personal rewards as an incentive;
- the use of male characteristics such as emotional and physical strengths combined with these feminine characteristics can be advantageous within some fields (e.g. strong male nurses for lifting.)

O'Neil (1982, p. 9) states that "unresolved gender role conflicts can potentially inhibit human maturity, affect overall emotional and physical health, and reduce happiness in life. Three of this study's four subjects do not have gender role conflicts. They see the advantages to themselves and others in fulfilling the roles that they do and having developed the necessary traits to do so successfully. The fourth subject struggles with his gender identity in the job that he is doing and commented after reading his case how immature he sounded (reflective of O'Neils findings mentioned above). He is not happy in his current situation.

7.2 Conclusion

There is a move toward a more egalitarian society. Equity in the home and workplace is an issue of the late Twentieth Century that is being addressed with varying degrees of success. With the emergence toward an androgynous workforce there is the recognition that men in particular, are having to reevaluate their roles, values and beliefs. Boles and Tatro (1982) point out that the idea of androgyny has freed both men and women to consider alternative lifestyle behaviours and gives both the opportunity to acknowledge their masculine and feminine qualities. This optimism is contradicted by the somewhat more sombre conclusion of Williams (1993) who in commenting on the group of essays entitled Doing Women's Work: Men in Nontraditional Occupations said "this collection demonstrates how entrenched occupational segregation is, and how far we have to go before men and women and women achieve true economic equality"(p. 7).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the barriers, difficulties and in turn the highlights of four men who moved into non-traditional male occupations coinciding with a time of significant change to society's attitudes. This research records that they experienced the complex situations so aptly summarized by Boles and Tatro (1982) and Williams (1993) as quoted. There are indeed barriers they have had to overcome. On the other hand, there have been highlights in their chosen careers and significant benefits have accrued to them.

The interview process and the subsequent analysis have identified that men going into non-traditional careers encounter many and varied situations, some good and some bad, not encountered by those following traditional career paths.

The men of this study have adopted a number of significant strategies that have enabled them to face up to the difficulties that they have confronted and they have learned lessons that have wide application. The consequences of their experience is that three of the four men studied are happy with their lot and they would recommend their life experience to others.

One way in which individuals may benefit from the outcome of this research and that of others in this field is through the agency of career counsellors. The complexity of the situation confronting men in non-traditional roles and the need to recognise there are opposing views of the matter, complicates the role of career counsellors in the nature of the advice that they give. Counselling considerations that have been identified in the course of this study, which, are also supportive of the findings of other research done in similar areas, are as follows:

- the development of skills and attitudes for dealing with the ridicule of peers;
- appropriate attitudes for understanding and coping with role conflict;
- the recognition of the value of expressing emotions and behaviours that are usually associated with feminine roles, such as gentleness and caretaking;
- learning to relax and putting competitiveness and success into perspective; and
- the development of support groups for men: who find the prospect of egalitarianism threatening to their status and self esteem; and others who are concerned with gender role and career-related issues.

This study has implications for future research in that it has resulted in the formulation of many more questions than it has answered. This research has made it clear that the issue of men in non-traditional careers is a complex and multi-faceted problem. It not only highlights the need for research into men's careers in these fields but it highlights the deficiencies in our understanding of many other work related and personal issues for men. The following are some pertinent topics that need addressing:

- the relationship between society's attitude to sexuality and gender;
- the threat that men and women feel with respect to their masculinity femininity respectively when persons of the opposite sex move into their traditional workplace;
- discrimination in the workforce and society in general, on the grounds of sexuality;
- the extent to which career development decisions are affected by

gender, affectual preference, and by sex role attitudes;

- the particular aspects of female occupations that are beneficial to productive working environments for men who choose them; and
- the disparate movement of men and women into administrative positions in areas where there is a predominance of 'female' employees.

The more males and females who can be encouraged by teachers and counsellors to expand their career aspirations and re-examine their restrictive attitudes to life roles and the more this can be understood through future research, the more likely it is that androgynous egalitarianism will exist in the future.

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Appendix A
Questions.

Background:

Family?

Where from?

Schooling?

Family situation now?

Initial decision:

Why/how did you come to choose this career?

Were your friends and parents supportive of your career choice?

What were your major concerns when you decided to follow this career path?

Why do you think other men don't choose this career?

Training

How did you train to become a.....?

How did other students and teachers react to you being there?

Were there any major issues or advantages of being a male in this training environment?

Work environment:

Was it easy/ difficult finding work in your chosen career?

How did people react working with a male.....?

How do clients/patients respond to a male.....?

Future career plans?

Do you intend to pursue this career?

How could things have been made easier for you?

Generally:

What is the reaction of most people when you tell them you are a male.....?

How do you respond to these reactions?

Has there been any long lasting personal effects of having chosen to follow this career path?

What advice would you give to other men choosing to take up a career in.....?

For each issue suggested by the interviewee it may be useful to ask:

What is the nature of the issue?

How significant is the issue; what are the consequences/ramifications of the issue?

How did the issue arise; what factors are responsible?

Would other males have encountered the same issue - personal or social?

What did you do to resolve this issue?

Has the issue been resolved satisfactorily?

What more needs to be done to resolve the issue?

Appendix B

Review request letter.

21 September 1994

Dear

Thankyou for taking the time to look over these case studies. I hope that you find I have written a true account of your experiences.

As you are reading your own case study please feel free to make any changes that you see necessary, such as adding to a story, deleting text that you feel is not true, adding extra information that has come to mind as you read, et cetera.

As you read the accounts of the other participants again feel free to write on the copy indicating experiences that have been similar to your own, in contrast to your own, or maybe something one of the other candidates has said will spark a memory of an experience of your own that you think is relevant. you may choose to use a code such as a green highlighter for similar experiences and red for dissimilar.

If you do not wish to comment in writing but would prefer to discuss the cases I would be happy to organise another interview time (please call me on *** ****) .

Thank you again for your assistance, I am looking forward to your response,

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Kelly

Appendix C.

Participation letter.

29 June 1994

Dear

I am conducting research into the experiences of a few men who have embarked on a career in what is sometimes regarded as a traditionally female occupation. I aim to faithfully describe the experiences of the participants as they perceive them. The data collected will be used as a basis for an honours thesis as part of my Bachelor of Education (Hons.) degree.

All information will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in all documentation. Places of employment will not be named and all measures desired by the participants in regard to confidentiality will be respected.

I hope to conduct two or three interviews of approximately one hour and having completed each case study I would like the participant to read and comment on the final draft. To facilitate the interviewing process it is intended that a tape recorder will be used.

I hope that this information will help in the development of strategies to encourage more males into such careers and the development of support and counselling processes, if needed, for men already studying and working in these careers. I also hope that this information may be the beginning of a move toward a changing societal attitude toward the distribution of jobs to one where people are less influenced by gender expectations and more by personal desire to work

in occupations to which they are most suited.

Any questions concerning the project *A study of men in Non-traditional Male Occupations* can be directed to Fiona Kelly (Principal Investigator) B.Ed(Hon) Career Education student on *** **** or Dr Anna Lichtenberg (Research Supervisor) at Edith Cowan University on 370 6479.

I (the participant) have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided that I am not identifiable.

(Participant or authorised representative) (Date)

(Investigator) (Date)

Appendix D.

Subjects' review of cases.

On completing the first draft of the case studies a copy was returned to each subject. The following is a summary of the comments and request made. The case studies were altered accordingly.

Simon returned the studies with several changes to be made to his own. He felt that he may still be identifiable and therefore requested the changing of his name to something less similar to his own. He asked for the deletion of several quotes that may have indicated where he worked or may have been recognised by somebody to whom they referred. One other quote was altered to be less "controversial". Simon indicated with respect to the other studies that he agreed with the references to poor pay in "female" jobs, that friends reacted similarly to Justin's friends (ie "sheila's job) and he agreed that there is a need for men in caring occupations as commented by both Stuart and Terry.

Terry returned his with one word changed on all four documents. He agreed completely with the account of his own experience, and was not concerned about being recognised. He found the accounts of others interesting but did not wish to comment.

Steve returned the four accounts having highlighted in blue experiences he agreed with and in red those he had not found similar to his own. It was noted that he found many similarities with the counsellor and ECE teacher but only a few with the secretary. In his own account he had made a few minor changes to quotes to make them clearer but it was otherwise unaltered.

Justin also highlighted experiences he found similar and those he found dissimilar. His main focus was on the recollection of the other subjects that made reference to occasions of discomfort when asked about their job and difficulties getting work in a "female" occupation. He commented that he was a little embarrassed as to how immature he came across in his own account but that if that was how he sounded, so be it. He made several changes in order to clarify meaning.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF MATRIX

	STUART - nurse	TERRY - counsellor	JUSTIN - secretary	SIMON - ECE teacher
BACKGROUND eg Parents, siblings, age, nationality, friends.	p1* - parents together, English, older sister and brother, younger sister, Australian, Singleton Age = 40 p6 - big, supportive family p10 - parents/sexuality success p9 - aunt and uncle/visit p13 - partner suicide	p3 - family don't talk about things like that p3 - friends - gay socialisation process doesn't matter bottom p3 - family not talkative (mentioned again) p4 - friends like-minded p8 - being part of the group Age = 30 p 8 - don't show emotions p13 - upbringing 'rock-age'	p1 - parents English, back and forth, grew up in Adelaide, hated school Age = 24 p1 - going to England big mistake, coming back - big mistake! p1 - still living with parents in Perth - economic reason p2 - parents may move again p14 - hated school - reason p14 - aspiration - photography p16 - Adelaide - stayed inside, won't go back	p5 - family of 7 children, second eldest, sensitive to needs of young children p6 - jobs other family members p5 - friends and 'ocker' image p2 - first job 'ever'
INITIAL DECISION				
TRAINING				
WORK ENVIRONMENT				
FUTURE				
STEREOTYPES				
OTHER MEN				

* all page numbers refer to transcript document not included in this thesis.