SALIENT FACTORS INFLUENCING EXPERIENCES ENCOUNTERED BY REENTRY WOMEN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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by

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents,

Walter and Evelyn Jones,

who instilled in me the importance of education

and the determination to fulfill my goals.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was conducted to identify salient factors influencing the experiences encountered by women as they reentered post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both. The study involved 11 women ranging in age from 19 to 40 plus, who were registered with a Center for Women Interested in Successful Employment. These women decided to return after periods of absence.

The data were collected using semi-structured interviews and personal narratives written by the women. Data analysis adhered to the guidelines outlined by Gay and Airasian (2000). The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed for data analysis. The investigator listened to the audio-tapes several times before transcribing them. The data were broken down and classified using four iterative steps that were interrelated, but did not necessarily follow a linear pattern. The data were read and re-read for familiarization and identification of main themes, examined for detailed descriptions of setting, participants, and activities, categorized and grouped into themes, and finally interpreted and synthesized into general conclusions.

Various career development theories and approaches, developmental theories, and theories of feminist counselling were reviewed and presented. These theories provided a framework for understanding the many variables influencing the experiences of reentry women.

Recommendations for practice focused on the need for improved counselling services and programs for reentry women and women in general, especially in rural areas. Recommendations for research included further studies on: required supports

for reentry women, follow-up to determine continued level of satisfaction with reentry, information on the quality and quantity of available counselling services for reentry women and women in general, preparation necessary for the perceived fears associated with reentry challenges, and occupational choices, and information on how these choices relate to reentry experiences.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine salient factors influencing women's decisions to reenter post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both. The focus was on personal experiences of women in this category, the factors that influenced their choice, and the factors inherent in their experiences as reentry women. The women selected for this study ranged from age 19 to 40 plus, and were registered students with Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE). These women represented various life stages and life events.

Rationale and Significance

Introduction

Some preliminary research has been conducted in the area of reentry women. According to Morgan and Foster (1999):

> A consistent profile of reentry women who are seeking to enter the workforce or higher education and who may, therefore, be seeking career counselling has emerged. These women are generally in their thirties, with an average of two children. Reasons for returning to work or higher education include a search for identity, boredom, self-fulfillment, and a willingness or the necessity to contribute to the financial welfare of the family. (pp. 125-126)

In North American society, past experiences throughout the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and to a large extent the 50s, indicate in the majority of cases women did not work outside the home. For most, childcare, housework, and family responsibilities were the extent of their labours. Even though the duties of these responsibilities fit the definition of the word "work," it has not been a part of the paid workforce of the world, and therefore, has for many years not been recognized by society as an occupation or a career. More recently, however, women have chosen a career, or in many cases, a second or joint career, as they have opted to add work outside the home to that already existing within the home. In other cases, women who were already in the paid workforce, decided to marry, have children, or both, thereby adding a new role to their existing workload. Such choices brought with them changes in lifestyle and major decision-making responsibilities.

Many women have chosen to return to post-secondary institutions. Hause (2000) stated:

> Today women are in the majority on college campuses. The numbers of reentry women (i.e., non-traditional age) entering college and the workforce are on the rise. Women dominate careers on the "cutting edge" of information industries such as the more technological fields of computers and research. And the number of small businesses owned by women ... has been increasing more rapidly than those owned by men. (p. 2)

Factors Influencing Reentry Women

According to Padula (1994), "Reentry women have been a topic of concern to educators and counsellors only since the late 1960's [sic]" (p. 10). Over thirty years later, it has continued to present an area that has been much discussed and has received some research. Shapiro and Fitzsimmons (1991) asserted, "Reentry women have been conceptualized as a homogenous group primarily due to their highly similar personality and demographic characteristics" (p. 510). Perhaps, this statement is worthy of further scrutiny. Women in this group may be married, divorced, widowed, or separated. They may be parents of young children or older children ready to leave home. Some may be single parents, parents in dual-career families, or sole supporters of a two-parent family. They may represent low, middle, or high income levels. This represents a rather broad range of women who undoubtedly have very diverse and unique characteristics, lifestyles, values, and personalities.

Shapiro and Fitzsimmons (1991) reviewed the literature on reentry women. Their studies indicated reentry women students exhibited high levels of achievement, low self-confidence, a lack of assertiveness, high levels of dominance and low levels of impulsivity, and perceived themselves as independent.

For the purpose of this study, interest lies in women who had been absent from the paid workforce for a period of time and decided to return to either the workforce or post-secondary institutions, or women who had never worked, but have now chosen to do so. What motivated them to return? As reviewed by MacKinnon-Slaney, Barber, and Slaney (1988), "The research describing reentry female students, women over the age of 25

enrolled in regular undergraduate degree programs in higher education, indicates that these women come from diverse backgrounds and have varied reasons for continuing their education" (p. 327). Returning women have reported vocational reasons for reentry. Many simply desired to work or have a new career, or were dissatisfied with their present job and wished a change (Padula, 1994).

According to Lindstrom (2000), despite the multitude of reasons women have had for entering post-secondary institutions, it is important to realize the timing for their reentry is not solely a function of motivation, but very much affected by the state of relationships and occurrences in their everyday lives. Lindstrom reviewed a study by Mahoney and Anderson (1988) that noted what actually prompted a woman to enroll in an educational program was indeed a complex interaction of life events, goals, and motivation.

Reentry women have encountered many dilemmas when considering the decision to return to school or work, and carrying out their choices. Shapiro and Fitzsimmons (1991) noted:

> According to the Life Events Perspective of Adult Development, women's lives undergo changes in their major life areas during transitional stages. Moving from home to the work force is often accompanied by stress as the women adapt to their changing environment. Recent studies have documented the increasing incidence of depression in reentry women. (p.511)

Lacey (1997) prepared a survey on Priorities and Concerns of the Women of Newfoundland and Labrador, consisting of 757 women, aged 18 to 86. The results

showed, when asked to rank concerns as workers in the province, balancing work and family ranked the highest. This was rated very concerned by 394 respondents, followed by opportunities for education and training (353), childcare (352), and opportunities for advancement (312).

What coping mechanisms do reentry women adopt? What assistance is available for them during their transition? After returning to the workforce, does it meet their expectations? How satisfying is their new role in life? MacKinnon-Slaney et al. (1988) noted, some reentry women "have been housewives and have experienced frustration, a lack of self-confidence, and anxiety....Many see themselves as being independent, effective, self-confident, and committed to their educational endeavors" (p. 327). According to Padula (1994), a study by King and Bauer (1988) stated, "Researchers have reported that the life experiences of reentry women are broader and more complex (than that of traditional students) because of their multiple responsibilities at home, in society, and at work" (pp. 10-11).

Many of today's women fit the category of all of the above. Many have been mothers and housewives who have both worked and attended post-secondary institutions. In fact, some have returned to different post-secondary institutions several times. What is their story? What brought them to the decisions and the transitional periods in their lives? How have they coped in these situations, and what are the personal, academic, and career results of their efforts? Undoubtedly, they are many and diversified.

Women who have sought reentry to school or the workforce in the past would surely have benefited from counselling services. This not only applies to issues related to

academic and career counselling, but personal counselling as well. According to Hause (2000):

> Whether you are a reentry woman, a career changer or a 22-year-old, my advice is first to know yourself...the better a woman knows herself and her likes, the more successful her job search will be and the happier she will be in the job or career she chooses. After that comes researching the kinds of career fields and positions which match your skills and interests. (p. 3)

The Need for Further Research

The study and research of occupations and career development, combined with that of women in relation to occupations and women in counselling, is an interesting and fascinating topic. It is an intriguing avenue for research, as many new and exciting things are happening today in these domains. For those who aspire to working in this field with the adult female population, researching this topic gains support. Research in this area would undoubtedly have implications for gaining knowledge and information related to career programs and career counselling of reentry women. Such information may then be useful in helping and directing these women. Although previous studies have provided valuable information about reentry women, the depth of that information has been limited (Padula & Miller, 1999).

Padula (1994) pointed out the need for research of reentry women was apparent when reports issued by the Bureau of the Census (United States Department of Commerce, 1990) indicated total college enrollment of both men and women was higher in 1988

than the previous year, and most of this growth was among students 25 years of age and older, with women in this age group, constituting 48.6% of the total college enrollment growth for 1980 to 1988. Padula noted, it was expected this trend would continue, as women had been, and were projected to earn more master's degrees than men. Women were entering the workforce in greater numbers than they had at any time in the past. In her study Padula revealed, "Many women may continue to delay establishing their vocational role until after 35 years of age when they have established their family roles" (p.10). Thus, the need for further research is supported. Kopp and Ruzicka (1993) pointed out, the 1986 U.S. Bureau of the Census reported the largest increase in labor force participation was among mothers with school-age children. Padula reported, "Current information about reentry women is needed to meet the counselling and program needs of this group in both academic settings and the workforce more effectively" (p.10).

Statistical Information

The significance of this research is indicated because reentry women are a fairly recent phenomenon. It appears to have begun sometime in the 1960s and escalated to present day. More and more women, in particular, older women are returning to post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both.

Recent Canadian statistics show Community College Post-Secondary full-time enrollment for women in Canada in 1994-95 was 201,188, and in 1998-99 it increased to 216,729. This shows an increase of 15,541 women entering community colleges full-time in a four-year period. The statistics for men show an increase for this same time

period of 8,014. The Newfoundland statistics show women in full-time enrollment in community colleges decreased from 1994-95 to 1998-99 by 480, whereas male full-time enrollment increased by 482. However, part-time enrollment in Newfoundland witnessed an increase from 69 women in 1994-95 to 228 women in 1998-99, an increase of 159 women. Could this increase be partly attributed to reentry women finding part-time attendance more suitable to their life situations? It is, however, noteworthy that part-time female enrollment in Canada at this time decreased by 1,456. Community college diplomas granted to men in 1999 increased by 8,243 from 1995. For women, the increase was 10,604.

Canadian statistics of university full-time and part-time enrollment indicate an increase of 13,831 women in Canadian universities from 1994-95 to 1998-99 in full-time enrollment. Statistics show a decline for men in this enrollment of 9,168. In Newfoundland, full-time female university enrollment increased from 7,272 in 1994-95 to 7,562 in 1998-99, an increase of 290 females. However, part-time enrollment for women in university in Newfoundland decreased by 838. A decrease in part-time female university enrollment and an increase in part-time community college enrollment were noted. Did one institution support the needs of female students more efficiently than the other institution? Unlike the increase in the number of diplomas granted to females in community colleges, degrees granted by universities in Canada to women did not increase. The overall number of university degrees awarded in Canada to female students did not show an increase from 1995 to 1999, however, certain areas of study, in particular some non-traditional fields, showed an increase in degrees for women.

Finally, statistics reveal of the total enrollment in Canada, in both community colleges and universities, full-time and part-time, over half of the students were women. Total full-time enrollment in community colleges in 1998-99 was 403,516 students. 216,729 of whom were women. Total part-time enrollment was 91,439 students, 53,804 of whom were women. In the universities, full-time total enrollment for 1998-99 was 580,376 students, 319,475 of whom were women. Part-time enrollment in Canadian universities at this time was 245,985 students, 149,406 of whom were women.

It is obvious more and more women are attending post-secondary institutions. Many of these women are older women who are returning to colleges and universities in preparation for reentry to the workforce. According to Lindstrom (2000), "Adult learners over age 25 enrolled in part-time courses have become a new majority. They now outnumber "traditional" (18 to 24 year old) full-time students" (p. 30). Novak and Thacker (1991) reviewed a study by Parliament (1986) that noted, in Canada, statistics reported "most of the part-time Canadian university undergraduate student population in 1984 to 1985 (61%) were women" (p. 324). Many of these students were older women. Novak and Thacker found, in 1985, 70% of part-time students 45 years and older were women, and women accounted for 59% of part-time students 25 to 45 years of age, and 56% of part-time students under 25 years of age. Novak and Thacker pointed out the results of a survey of Canadian adult education showed almost 1 of 3 women, aged 25 to 34, took part in adult education and had a higher participation rate than any other age or sex category in the study. Lindstrom noted, by the mid-1990s almost one-half of all post-secondary students were 25 and over, including graduate and part-time students, up

from one-third only 20 years previously. Novak and Thacker reported data that indicated these trends were similar in the United States. American college enrollments between 1972 and 1982 showed major enrollment increases among those 35 years and older, and the increase in this age group was due almost exclusively to increases in female participation. According to Foote (1996), this trend is expected to continue and as the population as a whole ages, so too will the population of universities and colleges. As reviewed by Lindstrom, based on these trends it is predicted that the number of mature female students will continue to increase (p. 30).

Lindstrom (2000) reported the following statistics presented by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education, 1998:

> In Newfoundland, the average age of public college enrollment peaked in 1993/94 at 26.5 and has dipped slightly to 25.4 in 1995/96. Differences in age among university undergraduates are primarily related to attendance status. The average age of full-time students has ranged from 20.5 - 20.9 over the past few years, while part-time student average has remained steady at 30. There is a clear trend toward increasingly older students in Newfoundland's public college system. "Students who enrolled in 1995/96 were, on average, nearly three years older than students who enrolled ten years earlier." (p. 32)

According to a study conducted by Kopp and Ruzicka (1993), increasing numbers of women were engaged in paid employment. In the United States, in 1996 almost 62 million Americans in the workforce were women, double the 31 million women who were either working or looking for work in 1970 (Tumulty, 1997). As with students in

colleges and universities, many of these women in the workforce were reentry women over the age of 25. Tumulty pointed out in 1948, fewer than a third of women 16 or older were working. The number reached 40 % in 1966 and 50 % in 1978. By March of 1997, a record 60 % of women age 16 and older were in the workforce. For men, it was 75 %.

Women are returning to the labour market after childbirth in ever increasing numbers. A British Work and Welfare Study Guide (1997) reported:

> This is a long-term trend: amongst married women, labour force participation has increased from fewer than 1 in 10 in 1921 to over 1 in 2 by 1981.... Employment rates among women with children under five years of age doubled between 1973 and 1996. In 1974 only 24 percent of mothers returned to work within the first year after birth. By 1997 two thirds of mothers returned to work after having a baby, an increase of 50% since 1988. (p. 2)

Canadian Statistics show full-time and part-time employment from 1996 to 2000. In 1996, in Canada, full-time employment of both sexes was approximately 10,883,000 people, 4,332,000 of whom were women. Total part-time employment was approximately 2,579,000 people, of whom 1,784,000 were women. Women made up more than half of the total part-time workforce. By 2000, total full-time employment for both sexes in the country had increased to around 12,208,000, and full-time employment for women had increased to around 4,988,000. This shows an increase of 656,000 women in full-time employment in four years. For the same time period, part-time employment for women increased from 1996 to 2000 by about 87,000 women. Of the

full-time employed women in 1996 (approximately 4,332,000), about 3,862,000 of them were over 25 years of age. By 2000, there were approximately 4,448,000 women in full-time employment over 25 years of age. The total number of women in full-time employment in 2000 was approximately 4,988,000. The total number of part-time women, over the age of 25, employed in 1996 was shown to be around 1,247,000. By 2000, this increased to around 1,300,000, an increase of 53,000 women.

Canadian statistics also provide information on the labour force and participation rates. Of all the women in the labour force between 25 and 44 years of age in 1996, 77.8 % participated. By 2000, 80 % in this age group participated in the workforce. This shows an increase of 2.2 %. The increase for men in this age group, at the same time, was 0.5 %. In 1996, 57.3% of women 45 to 64 years of age participated in the labour force, and by 2000, 62.1 % participated - an increase of 4.8 %. For men aged 45 to 64, the participation rate from 1996 to 2000 increased from 76.7 % to 78.1 % - an increase of 1.4 %.

These statistics indicate participation of women in the workforce, in particular women between mid twenties and mid sixties, is definitely on the rise. Women are realizing they have options. No longer are they staying at home until their children are completely raised. How prepared are they for this transition? Indeed, how prepared is the world of work for them?

Theoretical Rationale

Theories of career development provide information that facilitates understanding of the internal and external variables influencing occupational choices and career

development. These theories assist in understanding why people choose occupations and become dissatisfied with them. They provide interpretation of information about career development in the past, present, and future. McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) stated. "Career theories provide the foundation knowledge from which counsellors draw useful concepts to explain client behaviour" (p. 27). Finally, and very importantly, career theories stimulate further research. As reviewed by Lalande, Crozier, and Davey (2000):

> Research in the area of career development of women and girls has grown exponentially, especially over the last decade, but with little focus on the underlying psychological processes that influence career decision making and career development. Much of women's career behaviour has previously been interpreted using a male perspective, although some attempts have been made to develop models or concepts more descriptive of women's careers. There has been increasing recognition of the relevance of relationships to women's career decisions and career identity development. (p. 193)

According to Issacson and Brown (1997), Super presented one of the first theories that attempted to apply its principles to the career development of women. Super has, over time, made some changes to accommodate the changing career patterns of women. McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) noted Super described his "life-span, life-space approach" to career development as "...a loosely unified set of theories dealing with specific aspects of career development, taken from developmental, differential, social, personality, and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept and learning theory" (p. 43). Avery (1996) and Dyke (1992) reviewed a study by Sandal-

Hansen (1987) that reported Super was one of the first theorists to acknowledge the career patterns of men and women were different and, therefore, there was a need to research women's career choices differently from that of men.

According to Betz (1994), one of the important theoretical contributions of Super is his emphasis on career development as a process of self-concept implementation (p. 32). Super maintained the major dimensions of the self-concept include traditional personality traits, such as self-esteem, clarity, certainty, stability, and realism. Super's research on self-concept theory focused on self-concept implementation in occupational preferences and choices. In reviewing this research, Betz reported Osipow (1983) supported the notion self-concept plays an important role in occupational preference. Osipow pointed out research on women's career development has shown self-esteem and other self-concept features pivotal in the career development of women. Super's theory has taken self-efficacy expectations into consideration. Betz explained self-efficacy expectations as, "expectations or beliefs concerning one's ability to perform successfully a given behaviour" (p. 35). Betz also noted Super's theory postulated a process by which specific self-concepts (including self-efficacy with respect to career related domains of behaviour) are related to career options, preferences, and other behaviours (p. 36).

According to Herr and Cramer (1996), Super stressed the interaction of personal and environmental variables in career development (p. 209). His theory, originally consisted of 10 major proposals, but expanded to 14 by 1990. He considered such areas as individual abilities, personalities, values, traits, needs and self-concepts, important to career development and choice. He viewed occupational choice as a developmental

process, and not merely a single decision. Super believed occupational preferences of individuals, their competencies, life and work situations, and hence, their self-concepts change with time and experience (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). Super maintained people go through a series of life stages in their development, and these stages are characterized by a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. He based these stages on age appropriate periods in the individual's life, however, he believed individuals could be in any stage at various points in their lives or careers, and further, could recycle through the stages when major changes or transitions occurred. Super said the growth stage begins at birth, followed by the exploratory stage (15 to 24 years), establishment stage (25 to 44 years), maintenance stage (45 to 64 years), and decline stage (65+). Super further subdivided the exploratory stage into the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phase, and the establishment stage into trial and stable phases.

Consistent throughout Super's theory is the concept of roles in life. He perceived these roles as emerging and interacting throughout the lifetime of individuals. He believed these roles of homemaker, worker, citizen, leisurite, student and child, are played out in the areas of home, community, school, and the workplace.

Women who opt to reenter the workforce may be represented well in Super's establishment or maintenance stage, since the majority of these women are between the ages of 25 and 65. As they experience changes in any of their life roles, they may then find themselves exploring options available to them in education and occupations. Finally, as they adapt to their new role in life, they may experience the establishment

stage of acceptance, or may indeed opt for further exploration. Thus, individuals may move from one stage to another as their life career develops in different directions.

Super's theory has important implications for reentry, and indeed for women in general. Super suggested because one's life career includes more than an occupation, counselling for career development should not be restricted to occupational choice only (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). Thus, Super recognized the significance of life roles in career choice and development. Super's theory also attended to the importance and significance of focusing on decision-making skills as they relate to occupational and life decisions over the life span. Women's career development can relate to Super's idea of a stage process in career development with developmental tasks at each stage, especially considering these stages do not necessarily progress in a linear fashion, but that individuals in middle or later life may return to earlier stages. People at different stages of development and different levels of career maturity need to be counselled in different ways. Therefore, based on Super's theory, counsellors for reentry women should gain an understanding of how to use life stages and tasks to make diagnosis and select appropriate intervention strategies (McDaniels & Gysbers, p. 51).

Other theories are significant to the process of career reentry for women. Gelatt's (1989) theory of positive uncertainty proposed a new strategy for making decisions and a new framework for counselling. Gelatt believed, " Today the past is not always what it was thought to be, the future is no longer predictable, and the present is changing as never before" (p. 252). Based on this, he proposed a counselling framework that would

help clients deal with change and ambiguity, accept uncertainty and inconsistency, and utilize the nonrational and intuitive side of thinking and choosing.

Gelatt (1989) stressed the idea of accepting uncertainty in life and developing and employing a sense of flexibility. He felt it is often not possible to know enough about the present to make a complete prediction about the future. Gelatt stated, "Counsellors need a broader view of decision-making that utilizes the decision maker's nonobjective role and incorporates the constant presence of uncertainty. Counselling can then help clients do more than seek certainty and avoid subjectivity" (p. 253).

Gelatt (1989) described decision-making as a process of arranging and re-arranging information into choice and action, and considered this process a crucial part for counsellors. He pointed out, "Helping someone decide how to decide must move from promoting only rational, linear, systematic strategies to recommending, even teaching, intuitive, situational, and sometimes inconsistent methods for solving personal problems or making decisions" (p. 253).

Many women attempt to reenter post-secondary schools, the workplace, or both, during times of uncertainty in their lives. They face the task of making decisions related to their academic, career, and personal life. They need to be proficient in gathering important facts and information, and consequently making wise choices. Gelatt believed counsellors must realize the importance of the client's attitude about these facts and how they are arranged and re-arranged in the client's mind to formulate a choice. Gelatt's theory stressed the importance of discovering goals as a part of the decision-making

process. He maintained counselling was needed to help clients develop their goals, develop their subjectivity, and challenge and change their convictions.

Herr and Cramer (1996) noted Gottfredson (1981) proposed a developmental theory of occupational aspirations in which she accepted the fundamental importance of self-concept in career development - that people seek jobs compatible with their images of themselves. Gottfredson recognized self-concept changed as the individual grew. She believed self-concept characteristics were continuously added as people progressed through refining their occupational aspirations. Avery (1996) stated, "According to Gottfredson (1981), people develop perceptions of themselves as compatible or incompatible with occupations based on the degree of fit between their self-concepts and their occupational images" (p. 14).

Gottfredson's theory proposed individuals choosing an occupation perceived the possible occupational choices as similar and different based only on a few dimensions. These dimensions included sex-type (masculinity or femininity), level of work (prestige), and field of work. She posited people created their own cognitive maps of acceptable alternatives based on their conceptions of their own social space - where they believed they fit into society (Herr & Cramer, 1996). As reviewed by Herr and Cramer, Gottfredson maintained, "... children and adolescents create boundaries of acceptable jobs based on tolerable sex-type images, tolerable levels of prestige, and tolerable levels of effort to attain them" (p. 226).

Brown (1995) presented a values-based approach to facilitating career transitions. He believed, in the decision-making process people attempted to clarify their values. Brown

maintained individuals went through career transitions in their lives. either planned or unplanned, and hoped to secure an occupation that would satisfy their values. Undoubtedly, reentry women experience interpersonal and intrarole conflicts that require attention in the process of their career transitions. Brown noted reentry women also need information about available options that will allow them to make accurate judgements about the likelihood that such options will result in satisfying their values. Brown felt clarifying and prioritizing values was of utmost importance in making occupational choices and decisions.

There appeared to be a limited availability of theories specific to the counselling of women. Some traditional theories, like those previously mentioned, attempted to adapt their principles to provide adequate inclusion of career development and choice for women. It is important to remember when dealing with career development and counselling for women, it cannot be separated from other important issues in the lives of women. Their career development and choices go hand-in-hand with many other life situations. In a review of the literature on reentry women, Lindstrom (2000) revealed, "many researchers strongly believe in the interconnectedness of career and personal issues and recognize that they should not be treated as isolated issues in the counselling process" (p. 11).

Erikson's Developmental Theory (1963) was criticized for its lack of adaptation to the counselling of women. However, Horst (1995) pointed out Erikson's work did have potential for dealing with women's issues in counselling. Erikson was criticized for focusing his work on male developmental characteristics to the exclusion and

underemphasis of female characteristics. Horst disagreed, pointing out while Erikson's work contained some examples of sexist overtones, he considered women in his theory, and she felt he was often quoted out of context. Horst asserted, "Erikson portrayed women as different, but not deviant or inferior" (p. 273). Horst stated, Gilligan (1982) reported, critics also "believe that Erikson's original portrayal of the progression through identity to intimacy reflects a masculine bias that emphasizes separateness from, rather than connection to others" (p. 271). Horst, however, maintained Erikson focused on the issues of bonding, fusing, and coming together, and did not ignore relationships entirely, and in fact, he emphasized interpersonal issues where other theories did not.

Chickering's (1969, 1974) psychosocial developmental theory is an elaboration of Erikson's stages of identity and intimacy (Crozier, 1994), and like Erikson's theory may be adapted to use in career development and counselling for women. Chickering proposed seven psychological tasks including establishing competency, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, developing freeing interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Combined with Gilligan's (1982) stages in female development (as indicated in her alternative view of psychological development), including caring for self and others, connection, interdependence and relationships, these tasks readily relate to career development.

Another theory with a perspective on counselling of women is the constructivist approach. This theory emphasizes the ways in which people make meaning in social relationships. Constructivist career counselling is a philosophical framework for guiding the work of counsellor and client (Peavy, 1996). Constructivist counselling views

individuals who are trying to forge identities and make decisions about careers and other aspects of their future living in an evolving culture of multiple choice, risk and uncertainty (Peavy, p. 8). It takes into account the changes that occur in the lives of people and how these changes affect and influence their work, social, and personal lives. In career related assessment, the constructivist stance focuses on methods that would generate personal meaning and self-reflection as part of the self-construction and reconstruction process. This is accomplished through such assessment methods as autobiographical work, conceptual and word-sculpting, self-characterization, interviewing, and portfolios.

Peavy (1996) stated, "A constructivist stance will enable counsellors to assist clients with the construction of selves and the generation of personal meaning and interpersonal flexibility needed for satisfactory life in the evolving society" (p.14). For reentry women, this offers an opportunity during the counselling process to maintain close ties with their life experiences, to recognize the turbulence in their lives, and to create a life with meaning.

Studies on career development of women must include variables specific to women. Reentry women experiencing marital and familial issues, sex role attitudes, multiple roles and role conflict, present variables uniquely relevant to their career development and choice. A more recent development in the counselling of women is termed "feminist counselling." Here female situations and issues are specific to the counselling process. It would be remiss to not discuss the aspects of feminist counselling for career

development of all women, including reentry women. Several theories have attempted to develop methods distinctive to counselling female clients.

Nelson (1996) reviewed a study by Chadorow (1989) that proposed object-relations theory has a relational component, particularly with respect to internalization of feelings about significant others and identity formation. Both are very important factors in personal and career development of women. Wastell (1996) discussed a model outlined by Conarton and Kreger-Silverman (1988) that addressed the life span of women. According to Wastell, this model emphasized the importance of relatedness and connections in the lives of women, including those related to nurturing roles, to each other, and to society. As reviewed by Nelson, Surrey (1991) described the developmental growth of women in his self-in-relation model. Surrey portrayed women's developing self within a set of connections, within relationships with others. Self-in-relation model emphasizes such important aspects as empathy and self-esteem, and their effects on relational competence. Finally, the transitional model for counselling women focuses on transitions experienced by women in various life stages. These include life events experienced by many reentry women, such as child raising, divorce, widowhood, job changes, retirement, and illness. This model also takes into account the influence of relationships in women's lives, their biological clock, and the environmental and social restraints they encounter. For reentry women, such an approach for counselling presents an opportunity to deal with, and cope with, inevitable transitions that accompany their new life role.

In summary, numerous theories and approaches attempting to apply principles to the career development process have evolved. Some have been adapted to relate specifically to women's career issues, and others have been developed especially with these issues in mind. All have been, and continue to be, instrumental in facilitating occupational and career development for women. Theories are further examined and explained later in this study.

Research Questions

The research questions proposed for this study were based on information gained through the literature review and the present investigator's personal interests and experiences. Women are reentering post-secondary schools and the workforce in ever-increasing numbers. For the women included in this study, the reentry process was inevitably accompanied by many life transitions. What were the salient factors in the decision process of returning, and in the actual experience in the school setting and workplace? Additionally, what can be done to facilitate these transitions for reentry women? To gain a better understanding of these salient factors, it was important to have personal input from these women.

Responses from these women were based on their own perceptions and reflective of their own life situations. From their perspective:

1. What motivations, both self-determined (internal) and situationally determined (created by external circumstances), were influential in the decision to return to school, the workforce, or both?

2. What specific barriers have women encountered prior to reentry (during the decision making process), and following reentry? Specifically, how have these barriers affected decisions?
3. Were they influenced by others to reenter? What types of support have they received from spouse or significant other, children, parents, friends, and counselling services? After reentry, were these same people a salient factor in their life transitions?
4. How have multiple roles, specifically the roles associated with home, school, and work responsibilities, affected reentry women?
5. Have reentry women experienced positive aspects on returning to post-secondary school or the workforce?
6. Have women perceived reentry to schools and the workforce more attainable for women today than it has been in the past? Specifically, what changes do they consider have taken place and how have these changes affected them?
7. How have reentry women perceived present counselling services as per accessibility and availability for women?
8. Were counselling services designed specifically to meet the needs of reentry women?
9. What specific issues have reentry women believed counsellors should address in order to offer effective services for them?

Definition of Terms

Reentry Women - Lewis (1988) described reentry women as "women reentering educational institutions or the labor force after an absence ranging from a few years to as many as 35 years..." (p. 10). Phillips and Imhoff (1997) defined reentry women as women who "rather than going directly from school to work ... first engage in full-time family roles, returning to school or work later in their lives" (p. 41). Farmer and Backer (1977) referred to reentry women as "women returning to school or work after an interruption for reasons such as child-rearing responsibilities" (p. 3).

Life Transitions - McDaniels & Gysbers (1992) stated Schlossberg's (1984) definition as follows: "Transitions can be viewed as a process of continuing and changing reactions over time - for better or for worse - which are linked to the individual's continuous and changing appraisal of self-in-situation" (p. 53). Schlossberg believed a transition was not so much a matter of the actual change as it was a matter of the individual's perception of change. Smart & Peterson (1994) reviewed a study by Levinson (1986) that reported individuals settled into stable periods in their lives, lasting only 5 to 7 years, followed by a "structure changing," or "transitional" period during which the goals and life activities that formed the basis for previous stability were called into question, and gradually modified. A transitional period terminated the existing life structure and created the possibility for a new one. (p. 242)

Self-Concept - Avery (1996) referred to Gottfredson's (1981) definition of self-concept as, "one's view of oneself, one's view of who one is and who one is not" (p. 21).

Career Development – Isaacson and Brown (1997) noted career development was "a lifelong process involving psychological, sociological, economic, and cultural factors that influence an individual's selection of, adjustment to, and advancement in the occupations that collectively make up their careers" (pp. 17-18).

Career Counselling - Isaacson & Brown (1997) stated the definition provided by the National Career Development Association (1988): Vocational/career [sic] counseling consists of those activities performed or coordinated by individuals who have credentials to work with other individuals or groups of individuals about occupations, life/career [sic], career decision making, career planning, career pathing, or other career development related questions or conflicts. (p. 375)

In a study reviewed by Isaacson & Brown (1997), Crites (1981) suggested, "career counseling not only facilitates career development, but enhances personal development as well" (p. 376).

Feminist Counselling - Counseling of women by women for women. It is counseling of women because female social situations and developmental issues are specifically incorporated into the counseling process. It is by women inasmuch as counselors potentially can achieve a more thorough understanding

of the female condition. And it is for women because it aims to address the gender-based inequities that contribute to clients' distress (Russell, 1984, p. 3).

Nontraditional - "Occupations that are presently dominated by males or jobs that are occupied by fewer than 33 1/3 % females" (Dyke, 1992, p. 45). Novak and Thacker (1991) defined nontraditional students as "adult learners (aged 25-44 years) who take credit or noncredit courses part-time", whereas they define traditional students as "(18 to 24-year-old) full-time students" (pp. 323-324).

Psychosocial – Avery (1996) reported Astin's (1984) definition of "sociopsychological" in the following terms:

attends to both psychological variables (personal characteristics), as well as contextual-sociological variables (social forces) and the interaction of the two in shaping human behaviour. It incorporates the influence of the social context on the person because work behaviour is a social behaviour. (p. 22)

Positive Uncertainity - "a new decision strategy with some paradoxical counseling methods, but it is basically attitude - feeling uncertain about the future and feeling positive about the uncertainty" (Gelatt, 1989, p. 255).

Qualitative Research - Gay and Airasian (2000) defined qualitative research as:

the collection of extensive narrative data on many variables over an extended period of time, in a naturalistic setting, in order to gain insights not possible using other types of research (p. 627).... Qualitative research seeks to probe deeply into the research setting in order to obtain understandings about the way

things are, why they are that way, and how the participants in the context perceive them. (p. 16)

Limitations of the Study

1. This was a qualitative study of 11 women registered with Women in Search of Employment. This was not a large sampling, and as such the factors involved may not be generalizable to other women throughout a broader area.
2. The study was conducted in one specific WISE Center in rural Newfoundland. The majority of these women were residents within the immediate area of this location, therefore, factors may not be generalizable to women residing in other areas of the province.
3. Data were collected through the interview process and may, therefore, be subject to the interviewees' interpretations at the time, their perceptions of the events as they occurred, and sometimes information may be withheld (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993).
4. The design of the study indicated the possibility of subjectivity rather than objectivity on the part of the interviewer. The interviewer had to be aware of this problem throughout the study.
5. The interviewer had to be aware of her interview skills and strive to maintain consistency throughout the interview process.

6. The interviewees had been in reentry only a short time and therefore their responses may not be representative of all salient factors that present themselves to reentry women.
7. Data were collected through written narratives by the women, and as such were subject to discretion on their part regarding the quantity and quality of the contents. They were also subject to the interviewer's interpretation of the written material.

Summary

In this chapter, a discussion of the factors contained in the literature and considered to be important in the experiences of reentry women, in post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both, was introduced. Statistics related to women, who had entered and reentered these areas, both provincially and nationally, were presented. According to Padula and Miller (1999), "In order for psychologists, educators and counsellors to better meet the needs of this ever-growing group, an understanding of the experiences of these women is essential" (p. 328).

Theories contributing to the understanding of career development and career counselling of women in general and reentry women in particular, and more in-depth coverage of factors affecting their life experiences, will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, the literature associated with women who re-entered post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both, is reviewed. The review begins with an examination of the history of career counselling and its development within the past one hundred years. Several theories of career development are presented. Appropriately included in this presentation are theories specifically related to counselling of women in the areas of career life and personal life, as both are intertwined and cannot be separated. A review by Sterrett (1999) reported, "Because women typically place considerable emphasis on the non-career aspects of their lives, women's career development cannot truly be understood apart from consideration of their family relationships" (p. 250). Many variables that influenced reentry women are discussed, including motivations for reentry, barriers that existed, supports, and positive factors of reentry.

Historical Perspective of Career Guidance

The term "career guidance" or "career counselling" has existed for almost a century. The earlier models of vocational guidance focused on issues such as choice of work and occupational adjustment. According to Herr & Cramer (1996), the more recent emphasis of career counselling encompassed questions of work in association with family roles, leisure, and mental health, and embraced life-span career concerns. New ideas and theories have developed over time as changes have occurred in areas of economics, unemployment, work environment and productivity, occupational content, school-to-

work transition, and a labor force that has experienced an increase in women and minority workers.

In 1908, Frank Parsons, who has been deemed the forerunner of modern theories of career development (Isaacson & Brown, 1997), developed a process called vocational counselling. His process of vocational guidance, involved understanding one's self and the requirements and conditions of the job, and then making a choice based on reasoning of these facts. This process was the basis of career counselling and career development practice that has prompted research and developmental efforts up to the present day. Attention was directed to identifying and measuring individual differences and relating them to satisfaction or success in particular occupations, acquiring and using occupational information, and the significance of decision making as it related to career guidance and counselling.

By the 1950s and 1960s, the emphasis on the cognitive processing of career information had shifted more to an awareness of the psychological variables affecting career choice. According to Nugent (1994), in 1951, psychological therapist, Rogers, described what he considered the major components of a helping relationship: warmth, congruency, and empathy. Such thinking was to influence many pioneers in the development of career counselling theories. Nugent noted people like Ginzberg (1972), Holland (1959), Roe (1957), and Super (1955) believed counselling about careers could not be separated from counselling about personal concerns. They emphasized career choice and development were influenced by and related to personality development.

By the 1970s, career guidance was termed a lifestyle concept. According to a study conducted by Herr and Cramer (1996), it was deemed to embody the need to combine work and leisure counselling, address sex role differentiation and reduce sex bias, and be devoted to the holistic development of a career conscious individual.

Herr and Cramer (1996) noted, "By the 1980s, career guidance was becoming increasingly comprehensive with added new concepts, new populations, and new techniques" (p. 21). Herr and Cramer also pointed out an emphasis for career guidance was placed on: (a) helping students and adults develop decision-making skills, and achieve self-understanding with the goal of including individual aspirations and values in making career choices; (b) examining the educational or personal and social implications inherent in occupational choice; (c) offering direction to the range of choices available; (d) acknowledging individual talents and opportunities to identify and nurture these talents; and (e) helping individuals to cope with rapid change in social and occupational conditions. An important implication of this comprehensive approach was its applicability to groups other than merely the adolescents on whom career guidance had traditionally focused. It could now assist adults, including retirees, persons experiencing job dissatisfaction or alienation, college students, and women wishing to reenter the labour force.

According to Nugent (1994), in the 1990s, increasing attention had been afforded to the impact and influence of environmental conditions, spiritualistic concerns, and the pluralistic world in which individuals were living. For the purpose of this paper, the

latter is significant, as it encompasses the complexity of multicultural counselling, including counselling practice with various groups.

Das (1995) stated, "All counselling can be regarded as multicultural if one defines culture broadly to include not only race, nationality, or ethnicity, but also social class, gender, sexual orientation, and disability as cultural barriers" (p. 45). Capuzzi and Gross (1997) viewed multiculturalism as a dynamic factor that pervaded the entire counselling field and attempted to address the needs of minorities and the culturally different that were not being adequately served. In their study they discussed minority defined by Wirth (n.d.) as a group of people, who because of physical or cultural characteristics, were singled out by the others in society in which they lived for differential and unequal treatment, and who regarded themselves as objects of discrimination.

It is true that women have made considerable advances in recent years and are continuing to do so, however the differential and unequal treatment, and the oppression by a "dominant culture" have not been totally eliminated. Women still strive toward equality and women's rights in areas such as politics, divorce settlements, education, and employment, to name just a few. These issues are important, therefore, in the discussion of career development and career counselling for women who are reentering the workforce, educational institutions, or both.

Theories and Approaches

Many of the early theories of career development were primarily oriented to white males and were inappropriate when explaining career development of women. According to Issacson and Brown (1997), Betz and Fitzgerald (1994) argued forcefully

that current theories have limited applicability to minority groups, one such group being women. In their review, Shapiro and Fitzsimmons (1991) noted, "Female career development is gaining increased attention due to the Women's Movement, increased participation of women in the labour force, economic pressures, changing attitudes and values toward marriage, family responsibilities, and working women" (p. 510).

Herr and Cramer (1996) examined the unique career development needs of women. They specified the knowledge gained each day in relation to career development of women has guided us to apply differential interventions to enhance female career development. Herr and Cramer reviewed the following perspectives of theorist Carol Gilligan (1982) about women's career development: (a) there are qualitative differences in how men and women process and interpret the world, and (b) there are sex differences in adult development not reflected in many of the current models. The following is a review and discussion of several theories and approaches as they relate to career development in general and as they specifically relate to women.

Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Approach

According to Isaacson and Brown (1996), Super's research dealt primarily with men, not women, however, over time he has made some changes to accommodate the changing career patterns of women. In his attempts to formulate a theory of career development, Super put forward several related propositions (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Isaacson & Brown, 1997; McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). His first set of propositions, in 1953, consisted of 10. By 1990, he had expanded this list to include a total of 14.

Factors inherent in these propositions stressed the interaction of personal and environmental variables in career development.

Super maintained there was a strong connection between career development and personal development. He believed self-concept played a major role in occupational choice, and individuals would function in a role consistent with their self-concept where they would fit comfortably and find satisfaction (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Implicit throughout Super's theory was the idea of individuals' perceptions of self and society, as their environment developed around family dynamics and around the social, economic, and political issues that determined careers.

According to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), "Super and his colleagues theorized that the movement of individuals through life stages was a typical process that could be loosely tracked according to an age-referenced time line" (p. 48). Super attended to the many life and career roles of humans, roles he suggested they played throughout their lifetime and emerged in chronological order. These roles included child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker (including unemployed and non-worker), spouse, homemaker, parent, and pensioner. These roles included all aspects of life, not just work (occupation). They influenced and affected each other. Super thought things in life, such as vocational preferences, life situations, and self-concept changed over time. Individuals may not be satisfied with their work and life if their abilities, values, interests, and self-concepts are not played out in their roles. If work did not allow them to be the type of person they pictured themselves to be, then they became very

discontented. Because of this they may want to make changes in their roles and occupations. Super summed up this process of change in 5 stages:

1. Growth (0 to 14 years) - a time of physical and psychological growth, as well as development of self-concept and knowledge of the world of work.
2. Exploration (15 to 24 years) - here individuals often express unrealistic occupational choices, termed the fantasy phase, progressing to the tentative phase of choosing only a few occupational possibilities, and then finally to the realistic phase, where possibilities are narrowed to a list that individuals deem to be within reach and to be suitable personal choices.
3. Establishment (25 to 44 years) - based on the choices and decisions made during the exploratory stage, individuals accept a job with the understanding that it may or may not be a permanent decision, depending on how well it satisfies personal desires.
4. Maintenance (45 to 64 years) - with the continual changes that occur in both occupations and self-concepts, in this stage individuals focus on maintaining the work situation as it is, if it is satisfactory for them, or making changes and revisions, if it is unsatisfactory.
5. Decline (65 +) - this preretirement period sees individuals focusing on keeping the job and meeting the minimum requirements, without effort to enhance it, until work is terminated in the form of retirement.

In Super's view, these changes were not linear but cyclical, as people may return to earlier stages of development.

Age being a factor, reentry women would fit well into Super's establishment or maintenance stage. If at the establishment or maintenance stage in life and development, women opted for a change in roles from being a "stay at home mom and homemaker" to a career outside the home, the exploration stage would come into play as they explored education and career options. When a new career became a new role in life, they could return to the establishment stage as they gained experience and proficiency, and became stabilized in a new occupation. This same process could recur for women in the decline stage if they opted for reentry to the work force. Then, could it really be referred to as "a decline stage" if they were taking on new roles in life? Another significant question was, why specific ages are associated with each stage? If a woman fitting into the age level as proposed by Super's maintenance stage (45 to 64) returned to the exploratory stage, she certainly would not fit into the age category (15 to 24).

Bejian and Salomone (1995) reviewed an additional stage, the renewal stage. They discussed the work of Murphy and Burck (1976) who concluded from their research that renewal was characterized by reevaluation of one's self-concept, which led to readjustment or reestablishment of one's career. Again however, Murphy and Burck assigned this stage to a particular time period (between the ages of 35 to 45 years for men), and thus, they specified, it should be placed between the establishment and maintenance stages of Super's schema. However, could "renewal" not take place later in life – after the maintenance stage, during the decline stage? Another study reviewed by Bejian and Salomone, conducted by Riverin-Simard (1988), found men and women in the age range of 43 to 47 years experienced much inner turmoil associated with raising

questions about the purposes of their vocational identity and their personal life. and with identifying meaningful goals for the future.

The idea behind the renewal stage is certainly worthy of note, however, as the individual considers earlier goals and plans, then rededicates self to pursuing those goals or decides to move in other directions with a mid-life career change (Isaacson & Brown, 1997). Again this mid-life career change for many women may be moving from the career at home to a career in the world of work.

Decision-Making Theory

Many theories have incorporated decision-making as an important component of career choice and career development. McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) pointed out critical decision points occurred when people faced the selection of an entry job, a change in jobs, or a change in educational plans. These important decisions would undoubtedly be a part of the process for women reentering either the workforce or post-secondary institutions.

In their decision-making model, Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963), as reviewed in McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), emphasized the importance of individuals knowing themselves and knowing relevant external factors and information when making career decisions. They divided their model into two phases. Anticipation Phase focused on the steps and details of the decision-making process. According to McDaniels and Gysbers, in this phase Tiedeman and O'Hara maintained individuals explored possible educational, occupational, and personal alternatives. They identified their interests and capabilities, and the possible relationships between these and the alternatives they

explored. Next they organized, evaluated, synthesized, and ordered information they had accumulated about themselves and the possible career options. Following this, individuals began to stabilize their thoughts and a clearer differentiation among alternatives emerged. Finally, a choice was made based on the results of this process, and a plan was formed and carried out to implement this choice.

In their study McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) discussed, "The accommodation phase involves the change from deliberation and choice to the implementation and reality-based adjustments that occur between self and external reality, once a choice is made and put into practice" (p. 56). It was posited in this phase individuals experienced the realities of the settings of their choice and searched for cues regarding the acceptability of this choice. Through this process, they learned about their individual expectations and requirements. They then progressed to a more assertive nature and experienced their own identities, and those of their co-workers, becoming similar. In the final stage of this decision-making process, these identities integrated and the individuals experienced equilibrium and stability.

Gelatt (1989), in his decision-making model, presented a view of decision-making in which flexibility, keeping one's mind open, and using the intuitive, irrational side of decision making were emphasized (p. 58). Gelatt focused his theory on obtaining basic information for decision-making, arranging and rearranging this information, and finally making a choice. Gelatt believed what is true today may not be true tomorrow, the information available one day, may be totally different the next (p. 59). Gelatt emphasized the idea of uncertainty in life. This can be no truer than for the woman who

is experiencing discontentment with her "lot in life" and wanting to work, or who suddenly finds herself needing a job. Gelatt maintained in the process of arranging and rearranging information, people contemplated various alternatives available to them. He presented the use of reflection, imagination, creativity, using both rational and intuitive thinking, and flexibility, as important decision-making skills.

Gelatt's (1989) theory can be most helpful with reentry women as they attempt to deal with and adapt to change. Gelatt stressed the idea of changing the way of thinking, of being more intuitive, irrational, and situational. This is important for reentry women, as they need to be able to change their beliefs, reflect on situations and information, develop a good attitude about change and be positive in the face of uncertainty, because changing life roles (careers), especially later in life, and in the world of the twenty-first century, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, will certainly take place in a time of uncertainty.

Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

According to Isaacson and Brown (1997), Gottfredson (1981) based her theory of circumscription and compromise on four assumptions:

> (1) the career development process begins in childhood; (2) career aspirations are attempts to implement one's self-concept; (3) career satisfaction is dependent on the degree to which the career is congruent with self-perceptions; and (4) people develop occupational stereotypes that guide them in the selection process. (p. 36)

Isaacson and Brown's (1997) review revealed that Gottfredson viewed the self-concept consisting of a social self, composed of self-perceptions of intelligence, social

status, and gender, and a psychological self, composed of aspects such as values and personality variables. She maintained the social self was more important in determining occupational aspirations, and in choosing a career, individuals established a social identity based on the choice they made. In making these choices, Gottfredson believed people developed cognitive maps of occupations that included masculinity and femininity of the occupation, prestige of the occupation, and fields of work, and these aspects were taken into account in their process of making a choice. This theory proposed individuals estimated how compatible they were with a particular occupation by determining whether it met self-precepts regarding their masculinity or femininity, whether it protected their social standing, and represented their interests and personality, and the accessibility of the occupation itself. As pointed out by Isaacson and Brown, Gottfredson believed as children grew and developed perceptions of themselves and occupational fields, they began to narrow their range of occupations based on this compatibility and accessibility, and would choose occupations that were compatible. She thought people were often forced to compromise and choose occupations that were not necessarily the preferred ones but rather the most accessible in relation to the availability of work, availability and quality of educational and employment opportunities, and discrimination.

These factors were very prominent for reentry women as they considered their options for the workforce, educational fields, or both. This theory has implications for reentry women based on its emphasis on the importance of promoting a good self-concept and attending to occupational stereotypes. As reviewed by Isaacson and Brown

(1997), Gottfredson's theory has "served as the basis for programs aimed at eliminating or reducing the impact of sex-typing and other factors that result in circumscription of occupational choice" (p. 37).

Values-Based Approach to Facilitating Career Transitions

According to Brown (1995), occupational transitions must start with identifying, clarifying, and prioritizing values. Brown believed people hoped to secure an occupation that would satisfy their values. In the decision-making process, the quality of their decisions depended on how well the values were clarified and the extent of information about choices that were available. In prioritizing values, the behaviour of individuals was influenced most by the top ranked, or strongest value, and influenced least by the lower ranked value. Positive affect (happiness, joy, and excitement) occurred when individuals acted in accord with their values, and desired outcomes were achieved. Negative affect (anxiety, anger, and depression) occurred when actions did not achieve desired outcomes, satisfaction was not attained, and people perceived their goals as unattainable.

This was often the case with reentry women as they realized or dealt with life role transitions. Depression and anxiety in these situations often created low motivation and stood in the way of progress for those involved. Brown (1995) felt because negative affect may impair the decision-making process, it was an issue that should be dealt with before facilitating the transition. Once this negative affect was attended to, then career planning could continue.

Brown (1995) thought clarification and prioritization of values was essential to making accurate estimates and decisions of occupational choice. When values had been prioritized and job transition had become a reality, Brown's theory emphasized gaining information from such areas as personal interviews, job shadowing, and part-time jobs, to make an informed opinion about which values would be reinforced.

Campbell's Four Stages of Career Development

In their study, Dean, Erikson, and Lindamood (n.d.) discussed Campbell's (1979) four stages of career development. These stages focused on the process that took place after the initial decision had been made. Campbell's first stage, preparation, was a stage that involved preparing for and obtaining a position in the work force. During this stage individuals engaged in self-assessment, learned about options in the world of work, made career decisions, implemented career plans, and obtained a position in their chosen occupation. All these tasks naturally applied to young people entering the work force for the first time. However, they could also apply to all job searchers. Older workers changing occupations, reentering the labour force after a period of absence, or retirees beginning a new career, all experienced these tasks of preparation.

Mature women who opted to return to the world of work, related to Campbell's second stage, establishment stage. Here they demonstrated their ability to function effectively in an occupation and organization. Dean et al. (n.d.) noted the following statement by Campbell, "The more mature workers do not usually need to re-learn work attitudes and values, but do need to be re-oriented to new organizations and to learn new job skills" (p.18). However, should it not be considered that many individuals who have

poor work attitudes or whose values leave a lot to be desired, or who have never really assessed their attitudes and values, may certainly need to take the time to understand, re-evaluate, and develop these areas?

Campbell's maintenance stage implied a long-term commitment to an occupation, an organization, or both. Here the workers assessed themselves in relation to their present occupation, adjusted to changes, and maintained a satisfactory performance.

Finally, the retirement stage usually involved leaving the work force. Here individuals decided whether their retirement would be full-time or part-time. If only part-time, then they explored options for part-time retirement.

Campbell's idea that mid-career changers (reentry women may be considered mid-career changers) often required recycling through the preparation stage, and that it may be done quickly or gradually, is worth noting. The extent to whether it progressed quickly or gradually highly depended on the personal situation of the individual, for example, the stress factors present in the person's life at the time and her ability to cope with these factors.

Theories for Counselling Women

In all aspects of counselling, including personal and career counselling, counsellors referred to, and often relied on, specific models that related to and described developmental aspects and milestones for their clients. Most of these developmental models have been subject to much criticism by feminists in recent years. One major criticism has been these models were male-oriented and posited the male as the standard of normal development. A study conducted by Baruth and Manning (1999) noted, when

assisting clients, counsellors need to recognize developmental differences between males and females. Another criticism has been, traditional counselling theories have been developed by men which has in turn reinforced the prevailing social and economic status of men and women (Nugent, 1994).

One advocate foremost in the urgency for developing theories for counselling women was Gilligan. Gilligan (1982) proposed modifications that helped to lay the foundations for feminist developmental theories. Recommendations have been made to strengthen existing models, as well as proposals for new developmental theories unique to women. Feminist developmental theorists maintained women and men develop differently. They believed men needed to separate and gain autonomy, whereas women needed to relate and connect with others. This belief has been an influential factor in both the development of new theories and the adaptation of traditional theories relevant to the counselling of women.

It is important to be aware of the research and theorizing regarding women's development. The following theories and approaches, Erikson's Developmental Theory, Psychosocial Developmental Theory, Cognitive Developmental Theory, Constructivist Approach, and Jungian Archetypal Psychology, are presented in an attempt to help explain how these have been modified with intentions of integrating and recognizing the need for, and techniques for, counselling of women, and to help expand the context of career development.

Erikson's Developmental Theory

"Career development is a process which takes place in the context of the overall development of the individual" (Crozier, 1994, p. 15). For the purpose of counselling reentry women, perception of other developmental processes they have experienced can help counsellors understand the perspectives, questions, and needs of this population. In order for counsellors to assist clients through phases of development, they should have a keen awareness of a theory of human development. Nugent (1994) reported one such widely used theory is that of Erikson (1950, 1963). Erikson identified eight stages through which humans progress in their development. His theory, however, has been highly criticized and deemed by many writers and researchers to be unsuitable for adaptation to the counselling of women. Horst (1995) was one writer who felt there was a need for further reinterpretations of Erikson's work and further research and reflection on his theory by feminists.

Erikson's theory has been criticized for the nature of its development. Feminist critics, in particular, asserted in Erikson's theory, "the male is seen as the model of normal development" (Wastell, 1996, p. 576). In her review of the literature Horst noted that Gilligan (1982) viewed Erikson portraying women as "inferior, weak, and hopelessly dependent on men" (p. 271). Gilligan believed his stage theory reflected the experience of men to the exclusion of women, and ignored the fact that women relied more on connections with others and on relatedness, rather than the separateness and autonomy that was emphasized.

In reinterpreting Erikson's work, Horst (1995) pointed out Erikson developed his life-cycle theory at a time when academic journals and academic thought did not question equating "male" experience with "normal' experience. His work focused on the masculine version of human experience. In this way, women's experiences were virtually ignored. Horst, however, thought it was important to examine what Erikson did have to say about the social status of women. She believed Erikson did not hold at face value all the overtones of male dominance and female submission, but rather he subtly urged young women, who were eager to submerge their identities in marriage, to consider alternative perspectives. Horst felt Erikson did not devalue what he perceived as women's unique abilities and inherent traits, but rather he portrayed women as different, not deviant or inferior. She noted he recognized the contributions of women to the realm of politics and to the world of work.

Erikson's portrayal of sex differences and female development as anatomically determined, received criticism. Horst (1995) thought a view of sex differences as relatively fixed, contributed to the perpetuation of differential, and unfair, treatment on the basis of sex, and led to a cultural reinforcement of sex roles that could seriously harm a particular individual. Horst, however, pointed out the danger that could arise from underemphasizing sex differences. According to Horst, a study by Hare-Mustin and Maracek (1990) noted either stance (underemphasizing or overemphasizing sex differences) could be helpful or damaging to the status of women, depending on the

context. As reviewed by Horst, they provided the following example:

> Assuming that men and women do not differ legitimates the right to equal pay for equal work, but it also ignores the difference in earning power that makes single mothers less likely to be able to support themselves than single fathers. (p. 273)

Horst (1995) thought Erikson not only expected women to have careers, but their femininity would lead them to make unique and valuable contributions in fields traditionally dominated by men. She maintained Erikson's emphasis on anatomical basis for sex differences, was an overstatement. Horst viewed the feminist opinions on this issue having more to do with opposing styles of feminism than with an essential sexism in Erikson's work.

According to Horst (1995), Erikson's identity-intimacy progression was criticized because it was perceived that it did not work the same for women as it did for men, and women in these stages seemed to be reversed or fused. Gilligan (1982) argued Erikson's stages confused development, up to young adulthood, with separation, thus obscuring the relational world of women. In her review, however, Horst noted Hamachek (1990) identified Erikson's concept of young adult-development as unique among developmental theories because of its relational focus, his concentration on interpersonal and intrapsychic issues like intimacy and feelings of isolation, and his focus on the importance of people fusing, bonding, coming together, and forming relationships. Thus, Horst believed Erikson did not ignore the significance of relationships throughout life, and indeed had woven interpersonal and intrapersonal themes through each stage.

In conclusion on Erikson's contribution to theories for counselling of women. Horst (1995) discussed the work of Josselson (1987). According to Horst, Josselson "did not simply attempt to fit women into categories designed for men. Instead, she reexamined and redefined the categories, tailoring their content and their social and psychological implications to fit the experience of women" (p. 276). In her findings, Josselson reconceptualized themes traditionally associated with men's development. She defined the idea of separation-individuation in terms of becoming different and maintaining connection at the same time, rather than separateness and self-hood, and she defined the identity status of women around specific relationships or an occupation, rather than in terms of crisis and commitment around occupational goals only. Thus, Josselson had shown how Erikson's identity concept could be expanded to include the unique experiences of women.

Horst (1995) found much of Erikson's work had been misread and many of his concepts were not incompatible with understanding women's experiences. She purported experiences of women were both the same as and different from men's, and researchers needed to rediscover the relational components already present in Erikson's work and expand on them to include the experiences of women. Horst believed there was potential in the work of Erikson for "an important foundation for a constructive feminist stance" (p. 276).

Psychosocial Development Theory

According to Crozier (1994), Chickering's psychosocial developmental theory (1969, 1974) was an elaboration of Erikson's 1963 stages of identity and intimacy. Chickering

hypothesized seven major developmental tasks. Crozier provided an interpretation of these tasks and their relation to career development. The first task, establishing competency, related to exploring academic, work, career management, and interpersonal competency. The second task, managing emotions, related to individuals expressing, accepting, and coping with emotions involved in the career planning process. Task number three, developing autonomy, related to developing skills, abilities, and confidence to proceed with career planning independently. The fourth task, establishing identity, related to the development of a sense of career self. The fifth task, developing freeing interpersonal relationships, related to establishing relationships, which support career choices. The sixth task, developing purpose, related to determining an occupational direction, which is a part of the sense of purpose in life. Finally, task number seven, developing integrity, related to choosing an occupational direction, which is consistent with personal values, beliefs, and morals.

Crozier (1994) stated, "Gilligan's (1982) research offers an alternative view of psychosocial development. ... Gilligan has found that women develop a sense of their identity through relationships defining themselves using relational terms, such as giving, helping, caring, being kind, and not hurting others" (p. 23). According to Gilligan, in the initial stage of development, females focused on caring for the self in order to ensure survival, with a transitional phase occurring, labeled selfish and self-centered. This triggered a new understanding of self and others, and the concept of responsibility. During the second stage, Gilligan viewed the good equated with caring for others. The emphasis was on connection and interdependence. Self-sacrifice and the needs of others,

over their own desires, was valued. The exclusion of self created problems in relationships and an exploration of separation and individuation, and recognition of the importance of self-care. Gilligan's third stage of development focused on the dynamics of relationships. Crozier pointed out females experienced a fuller understanding of the interconnection between other and self as they strived for an effective balance between self-nurturing and caring for others.

Like Chickering's seven psychological tasks, these stages in female development related to career development. Crozier (1994) noted career decision-making was a way to implement one's self-concept and a way to define one's self in the world. As women opted for reentry to the educational or work world, they often found themselves struggling with the issue of identity, relationships, and a personal sense of autonomy and self-fulfillment. Therefore, counsellors of women need to have an awareness and recognition of individual aspects of career directions and the dilemmas life's stages present, such as: (a) present and future relationships and their impact on life roles; (b) a sense of academic, interpersonal and work competence; (c) emotional upheavals; (d) a sense of autonomy, purpose, values and beliefs; and (e) the importance of finding a balance between meeting their own needs and the needs of others.

Cognitive Developmental Theory

Constructs from cognitive psychology have been applied to career behaviour and career development. McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) indicated in cognitive models the processing of information, whereby "individuals selectively attend to certain stimuli, arrange these stimuli in some meaningful pattern, and develop principles to guide

behaviour and solve problems" (p. 60) is of central importance. Cognitive developmental theory purported as individuals developed through a sequence of hierarchical stages, each stage involved a different way of thinking.

Crozier (1994) reported that Perry (1970) found students progressed through four broad stages of increasingly complex intellectual functioning. According to Crozier and McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), Perry's stages of cognitive development, as they applied to the career development process, have been revised and extended by Knefelkamp and Slepitza (1976). They described a movement from a simplistic to a complex approach to career decision-making. In the first stage, individuals were described as dualistic thinkers, where they looked for simplistic answers and relied on external factors to control decisions. They needed to have information and perspectives presented in a simplistic manner. At this stage they had very little understanding of the complexity involved in making career choices. The second stage, multiplistic thinkers, viewed individuals as capable of more complex reasoning, and therefore, able to consider more factors in the career decision-making process. Even though they were still very influenced by external factors, these individuals were beginning to analyze occupational factors in more detail. The third stage, relativistic thinkers, occurred when the locus of control shifted from an external to an internal one. Here individuals recognized their own capabilities and responsibilities for the decision-making process, and began to use more analytical reasoning and reflective thinking. Finally, committed thinkers described the stage when individuals viewed the choice of a career as a personal commitment, and were capable of taking full responsibility for their own career decisions. Career identity

and self-identity became more closely related. McDaniels and Gysbers asserted. "Values, thoughts, and behaviours become more consistent with one another. Individuals can now deal with more challenges and changes" (p. 62).

Perry developed his ideas of cognitive development based solely on a male population. As reviewed by Crozier (1994), women's cognitive processes were found to be more variable and flexible, and less sequential and linear, and differences were found in the ways male and female undergraduates preferred to acquire knowledge. Crozier stated, "women preferred collecting others ideas, whereas men enjoyed debating ideas; women also relied more on personal interpretation compared to men" (p. 18).

Women may choose to reenter the workforce at any stage in their life. In order to facilitate this and to understand career development, there must be an awareness of gender differences as they relate to cognitive processing, specifically to women's ways of acquiring knowledge, and the impact this may have on career planning and career counselling of women.

Constructivist Approach

Another perspective believed to hold potential for understanding women's experiences was the personal construct model of adult development. This model was based on the constructivist approach and classified as a postmodern perspective. According to Corey (1996), constructionism had its beginning when Gergen (1985, 1991), among others, placed an emphasis on the ways in which people made meaning in social relationships. This focus on social interaction would certainly appear to be a valid consideration for the counselling of women. This approach viewed areas such as gender

awareness, cultural outlooks, and developmental processes, as important perspectives in understanding how individuals constructed their lives.

One important aspect of constructionism was its use of explanatory accounts of human behaviour in which narrative accounts and interpretive inquiry played a prominent role (Peavy, 1992). This approach maintained the form of the narrative was appropriate for understanding actions of individuals.

In a study reviewed by Lippert (1997), Viney (1992) stated:

> During transition, life events require change in both construing and behaviour....People create stories about events and about their lives generally. These stories help them to find meaning and order and allow them to present themselves to others. The concept of narrative - the telling of one's own stories to both self and others - is thus important to this model of development. So is the socially construed or shared nature of these stories about development. (p. 20)

According to Lippert (1997), Viney discussed three assumptions underlying this theory important to understanding the changing developmental patterns of women: "(a) reality is construed and therefore variable and changing; (b) thoughts and emotions are different but complementary ways of knowing; and (c) development occurs through an on-going process of refinement of one's mental representations" (pp. 19-20). Peavy (1992) mentioned a study by Young and Collin (1988) in which they assumed "that whoever lives out a career creates a text" (p. 219). Life stories and career stories were beneficial in helping individuals understand themselves, and could serve as a guide to future advancement.

In his study Peavy (1992) noted the constructivist approach to career development and counselling presented "a shift to a more meaning-centered model, which places the subjective experience and values of clients in center-stage" (p. 218). This, then, would provide an ideal opportunity for learning about and understanding the complexity of processes involved in the developmental paths of women. This theory showed a sensitivity " to sociocultural influences that naturally affect both the process and content of how women construe their reality" (Lippert, 1997, p. 20). The constructivist approach, therefore, would provide a framework from which to gain understanding of the rich and diverse roles, and developmental stages of women, and how this in turn would apply to the career development of women.

Jungian Archetypal Psychology

Archetypal psychology has become an area embraced by feminist therapists in their work with women. Most recently this psychology has focused on helping "individuals create new and more complete models of what it means to be a man or a woman" (Enns, 1994, p. 127). According to Enns, Jung (1961) divided the unconscious into two domains, namely, the personal and the collective unconscious. He proposed the collective unconscious consisted of archetypes, or primordial images, myths, and evolutionary symbols that provided individuals with wisdom about the past and predisposed them to experience the world as their ancestors did. In her review Enns pointed out Jung devoted special attention to archetypes that were highly important in shaping personality and behaviour.

Enns (1994) noted many counsellors and psychotherapists who worked with women adopted the archetypal psychology because it defined receptivity and the "feminine" instincts as valuable assets for making meaning of one's life. She stated, "Archetypal psychology provides a method for revaluing traditional feminine strengths and for healing misunderstandings between men and women" (p. 128). Jung's idea of the animus (the unconscious man that exists in a woman) and the anima (the unconscious woman that exists in a man) was criticized for creating limiting views of women. Contemporary Jungians attempted to redefine these terms in nonsexist ways. However, Enns reported Lauter and Rupprecht (1985) cautioned even with sexist notions removed, the Jungian definition of archetypes as universal and internal encouraged individuals to ignore the reality that many aspects of men's and women's experiences are socially constructed rather than biologically based.

Feminist counsellors and psychotherapists believed Jung's emphasis on human pain and symptoms representing efforts of the psyche to regain balance and a healthy struggle toward wholeness, was consistent with feminist ideals. Other aspects of Jung's theory believed to be consistent with the basic tenets of feminist psychotherapy included his view of individuals as self-regulating and his belief that "persons move toward maturity through a natural and continuous exchange between the conscious and the unconscious" (Enns, 1994, p. 128), as well as his de-emphasis on the authority of the analyst and accentuation on the importance of the client's experience, self-understanding, and insight.

In contrast to the patriarchal archetypes, myths, and symbols of traditional Jungian psychology that tended to undervalue women's experience and reinforce traditional visions of masculinity and femininity, Enns (1994) indicated feminist Jungians described nonsexist and women-centered archetypes that could provide concrete and empowering visions of women's social, economic, political, and personal behaviour. She believed this was achieved through such sources as women's poetry, writing, painting, needlework, dreams, and quilts. Enns reported, "By exploring the myths and experiences of female archetypes, women see how culture is transmitted unconsciously and how difficult it is to change "realities" that have been accepted for centuries" (p. 128). Through gaining awareness of specific behavioural coping patterns women used, they gained insights that allowed them to alter their roles and continue their struggle towards equality.

One final area of Jung's theory, termed "goddess psychology", is worthy of mention. Some feminists attempted to inspire women by identifying patriarchal archetypes and goddess images. This was based on the idea of early matriarchal societies of egalitarian, nonviolent, earth-centered values that revered the Great Mother and goddess figures. In her review Enns noted, here women were encouraged "to explore what goddesses they are ruled by, and how different goddesses facilitate and influence specific developmental stages and turning points in women's lives" (p. 129). Enns reported goddess psychology emphasized the special and unique qualities and instincts of women, and was consistent with cultural feminism, which focused on how women's strengths are different from men's qualities.

Implications of this theory for counselling are inherent in the concept of the counsellor conveying to clients the complexity and diversity of normal behaviour and encouraging them to think creatively about how they want to define themselves. Enns (1994) indicated archetypal images that were not linked to sex and gender could be used, and occasionally would be helpful for women to see examples of heroism in other women through such sources as autobiographical and biographical accounts of diverse groups of women.

Feminist Counselling

Russell (1984) revealed, "Feminist counselling is now recognized by professional counsellors as the choice counselling approach for female clients" (p. 3). Feminist counselling was specifically designed for women by: (a) incorporating female social situations and developmental issues into the counselling process; (b) its use of female counsellors, who it was believed have the potential for a better understanding of female issues; and (c) its attempts to address the gender-based issues that were cause for concern. Russell pointed out traditional counselling approaches were criticized for their lack of positive orientation to women, their abundance of sex role stereotyping, and their lack of support for the total development of female clients. Russell posited in order to produce effective feminist counselling it should be devoid of any trace of past counselling practices, and should consist of distinctive methods, that may have some skills common to traditional approaches, but which would be delivered with a different purpose and use in counselling female clients.

Counsellor re-evaluation was encouraged by the Women's Movement as women began to verbalize their dissatisfactions and became more assertive in their demands for changes. The consciousness raising techniques and the sharing of common experiences by uninhibited self-disclosure developed by women at that time became methods that were believed could be modified and incorporated into the counselling process (Russell, 1984). Thus, feminist counselling began to develop its unique theory and practice. Goals of feminist counselling included recognition of: (a) the value and existence of women's identity and development, (b) what constituted appropriate opportunities for women's development, (c) what constituted appropriate behaviour for women, and (d) the value of women's social contributions.

The following counselling approaches are believed to be specifically adherent to the principles for feminist counselling techniques.

Object-Relations Theory

New trends in psychoanalytic thinking of the 1970s and 1980s developed an approach called the object-relations theory. Perry (1993) noted this theory was a model of psychological development that viewed the first two years of a person's life as the most important time in the development of personality and psyche. According to Corey (1996), object relations were interpersonal relationships that were represented intrapsychically, and shaped the individuals current interactions with people.

Nelson (1996) reported that Chadorow (1989) examined the notion of differentiated self in the context of object-relations theory. Chadorow believed because object-relations theory maintained the formation of the self involved the internalization of

feelings about significant others and representations of experienced reactions of others to the individual, it therefore had a relational component. Such a component was thought to be valuable in the process of counselling women. Chadorow particularly focused on the aspect of identity formation, stating the formation of a core identity was conflicting for boys, who eventually must identify away from their primary caretaker (their mother), whereas girls who may continue to connect and identify with their mother did not experience such conflict. She recommended both male and female caretakers share parenting tasks thereby providing adequate models for identification for both males and females. According to Walsh (1987), many women therapists found Chadorow's view of "mothering" useful in clinical situations related to separation-individuation issues in female development.

Conarton and Kreger-Silverman

Wastell (1996) reviewed a model proposed by Conarton and Kreger-Silverman (1988). This model, developed during the rise of feminist therapies, provided counsellors with important definitions of the key issues that faced clients in their life journey. They outlined a developmental model addressing the life span in its entirety. Using this model, counsellors were able to place counselling issues within these perspectives. One of the key themes in Conarton and Silverman's model was connectedness, ranging from the interconnectedness of women entering nurturing roles in later life to the phase where women were said to be oriented toward healing the damage caused by unaware societies, women's connectedness to each other, and to society. A second important theme was rejection of the traditional social roles for

women and the expansion of their life beyond the immediate family. Conarton and Silverman stressed the idea when viewing the developmental cycle of women there must be an awareness that women's primary striving was for relatedness and connection (Nugent, 1994). Feminist counselling encouraged the inculcation of these aspects in the counselling of women.

Self-in-Relation Model

According to Nugent (1994), Surrey (1991) used the term self-in-relation to describe women's developmental growth. Surrey's model proposed the maturation process for women involved the development of a complex and defined self within a web of connections (Nelson, 1996). This theory rejected the necessity of the separation-individuation process and stressed the self grows as a result of supportive and intimate relationships with others. Surrey maintained empathy was an important aspect of women's and girls' experiences and was thought to play a central role in a girl's development of self-esteem. Self-esteem was seen as an important aspect for the development of relational competence (Nelson, 1996). Nugent (1994) noted, "In order to empathize, one must have a well-differentiated sense of self in addition to an appreciation of and sensibility to the differentness of self as well as the sameness of another person" (p. 61). The self-in-relation model provided beliefs and values conducive to the development of an effective approach for counselling women.

A Transition Model for Counselling Women

The transition model was a feminist approach to counselling based on the notion women as a group experienced transitions in their life stages. These transitions included

areas such as marriage, child raising, divorce, widowhood, job changes, retirement, illnesses, and changes in sex roles that exist in our society today, to name but a few. In her book, Skills for Counseling Women: The Feminist Approach, Mary Russell (1984) discussed a model for adult development that was beneficial when considering the charting of transitional points for women. Such models usually included progressive or hierarchical steps or life crises that were characteristic of particular age ranges. In the past, these have been male defined. Russell, however, examined the following distinctive characteristics of female development: (a) the influence of relationships in women's lives; (b) their regard for affiliative goals, as opposed to achievement goals; (c) their biological clock; and (d) the environmental and social restraints that affected women. Russell viewed women's development as a spiral process rather than a linear hierarchical process. She indicated each transition point in a woman's life provided new opportunities for the development of personal strengths, for the utilization and expansion of supportive social networks, and for dealing with social pressures and demands associated with women's dilemmas.

The transitional model for counselling women, discussed by Eisenberg and Patterson (1991), described three major components of the model: (a) the counsellor must have an understanding of transitions in general; (b) the counsellor must be able to analyze the factors that influence an individual's adaptation to transition; and (c) the counsellor should be able to assess the individual's adaptation to the new environment. Eisenberg and Patterson maintained most of the problems women brought to the counselling session could be analyzed within the context of the transition model. That this model

would be beneficial for the counselling of women was evident from its ability to help clients gain insight into understanding their problems, its usefulness in helping clients plan and prepare for transitions, and the emphasis it placed on the importance of support systems in adapting to transitions. Russell (1984) viewed feminist counselling as a matter of presenting and expanding options and choices for women, particularly as they passed through transitions in their lives, and charted these transition points that provided positive indicators for the use of the feminist counselling approach.

In summary, the quantity and complexity of roles and experiences that compose women's lives seem to indicate the appropriateness and necessity for continued development of new and more flexible theories for the counselling of women, and in turn for the conduction of sound research to validate these new perspectives.

Motivations for Reentry

Reentry to either post-secondary schools or to the workforce can be considered a transitional stage in a woman's life. Bejian and Salomone (1995) noted in all transitions people ascribed meaning to past decisions, made new decisions, and set a course of action to implement their decisions. According to previously discussed theories, this was apparent for reentry women. Transitions may be either planned or unplanned. According to Brown (1995), such transitions occurred when an individual's current occupation did not result in satisfaction, or because of conflicts between work and other life roles. It would be interesting to determine what implications this would have for women choosing to reenter educational institutions, the world of work, or both. What would motivate their decisions? Stoltz-Loike (1995) pointed out because of family issues,

many women who were employed chose career paths that were less continuous than those of men.

Dean, et al. (n.d.) discussed two types of career changes:

> A "self-determined" career change results when the person seeks new opportunities not because of environmental pressure but because it meets some internal need. People in this category are usually very highly motivated and frequently willing, for example, to meet the rigors of an academic program. People involved in "situationally" determined career change, however, often do not desire, and are not prepared for, career change, nor are they motivated to seek out resources or to engage in activities that will prepare them for a career change. (p. 17)

Self-determined (internal) reasons motivated women to make changes in their lives because of a desire to fulfill an internal need and reenter the labour market voluntarily. On the other hand, women also reentered because of situationally determined (external) reasons, where they did not necessarily desire to reenter the workforce but environmental factors or pressures forced them to do so.

Padula (1994) asserted, "Reentry women have reported vocational reasons as a primary motive for both educational and labor force reentry" (p. 11). Padula mentioned the following vocational reasons: desire to have a new career and to become self-supporting; extrinsic job satisfaction; job dissatisfaction, better employment, or changing jobs; and the desire to work. (p. 11)

Women often left established jobs, homes, marriages, and beginning careers in order to return to school after absences of 5 to 10 years (Bauer & Mott, 1990). Women sought higher education for many reasons. As reviewed by Novak and Thacker (1991):

> Some women return to school to achieve career goals and to make career transitions. Other women return to school to make life changes or for self-enrichment. Some women return to school to obtain a personal sense of achievement, to learn something new, or to receive a degree. (p. 326)

Additionally, Novak and Thacker revealed that Aslanian and Brickell (1980) found "a life transition often triggered a return to formal education" (p. 326).

The above reasons have been cited in relation to reentry to educational fields, however they, as well as the following information reported in Avery (1996) may equally apply as reasons for reentry to the workforce: a focus on boredom, self-fulfillment, and career preparation; fulfillment of personal goals, or an interest in finding more stimulating or better-paying jobs; and/or [sic] empty-nest syndrome. (p. 3)

The following sections discuss reentry motivations in relation to Dean et al.'s (n.d.) situationally-determined and self-determined factors.

Situationally-Determined Factors

1. One obvious cause of motivation was financial. Many families discovered in the age of inflation in which they lived, in order to increase or even to maintain their standard of living, two incomes were essential. In addition, during times of high unemployment, job loss through downsizing, manufacturing industries being transferred to other countries, companies or jobs transferring to other areas (and

workers or families unable or unwilling to relocate), complete closures of factories and industries, often times families were forced to reevaluate their present lifestyle and seek other means of livelihood. In many such cases, the woman was the only one in the family who was able to obtain work. As reviewed by Padula (1994) increased ability to contribute to the family financially was found to be a motive for educational reentry for women.

2. Divorce, marital separation, and widowhood often necessitated reentry, as women found themselves in a situation of having to be sole supporters of self, family, or both.
3. Dissatisfaction with the present role may be considered situationally determined in relation to today's advanced technology in the home, as women often found themselves unemployed in the sense of traditional motherhood (Herr & Cramer, 1996) and housekeeping duties. Also, children entering school or growing up, and the "empty-nest" syndrome that oftentimes developed when all the children had left home, prompted women to search for an outlet to fill the void that had been created.
4. Reentry was often determined by other peoples' needs - family variables. Bauer and Mott (1990) noted women interested in returning to school "speak often of the disharmony in their lives stemming from competing commitments to children, spouses, jobs, and self" (p. 555). Many women who desired to return to school or work but were unable to do so because of family commitments, perceived these obstacles no longer prevented them from attempting to reach their goal. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), with children "old enough," adequate childcare, social

supports from family and friends, and adequate finances, women were often motivated to educational reentry.

5. Technological advancement in the workplace forced many women wishing to reenter the workforce to seek higher levels of education and training or retraining for many of today's occupations.

Self-Determined Factors

1. Dissatisfaction with the present role contributed to intrinsic reasons for reentry. Upon reexamining marriage and family roles, many women desired to return to work or school because of personal boredom and unfulfillment in their role as mother and housewife. Granrose and Kaplan (1994) stated, "Women often formulate general intentions to be employed or not after childbirth, ... these intentions may not be acted upon for several years ...." (p. 873). Lindstrom (2000) noted in her review of the literature on reentry women, children entering school or growing up and leaving home, allowed the women free time and energy to devote to their own interests and needs.
2. Women chose to return to work because they had a personal desire to have a career and become self-supporting.
3. As reviewed by Padula (1994), "Self-actualization, self-improvement, and social and humanitarian motives, have also been identified by reentry women as reasons for returning to college" (p. 11). MacKinnon-Slaney et al. (1988) reported the women in their study most frequently selected increased knowledge as their major career-related goal.

Many women reevaluated their values in life and contemplated whether or not these values were being, or had been, satisfied. "For a job to be satisfying, it must allow individuals to engage in activities that they believe are worthwhile..." (Brown, 1995, p. 5). If women found these values were not being met in their present situation, they opted for reentry as a means of fulfillment. In their study Bejian and Salomone (1995) revealed that Riverin-Simard (1990) found, "this "state of instability," perceived as a "loss of self," forces the individual to forge a new (or revised) self-concept by reconsidering life motives and values and by expressing aspects of the personality that were previously less developed" (p. 55). As stated in Lindstrom's (2000) report on reentry women, "a return to college may assist her in establishing her intellectual worth and individuality...Women have reported reasons for reentry such as the desire to "become someone" and to "find out who I am" (p. 37). Reentry women felt these aspects could be expressed in new life roles, such as those that accompany returning to school, the world of work, or both.

An obvious conclusion is women returned for diverse reasons. It is not possible to focus motivations in any one area. However, having disclosed various reasons for reentry, it is interesting to research how these motivations reveal themselves, how transitions unfold in the lives of women who desire to satisfy these motivational aspirations, or of women who are forced into educational and career pursuits.

Barriers to Reentry

Reentry to post-secondary institutions or the workforce is not necessarily an easy transitional experience for many women. It may have been a much easier and more

acceptable process for those women who reenter by choice, than for those who are forced into the situation. However both groups often encounter many obstacles. Herr and Cramer (1996) discussed three types of barriers for reentry women (a) institutional. (b) situational, and (c) psychosocial (p. 540).

Institutional Barriers

Institutional factors reveal how the various institutions, school and work, affect returning women. Many women are ill equipped to return to work immediately without some form of re-education, skills training, or both. The vast changes in the global economics, the decline of manufacturing industries, increased corporate concentration, rapid expansion of multi-national corporations, and introduction of technologies (Riche, 1991), create a totally different world of work from that previously experienced by many of these women. Some have never been employed outside the home. Many reentry women realize they have to reevaluate their present skills and often upgrade them or retrain for totally new skills.

Barriers experienced by reentry women included the following:

1. Educational facilities for retraining were not always available in the immediate area. Therefore, location posed a major problem. This was especially true for rural and remote areas of the country. Transportation was also a problem for reentry women if off-campus or outreach services were not available (Lindstrom, 2000).
2. Many women reentering post-secondary institutions encountered problems with admission policies. Some of these women who had not attended such institutions for a number of years discovered much of their past credits were no longer valid nor

transferable, could not be located, or were inappropriate for reentry. Additionally, many women found the entrance examinations and requirements difficult and intimidating.

3. Lindstrom (2000) reported in her study, "Often programs are limited to full-time students only, have residency requirements, and time limits for completing degrees, that also put women at a disadvantage. Some institutions have only daytime class schedules, and insensitive school policies, such as grades dependent on class attendance, that hinder women with children"(p. 44). According to Novak and Thacker (1991), mature students were more likely to be part-time, and, in fact, part-time students outnumbered full-time students. As reviewed by Lindstrom, Tittle and Denker (1980) noted, "Institutions, however, still seem to prefer full-time students" (p. 45).

   Lindstrom (2000) revealed University Enrollment (1998) showed undergraduate enrollment in Canadian universities had actually declined in the last five years, due entirely to a sharp drop in part-time students, especially those in older age brackets. From 1992-93 to 1997-98, enrollment for women aged 25 - 44 dropped an alarming 31.2%. Cutbacks to university funding could be a major factor, as universities seemed to be concentrating their resources on full-time programs offering fewer part-time courses (p. 45).

4. In their study Novak and Thacker (1991) noted some reentry women reported they felt strained by the demands of school. Additionally, they reported close to half of reentry women in a study conducted by Marcus (1977) dropped out of school at least

once because of strain (p. 326-327). According to Novak and Thacker, students frequently mentioned time pressures as their major source of strain. This included strains resulting from conflicting demands on their time and from anxiety about their academic ability. In addition to time pressures, scheduling problems presented obstacles to reentering, as women often found it difficult to juggle course work with home and family responsibilities. Novak and Thacker believed reentry stress to post-secondary and work institutions was related in some cases to lack of helpfulness of professors, and lack of support of family and friends. Many reentry women who had not been students nor employed workers outside the home for a long time, experienced fears and apprehensions about returning to school or work and coping with the demands associated with learning and retraining.

5. Fee structures and lack of financial resources to meet this necessity made it difficult or even impossible for some women to reach financial obligations of educational and training institutions. Many women at this time in their lives had children who themselves were post-secondary students, thus making the financial burden even greater. According to Lindstrom (2000), studies conducted by Lewis (1988a), Glass and Rose (1987), Tittle and Denker (1980) pointed out, "Financial aid policies are particularly discriminatory towards reentry women who may only have enough money to attend part-time, yet, are ineligible for funding because of their part-time status" (p. 46). Lindstrom pointed out the government's recent mandate, August 1999, of credit checks on student loan applications would affect 38,000 mature students each year. She also noted "...First-time loan applicants aged 22 and older

will be subject to credit checks in an effort to reduce the loan default rate...." This "may eventually mean lower and middle-income Canadians will no longer qualify for student loans because of their heavy financial burdens" (p. 46). In reviewing studies by Gilbert et al. (1980) and Glass and Rose, Lindstrom noted, "Frequently, married students whose husbands work are also discriminated against as his salary is taken into account whether or not he is contributing" (p. 46).

6. Campus friendliness, or support or lack of support for reentry women in educational settings often posed barriers for them. Barriers included (a) lack of childcare facilities in many institutions, (b) housing problems, and (c) attitudes of faculty members.
7. One final barrier faced by many women when deciding to reenter, was lack of counselling support. This was especially true in smaller and more remote areas. Such an omission prevented women from obtaining necessary guidance with educational and career choices, with job-seeking and job-hunting skills, and with personal support as they attempted to deal with their changing lifestyle and the stresses that accompanied it. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), "Once the individual has begun to work, there may be needs for assurance, enhancement of coping skills, and general support" (p. 542). Unfortunately, not all institutions provided such a support system. As stated in Padula (1994), "reentry women seem to be less satisfied with advisement and counseling services than are some other groups, perhaps because these services have been designed with younger students in mind" (p. 13).

Situational Barriers

Situational barriers included personal circumstances that influenced reentry to educational institutions, the workforce, or both. Many returning women encountered responsibilities and restrictions that interfered with an easy transition.

1. Family factors contributed to major barriers faced by reentry women. In their study Sinacore-Guinn, Akali, and Fledderus (1999) revealed the interdependence of work and family life is more problematic for women than men because of the greater demands of family responsibilities they experience, and women's work roles are more vulnerable to family demands than are men's work roles" (p.188). Additionally, they stated, according to Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) "...family factors constitute the main limitations of women's career development" (p.189). A study by Phillips and Imhoff (1997) reported:

   > ...women appear to be placing increased importance on goals in the work domain. This change has not detracted from the importance women give to the home and family domain, nor diminished the expected conflicts among roles....this shift has presented women with additional challenges in their career planning. (p. 40)

The reality of multiple roles and role conflicts experienced by reentry women has placed demands on them. As reviewed by Kopp and Ruzicka (1993), the U.S. Bureau of Census (1986) reported, "In the past, women's roles traditionally had been perceived by themselves, by others, and by society as related to home and family; however, changes in society over the last twenty-five years have dramatically altered

women's situations and conditions" (p. 1351). Reentry women experienced multiple roles of partner, mother, student and paid employee.

Many reentry women continued with childcare commitments and dealt with releasing their children to childcare facilities. In her study Padula (1994) noted, "Children, and the time necessary to devote to them, are viewed by reentry women as major obstacles to finishing education" (p. 12). Granrose and Kaplan (1994) revealed, "...Concern for the well-being of children has been related to the decision to work following childbirth" (p. 875). In their discussion of working mothers, Herr and Cramer (1996) pointed out:

> This situation is presumed by many to lead to interrole conflict between the roles of mother and employed worker, which, in turn, is thought to lead to stress. Not the least source of stress is supposed to be the guilt engendered by a mother's working rather than tending primarily to child care. (p. 567)

An area of particular relevance for reentry decisions was how the household and childcare responsibilities were shared. According to a study conducted by Phillips and Imhoff (1997), a number of studies still indicate that while women have taken on additional roles outside the home, their level of involvement with children and household responsibilities has not changed relative to their husbands (p.44). Additionally, they revealed, "Apparently women are still involved in more childcare than men, even in dual-income households" (p. 44). For some reentry women, managing these multiple roles, while attempting to adjust to a new role, posed specific obstacles. "Many women, having meticulously planned for their reentry,

preparing family and friends for the changes to come, and delegating certain household chores to other family members, are, nevertheless, constantly worried that their support will collapse" (Lindstrom, 2000, p. 41).

Herr and Cramer (1996) reported, "In general, marital adjustment for working wives is greatly enhanced as might be expected, by a supportive husband (for example, one who approves of his wife's employment, shares in household duties, and advocates a similar belief system)" (p. 570). According to MacKinnon-Slaney et al. (1988), "marital status, or relationships with significant others, provides a powerful stimulus or barrier to the career and educational plans of women" (p. 328). As reviewed by MacKinnon-Slaney et al., "... career aspirations of women are influenced greatly by the attitudes of male significant others" (p. 328). They mentioned Mishler (1975), who asserted "women who are reassessing their own career plans consider not only their own values, attitudes, abilities, and fears, but also the values and attitudes of significant men in their lives" (p. 328). In her review Lindstrom (2000) noted, "it is not unusual for spouses, significant others, family members, employers or coworkers to be opposed to or feel threatened by a reentry woman's career or educational aspirations" (p. 42). The affects of reentry on marital relationships were very real factors in the lives of those concerned.

2. Reentry women also encountered age and gender discrimination. Such discriminations were either subtle or explicit, and oftentimes interfered with hiring

opportunities and with securing occupations of choice. As Herr and Cramer (1996) pointed out:

> Generally speaking the older worker is considered to be over 45. Although age discrimination in employment hiring practices has been theoretically reduced by federal employment acts, there is little doubt that this category of worker faces considerable prejudice in terms of hiring or retention policies and that career problems are heightened for this age group. (p. 543)

Gender discrimination included sexual harassment, external restrictions on career advancement, policies against hiring women for particular jobs, isolation in the career field, and disparities in expected salary in relation to male employees (Cook, 1997). As reviewed by Melamed (1995), "regardless of equal opportunities' legislation, marital status and parenthood interfere with women's progress, as employers are more reluctant to offer jobs to, or promote mothers or married women due to the high likelihood of career interruption" (p. 40). Therefore, job procurement and advancement associated with home responsibilities appeared to enhance sex segregation.

Women's ability, motivation, and suitability were often underestimated. According to Melamed (1995), "Corporate sanctions and organizational structures disadvantage career paths that involve career breaks and outer-organizational commitments" (p. 37). Thus, women were not always offered a fair chance in the labor market. In their study Phillips and Imhoff (1997) reported, "There is substantial evidence that the work force remains highly sex segregated" (p. 47).

"Progress toward more gender equity seems to have been made in recent years, but as Hoyt (1989) pointed out, a great deal still needs to be done" (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992, p.281).

3. Herr & Cramer (1996) noted even though the benefit of returning to school was recognized, women wishing to reenter were also very aware of the required cost of time and money in order to complete the action. With the already existing financial responsibilities of family, women were not always in the position to afford the retraining necessary for reentering the work force.
4. Typically, transportation problems posed barriers for reentry women if the school to attend or the job site itself were in another community or city. Additionally, many families had limited or no means of transportation, or, as in rural areas, no access to a commuting system.

Psychosocial Barriers

According to Phillips and Imhoff (1997), various individual, family, and work factors were related to psychological and physical well-being. Variables thought to influence well-being included ethnicity, husband's views about women's employment, household assistance, occupational rank, and traditionality of the woman's occupation. Many of these factors played a significant role in the coping aspect for reentry women. Attitudes, beliefs, values, self-esteem, opinions of others, and past experiences influenced the decision-making process of reentering, as well as how well women adapted to their new role after the decision had been made.

1. As reviewed by Padula (1994), "reentry women have reported conflicts and emotional distress for beliefs about their roles, beliefs about self, and interpersonal dissatisfaction" (p.12). Many women in reentry situations debated within themselves whether or not they were capable of returning. They wondered if the sacrifices they would encounter were actually worth it. According to MacKinnon-Slaney et al. (1988) a study conducted by Osipow (1975) revealed, "Internal biases and self-expectations about life-roles as well as external biases and societal expectations, influence and complicate career development for women" (p. 328). As reviewed by Padula, "Reentry women have also reported that, family demands cause role conflict and emotional distress, and that career versus family causes major value conflicts" (p. 12).
2. In their study, Morgan and Foster (1999) reported, reentry women's struggle to manage both work and family responsibilities was found to be associated with physical and psychological distress. They revealed risk factors associated with combining housework and people-care with outside employment, which remain socially constructed as women's work, despite women's acquisition of outside employment, included fatigue, depression, and stress. Reentry women strived for efficiency at home, and at school or on the job site, while at the same time attempted to cope effectively with a new and changing self-image.
3. Farmer and Backer (1977) noted, self-confidence was found to be a critical ingredient to mental health and one's ability to initiate and take action. Rees (1992) reported, "At a conference held in the European Commission's Center for the

Development of Vocational Training in Berlin in December 1988, researchers on training for women from all the member states unanimously agreed that extremely low levels of confidence of women who present themselves for training was the most important training issue for returners" (p. 74). Areas of particular concern existed where women who lacked the necessary skills or training allowed this to develop into feelings of little personal worth. Many women who were in the family role for a long period of time had taken on an identity in relation to needs of a husband, family needs, or both, rather than their own separate identity. Novak and Thacker (1991) pointed out, they have a strong fear of failure... and experience tremendous self-doubt, insecurity, and anxiety about their "rusty" academic skills, which can be a major stumbling block. They often had problems in self-concept and self-perception, and frequently underrated their actual abilities (Padula, 1994). Good self-confidence was a definite asset, if not indeed a necessity. Lack of optimism and self-efficacy can lead to emotional and psychological distress and interfere with effective job searching, job acquisition, and job success. Granrose & Kaplan (1994) stated, "Self-confident women will believe they are able to control what happens to them and will be more likely to believe they can manage the multiple responsibilities of being an employed mother" (p.876).

4. Novak and Thacker (1991) reported a study by Kirk and Dorfman (1983) revealed, among other factors, the psychological support of friends and children led to increased satisfaction of reentry women in the student role. Additionally, Novak and Thacker noted reentry women viewed spousal support as very important and

reported less stress when their husbands gave them attitudinal, financial, and behavioural support. Other factors, reviewed by Granrose and Kaplan (1994) found related to post-childbirth employment included (a) the influence of peers, (b) parental approval, and (c) spouse approval for maternal work. Lack of support in these areas can lead to self-doubt and anxiety. As Morgan and Foster (1999) indicated, "The absence of a supportive social climate for a humane integration of family and work responsibilities makes a decision to reenter the workforce especially problematic for many women" (p. 129).

5. As with all other aspects of reentry, past experiences in both school and the work place had different connotations for each individual. Success and contentment in the past did not necessarily mean the same would hold true in the present. The extent of satisfaction or dissatisfaction heavily depended on the length of time between past experience and reentry. The shorter the time, the better was the chance for coping well. The longer the interim, the more likelihood of such influential factors as changed interests, sense of self, work skills, work and school environment, and job descriptions.

Positive Factors

Despite the many obstacles presented, and the stress that accompanied them, all was not "doom and gloom" for reentry women. Reentry did not always create stress for individuals. In fact, for some it was a very positive time in their lives. For women who were reentering voluntarily, it provided an opportunity to redirect goals and priorities, consider new alternatives, develop new competencies, or leave a dissatisfying or

unchallenging lifestyle. In their study, Kopp and Ruzicka (1993) revealed, "the highest psychological well-being was among the busiest women in the study, the employed, married women with children" (p. 1351). Another study conducted by Gerson (1985). that tested a group of women who returned to school at midlife, hypothesized role accumulation may result in a net gain. The results reported the students in the study experienced significantly more benefit as well as more disadvantages from their role repertoires than did the housewives. However, the students also perceived a greater amount of net gratification. According to Gerson, "The data demonstrate that when women add role obligations outside the home, the results are positive as well as negative" (p. 90). Statistics were encouraging. As reviewed by Herr and Cramer (1996) a study of 285 single and married mothers in Australia, who were "mature age" returnees to education, revealed career commitment and job satisfaction in primarily female occupations. This report also indicated late-entry workers appeared to be as effective and happy as earlier-entry workers. Many pursued careers they had longed for, others enthusiastically returned to school, and in the process experienced a feeling of rejuvenation as they pursued goals they thought were lost to them. For some women, finally, they had their children raised and free time on their hands. Many were thrilled at the idea of accomplishing a long awaited goal, of returning to their previous type of work, a new occupation, or becoming a career woman for the first time.

Many reentry women identified rewards that made returning to school a worthwhile and exciting experience for them (Padula & Miller, 1999). These rewards also assuredly applied to women who returned to the workforce. They included (a) learning itself,

(b) brighter career prospects, (c) developing camaraderie with other women students (or co-workers), (d) learning or developing more positive self-perceptions, and (e) increased self-confidence.

Due to improved technology, another advantage for reentry women was the home-based work that proved very appealing to women in the transition of participating in the workforce. They engaged in substantial and rewarding employment without having to leave their home. This, therefore, alleviated many perceived obstacles in their family responsibilities.

Herr and Cramer (1996) reported employability looked promising as shortages of skilled workers in many professional, managerial, clerical, skilled craft, and service occupations offered women excellent prospects. Women's reentry into the workplace was supported more than ever before. "Opportunity 2000", backed by the British Prime Minister, John Majors in 1991, was "an initiative whereby employers have pledged themselves to promote women within their organizations by the end of the decade" (Rees, 1992, p. 108).

According to Lewis (1988), other areas where reentry women gained support included: (a) new benefit options - expanded maternity leave, paternity leave, modified paid personal or sick leave (allowing parents to stay at home with sick children or older frail adults), expanded family medical coverage and company health-maintenance organizations; (b) childcare benefits - provision of vouchers toward childcare, subsidies for a number of slots in nearby childcare centers, information and referral services, and

on-site childcare; and (c) flexible time and job sharing - allowing for rearranging the scheduling of work to accommodate family needs.

Educational facilities also improved conditions for reentry women in areas such as orientation programs for adult students, availability of childcare programs, housing facilities, counselling, support groups, informal workshops and seminars, special awards or honours, and student organizations. Special features offered by some colleges and universities extremely beneficial and welcomed by reentry students included: (a) pass or fail no grades, (b) internships and tutorials, (c) day, evening, and weekend courses, (d) six week credit courses, (e) open admission, (f) first 30 credits, (g) lower tuition, (h) variable length sessions, (i) required interdisciplinary course, (j) self-designed degrees, (k) no traditional exams or grades, and (l) distance education. Lindstrom (2000) stated, "Perhaps in recognition of the possibilities of this fast growing population, some colleges/universities [sic] have developed programs to assist reentry women make the transition to the educational setting, offering free services to current students and those considering reentry" (p. 50). In her review Lindstrom pointed out, "These programs often decrease the barriers of time (through evening and weekend class scheduling), place (through distance learning and independent study), and cost (by lowering educational costs for nontraditional students)" (p. 50).

It was encouraging to realize that more and more literature had been developed around the issue of interventions designed to support the career development of reentry women. In their study Phillips and Imhoff (1997) reported several intervention programs, described in the early part of the decade, specifically focused on reentry

women, including women entering nontraditional and professional careers, displaced homemakers, and reentry college women (pp. 41-42). Social variables central to women's career development have long been recognized. More recently, however, as noted by Phillips and Imhoff, research has highlighted "the benefits derived from those connections rather than focusing solely on the limitations that social contexts impose" (p. 50).

For many reentry women, multiple social roles need not be viewed as detrimental to their psychological well-being. Kopp and Ruzicka (1993) asserted one study reported "the comparison of community college women with multiple roles (two or more) and women with one or no role, supported the conclusion that women having multiple roles perceive themselves as being happier" (p. 1354). Kopp and Ruzicka reviewed a study by Baruch et al. (1983) that pointed out, "perhaps multiple roles may allow women to shrug off more easily the least desirable aspects of some of the roles" (p. 1354). Women who found working outside the home a release from routine household and childcare duties, considered it a pleasant diversion, and welcomed the opportunity. For some women, the stresses of social roles were often greater than the stresses of work roles, however, for others the opposite was true. As reviewed by Sinacore-Guinn et al. (1999) "...the quality of home and family roles buffers women from the negative effects of poor job experiences. The accumulation of multiple roles may therefore be positive for women, as one role may provide relief from or buffer the effects of stress in other roles, and as such, enhances women's lives" (p.189).

Herr and Cramer (1996) indicated even though improvement continued to be a necessary goal, society had come a long way in alleviating many problems faced by reentry women and indeed women in general. Gains had been made in breaking down barriers to higher level occupations and to traditionally male-dominated fields, and new opportunities were available in expanding occupations. Isaacson and Brown (1996) believed we strive to make further improvements in areas such as unequal pay, unfair employment practices, and harassment in the work place.

Counselling for Reentry Women

According to Morgan and Foster (1999), "Many reentry women seek career counselling as they attempt to plan for continued education, to regenerate an old career, or to seek guidance regarding a new career" (p. 125). Women who chose to return to work or school following a hiatus, presented special needs to counsellors. Indeed, women as a group in themselves required special counselling. Reentry women oftentimes required more than merely career counselling.

Counsellors need to be sensitive to the fact that these women are often balancing family and career responsibilities. In relation to the stresses already mentioned, it advocates an importance of dealing with personal, life-defining issues. Often, before occupational exploration and choice can even be considered, reentry women first need counselling to deal with personal, emotional, physical, and social concerns. Many women returning to the world outside the home lack self-confidence in their academic and work related skills. These issues may cause problems such as depression, frustration, fears, and anxieties.

Significant implications for counselling and concerns that brought reentry women to seek counselling included:

1. The need to reinforce positive feelings about self-worth and ability to make a contribution in the workforce outside the home (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Women who for various reasons experienced loss of self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence, needed to be helped and encouraged to build on their strengths, talents, and skills, to promote themselves in a positive way, and to understand the meaning and value of empowerment.
2. Reentry women needed to assume responsibility of decision-making and goal setting skills. Good decision-making skills are essential to making good choices and solving many of life's problems. Reentry women often required guidance to develop skills related to coping with change, being open to new opportunities, opting for the new rather than staying with the old, developing good problem solving skills, thinking skills, and good public relations skills.
3. Transitions women experience in their lives, such as marriage, birth of children, divorce, single parenthood, widowhood, new relationships, job changes, retirement, physical developmental changes, and the empty-nest syndrome, may provide an opportunity for either growth or deterioration. Some women viewed these transitions as a chance for advancement and development of their potential, whereas for others it was a retreat into depression, loneliness, boredom, and feelings of worthlessness. Women in this category needed help to explore changes in lifestyle and methods of coping with these changes as they took on each new role. They

needed to focus on the positive aspects of new growth and opportunities for an exciting and adventuresome future, and to see these stages as a developmental experience rather than a crisis.

4. Sociocultural factors often contributed to problems for which women sought counselling. Women may be very dissatisfied with culturally prescribed gender roles they see as too confining. Women in the past, and to a certain extent even today, were expected to be the dutiful wife, mother, and housekeeper. Many desired to change that role and to work outside the home. This often caused stress as they contemplated leaving their children with babysitters and daycare centers, not having their homes in perfect order, or not having dinners prepared for husband and family on time. In some cases the transference from home to work progressed quite well, but for others it was a juggling process trying to cope with both worlds.
5. Oftentimes, women who chose the reentry route had to contend with resistance to their work aspirations from husband, children, or both. Many women in this role needed counselling to help change attitudes or to accept the hostilities.
6. Other women who were seeking reentry positions after escaping from, or indeed remained a part of, an abusive home environment, or carried with them memories and horrors of rape or child abuse, required counselling services.
7. Competent financial advisement was often necessary for women who experienced financial problems associated with their personal lives as well as the added burden of new costs for such things as school reentry and childcare services.

8. Women who were anticipating or had already decided to relocate to other cities or countries, needed help to deal with possible issues such as, economic changes, loss of cultural identity, cultural adaptation, availability of social support systems, and managing family disruptions.
9. Reentry women required information about basic career decision-making, personal assets and limitations, values and attitudes, the world of work, and available resources. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), they needed assistance in exploring entry-level jobs, to have access to a referral system for placement assistance, and job-seeking and job-hunting skills.
10. Career women often experienced discrimination in the workplace and required counselling services in attempts to deal effectively with this serious problem.
11. Reentry women needed to explore possible support groups and systems that could benefit them as they attempted to cope with any of the aforementioned issues facing women today.

Thus, the issues that reentry women brought to counselling were many and diversified, and very importantly, many were unique to women. Therefore, would not a unique situation require unique attention? In order to meet the needs of reentry clients, counsellors must be familiar with theories related to career development as well as personal development. Theories provide a means of identifying and weighing the complex forces that operate in a client's world and thus allow the counsellor to more aptly help the client understand these unique experiences. Counsellors may be assisted in defining counselling goals for their clients by ensuring they have an understanding of

such concepts as career development, attachment, intimacy, connection, relationships, and relational responsibility.

Conclusion

Counseling of reentry women appears to be in and of itself a distinctive type of counselling that, in its process, requires specific knowledge relating to female issues, social situations, developmental issues, and career issues. The feminist movement exists, and as such addresses the inequitable treatment of women, it recognizes the common female experience, and it continues to be instrumental in developing theoretical propositions that promote a female worldview. Counselling approaches that will benefit female clients effectively should take into account and integrate, the future developments in theory, research that has been and will continue to be conducted, and the practice of counselling itself, to provide choice counselling for women, including reentry women.

Reentry of women to education, the work force, or both, encompasses many aspects. Shapiro and Fitzsimmons (1991) stated, "There are no 'typical' reentry women....There are instead types of reentry women who may share common needs" (p. 517). Numerous theories and approaches are available to help understand such career moves and to assist in career development. Many important and helpful strategies have been drawn from a combination of theories. Reentry women need counselling to take control of their lives and to develop skills, both academic and affective skills, that would facilitate their life role change, career choices, and personal employability. Counselling must be provided in areas such as enhancing self awareness, decision-making skills, gaining information

on the job market, meeting the demands of family and job responsibilities, stress management, overcoming lack of training, and offering emotional support.

Qualitative Methodolgy

Gay and Airasian (2000) asserted, "Qualitative research methods are based on the collection and analysis of nonnumerical data such as observations, interviews, and other more discursive sources of information" (p. 9). They pointed out the "types of data commonly collected include records of formal and informal conversations, observations, documents, audio and video tapes, and interviews" (p. 19).

Qualitative research approaches are used to examine different aspects of social contexts and their inhabitants. According to Gay and Airasian (2000), "Qualitative research is not only concerned with simply describing the way things are, but also with providing insights into what people believe and feel about the way things are and how they got to be the way they are" (p. 18). They believed qualitative research requires detailed understandings of the subject matter and as such the researchers themselves "must undertake in-depth, in-context research that allows them the opportunity to uncover more subtle, less overt understandings" (p. 18). Typically, in a qualitative research setting the researcher maintains a lengthy physical presence, as an observer, an interviewer, a participant observer, or a combination of all three.

Gay and Airasian (2000) stated:

> Data analysis of most qualitative approaches is ongoing; as initial observations, conversations, and interviews are collected, the researcher analyzes and codes them to discover the nuances of the context and the perspectives and beliefs of the

> participants. As more data are collected, the researcher refines prior analyses and understandings, trying to focus on the key aspects to be studied and described. Thus, data collection, analysis, and interpretation occur throughout the study.... The final product of the study is a rich description or narrative of the essential aspects of the topic as viewed by the participants. (pp. 19-20)

As reviewed by Padula and Miller (1999), "Qualitative studies are especially appropriate for defining important variables and developing new ideas, an area of critical need in our study of women" (p. 328). Padula (1994) felt this was currently needed in reentry areas. She believed qualitative studies using triangulation and multimedia in data collection could be used to identify themes of service needs and desires. A greater understanding of the impact of reentry women into post-secondary schools, the world of work, or both, "requires more involvement with women in their own natural setting, allowing them to express their concerns from their own perspective. A qualitative study would permit this type of in-depth discussion through the use of semi-structured interviews" (Avery, 1996, pp. 79-80).

According to Lott (1999), psychologists have begun to pay attention to qualitative methods as a means of gathering information. She further revealed within feminist psychology, qualitative methods were regarded by some as most appropriate to gaining knowledge about women's lives. Lott believed qualitative research was best suited to studying the richness of individual experiences, and as pointed out by Padula and Miller (1999), the richness of the qualitative case-study method lies in its use of the words of the participant. Padula and Miller noted Reinhartz (1992), in her book, Feminist

Methods in Social Research, "suggested that feminist interest in case studies stems from the desire to document aspects of women's lives and achievements (p. 171) and that case studies are essential for putting women on the map of social life (p. 174)" (p. 330). Additionally, they pointed out Reinhartz maintained case studies have the power to convey vividly the dimensions of a social phenomenon or individual life. The case study method provided a powerful avenue to explore the experiences of all women, and give voice to those experiences.

Padula and Miller (1999) cited the following important characteristics of qualitative research:

1. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings. Researchers enter participants' worlds without purposefully manipulating or altering the context (Eisner, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988).
2. Qualitative research is inductive. Hypotheses are not established a priori and theory emerges from the data rather than testing or verifying preexisting theory (Creswell, 1994; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987; Meriam, 1988).
3. The researchers are the primary data-collection instruments (Eisner, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miriam, 1988). Researchers interact with participants (Creswell, 1994) and cannot function apart from the context and participants. This adds sensitivity and responsiveness to the research process (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990).
4. Qualitative data are descriptive in nature and are presented in words or pictures

rather than numbers (Frankel & Wallen, 1990; Locke et al., 1987; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988).

5. The focus of qualitative research is participants' perceptions and experiences and the way they make sense of their lives (Frankel & Wallen, 1990; Locke et al., 1987; Merriam, 1988). Realities are constructed by the participants in the research, and multiple realities exist (Creswell, 1994). Creswell suggested that researchers need to "report faithfully these realities and to rely on voices and interpretations of informants" (p. 6).
6. Process is of greater importance than product in qualitative inquiry. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how things occur, rather than simply identifying outcomes (Frankel & Wallen, 1990; Merriam, 1988).
7. Qualitative research is developing its own language. Creswell (1994, p.6) contended that words such as "understanding, discovery, and meaning [form] the glossary of emerging qualitative terms." (pp. 328-329)

Gay and Airasian (2000) described the following 6-step procedure for analyzing qualitative data:

1. Data Management. The data must first be collected and managed in a way that can be studied and organized effectively. The two main purposes of this step are to organize the data and check it for completeness, and to start the process of analyzing and interpreting the data.

2. Reading and Memoing. Interpreting the data involves becoming familiar with them and identifying any main themes that exist. Reading, reading, and rereading the data provides an opportunity for the researcher to become familiar with the information.
3. Describing. The data must then be examined in depth in search of detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, and activities. This provides the reader with a better understanding of the context in which the study took place.
4. Classifying. Pieces of the data must be categorized, coded, and grouped into themes. " The typical way qualitative data are broken down and organized is through the process of classifying, which means ordering field notes or transcriptions into categories that represent different aspects of the data" (p. 242).
5. Interpreting. The organized data must be interpreted and synthesized into general conclusions or understandings. In this step, the concepts and relationships that have been identified in the analysis are clarified for the audience.
6. Writing the Report. Finally, a written report must describe the study and its findings. This "will lead to reexamination of your data interpretation as well as producing the report" (pp. 253-254).

Summary

This chapter has presented theoretical and practical considerations relating to the salient factors inherent in the life experiences of reentry women as they prepare for or engage in a new life role. In addition, an overview of the methodology involved in qualitative research is provided. The qualitative methodology, as it pertains to the present study, will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, the overall methodology of the study is discussed. The content focuses on providing a description of the sample population involved in the study, the development of the interview process, interview questions presented to the participants, data analysis, and issues of reliability and validity as they pertain to qualitative research.

Research Design

The basic purpose of the research design was to study women who had chosen to reenter either post-secondary institutions or the workforce. These were women who returned after a period of absence, or who opted not to attend school or enter the workforce upon directly completing secondary education, but had now decided to do so. Attention was directed to academic, career, and personal aspects as they affected the experiences of these reentry women.

The data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews guided by the research questions stated in Chapter 1 and the literature review in Chapter 2. Open-ended questions were designed to allow the women to respond freely and without any constraints.

Participants

The women selected for this study were registered participants with the Center for Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE), Bay Roberts, Newfoundland.

WISE is a not-for-profit, community based organization currently offering career development programs and related support services for women in three separate locations in Newfoundland, namely St. John's, Bay Roberts and Gander. A twelve-week Career Exploration Program offers a flexible, holistic approach to career exploration and development, designed to assist women who are seeking to enter or reenter the labour market or who are looking to redirect their career paths.

There were 11 women included in this study. These women were selected according to certain criteria. They were required to be within the age range of 19 to 40 plus. They had to be women reentering either the workforce or a post-secondary institution following a period of absence, or women who had not entered either of these areas upon completion of secondary school, and were opting to do so now. Participation in the study was voluntary. The study included all 11 women participating in the program and was conducted at the WISE center.

During the initial meeting with the 11 participants, the investigator informed the participants, both verbally and in writing, of the following: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the researcher's role, (c) how the study was to be conducted, (d) how the study involved the participants, (e) the time required to conduct the study, and (f) expected outcomes (see Appendix A). Prior to any interview sessions, the women were required to sign consent forms giving permission to take part in the research project (see Appendix B). All of the women were willing and anxious to participate in the study. To protect the identity of the participants and to ensure confidentiality, fictitious names were used.

Methodology

For the purpose of this research a case study was conducted (Altrichter et al., 1993; Harvey, 1990; McKernen, 1996; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995) using interviews. and documentation journals that consisted of personal narratives. The information from these sources provided a collection of evidence on the research topic. This permitted the narratives to be viewed from various vantage points and to correlate methods with perspectives (McKernen). As reviewed by Padula and Miller (1999), Yin (1989) noted a key characteristic of case study research is the use of multiple sources of evidence (p. 331).

Padula and Miller (1999) reported the goal of a case study research is to seek understanding of the case (p. 330). The goal of the present research was to provide an understanding of the experiences reentry women encountered as they chose to return to post-secondary school or the world of work after a period of absence. In reviewing the literature, Padula and Miller revealed that case studies focus on one specific phenomenon of interest (such as a specific individual, program, event, process, or institution) and study that phenomenon in depth (p. 330). In the present research, reentry women were selected to provide their perceptions of the phenomenon of interest, namely reentry experiences. According to Padula and Miller, Yin (1989) suggested "case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" and "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real-life context" (p. 330). The purpose of this

research was to explore reentry women's real-life experiences returning to school, the workforce, or both, focusing on how they perceive and interpret those experiences.

Personal Interviews

As part of the case study, personal interviews were conducted (Altrichter et al., 1993; Cortazzi, 1993; Gay & Airasian, 2000; Harvey, 1990; Merriam, 1988; McKennan, 1996; Stake, 1995). This methodology provided access to individuals' perceptions, thoughts, attitudes, and opinions that lie behind their behaviour. It provided in-depth information on issues related to reentry women, for example, motivations to returning, life changes they experienced and how they felt about these life changes, and extraneous factors that were involved with their reentry process. In this setting the interviewer was able to examine individual attitudes, interests, feelings, concerns, and values (Gay & Airasian).

The 11 women chosen from the WISE program provided a cross section of women who were reentering for various reasons, both personal and situational. Some of these women were reentering voluntarily, while others were reentering because they felt they had no other choice but to do so. This, then, provided a selection of women who indicated differing attitudes related to their reentry.

The essential components of the interview followed the format outlined by Gay and Airasian (2000). A semi-structured approach was used. This provided an opportunity for the participants to take the lead and reflect at will what they considered important. The questions and the order of presentation were determined prior to the interview sessions. The questions were opened-ended (see Appendix C) with the use of additional prompting and probing when necessary. All interviews were audio-taped.

Components of the interview included:

1. The questions were developed based on theories of women's career development, the counselling of women, and the information gathered through the literature review.
2. The interviews were approximately one hour to one and a half hours in length and were conducted at the interviewees convenience at the WISE Center.
3. All interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interview at an initial meeting and again prior to conducting the interviews in person.
4. Interviewees were informed they could refrain from answering any questions with which they felt uncomfortable, and could have any questions repeated or clarified if needed.
5. Good rapport was established between the interviewer and the women, and they were informed where to contact the researcher if needed.
6. The interviewees were informed of the potential use of the data, namely, to help delineate pertinent factors relating to experiences of reentry women.
7. The women felt comfortable with the idea that such information may be beneficial in helping reentry women of the future. All of the women expressed interest and enthusiasm about participating in the study.

The interviews were conducted during the month of March 2001. The women were chosen randomly for each interview session. Two or three interviews per day were conducted, depending on the availability of participants and the length of time required for each interview.

Prior to conducting the interviews, it was made clear to the interviewees all responses would be held in strictest confidence. It was of utmost importance to develop a good sense of rapport and trust with the participants, and stress confidentiality. All responses were anonymous. To help the participants feel relaxed and at ease with the interview setting, a short conversation including questions about their children, marital status, previous work and post-secondary school experiences, was conducted prior to asking the interview questions. Participants were informed they would have an opportunity to review all documents that involved them. A time and place would be arranged at their convenience.

During the interview, the researcher took notes where it was beneficial to do so; however, note taking was limited, as taking notes during the interview may have distracted the process and could have altered the flow of the session (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Tape recording provided a verbatim account of the session and provided the researcher with the original data for use at any time.

Documentation Journals

The present research also included documentation journals (Cortazzi, 1993; Harvey, 1990; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995). This consisted of a written narrative by the individuals who participated in the personal interviews. Personal documents written by individuals are first person accounts of the whole or parts of their lives, or their reflections on a specific event or topic (Merriam, 1988). These personal narratives were written by the participants, on their own time, and submitted to the researcher.

Participants in this research were asked to write an account of what led up to their decision to reenter, and the actual reentering itself. They were asked to include some life history related to this event in their lives, and to focus on such things as the events following completion of high school, motivations to reenter, barriers and stresses they encountered, support they received from others, changes in their life-roles, positive factors related to their reentry, and any counselling they may have received. The personal journals provided an opportunity to learn more about each individual participant, the person, the situation, and the reentry event itself.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research relies on data in the form of narratives, tape recordings, and field notes. Gay and Airasian (2000) stated "Qualitative data are usually analyzed using interpretative rather than statistical analysis" (p. 5). In analyzing the data for the proposed study, it was necessary for the present researcher to be cognizant that data analysis takes place simultaneously with data collection. All data had to be managed efficiently for the purpose of studying. The data were analyzed following the steps for analyzing qualitative data outlined by Gay and Airasian.

Data Management

"The first step to data analysis is managing the data so that it can be studied" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 239). All audio-tapes were carefully reviewed and transcribed. All transcripts were then checked and rechecked against the original tapes to ensure accuracy. The transcriptions of the tapes were verbatim. Copies were made of all field

notes, transcripts, and personal narratives for the purpose of marking and underlining important sections while still retaining a clean, unmarked copy of the original data.

During this process the researcher was able to examine any comments, memos, or notes that were made on the field notes or interview transcripts. The emerging of certain themes, patterns, and issues were noted by the researcher, however, more detailed analysis was required to uncover the meaning of the data.

Organizing the Data

The data were broken down and classified using four iterative steps:

1. Reading and memoing - In this first step the field notes, transcripts, and personal narratives were read in order to get a sense of the data. During this reading, notes were taken, and sections and issues that appeared important were underlined for further analysis. At this time, the researcher also searched for themes and common threads that seemed to reoccur throughout the data.
2. Describing - In this second step, the researcher examined the data in-depth to provide detailed descriptions of the settings as they related to the lives of the women included in the study. This helped to provide a clear picture of the settings and events that were an integral part of their lives and played an important role in their life experiences as they related to reentry. This enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the context that influenced the actions and understandings of these women.

   In the process of describing, the researcher also paid careful attention to present the views of the participants. According to Gay and Airasian (2000), "how

participants define situations and explain their actions are important to describe thoroughly" (p. 242). In this step, the researcher searched for information regarding the participants' interactions and social relations and how these influenced their reentry process.

3. Classifying - In the third step, data were classified by reading and rereading field notes, transcripts and personal narratives, examining and comparing concepts to one another and making connections. The constant comparison method described by Gay and Airasian (2000) was used, whereby the present researcher made constant comparisons of identified topics or concepts acquired though the interview questions and the participants' responses (p. 243). Distinctive characteristics were determined and the contents were ordered into categories that represented different aspects of the data. Categories included the many factors that affected the lives of the reentry women and played an important role in their reentry process and their lives in general.
4. Interpreting - The final step in organizing the data involved the "reflective, integrative, and explanatory aspect of dealing with a study's data" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 250). Here it was important to work towards producing an account that was understandable for both the researcher and the audience. In this step, the researcher identified and abstracted important understandings from the categories developed in step three. It was important to search for data considered relevant to the study and to determine which data could be deleted from the final product. Gay and Airasian asserted, "Rarely is every piece of data incorporated into the interpretation and

report of a study" (p. 251). This involved identifying the important themes or meanings of the data, and determining what data was important, why it was important, and what could be learned from it in relation to the participants and the context of the study. This was accomplished by examining closely the categories that contained the data and identifying important concepts for interpretation. The categories were scrutinized for sequences and patterns.

When analyzing data, it was important for the present researcher to remember these steps were interrelated and would not necessarily always follow a linear fashion. Also, the researcher had to be aware that the quality of the analysis and interpretation depended heavily on the researcher's ability to think, imagine, hypothesize, and analyze (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Writing the Report

According to Gay and Airasian (2000), "The final stage in the qualitative research process is the writing of a report to describe the study and its findings" (p. 253). In writing this report, the researcher re-examined the data interpretations before producing the report. During the writing process, the researcher reflected on the data and interpretations to assist in understanding the writing and to provide a coherent, logical description.

The research report included the purpose or focus of the study, information about existing literature, and the background of the study. Additionally, it included descriptions of the data, the methods used to collect it, descriptions of the participants and context, development of categories and patterns, quotes and examples to illustrate

the data, and major interpretations and findings. Finally, the report included major conclusions, implications of the findings, and possible suggestions for future research. The aim of the written report was to present the themes that emerged from the data in a manner that would retain the voice of the women involved.

Reliability and Validity

Dyke (1992) and Avery (1996) indicated qualitative studies should not be evaluated using the conventional method of reliability and validity associated with quantitative studies. Maxwell (1996) stated:

> There are important differences between quantitative and qualitative designs in the ways they typically deal with validity threats. Quantitative and experimental researchers generally attempt to design, in advance, controls that will deal with both anticipated and unanticipated threats to validity.... Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, rarely have the benefit of formal comparisons, sampling strategies, or statistical manipulations that "control for" the effect of particular variables, and they must try to rule out most validity threats after the research has begun, using evidence collected during the research .... (p. 88)

In qualitative research, the data collected from the participants are extensive and detailed. Because of the depth of the data, and because of the personal perspectives and biases brought to the study by the researcher, important questions and answers must be considered. According to Gay and Airasian (2000), it is important to know how much confidence can be placed in the data that has been collected, the quality of the data that has been obtained from the participants, and if personal biases of the researcher have

intruded in the data collection process. This information relates to the validity of the data collected. As stated by Palys (1997):

> Qualitative researchers believe that understanding people's perceptions requires getting close to "research participants" or "informants" or "collaborators." You must spend time with them, get to know them, feel close to them, be able to empathize with their concerns, perhaps even be one of them, if you hope to truly [italics added] understand. This approach directly contradicts the quantitative view that "objective" understanding requires aloof detachment, lest the researcher "lose perspective."
>
> Some qualitative researchers believe that one can never understand a group of which one is not a part - that male researchers can never truly understand what it means to be a woman, that non-Aboriginal researchers can never know what it means to "grow up Indian," or that someone who has never spent time in prison will never completely understand what it means to do time. (p. 19)

To help improve the validity of the data collected, the present researcher, as suggested by Gay and Airasian (2000), used several strategies. A concerted effort was made to obtain participant trust and comfort. A preliminary meeting was held where the researcher met with the women, as a group, and provided a personal introduction with some background information on her involvement in the study. Additionally, the researcher discussed the research project, informing the participants of the purpose, the researcher's role, how the study would be conducted, and the extent of involvement that would be required by them. Prior to each interview session, the researcher engaged the participants in informal conversation to help them feel relaxed and at ease with the

situation. The purpose of this was to assist in gaining more detailed, honest information from the participants.

Gay and Airasian (2000) pointed out observer effects and observer bias may pose threats to the validity of the interview method. During the interview and data management processes, it was important for the present researcher to be aware of her own background, experiences, preferences, and attitudes, and ensure that these factors did not influence the interview process, especially as per interviewer observations, personal reflections, and interpretations. Additionally, the interviewer had to be aware of identifying with any one or more participants, and the possibility of influencing how she interpreted information from different participants.

The participants in this study responded to open-ended questions in a semi-structured format. Allowing the participants to take the lead and reflect on what they considered important provided for accuracy of findings, as truth was subject-oriented, and not researcher-defined. As stated by Gay and Airasian (2000), "the interview may also result in more accurate and honest responses, since the interviewer can explain and clarify both the purposes of the research and individual questions...it allows follow-up on incomplete or unclear responses by asking additional probing questions" (p. 291). Altrichter et al. (1993) noted the answers to the interview questions were subject to the interviewees interpretations at the time, their perceptions of the events as they occurred, and the fact that sometimes information may be withheld. Questions posed by the researcher, to assist in clarification of participants' viewpoints and to ensure understanding on the part of the researcher, facilitated the data analysis.

Verbatim accounts of the interviews were used through collecting and recording data with tape recordings. This information was then transcribed in the exact words related by the participants. This method provided an accurate and complete description of their responses to the interview questions. Additionally, the participants submitted personal narratives, providing their own written account of factors relating to their reentry experiences.

The present researcher maintained a personal journal of pertinent information during the study. This allowed the researcher to review personal reflections and concerns when examining and analyzing the data collected.

Where the researcher felt it was necessary, further feedback was received from participants. This was acquired at the end of the entire data collection period and allowed for confirmation of accuracy and meaning, and provided additional data for the researcher.

Triangulation was employed through the use of the following data sources: (a) a questionnaire, devised for the purpose of gaining necessary background information, (b) interview questions, (c) personal narratives, and (d) field notes. According to Maxwell (1996), "this strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that you develop" (pp. 93 - 94).

Rothe (1993) pointed out all qualitative researchers do not consider reliability a major concern in their work. Reliability is oftentimes viewed as an irrelevant feature because of the differing realities of people, the constantly changing situations, and the different

perspectives of researchers on the topic of study. Rothe indicated in other instances an important issue was "the extent to which another researcher with similar methodological training, understanding of the field setting, and rapport with the subjects will make similar observations" (p. 124). Rothe stated, "These researchers suggest that reliability can be attained if the researchers explain their observational procedures" (pp. 124 - 125).

Creswell (1994) discussed the limitations in replicating a study. According to Creswell:

> Like the issue of generalizability, the uniqueness of a study within a specific context mitigates against replicating it exactly in another context. However, statements about the researcher's positions - the central assumptions, the selection of informants, the biases and values of the researcher - enhance the study's chances of being replicated in another setting. (p. 159)

Thus, reliability appears to pose a problem task for any researcher studying qualitative behaviour. It would be impossible to precisely reconstruct the unique situations that arise in such studies. As Avery (1996) pointed out, because of the process of change in natural settings, replication can only be approximated, never entirely achieved. This necessitates the importance of understanding the findings by other researchers rather than repeating them.

Participants in qualitative studies willingly relate their experiences in hopes that these experiences will be understood and truthfully retold so that others may benefit from them. They trust the researcher to present a correct interpretation of their story to consider it important and authentic. Erickson's (1986) research as reviewed by

LeCompte, Millroy, and Preissle (1992) considered the importance of the way the "story" was told, and the evidence for its authenticity provided. Erickson asserted:

> The story persuades the reader that things were in the setting as the author claims they were, because the sense of immediate presence captures the reader's attention. and because the concrete particulars of the events reported in the [story] instantiate the general analytic concepts (patterns of culture and social organization) the author is using to organize the research report....In sum, richness of detail in and of itself does not make a [story] ethnographically valid. Rather it is the combination of richness and interpretive perspective that makes the account valid. Such a valid account is not simply a description; it is an analysis. Within the details of the story, selected carefully, is contained a statement of a theory of organization and meaning of the events described. (pp. 649 - 650)

Summary

The overall methodology of the study has been presented in this chapter. In Chapter 4 the research findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews and the personal narratives of the participants will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Chapter

The research findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews are presented in this chapter. Each of the factors considered important in the experiences encountered by reentry women to post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both, researched in the literature, are discussed and presented using quotes from the participants. The women presented their reentry experiences in their own words. Throughout the report, all people are identified by fictitious names. The following factors are discussed: motivations, barriers (prior to reentry and following reentry), support systems, multiple roles, positive factors, and counselling services.

The data presented in this chapter are the results of the data analyses process. The process began by listening to the audio-taped interviews. Careful analysis was made of the transcribed audio-tapes. Transcriptions were checked against the original tapes to ensure accuracy and determine whether the semi-structured interviews provided the necessary information for the study. Transcripts were photocopied to assist the researcher to record on the copied files. The originals were kept, thus providing for continuous referral. Each category in each file was scrutinized for pertinent information. Personal narratives, written by the women, were examined in the same manner to ascertain factors of personal experiences related to reentry.

As discussed in Chapter 3, a brief conversation provided an introduction to the women, and a short questionnaire gathered information on age, marital status, family size, work, and post-secondary school experience. The research findings obtained from questions on factors relating to reentry experiences of women have been placed in the remaining subsections of this chapter.

The majority of the women in this study were married with two children. One woman was a widow with two children, and two other women were separated or divorced, and have one and two children respectively. Two of the women were single with no children. The highest level of education received included: (a) less than high school completion for four women, (b) high school diploma for three women, (c) some college education for one woman, and (d) college diploma or certificate for three women. The length of time since they were members of the workforce ranged from less than 1 year for three women, 1 to 5 years for three women, 6 to 10 years for three women, and 11 to 15 years for two women.

Motivations

Personal Reasons

For 9 out of 11 women interviewed, the main personal reason cited for reentry was a desire to do something for themselves, to have an opportunity to "get out of the house." This included women who were married and single. For some, it was a matter of avoiding boredom, wanting a change, and to widen the social network beyond the family. One single woman stated, "Well, I've been in the workforce for six years. I'm a

seasonal worker, home during the winter months, bored to death. So I decided to go back to school, more or less to keep myself busy and occupied." Beth said:

> I found I had to do something for myself or stay home all day and bite my nails right down to the cuticles, or whatever. I'd be home doing nothing. You can only do so much housework. It's a change for myself, to get out and do something for myself.

Most of the women, who were mothers, said their children were either in school all day or had graduated from high school. These women experienced boredom being home, or felt they now had the opportunity to do something they had always wanted to do. As one woman pointed out, "The thing that made me decide to go back to school was that I have my kids in school full time and I didn't have a job, and I was tired of staying home and doing nothing." Jill commented:

> I know I've raised my two kids and they're in school full time, and I'm ready to go and have a career - not to get away from them, just to have something for myself. I've been at it so long.

Another woman stated, "From 1990 I've been pretty much a stay-at-home mom. Now that both my children are in school full time, I would like to go back in the workforce and start to socialize again."

Other personal reasons offered by the women for wanting to return included (a) the need to be more independent, (b) the desire to achieve a long awaited career goal, (c) to set up some form of insurance, (d) to help look at life in a better way, or (e) to be working like their friends.

Other Reasons

Of all the women interviewed, nine indicated financial reasons, or needing a second income, as a motivation for reentry. Some thought they had no other choice but to seek employment. As Jean, a widow, pointed out, "For me, mostly, it was forced back because my husband passed away. When he died my income was cut in half, but you still got to pay bills." Another woman, Michele recently experienced a marriage separation and felt she needed to work to get an income. She said, "I knew I had to do something, to try to get work, find something sensible to do."

Many women thought one income was simply not sufficient for raising a family, and expressed concerns about the difficulties of providing for a growing family of children. As Allison pointed out, "The older the children get, the more they need, and it's more expensive." Some specific concerns included, providing "brand name clothes" for their children so they could keep up with friends, not having to put the children on hold for things they wanted, and the expenses of having children involved in activities such as hockey and figure skating. One woman stated in her narrative, "One income alone is just not enough." Jill said:

> Well, a second income would make things a lot easier. My husband is a fisherman and we've been on one income since we were married. It's hard on one income, but I know if we had two, it could be a lot easier.

Some women commented on the unfairness of having to do without things for

themselves. When asked about other motivations for reentry, Judy noted:

> A lot of it was money. My kids don't do without, but I find myself doing without, and if I had a good job I don't think I would have to make so many sacrifices that I find I'm making now. You feel left out from the group because you can't afford to do this, like Buddy Waisname and the Other Fellers were in Carbonear, and I couldn't afford to do that. So, if I was making good money, then once in awhile you wouldn't mind having to sacrifice a bit for that one thing.

Although eight of the women indicated wanting to do something for themselves as a motivation for reentry, nine cited needing an extra income was a motivation as well. Both reasons appeared to be highly influential factors for these women in making the reentry decision.

Sources of Motivation

It was interesting to note, 10 of the 11 women said the final decision to reenter was their own. However, even though nine of the women mentioned a desire to get out of the house and do something for themselves was a reason for reentry, only four stated they were their own main source of motivation. The remainder of the women named husband, family, or friends as the most important source of motivation. This is not entirely surprising, as is evident when the issue of self-confidence is discussed later in this chapter. When asked whom she would consider her main source of motivation for reentry, Jane replied, "I'd say my husband. Well, he knew I was out for so long and I wanted to get out to go to work, and he kinda helped me, he talked to me and kinda

pushed a little further." Allison's response was:

> My boyfriend - he encouraged me to go back. I didn't feel I was smart enough to go back to school and he knew I always wanted to be a nurse, so he's encouraged me to go back and do it.

Interestingly, of the four women who said they were self-motivated to return, Jean, was a widow who felt forced back into the workforce, and Michele, was recently separated from her husband. When asked to identify her main source of motivation, Michele remarked, "Myself - I just realized I had to do something, husband was gone, had a son, couldn't sit in the house all day long and be on social services, because that's what it would amount to." Obviously, two of the four women who were self-motivated felt they had no other choice but to return to the workforce.

Barriers (Prior to Reentry)

Barriers

The 11 women were asked to think back to the decision-making process prior to reentry, and to consider any barriers or obstacles they perceived at that time. Six of the women were concerned about children. This especially included feelings of guilt about leaving the children for a portion of the day. One woman, Judy, who still had children at home all day, said the guilt was huge. Jill also felt badly about being away from home. When asked about barriers, she replied:

> My kids, one thing about leaving them, even though they were in school, I used to bring them home for lunch every day, and well then, that way I made sure they had a

> good lunch, but now they'd have to bring their lunch to school, or buy it, and to me, that was one thing I didn't like at all.

Apprehensions about childcare also presented a barrier. In the process of decision-making for reentry, most of the women had to decide who would take care of their children. At that time, many of the women were not sure who this would be. Judy wondered if she would need to get a babysitter and would he or she do a good job. Allison was concerned about what to do with her children if they had a day off school.

Two of the women expressed a concern about furthering their education, travelling distances, and longer classtime. Allison pointed out:

> I'll need a babysitter because John will be going back to work, so that's a little bit scary, because I gotta find a babysitter....and I'm gonna be gone before they leave to go to school, and it doesn't finish until 3:30 in the day. They're gonna be home, so I gotta find someone to be with them for an hour after school. So, I'm a little bit worried about that.

Jane also expressed concern:

> Well, the kids, I'm thinkin' if I went to St. John's, I'd have to go to work before they'd have to get up to go to school. Well, I'd need somebody there, you know, to get them off to school. I think the children were the main concern.

Even though six of the eight women who had dependent children considered childcare a barrier when making the decision to return, only three women considered it the greatest obstacle. Most mothers said they knew other family members would care for their children.

Accessibility of the Center

During the decision-making process, the majority of the women said the location of the WISE Center was not a problem. For most women it was about a 15 or 20 minute drive. Location seemed to pose difficulty only for those who also had transportation problems. With no bus services in the area, transportation was the responsibility of the individual. Some of the women did express concerns they had in this area at the time of decision-making. Carol remarked, "A barrier would be transportation, because we have only one vehicle and unless I can go out and get to work we can't afford to keep a second vehicle....My husband works and he has to take the car." Jill, who would have to drive 30 to 35 minutes stated:

> Another barrier was driving by myself, but I do it anyway. I was scared about comin' back and forth over here by myself. Well, it's not that far, it's only about a half-hour, but still I gotta come across the Barrens. I was really petrified about the drive. Well it would have been better if it was closer to me, no doubt.

Some of the women were anxious about location and transportation in the future, when they entered the workforce or attended further schooling. Allison noted, "Well, I'm worried about that because I got to find a way back and forth, you know, so I gotta try and meet up with somebody at the school and hope that we can car-pool back and forth." Jane, who hopes to enter the workforce, said:

> I wouldn't mind goin' back and forth to St. John's if I had to, I mean anywhere in the Conception Bay area. I wouldn't drive any longer than about an hour or 45 minutes.

Well, my husband, when he's workin', he got the van. We'd definitely have to get a second vehicle.

Admission and Educational Requirements

Admission and educational requirements did not present an obstacle for all of the women when they were making the decision to reenter. Most women said they did not think there were any admission requirements. Judy commented, "As long as you're an adult woman there's no problem." Patricia, however, stated, "Well I didn't know what the admission requirements were at that time...I didn't know what was required. I mean, whether it was dress clothes and stuff like that, or not." Carol also considered admission requirements somewhat of a barrier in her decision-making. She remarked, "Getting into the actual program was a little bit hard because they only pick so many people, so we had to come down and do an interview and that. But, other than that I think it was pretty good."

Of the 11 women, 4 had less than a high school education, 3 had a high school diploma, 1 had some college education, and 3 had a college diploma or certificate. None of the women said educational requirements posed a barrier to entering the WISE program. However, of the eight women who had decided to further their education, some did express concerns in this area, as well as in the area of admission requirements to a post-secondary institution.

Several women said financial costs could be a barrier. Beth indicated admission fees might cause a problem, especially for someone who is not eligible for Employment Insurance. One woman mentioned she was counting on her Employment Insurance

eligibility to fund the course by helping with admission fees, transportation and childcare costs. Catherine commented:

> I'm considering going back to school. The only thing I can see standing in my way would be transportation and financial. If I don't get financial help with it, well then. I will have to go back to work first before I go back to school.

When asked if admission requirements for future schooling might be a barrier, Judy replied, "Maybe the cost of admission, some are $100.00 fees, which is a lot when you have a family. I see that as a little bit outrageous, when some other schools are $25.00."

One other concern for future studies was the wait list for entrance to some of the courses. Michele noted there was a two-year waiting list for the Medical Laboratory course she hoped to do.

Some of the women would be required to do upgrading, or further course work before they could enter the field of study in which they were interested. For most, this did not pose a major problem. However, as Jill pointed out:

> Well, I only have grade 10. You're not going to get very far with just grade 10, not nowadays. That's why it's important now for me to get to grade 12, 'cause you need grade 12 to do a lot of courses.

Michele remarked, "I'm back now doing ABE (Adult Basic Education) ... to get courses I need. I'm taking more courses than I need, but because I've been out of school for so long, I want to get a better background."

Class Scheduling

None of the women said class scheduling was a concern when considering attending the WISE Center. All of the mothers with school children knew the hours would be perfect because the children would be gone to school before they left in the morning and they would be home before the children, or around the same time, in the afternoon. Mothers with children who needed childcare all day either had their husbands at home or had a family member, usually the children's grandparent, to care for them. Most of the mothers indicated this type of childcare would also be available if they went to work, or attended a post-secondary school anytime in the future. Only one of the women noted if the scheduling had been different, it probably would have prevented her from attending.

The women did not express any major concerns for scheduling in their future plans either. Allison, who would have to travel the longest distance, planned to attend a post secondary school following the WISE program. When asked about class scheduling for this, she said, "I will find it hard because of time on the road, class time, and study time - a lot of commitments. I can see problems with transportation and childcare."

The women did not consider class scheduling to be a great barrier. This was considered in relation to childcare availability. None of the mothers expressed any preference for night classes over day classes, but seemed to feel any schedule would be workable for them. It would be interesting to know how scheduling would have affected them if such easily accessible childcare was not available.

Level of Self-Confidence

Level of self-confidence proved to be a fascinating topic during the interview sessions. Of the 11 women, 8 said they had very low self-confidence and self-esteem during the decision-making process, prior to entering the WISE program. It was interesting to hear the explanations of how insecure they felt at that time. In her narrative, one woman mentioned the stress she felt relating to "fitting in and being accepted by the group." Some women worried about coping with going back to school and how difficult it would be. Catherine stated, "I didn't know if it was goin' to be too hard for me to handle." Carol indicated she had a lot of doubts about what she was getting into and where she was going in her life. Some of the women thought even though their self-confidence was low, deep down they could accomplish their goals. As Judy related, "I knew I could do it, but there was always that question, are you sure you can really do it?"

When asked about her level of self-confidence prior to reentry, Allison stated:

> Not good, definitely not good. I don't have high self-esteem, for sure, and I got a fear of what I don't know about. That makes it really, really hard. Just not bein' good enough .... I didn't know what this was all about. I thought we were gonna be tested on stuff, and that was a fear, because I don't have high self-esteem.

In response to the same question, Jill replied:

> It wasn't good. It wasn't very high. I was scared. I was wonderin' what it was all about. I didn't know if it was gonna be like bein' in a classroom. I was scared if I was

gonna have to stand up in public and speak. Coming here to meet the new people - I came here and didn't know a soul here.

Michele believed the greatest barrier for her was the fear of going back. She remarked, "After being out so long, could I do the work?" Catherine replied, "Well I was nervous, too quiet probably. I get nervous if I gotta go and do something. I was wondering if it was gonna be a hard program."

Jill, who plans to attend post secondary school in the near future, expressed her concern:

What scares me about going back to school, I think it's the thought of being in a school. I have the thought in my mind of being in with younger students, not my age, and that's what scares me - and that I'm not smart enough to go ahead and do it.

Low self-confidence appeared to be a significant issue for most of the reentry women. As mentioned previously in this chapter, low self-confidence and self-esteem might have contributed to others, rather than self, as the main source of motivation for reentry. This is surprising when considering the majority of the women indicated "wanting to do something for themselves" as a personal reason for returning to school or the workforce. Obviously, the desire to do something and actually doing it can be very difficult for many women, and low self-confidence appears to be a contributing factor to this difficulty.

Additional Barriers

The women considered other significant barriers relating to the reentry decision. Four of the women indicated finances were an important consideration. This concern included

cost of travelling, possible childcare costs, and admission fees. Allison summed up the concerns in this statement, "Financial, that's a big thing. Well...right down to the gas money for comin' back and forth, and child care, lunch money, and just havin' to buy clothes to come here." Jill pointed out, "Money would have been a factor. I guess that would be for to go to college or somewhere, but not here because this was free."

Interestingly, two of the women felt dress code was a concern. As previously stated, Patricia was troubled about having to wear certain attire. She went on to say, "I'm not one for dress clothes." Judy expressed her apprehensions as follows:

> Another thing I was really worried about was, when you're home for 3 years and you got two little children, you don't buy yourself anything, just what you need, that's what I'm like. So, I was worried about, what am I gonna wear....I had to go and get some stuff, because when you're home all you have is sweat pants. When you're home for 3 years, your good clothes, you haven't worn it, and after having two babies it doesn't fit. That was huge for me. You need to know what the other women are wearing, and if you'll fit in that way.

The six married women seemed to feel their spouses would be supportive of their reentry decision. Only one woman, Judy, indicated she had some concerns about her husband's reaction. She stated:

> I didn't know how my husband would take it. I didn't ask his permission though. I pretty much told him. I was concerned about his reaction, definitely. You know, I thought he'd say, "Are you crazy, I got to stay home with the two kids from 8 o'clock

in the morning to 3 o'clock in the afternoon?" But, it just worked out. I'm really lucky that way. He loves to be home with them.

Beth's concern involved her children's reaction. It was very important to Beth she have the support of her two children before making her final decision to reenter, and remained a priority with her for future schooling or work. Before making a commitment, she said she would want to discuss it with her children. Beth stated:

> I haven't really discussed it with the kids to see how they will really feel about me going back to school, and explaining to them that there are times that I won't be able to help them out, and that probably the rest of the week might be alright, but on weekends, if I have books to do, I might not be able to spend quality time with them, and where they're so used to having that quality time, they might feel left out. I haven't really sat down with the two kids.... I find it hard to mention it to them, especially the younger one. If I find that I can talk to the kids now about possibly starting in September, but if I find they're not too keen on it at this moment, then I probably wouldn't go.

Jean, whose husband had passed away in March 2000, remarked she had concerns at the time of decision-making related to readiness. Jean inquired about the WISE program in June 2000 and had the interview, but as Jean said, "I figured I wouldn't come in June. I didn't really feel up to starting in June." She commented:

> Really, I think, at the time, where my husband passed away, I don't even know if I was thinking. When I first came, I was just checking it out. I really wasn't ready to come. It was June for the first one, September for the next, and then January. Even

when September came, I think, in the back of my mind I still wasn't really prepared to come.

Clearly, all of the women interviewed indicated many issues they considered barriers prior to reentering post secondary schooling or the workforce. As is evident from the comments presented, these issues often require women to struggle through the process of making important decisions in their lives.

Barriers (After Reentry)

The women were asked to consider barriers that existed for them during their participation in the WISE program. It was anticipated that barriers experienced by reentry women prior to reentry and after reentry could conceivably differ. As indicated in the following section, for many women the barriers were somewhat similar, however, barriers experienced in relation to self-confidence were notably different. It was felt all responses were worthy of note. Only half of the six women who mentioned childcare a barrier when making the decision to reenter still considered it a concern. This could be attributed to the availability of childcare by family members. The apprehensions experienced by these women mostly centered around the separation from children for part of the day, and feeling the need to make up for this when they returned home. Judy, who had expressed a concern prior to reentry about who she would get to care for her children, now remarked, "At home is wonderful, really, really, surprisingly wonderful." Her main worry at this point was ensuring she spent time with her children. Again, the issue of guilt feelings was presented as Carol discussed being away from her child. She

pointed out:

> My biggest barrier right now is my little girl and getting a babysitter for her. Right now my mother-in-law is looking after her, but it seems like she's raising her and I'm not. That's what it feels like, but I know I gotta get over that.

Michele also expressed a concern about going home after school hours and helping her son. When asked about barriers, Michele's first response was:

> Well, I guess being a single parent now. I mean, goin' home in the evenings and helpin' Tom, he's goin' through a hard time. He's 14 years old, me and his father are split up and that's not good.

Accessibility of the Center

All of the women, except one, thought the location of the WISE Center was good. Judy felt the location posed somewhat of a problem for her. This problem was related to transportation. Judy remarked:

> I don't have a vehicle to take so I need to get on the school bus in the morning. It's great to get on with the little children, but in the afternoon I got to get on with the high school children and that's awful. It's awful. Sometimes if we're late, or if we get out early or only have a morning session, then I have to arrange transportation to bring me home.

Other women expressed worries about transportation. For example, Catherine's car broke down, and she considered transportation her biggest problem at that point. Transportation was not easy for Carol because there was only one vehicle, required by her husband to get to his work. Most of the women, however, seemed to have worked

out the issue of transportation and were car-pooling together, had their own vehicle, or had access to a vehicle.

As previously noted some of the women who planned to do further post secondary courses or enter the workforce in a community farther away, were concerned about the location and transportation. Catherine pointed out:

> If I consider going back to school, I got to go to The College of the North Atlantic to do upgrading, which is in Carbonear. So that's a big distance from where I'm to, and you got to have a vehicle to go there.

Apprehensions about the location, both at the time and for the future, seemed to be linked with transportation concerns. Rural areas in the province of Newfoundland do not supply bus transportation to any of the major centers. In fact, even though a substantially large number of people living in the rural communities attend post secondary schools and work in these major centers, as well as in the capital city, no form of commuter transportation is available for them, other than private vehicles.

Class Scheduling

All of the women were pleased with the class schedule. For most, satisfaction with the class schedule seemed to center on the scheduling of their children's school day. When asked if scheduling was a barrier for her, Allison replied:

> No, not really, because in this program the hours are perfect, because they're from 9 until 2:30, so the children are gone to school before I leave and they're home before I get home. The only time I really have to worry about it, is if the children have a day off.

Carol expressed her feelings, consistent with the responses of the other women, "pretty good, really good. We start 9 in the morning, finish 2:30 in the afternoon, which is really good for me, because my mother-in-law lives next door, so I bring my little girl next door with her."

Academic and Time Demands

The women were asked to consider the academic work required for the WISE program and the time this involved. Out of the 11 women, 8 did not consider these demands as barriers. These women indicated work involved in the program was usually completed during class time. Carol replied, "What we do have to do in the nighttime is not too much." Allison was also doing a post-secondary night course. When asked about her academic demands with this course, she responded:

> My boyfriend helps me out, because when I go and study he takes care of the children.... He helps me with the studying too. So, I got a lot of support from him. And, I'm at it all the time. I'll probably pick up my book and study for half an hour instead of tryin' to cram it all in, in 4 hours. Or while I'm doin' the dishes, it's there and I'm readin' it, just so I don't have to miss a program with the kids, or miss tryin' to fit it all in. The time management skills they taught us here, helps me a lot.

However, this was not the case for all women. Three did feel that academic and time demands presented somewhat of a barrier for them. Judy remarked:

> I had to change my schedule. My time is gone now. I go home and spend some time with my children, then I'll cook supper... you got such a schedule to do. When the children were tucked in bed and I got my last minute things done, normally I would

sit down and watch a T.V. show, or do something. Now I find I'm reading something that was assigned. I don't mind, but I find sometimes you look at the time and it was 12 o'clock, and sometimes I feel like I was jipped of my relax time, just veggin' on the chesterfield or something like that. I find it's just takin' my own time.

Catherine is also doing a night course at college. She commented:

Well, I don't have any time to not do anything.... I'm busy all the time. This what started last night now (mid-term exam at the college), there's a lot of study involved in that, now I got to make time for that.

Jill, too, felt that the extra work placed certain demands on her time. Interestingly, Jill had to drive the longest distance each day to the center. She related her experience as follows:

Sometimes I find it hard to get it done. I do, because I'm here from 9 to 2:30 in the day. By the time I get home and get supper and that, I have so many things. Monday night I have to go out, I have meetings on Monday night. Tuesday night I'm a scout leader, and Wednesday night is the night that I'm usually home. Sometimes, I just don't get it done....Probably, if I get out 2:30, I'll just stay a few minutes extra behind and finish up what I'm doing. So, I will get it done, or either that, I'm up late, 'til probably 12:30. I get it done by the end of the week.

Even though 8 of the 11 women did not perceive academic demands as a barrier, it would be interesting to know how these demands would influence the women if there were more extensive studying involved than prescribed by the WISE program.

Level of Self Confidence

A majority of the women believed they had very low self-confidence prior to entering the WISE program. However, when asked about this after reentry, all the women replied they had very good self-confidence. They mentioned feeling less nervous, belonging to a group, able to do whatever they put their mind to, and being able to accomplish what they had thought was practically impossible.

When asked to describe her level of self-confidence after reentry, Michele responded:

> A lot better, WISE helped that. Before, I was down about everything. Now it's not like that. I consider myself just as good as anyone else.... WISE boosted my self-esteem. They make you feel good about yourself.

Jane discussed how her life had changed socially since reentry. She commented on her level of self-confidence:

> Oh, definitely a lot higher than it was. You know, I have a social life again and it makes me wanna get out more. Makes me feel I gotta get out and get a job. Where I've been home with the kids for so long, and not havin' a social life, this here, together with the girls and having some little social thing, it's good.

Patricia felt encouraged about her future prospects. She described her level of self-confidence after reentry:

> Really, really strong, really strong, by knowin' that once I get my mind made up on what I wanna do, I can do it. It's like I can do anything I put my mind to, and being able to see what's out there and what I wanna do, and actually goin' ahead and doin' it. I got a better understanding of things, like there is employment out there. I just

gotta take my time, I got to know what I want, and I got to look for it.... I got to believe in myself and know that I can do it.

Judy stated:

Well, I feel like I fit in pretty good with the group, which is wonderful, really good. I feel more positive, more outgoing, a lot more outgoing. I don't have the weight of the world. I got some time to myself at class, you know, to take a break. Which is all a boost in your self-confidence, your self-esteem.

One woman wrote in her narrative:

I am glad I made the decision I did to come back to school. It makes me feel good. It's made me have a different prospect on life, knowing with the right training I will be successful in finding employment. It's also made me believe in myself and have more self-confidence in myself. I know now I am ready to take the next big step as to deciding where I want to go from here.

One final comment from Carol on the topic of self-confidence after reentry:

Now, that I'm here, I think I can do anything. I can do anything now if I put my mind to it. It's been a really good program and I enjoy it and my peers, my fellow classmates, I mean, they really helped me and we helped each other. My self-confidence is good.

It was interesting to hear these women relate how differently they felt after only six weeks into their program at the WISE center. They seemed to feel they had a new lease on life and were eager to put their newfound convictions into practice by finding their

way into the world of work. It was amazing how such a short time in the reentry setting influenced their feelings, outlook, and beliefs.

Additional Barriers

Another barrier mentioned by four of the women was the competition that existed for admission to post-secondary courses and reentry to the workforce. When Michele was asked what she considered her greatest barrier since reentry, she replied, "Trying to get into the medical course. I'm worried that I won't get in." Three of the women were concerned about finding a job. Carol considered her greatest barrier was competition in the workforce. She commented:

> I would say that there's so many people out there working. They know more than I do, and just trying to get back into doing the different tasks and stuff. Where I've been away for awhile, I'll be competing with someone else and trying to get work.

Beth felt her greatest barrier was not having enough experience. She pointed out:

> You see all these ads and they want at least 1 to 5 years experience, or 1 to 2 years experience. You haven't got it. They're not going to take you into consideration over someone with 2 years of experience and you haven't got none.

One woman, whose husband worked night shifts, indicated her husband's reaction to her working was another possible barrier. She remarked:

> My husband is not too keen on the idea. He don't mind me being here, but it's the idea of the time it takes from us. When you only got a little bit of time you want to gather as much time as you can, or you end up being two ships that pass in the night.

Interestingly, Jean, who is a widow in her 50s, said her greatest barrier was that she did not want to work. As stated previously, Jean was reentering because she believed she had no other choice. She commented, "Right now at my stage in life I really don't want to work. I don't mind if it's just a few hours a day or something, but I don't want to commit to full time." Jean felt she would rather have the freedom to come and go as she pleased.

Surprisingly, only one woman mentioned finances as a barrier to reentry. None of the other women thought they were experiencing any such barriers during this time. Factors attributing to lack of financial difficulties may have included: (a) free participation in the WISE program, (b) short travelling distance for most of these women, (c) family care available for the children, (d) some of the women were receiving employment insurance and (e) one woman was receiving social service benefits.

Support Systems

The perceived support the women in this study received from others will be discussed in this section. Of the 11 women, 9 were either married, living in a common-law relationship, or had been married and were separated or widowed. All of these women had children, the majority of them requiring childcare services. The women were asked whose support they considered most important. For the majority of women with husbands or significant others, the first major support was their spouse. Many of them believed they would not be able to continue without this support. One woman responded:

My husband, because, he's there for the children and if there's anything he can do he'll do it. Then I don't have to worry about it being done. If they need something, and I'm not there, I don't have to worry about it.

The support they received from spouses or significant others included verbal support through encouragement. Jill described it:

He's all for me goin' back to school, and becoming a nurse because he knows that's what I wanted to do. Sometimes I'll say, "I don't know if I should be goin' back to school because I don't think I'm smart enough." He'll say, "you are smart enough." He's really, really definitely encouraging. He's tellin' me, "yes, you can go back to school, you can do this."

In addition to verbal support, these women mentioned support from their mates with childcare, household duties, and financial matters. Judy explained her husband's support as follows:

Actually, I'm very surprised. Before, when I was home, in regards to housework he didn't really do a whole lot. You know, he did stuff, but now,... when I go home in the afternoon,... he won't have the table set, but he'll have all the dishes out in a little pile so that it's easy to set. He'll have supper on. He tried laundry, I asked him to stay away from that. The beds, that's a huge one, he makes the beds. That's something he never did before, but he does it every single day, and he does a real good job. That's a huge support, because that bothers me so bad when the beds aren't made....I'll go home and the house is in, a lot of times, in better shape than what I left it in the morning. That's a big thing, because you don't want to spend all your time cleanin' up.

I'm so shocked by it, that it's unbelievable, because I didn't really think he had it in him.

Other family members were significant supports for some of the women as well. Three of the women mentioned parents and parents-in-law as important supports. For Jane, this was because they provided childcare whenever necessary. As Jane said about her mother-in-law, "I don't have to worry about the kids, she's there for them whenever they need her." Others felt parental support was significant because it was a source of motivation for them, and because they wanted their parents to be proud of them.

Three of the women thought their children's support was most important to them. Two of these women were single mothers. One was married, but her children, and not her spouse, were her most significant support. This woman stated:

I would say it would have to be the children, because if they don't approve of me going back to school, they can make your life, well, holy hell. More than likely, they're the ones that will have to take the majority of the toll on them. There's gonna be days there that they won't see their mother, there's gonna be days that they won't be able to sit down and have these conversations like we did before.

Michele pointed out her son was her most significant support. She remarked, "If he didn't want me goin', I don't know, I wouldn't feel right, bein' gone all the time."

The majority of the women also mentioned friends as a source of support. In all cases this was in the form of encouraging words and congratulations on going back to school. Comments were made such as, "You're doin' the right thing," or "yes, go for it." One woman said her friends were saying, "go girl," and, "yes I could see you doin' something

like that, I've always thought you had the knack, different things like that, that's support when they give you confidence like that." Patricia discussed the support from one of her friends, and how it motivated her to reentry:

> One of my friends, she's a telemarketer person, was never the type for dealing with people, and she said it's just unreal the different types of people that she deals with on a daily basis. She said to me, "you'd be suited to that because, where I've had the job of bein' a ticket seller at the festival, that's a worldwide thing, people from all over comes to it, and she said, "you'd feel comfortable at a job like this"....That's what kinda got me thinkin', where I worked at interacting with people from different places for the past ten years, and that's why I wanted to do something people oriented.

Interestingly, none of the women had received any form of counselling prior to reentry. One woman said the only counselling she can remember was through the guidance teacher in high school, for admission and course information. Another woman mentioned services she received through Human Resources in the form of directing her to school after she had been out of the workforce a few years. Otherwise, the women had received no counselling until they entered the WISE Center. When asked if they were aware of any support groups, other than WISE, available for reentry women, all of the women indicated they were not. Michele noted, "I don't really know, I mean they may be out there, but I don't know of any of them." Jean commented:

> No I didn't know of anything....Not that I can think of. Right now if I had to go and find somebody, I don't know, I'd have to ask somebody if they could recommend somebody. That's one thing, even with regard to help of any kind, it seems like you

got social assistance to help,...different things paid for, and your unemployment.... but someone like me who's in between – nothing - and I mean I don't know if there's anything there, but I haven't heard of anything, even with all the different things I've went through - nothing.

Undoubtedly, all the women received and appreciated support from various sources, especially family. For most of the women with children, support from their husbands appeared to be significant to them, whether it was verbal support or support with childcare or household chores.

Multiple Roles

Changing Roles

The reentry women in this study were already experiencing multiple roles in their lives, balancing the activities associated with the roles of wife, mother, housekeeper, daughter, friend, and citizen. Previously, most of these women had also been a worker outside the home. Upon entering the WISE program, and in some cases doing additional night classes, these women took on the added role of student. They were asked to consider if their role in life had changed, and how so.

Of the nine women with children, seven of them felt the biggest change for them was scheduling. Their lives had become busier, and things just didn't get done as quickly as usual. In all cases, they were referring to household chores. All of these women had to rearrange their daily schedule to accommodate the fact they were no longer home during the day and certain things still needed to be done. All of them also received help from their spouses and, to a certain extent, their children, however, they continued to carry

much of the responsibility of housework themselves. As Carol stated:

> Well, everything I used to do in the daytime, like house cleaning and looking after my little girl, basically is moved to after supper. So my time after supper, to myself, has been limited. The roles haven't changed though. They're still basically the same, but I've added one.

Another change some of the women associated with their added role was lack of time for self. They felt their lives were so busy, they now had limited time to just relax. However, even though the women found this different, none of them seemed to consider it a major problem. Jill explained her situation as follows:

> It's busier. Now there seems like there's just not enough time in the day to get everything done that has to be done. But I like that, I like to be busy all the time. I was so used to being home and fiddling around the house, sitting down half the time bored to death, but now, I do laundry probably 10:30 or 11 o'clock in the night. I never did that before, it was always in the morning. Now, there's just not enough time in the run of a day, but I like it. I like bein' busy.

All of the women enjoyed their new role as a student. Three of the women noted changes in themselves personally. They reported gaining a sense of responsibility, increased self-confidence and self-esteem, and believing in themselves. When asked to consider changes related to the added role, Jill pointed out:

> Changed myself. I just can't even believe sometimes that I'm here, that I got up enough nerve to come here. And now that I'm here, I feel like a different person. I

> just can't believe the self-confidence that I've gained since I came here. Just bein' around people that I don't know. I was always nervous, especially when I met strangers before, always shy, quiet, whereas now I'm not that. I guess I still get. probably, a little bit nervous, but I'm not like I was before. You know, I can see myself goin' up to a stranger now and sayin' hello, my name is...

Stresses

In addition to the changes experienced by the women in this study, they were also asked to consider any stresses they felt associated with the added new role. Six of the women indicated the timing for getting things done was often stressful. They thought their days and nights were filled with activity. Concerns included: having time to help with children's homework, doing their own homework, doing household chores that were still considered their responsibility, getting children off to school in the morning, and simply having enough time for hobbies. When asked about stresses in her life related to the added role, Judy expressed the thoughts of many of the women:

> The timing for some things - my husband is not really confident about goin' grocery shopping. So that's still my job, to go grocery shopping. I find it'll take away my Saturday or it'll take away an evening, like on a Wednesday evening, if that's when I go, and then your day and your whole night is all fooled up. Your kids get in the bath late, and your supper is late, they go to bed late, and then you find yourself staying up even later to finish your homework. You can't go during the day to do your shopping like you used to, you gotta go after school or after supper. Your schedule is all fooled up for that day. It feels like you're getting nothing done.

Surprisingly, only one woman found it stressful not having enough time to spend with her children. For the women in this study, this may not have been a major concern because most of the children were in school during the day when the women were in class, or family members, quite often the husband, were caring for them. However, given the busy schedule indicated by most of the mothers, it is surprising time spent with children was not considered more of a concern.

Following completion of the WISE program, all the women were hoping and planning to either continue their education or enter the workforce. Jill revealed, knowing what to do after completion of the WISE program was one of the stresses she was feeling. She commented:

> For me right now it's not knowin' what to be doin' after I leave here. Even though I know I'm goin' to go and get my ABE, grade 12, but after that I don't have it narrowed down to what I want to do. I feel very stressed over that. I just wish that someone had it all figured out for me and give it to me and say, "here this is what you're gonna do," and it don't work that way.

Positive Effects of Added Roles

Not all the changes associated with multiple roles of reentry women were considered stressful. The women in this study were asked about any positive effects they believed the added role brought to their lives. One woman said she enjoyed the full schedule and being busy all the time. Others said simply having a place to go in the morning, socializing with the other women in the program, and meeting new people was a

positive experience. Four of the women were very pleased with what they were learning in the program, and felt confident it would help them with their future interests.

Interestingly, as with other areas of the study, most of the women mentioned an improvement in self-confidence and self-esteem as positive factors for them. Two of the women noted they were finally doing something for themselves and becoming more independent. Six of the women specifically stated gaining self-confidence was a major positive effect of their added new role. Patricia described it as follows:

> I can sit down and I can talk to people more clearly about my options that I want to pursue further. That, I never thought I could do. Like, bein' a secretary, I could sit down now and talk to anybody about it. Before I was, like, maybe secretary, and then well, maybe not. But now I can sit down and talk about it more clearly.

Household Chores

Spouses today tend to share household duties more than in the past. Several factors may contribute to this change. These include, more women working outside the home, men working seasonal jobs or not working at all, and less stigma attached to the idea of a man helping with, or doing, housework. For most of the women in this study, extra help with the household chores was a major factor related to the multiple roles they were playing in life.

When asked if household duties were shared and with whom, all of the married women said husbands helped with the housework. The sharing of these duties varied from household to household. Three of the women listed fairly extensive chores with which the husbands either helped or did entirely on their own. These included chores

such as: vacuuming, laundry, grocery shopping, packing lunches, preparing meals, doing dishes, sweeping, and some cleaning. Judy explained it this way:

> He looks after the kids all day, he does the breakfast and dinner dishes, 'cause I'm not home to do that. He'll cook supper and I'll do the supper dishes and the laundry. He makes the beds. He vacuums, but he always did that....I still clean the washroom. When I look back, he always did help with things. That's why he vacuums, because he never did let me vacuum when I was pregnant. So he just took it over and he just didn't stop. But the dishes is a big thing, he didn't want to do dishes, and he does them every day, and he makes the beds, and that used to be always my thing. He shares all of it.

The other women mentioned husbands helped with housework, but not to the same extent. Jill responded:

> Well, they're not 50/50....He'll start it off, I just got to finish it. But basic things that has to be done - like, he'll probably sweep, or do the dishes. But regards to beds, bathroom, vacuuming, that sort of things, that's my area. Laundry, I don't even know if I'd let him. But, no it's not 50/50 by any means, I'd say probably 80/20.

All of the women in the study with children old enough to help, said the children assisted with chores as well, but to a lesser degree. Most responsibilities for children included: making beds, helping with dishes, and taking out the garbage.

When asked if sharing of household chores by spouse was different since they became reentry women, four of the women replied it was a change and their spouse did

not originally help to such a great extent. Three of the women said there was no change. their spouse always helped.

Interestingly, out of seven women who had spouses and children helping with the household chores, six still said timing for getting things done was stressful. They pointed out scheduling was a problem, and they had difficulty finding time in the day to get everything done. Equally as interesting, two mothers who did not have a spouse did not mention timing or scheduling as a concern. Additionally, for these two women, children were not a major factor in sharing household chores. The children's responsibilities were minimal.

Positive Factors

As stated in the previous section, the women in this study believed positive factors were associated with reentry experiences. A reoccurring theme that emerged throughout the study was the influence reentry had on the self-confidence and self-esteem of these women. When asked how the decision to reenter had changed their lives, 9 of the 11 women replied it had greatly increased their level of self-confidence. These women felt that finally doing something for themselves had positive effects. Allison expressed it this way, " I feel a lot better about myself, because I'm doing something now, I'm doing something with my life." When asked if her decision to reenter had changed her life, Jill responded, "I know it has changed me completely. I just feel better about myself, 100% better. I got something to look forward to in getting up in the mornings, it's just havin' somewhere to go."

The majority of the women thought the most significant outcome of reentry was increased self-confidence. As Patricia commented about her level of self-confidence, "really, really, to the ceiling." When asked what she would consider the most significant outcome for her, Jill responded, "I would have to say, raised my self-esteem, big time."

With the information and knowledge they had gained through the WISE program, the women in this study felt they now had the confidence to progress toward their goals. The women were asked if their decision to reenter had influenced any long awaited goals. All of them discussed some area where they could finally accomplish something they have always wanted. For some it was starting up their own business, for others it was completing high school, or starting the career they had always wanted but had been put on hold to stay at home with their children. Michele, who is doing courses in addition to the WISE program, simply said, "This is what I've always wanted, to go back to school and do something." Allison, who previously expressed a desire to be a nurse, stated:

> I'm definitely getting things done that I didn't think. I always wanted to do some kind of health care. Like, home support worker, but the money is not there. You know, that would be an easier course to take and it wouldn't be expensive....With the LPN course it's only a year and you make decent money at it.

Some of the women expressed it as, "a dream come true." When asked about an

accomplishment of a long-awaited goal, Judy responded:

> Well, you see that it's possible. It's a dream, but when you're here it's slowly becoming a reality. It's not just a dream that you see far away. You don't even know that it's possible, and when you come to a place like this you realize it is possible.

All the women felt reentry to the WISE program would help them with future school and work opportunities. In addition to giving them information, motivation, and increased confidence to pursue their goals, these women expressed personal determination that would help them succeed.

Additional positive factors reported by the women included: an increased feeling of independence, an opportunity to socialize with other women and make friends, incentive for their own children as they observe their mother in the student role, and a sense of something to which they could look forward. As Jill stated, "I've thought about goin' to work full time. That's positive for me." Michele expressed it this way:

> Before I wasn't doin' anything. I mean I was home and the only responsibility I had was in the house, housework, and lookin' after my son, but now I got other things to do. Hopefully in the end I'll get something in return for what I'm puttin' into it - work or something.

In associating positive factors with reentry, the women perceived an opportunity that enhanced their life experiences. For some, it involved achieving goals, developing new competencies and leading a more satisfying and challenging lifestyle. The women in this study expressed much enthusiasm as they anticipated their future life role as reentry women.

Counselling Services

As reentry women return to post-secondary schools or the workforce they will undoubtedly bring with them an abundance of life experiences. A desire for career achievement is only one of these issues. The women in this study were asked to respond to questions related to counselling for women in general, and reentry women in particular.

Interestingly, with the exception of one woman who said she did a course in Career Education in high school and another who received abuse counselling after a marriage breakdown, none of the women in the study had participated in any type of counselling prior to entering the WISE program. Most of the women seemed to know counselling was available somewhere, but did not know where to go if they needed these services. In fact, most of them were unaware of any such services until after entering the WISE program. Michele pointed out:

> Well, I don't really know what's out there. I know there's counselling in schools and that, but I don't know what else is out there for counselling, other than a doctor or something like that. I don't know, and most people don't.

One woman wrote in her narrative, "The counselling I have received to help prepare for my reentry is with my family, but mostly myself."

Allison, who had been in an abusive marriage, reported her experience with counselling services:

> Well, they're there, but I didn't know that they were there before. I was in an abusive marriage and a relationship since I was 16 years old, and the only reason I knew that

> Emma Jones even existed was because I had my husband arrested. and then she came on the scene and she helped me get out, and I didn't even know the woman existed. I didn't know there was any such animal as victim services. If I had known, and if there was a group that came into the community and said, "okay, we're here to support abused women," I think I would have been out eight or nine years before. But, it's not there for you. It's there, but you don't know about it.

Two of the women indicated, even though counselling services were available, they were not necessarily readily available to women living in the rural areas. Judy discussed the services offered by the WISE Center. She commented:

> For me, WISE is wonderful. But I know there's only three WISE offices in Newfoundland; St. John's, Bay Roberts, and, I think, Gander. So if I was, on the west coast, Stephenville area, I wouldn't have access to it. And, I wouldn't know,... this is the first program I ever heard in relation to career and women.

When asked how effective they perceived present counselling services for women, most of the women felt they could not comment because they had no experience with such services, but added they did not know where to go if they did need it. Catherine said, "I guess it's not well known. A lot of people don't even know they're out there. I didn't."

Dorothy thought the counselling services were effective. She stated, "I think they're good. I think they're very effective for some stuff, like abused women, and sexual assault, harassment." However, when asked if she would know where to go if she needed such services, Dorothy replied, "Well, I see some posters hung up on walls,

probably would look in the directory. I heard someone mention out in town there are shelters."

Allison, who did receive counselling, indicated for her it was "really, really wonderful." She remarked:

> You get so much support from them. I know the ones I've been in - I can't speak for any others. We were all just after comin' out of relationships, some of them were still in relationships with their abusers. I just found total support. It definitely helped me.

Judy expressed her concern as follows:

> When you think of women counselling, women need to be educated, far more educated than what they are. Let women know what's out there, that there is help,... and what kind of help. If you don't know it, and if you don't have the self-esteem too, you're just gonna go home and waste your life, because you probably don't know about it, or there just isn't any place in your area.

Counselling Issues

All the women in the study believed counselling services should be available specifically for reentry women. Many ideas were presented when asked about important issues for such counselling. The women felt all-around support and encouragement were important. They indicated reentry women needed to be reassured they could manage the new role they had undertaken.

Building up self-confidence and self-esteem were considered essential counselling issues. Some of the women expressed concern for reentry women as they attempted to cope with entering a world where there are mostly younger people in the schools and in

competition for employment in the job market. Michele said, "A lot of people want to go back and they're afraid to go back. Help them out that way. Find out what their fears and everything are."

Course and career information was valued as an important issue in counselling reentry women. Jill pointed out, "Well, for instance, a woman like me, home for 10 years, letting me know what's out there, what I can do, what's available to me, how I go about doin' it." Some women thought such counselling should provide women with information on available occupations, courses, and aptitude testing. Judy asserted:

> Just guide you, and if you wanted to do something that's non-traditional, well, help you out in that area. I know some women who probably would love to be welders, but they're afraid to go into it because there's mostly men, and they're afraid of maybe sexual harassment or different things like that. If there were women's groups, I'm sure they would be helped along the way.

The women indicated counselling should address personal issues and concerns that reentry women experienced as they attempted to make the transition from home to school or the workplace. These issues included: stress management, marriage difficulties or breakdowns, problems with children, dealing with feelings associated with leaving children as they reenter, adjusting to reentry itself, or dealing with death of a loved one. Three of the women reported difficulties often encountered by single mothers, and felt counselling in this area would definitely be beneficial for these reentry women, and in some cases for their children as well.

Two of the women believed counselling in organizational skills would be beneficial. Their concerns centered on readjusting schedules to meet the demands of the added role in their lives. Patricia noted she could use counselling to help reorganize her schedule. Jill pointed out, "I think where women have kids to think about, the house to think about - I think if there was just a particular place that women could go to see somebody about themselves."

Four of the women thought financial counselling was an important issue. For most women in this study, financial reasons were cited as a deciding factor in their reentry. Allison indicated for many women wishing to go back to school, and not having the money to do so, counselling services should direct them towards programs that would help with financial difficulties.

Available Services

The women in this study were asked to consider the services they would like to see offered for reentry women. Their suggestions tended to coincide closely with the issues they perceived as important for counselling these women. Michele believed better financial services should be available. She suggested, "Have lower rate loans or something, because money is a big problem for a lot of people." Jill noted certain services were offered for some groups of women who wished to reenter, but not for others, and suggested similar services should be available for all women who planned reentry. She commented:

I don't think there's a service for someone like me who's ready to reenter. I mean they're out there for EI eligible, they're out there for people on social assistance, but

for someone like me, who's neither, there's nothin' there for us. There's nothing available for someone like me who wants to go back to school, who wants to do training. It's just, either I do it on my own, or I don't do it at all.

Three of the women suggested rural areas should provide more counsellors and more centers specifically for reentry women. They felt in this way greater numbers of women wishing to reenter could avail of the services. Most of the women in the study believed the majority of women who wished to return to schools or the workforce were not aware of any counselling services that might be available to them. Therefore, they pointed out more advertising was needed so all women would be well informed on available services.

Two of the women suggested more daycare centers should be available for reentry women. Michele believed many women do not return because they do not have anyone to care for their children while at school or work. In preparation for returning to school following the WISE program, Allison said she had tried to find a babysitter for her children, but was unsuccessful. She noted it would be very beneficial for women if post-secondary schools provided daycare centers. She stated, "Wherever you go to school, if you can take your children with you, I think that would be a lot of help to women. They know where they are, they know who's takin' care of their kids."

As mentioned in the previous section, in addition to academic and career concerns, reentry women frequently experienced other issues that required counselling. Allison suggested post-secondary schools should provide counsellors to deal with any personal issues of reentry students. Specifically, she referred to the concerns of single mothers as

they attempted to deal with raising their children alone and succeeding with their academic goals.

One final suggestion by Judy was in reference to career education in the schools. Judy indicated neither students nor teachers took such courses seriously. She believed a change in this area would benefit women as they attempted to make career decisions and choices.

One of the women made the following suggestions in her personal narrative:

> I have had no counselling to help prepare myself for reentry, I just decided to do it on my own, but I would like to get more counselling. I think there should be more places like WISE to help women find out more about career exploration, what they would like to do in their future endeavours, and help them with emotional issues, whether it be school or a career. There should be more women as career counsellors in our world for women, because women know what other women are feeling, they know what obstacles they have to go through to get a career, or go to school, and women are comfortable, I think, in talking to other women. So, I think that could be done to help us in getting back into the workforce.

Attainability of Reentry

The women were asked if they thought reentry to post-secondary schools and the workforce was more attainable for women than it had been in the past. All 11 women in the study replied, "yes." Some women believed it was more attainable because of the following: (a) daycare for children was more accessible in some areas, (b) more financial assistance was available, (c) programs were offered to some groups of women

so they were able to afford to go back to school, for example, those who were EI eligible; and (d) more employers were willing to hire women than in the past. Catherine commented, "I guess there's more help out there now, probably more financial help, more career choices, and more jobs now than what it used to be."

The majority of the women perceived reentry more attainable because women in the work force had become more acceptable than in the past, and because more non-traditional jobs were now open to them. Carol pointed out, "The traditional jobs that were once geared to a man's work are now being offered to women....now there are many positions available for women that have to be filled by women."

They commented, women were once expected to stay at home and care for the family, but this had now changed and women were opting to be a part of the world of work. Beth stated, "the women are taking it into their own hands and saying this is something I don't want to do all the time, staying home, especially when the kids are off to school. You got to find something for yourself."

Summary

The research findings obtained from the subject responses to the semi-structured interviews were discussed in this chapter. The responses reflected the personal experiences of the women involved in the study. To fully express and understand their views, direct quotes and comments of the women were included in the writing of their experiences.

Motivations for reentry were seen as both internal and external factors. Most of these women were returning out of a desire to finally do something for themselves.

Additionally, they reported the need for, or desire to have, a second income as incentive for returning to the workforce.

The women noted they encountered many barriers, both prior to reentry and after reentry. Most significant was the overall response on perceived lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, especially on deciding whether or not to reenter. Other major issues centered on financial concerns involved in reentering post-secondary schools, childcare, and organization of time.

Spouses or significant others were seen as the major support for these women. The married women with children continued to carry out many of the responsibilities involved in the home, in addition to new roles as students. Some of them specifically indicated they would not have been able to reenter at all, if they did not have support with housework, childcare, emotional support, and encouragement.

Reentry was seen as a positive experience for the women. Even though the added role carried with it extra responsibilities and a busy schedule, the women enjoyed the feeling of having something important in their lives outside of home and children. They were pleased to be finally doing something they had always wanted. They enjoyed the socialization aspect of reentering, and were quick to point out the most significant positive outcome for them was the boost reentry had given to their self-confidence and self-esteem.

These women thought counselling services specifically for reentry were essential. They expressed concern over the lack of such services for all women, especially in the rural areas. They also believed available services were insufficient, and not well known

by the majority of women who would utilize them. Academic, career, and personal counselling were seen as important issues in a counselling setting for reentry women.

In conclusion, the women in this study indicated reentry was a worthwhile accomplishment in their lives. They looked forward to continuing their education or immediately entering the workforce with excitement and anticipation. After completion of the interview, Beth's final comments and words of wisdom for reentry women were, "Follow your dreams. Don't let anyone tell you that it can't happen."

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of Chapter

The purpose of this study was to examine the salient factors relating to experiences encountered by reentry women as they returned to post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both. The findings reported in Chapter 4 are discussed as they pertain to the different theories and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The recommendations for practice and further research will conclude this chapter.

The factors that emerged from the semi-structured interviews are addressed in accordance with the variables from the literature review, such as career growth and development in general, and as they relate to women and reentry women specifically. Additionally, motivational factors, barriers, supports, multiple roles, positive factors and counselling services relating to reentry women's experiences, as delineated through the interviews and personal narratives, are discussed in this chapter.

Motivations

A significant motivational factor to reentry identified by this group of women was the desire to do something for themselves. Nine of these women expressed dissatisfaction and boredom with their present situation as a stay-at-home wife and mother, and wanted to have a career life away from home. As reviewed by Isaacson and Brown (1997), Super contended individuals became very discontented with their work and life if they were not allowed to be the type of person they pictured themselves to be

- if their abilities, values, interests and self-concepts were not played out in their roles. Bauer and Mott (1990) stated, women interested in returning to school "speak often of disharmony in their lives stemming from competing commitments to children, spouse, jobs and self" (p. 555). According to Bejian and Salomone (1995), a study by Riverin-Simard (1990) asserted, a "state of instability", perceived as a "loss of self", forced the individual to forge a new (or revised) self-concept by reconsidering life motives and values and by expressing aspects of the personality that were previously less developed" (p. 55). This is worthy of note, as women in this study considered their goals and plans, and rededicated themselves to pursuing these goals, moving in the direction of a career outside the home.

Several studies have reviewed reasons for reentry. A study by Padula (1994) included: desire to have a new career, and the desire to work. Novak and Thacker (1991) mentioned the following incentives for reentry: to make life changes, and self-enrichment. Avery (1996) noted the following reasons: because of boredom, for self-fulfillment, fulfillment of personal goals, and empty-nest syndrome.

The women with school-age children felt having them in school all day, now provided an opportunity to do something for themselves. As one woman expressed it, "to have a career." According to Herr and Cramer (1996), with children old enough, adequate childcare, social supports from family and friends, and adequate finances, women were often motivated to educational reentry.

All of the women, except one, mentioned financial reasons as a factor for reentry. Two of the women who were sole supporters thought they had no other choice, and the

remaining seven women said they needed the extra income. In her review Padula (1994) pointed out a study by Clayton and Smith (1987) maintained increased ability to contribute to the family financially was found to be a motive for educational reentry for women.

Most of the women stated someone other than self was the main source of motivation for reentry. Only four women believed they were solely responsible for their decision. The other women indicated husband, family, or friends were the main influences. Novak and Thacker (1991) reported that a study by Kirk and Dorfman (1983) showed psychological support of friends and children led to increased satisfaction of reentry women in the student role. They also pointed out reentry women viewed spousal support as very important and reported less stress when husbands gave them attitudinal, financial, and behavioural support. Granrose and Kaplan (1994) indicated approval for maternal work was related to the influence and approval of peers, parents, and spouses.

Barriers

The women discussed several factors they thought might have presented barriers to their reentry during the decision-making process. They were asked to consider these factors for the purpose of delineating issues reentry women explore when progressing through the decision-making process for career change and development. Obviously, this process involved more than merely choosing a particular career or a specific course route. The barriers reported by the women in this study included: childcare, transportation difficulties, admission and educational requirements for future schooling, finances, and family support.

According to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), Super pointed out in his Life-Span. Life-Space Approach, the roles a person played in life included all aspects of life, not just work (occupation), and these roles affected each other. Career decisions are life decisions, and for these reentry women many aspects of life were considered in this decision-making process.

One of the women in the study expressed concern about her husband's reaction to her decision to reenter, while another was concerned about the reaction of her children. The latter woman remarked whether or not she returned to further schooling depended on her children's approval. As noted previously in motivational factors, psychological support from children and spouse was viewed as very important to reentry women and led to less stress and increased satisfaction in the reentry role. Morgan and Foster (1999) pointed out, "The absence of a supportive climate for a humane integration of family and work responsibilities makes a decision to reenter the workforce especially problematic for many women" (p. 129). MacKinnon-Slaney (1988) stated, "Marital status, or relationships with significant others, provides a powerful stimulus or barrier to the career and educational plans of women" (p. 328). In their review MacKinnon-Slaney et al. reported, "Women who are reassessing their own career plans consider not only their own values, attitudes, abilities, and fears, but also the values and attitudes of significant men in their lives" (p. 328).

Several of the women indicated financial costs might be a barrier to further schooling. Some felt funding of some sort would be very beneficial. One woman was counting on her Employment Insurance eligibility to fund her way through the course to

help with admission fees, transportation, and childcare expenses. According to Lindstrom (2000), studies conducted by Lewis (1988a), Glass and Rose (1987). and Tittle and Denker, (1980) pointed out, "Financial aid policies are particularly discriminatory towards reentry women who may only have enough money to attend part-time, yet, are ineligible for funding because of their part-time status" (p. 46). According to Novak and Thacker (1991), mature students were more likely to be part-time students, however, as reviewed by Lindstrom, Tittle and Denker noted, "Institutions still seem to prefer full-time students" (p. 45). Additionally, as revealed in the literature by Lindstrom, a recent government mandate of credit checks on student loan applications may eventually mean that lower and middle-income Canadians will no longer qualify for student loans because of their heavy financial burdens. In reviewing studies by Glass and Rose and Gilbert et al. (1980) Lindstrom noted, "Frequently, married students whose husbands work are discriminated against as his salary is taken into account whether or not he is contributing" (p. 46).

Even though admission, educational requirements, and class scheduling for the WISE Center, did not appear to present barriers to the women in this study during the decision-making process, eight women did indicate concern in these areas for future educational goals. In addition to financial concerns mentioned above, these concerns included acceptance for desired courses, and childcare. According to Lindstrom (2000), programs are often limited to full-time students, have residency requirements, and time limits for completing programs and degrees. This might be considered a disadvantage for many reentry women. Additionally, Lindstrom noted in her study, "Some institutions have

only daytime class schedules, and insensitive school policies, such as grades dependent on class attendance, that hinder women with children" (p. 44).

Women in this study also expressed possible concerns for transportation and travel distances for future work or school in an area that did not provide bus or commuter train services. Some of the women thought they would need a second vehicle in their family. Others said they would have to find someone with whom they could car-pool. Lindstrom (2000) indicated transportation could also be a problem for reentry women if off-campus or outreach services were not available.

Significantly, 8 of the11 women said they had very low self-confidence and self-esteem during the decision-making time for reentry. This revealed itself in apprehensions for acceptance with the group, level of difficulty of the program, and fear of the unknown. In the review of the literature associated with reentry women Padula (1994) revealed, "Reentry women have reported conflicts and emotional distress for beliefs about their roles, beliefs about self, and interpersonal dissatisfaction" (p. 12). In discussing career within the context of psychosocial development, Crozier (1994) maintained Chickering's theory (1969, 1974) hypothesized seven major developmental tasks, one of which was managing emotions. This particular task related to career development in learning to express, accept, and cope with the emotions involved in the career planning process. Farmer and Backer (1977) noted in their study, self-confidence was found to be a critical ingredient to mental health and one's ability to initiate and take action. Lindstrom (2000) mentioned women who have been in the family role for a long period of time and take on an identity in relation to needs of husband, family, or both,

rather than their own separate identity, "have a strong fear of failure" (p. 42). Novak and Thacker (1991) pointed out these women experience tremendous self-doubt, insecurity, and anxiety about their "rusty" academic skills, which can be a major stumbling block.

Interestingly, this lack of self-confidence, which was experienced by the majority of women in the study, was perceived as non-existent after reentry. All of the women appeared to be extremely pleased to report they had good self-confidence at this time. Many attributed the WISE program itself and their fellow peers for this change. In his review of a study conducted by Surrey (1991) Nugent (1994) discussed the term "self-in-relation" to describe women's developmental growth. According to Nugent, Surrey's theory rejected the necessity of separation-individuation process and stressed the self grew as a result of supportive and intimate relationships with others. He mentioned empathy was an important aspect for the development of self-esteem. The majority of these women felt involvement in a program with other women and having the opportunity to socialize with other people greatly enhanced their self-confidence and self-esteem. Padula and Miller (1999) noted many women identified rewards that made returning to school a worthwhile and exciting experience for them. These rewards included, developing camaraderie with other women students, learning or developing more positive self-perceptions, and increased self-confidence. Further information on increased self-confidence for this group of women will be discussed later in this chapter.

The majority of the women did not consider childcare a major issue, because family members cared for them. However, it did present some concerns, especially for some of the women who planned to further their education or go to work following the WISE

program. According to a review conducted by Padula (1994), "Children, and the time necessary to devote to them, are viewed by reentry women as major obstacles to finishing education" (p. 12). The concerns of the women in this study centered around feelings of guilt about leaving children in the care of others, being away from them for part of the day, being a single parent, and finding a babysitter for those who did not leave their children with family members. Herr and Cramer (1996) pointed out, the situation of working mothers was presumed to lead to interrole conflict between the roles of mother and employed worker. This, in turn, was thought to lead to stress, not the least of which was the guilt a mother felt because she was working rather than tending primarily to childcare.

Although the majority of the women did not consider the academic and time demands of their present reentry program a barrier, others did feel pressure from these demands. Their concerns included: having to change their daily schedule, not having enough free time for themselves, making time for study, and trying to fit in weekly activities. Some of the women also expressed concern in this area for future courses, work schedules, or both. A study by Novak and Thacker (1991) revealed some reentry women have reported feeling strained by the demands of school. According to Novak and Thacker a study by Marcus (1977) reported, "Close to half of reentry women in her study dropped out of school at least once because of strain" (p. 326-327). Frequently mentioned strains included: time pressures, anxiety about academic ability, scheduling problems, lack of helpfulness of professors, and lack of support of family and friends.

It was evident reentry women in this study experienced two sets of barriers. These included barriers prior to reentry (during the decision-making process), and after reentry. Some of these barriers overlapped from one time setting to the other. Such barriers, whenever they occurred, made reentry to post-secondary institutions or the workforce a difficult transitional experience for many women.

Support Systems

In her study of re-entry women Avery (1996) mentioned, "Numerous researchers have observed that a partner's attitude toward a woman's return to school is a crucial factor in her educational success and satisfaction" (p. 151). The majority of women in this study who were married or living in a common law relationship indicated the most significant support for them was their spouse. In most cases, they felt accomplishment of their goal would not be possible without this support. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), "In general, marital adjustment for working wives is greatly enhanced as might be expected, by a supportive husband (for example one who approves of his wife's employment, shares in household duties, and advocates a similar belief system)" (p. 570). Novak and Thacker (1991) noted reentry women view spousal support as very important and report less stress when husbands give them attitudinal, financial, and behavioural support.

Other supports considered important were children, parents, and friends. As Lindstrom (2000) pointed out, "Many women, having meticulously planned for their reentry, preparing family and friends for the changes to come, and delegating certain household chores to other family members, are, nevertheless, constantly worried that

their support will collapse" (p. 41). As indicated previously in this chapter, reentry women valued the psychological support of friends and children and were influenced for reentry by the approval of peers, parents, and spouses.

None of the women in this study had received any counselling support prior to reentry. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), there are many reports of successful programs designed for reentry women. The women in this study reported not having any knowledge of such programs, other than WISE. This was especially true in smaller and more remote areas. This lack of information and knowledge prevented women from obtaining counselling for educational and career choices, job-seeking and job-hunting skills, and personal support as they attempted to deal with changing lifestyle and stresses that accompanied it. Additionally, as pointed out by some of the women in this study, counselling is often needed following reentry. Herr and Cramer stated, "Once the individual has begun to work, there may be needs for assurance, enhancement of coping skills, and general support" (p. 542).

In conclusion, support, whether it was attitudinal, emotional or functional, appears to be an important issue for reentry women. The women in this study believed it was their time to do something for themselves, but also felt they needed support from significant people in their lives in order to fulfill goals.

Multiple Roles

According to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), Super pointed out individuals attend to many roles in life. These roles of child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent and pensioner intermingle as life unfolds. As reviewed by Avery

(1996), Super suggested these roles emerged and interacted within the lifetime of one person and were played out in various settings, although some roles may overlap causing conflict and confusion from the home to the workplace. Reentry women learned to balance many of these roles as they progressed through their life cycle.

The responses in this study indicated the women had adjusted to the multiple roles that existed in their lives, but were nevertheless affected by them. In some cases, the women reported stress because of the added role. For many, multiple roles and role conflicts placed demands on them. Six of the women in this study discussed the difficulty of timing and scheduling relating to accomplishing their daily tasks; especially those associated with household chores. In their study Phillips and Imhoff (1997) reported:

> ...women appear to be placing increased importance on goals in the work domain. This change has not detracted from the importance women give to the home and family domain, nor diminished the expected conflicts among roles....this shift has presented women with additional challenges in their career planning. (p. 40)

Even though the women discussed the sharing of the household chores with spouses and children, it is evident that many of them were either still responsible for most of the chores or had not experienced much change, if any, after reentry. Phillips and Imhoff (1997) noted, "Still, a number of studies indicate that while women have taken on different roles outside the home, their level of involvement with children and household responsibilities has not changed relative to their husbands" (p. 44). Additionally, they

mentioned, "Apparently women are still involved in more childcare than men. even in dual-income households" (p. 44).

A study conducted by Sinacore-Guinn et al. (1999) revealed, "Interdependence of work and family life is more problematic for women than for men because of the greater demands of family responsibilities they experience" (p. 188). The women in this study thought these responsibilities placed certain demands on them, interfering with their available time to spend with spouse, children, and relaxation time for themselves.

Reentry women also associated positive aspects with multiple roles. The women in this study revealed several positive factors in their lives they believed were a result of their multiple roles. Kopp and Ruzicka (1993) reported, "The comparison of community college women with multiple roles (two or more) and women with one or no role, supported the conclusion that women having multiple roles perceive themselves as being happier" (p. 1354). Even though the majority of women in this study still felt they were mainly responsible for household chores, they were also very pleased to have an opportunity to do something outside the house, something specifically for themselves. They enjoyed socializing with classmates and other people throughout the day. In their review of a study by Baruch et al. (1983), Kopp and Ruzicka pointed out, "Perhaps multiple roles may allow women to shrug off more easily the least desirable aspects of some roles" (p. 1354). According to Sincore-Guinn et al. (1999), "The accumulation of multiple roles may therefore be positive for women, as one role may provide relief from or buffer the effects of stress in other roles, and as such, enhances women's lives (p. 189).

The women in this study appeared to find the activities of the student role a pleasant diversion and a release from routine household and childcare duties. All of the women believed they were finally doing something for themselves and gaining much needed independence. They especially noted reentry had an enormous impact on enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem. One woman stated in her narrative, "I am a happier person. I am getting out of the house every day. I have much better self-esteem and I know the direction I would like to go."

Positive Factors

The reentry women in this study acknowledged throughout the interview, and in the personal narratives, increased self-confidence was a major factor related to reentry. The majority of the women indicated experiencing both stresses and positive factors related to multiple roles. Interestingly, Granrose and Kaplan (1994) noted, "Self-confident women will believe they are able to control what happens to them and will be more likely to believe they can manage the multiple responsibilities of being an employed mother" (p. 876). In their study Kopp and Ruzicka (1993) revealed, "The highest psychological well-being was among the busiest women in the study, the employed, married women with children" (p. 1351).

Gerson's (1985) study revealed reentry women students perceived a greater amount of net gratification than did the housewives who participated in the same study. Gerson stated, "The data demonstrate that when women add role obligations outside the home, the results are positive as well as negative" (p. 90).

Herr and Cramer (1996) reported late-entry workers appeared to be as effective and happy as earlier-entry workers. The reentry women in this study revealed they were enthusiastic about returning to school and considered it a positive factor to pursue their long awaited careers. Padula and Miller (1999) pointed out many reentry women identified rewards that made returning to school a worthwhile and exciting experience for them. These rewards included: learning itself, brighter career prospects, developing camaraderie with other women students, learning or developing more positive self-perceptions, and increased self-confidence. All such rewards were reported by the women in this study as an indication of positive factors associated with their reentry role.

Counselling Services

The women expressed many concerns reentry women encounter, including academic and career issues. Morgan and Foster (1999) stated, "Many reentry women seek career counselling as they attempt to plan for continued education, to regenerate an old career, or to seek guidance regarding a new career" (p. 125). Herr and Cramer (1996) reported reentry women "need to be assisted to explore entry-level jobs, have access to a referral system for placement assistance, and job-seeking and job-hunting skills."

The majority of the women specifically noted the importance of enhancing self-confidence and self-esteem of reentry women. Many women returning to post-secondary schools, the workforce, or both, required counselling with personal, emotional, physical, and social concerns. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), there is a need to reinforce

positive feelings about self-worth and ability to make a contribution in the workforce outside the home. Additional issues indicated by the women in this study for counselling of reentry women included: financial, childcare, organizational, and personal concerns. According to Lewis (1988), other areas where reentry women are gaining support include: new benefit options - expanded maternity leave, paternity leave, modified paid personal or sick leave (allowing parents to stay at home with sick children or older frail adults), expanded family medical coverage and company health-maintenance organizations; childcare benefits - provision of vouchers toward childcare, subsidies for a number of slots in nearby childcare centers, information and referral services, and on-site childcare; flexible time and job sharing, allowing for rearranging the scheduling of work to accommodate family needs.

Educational facilities have improved conditions for reentry women in areas such as orientation programs for adult students, availability of childcare programs, housing facilities, counselling, support groups, informal workshops and seminars, special awards or honours, and student organizations. These improvements would obviously receive approval from the reentry women in the present study, as this addresses many of their concerns.

All of the women believed reentry to the workforce is more attainable than it has been in the past, and more career options are available to them, especially in the area of non-traditional jobs. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), employability looks promising as shortages of skilled workers in many professional, managerial, clerical, skilled craft, and service occupations offer women excellent prospects. They also

pointed out gains have been made in breaking down barriers to higher level occupations and to traditionally male-dominated fields, and new opportunities are available in expanding occupations. According to Isaacson and Brown (1996), improvements are being made in areas such as unequal pay, unfair employment practices, and harassment in the work place.

It is encouraging to realize advances are being made to improve reentry conditions for women who desire to return to school or work. In their study Phillips and Imhoff (1997) reported, several intervention programs, described in the early part of the decade, specifically focused on reentry women, including women entering nontraditional and professional careers, displaced homemakers, and reentry college women.

Summary

In this chapter, the experiences encountered by reentry women were discussed. It is important to remember the factors involved were the direct experiences of the reentry women included in the study. The purpose of this study was to examine these factors and not necessarily generalize them to the population at large, but rather to explore and gather information about experiences that influenced and affected women as they attempted to reenter post-secondary institutions or the workforce.

One of the most significant factors identified by these women was the barriers encountered in the reentry process, and how they dealt with or overcame these barriers. A theme that kept recurring throughout the study was the emphasis the women placed on the level of self-confidence. They believed the following: (a) lack of self-confidence was a major barrier to their reentry, (b) reentry itself was a huge contributor to

enhancing their self-confidence, and (c) the issue of raising the level of self-confidence should be a significant factor in the counselling of reentry women. Good self-confidence is critical to one's ability to initiate and take action toward achieving goals. It is considered a definite asset, possibly even a necessity.

The women were aware of the multiple roles existing in their lives. Even though they felt inspired and energized by this, they were also cognizant of the need for support from others, especially spouses or other family members, to help overcome barriers or obstacles and to facilitate reentry. Herr and Cramer (1996) suggested marital adjustment for working wives was enhanced by a supportive husband, especially one who offered approval, shared in household chores, and promoted a similar belief system.

Additionally, the women thought counselling services should be readily available for all women, with special attention directed to reentry women. They indicated this service should provide not only academic and career counselling, but also personal counselling, to help women deal with the many issues of their reentry experiences. In discussing the inseparability of career and counselling, Betz and Corning (1993) stated:

> We can consider the inseparability of the "career" and the "personal" in our own lives. How many of us, for example, would sustain loss of or failure in our career without some threat to our level of self-esteem, self-satisfaction, and psychological well-being? (p. 140 - 141)

In conclusion, these findings seem to indicate experiences of reentry women are many and varied, but yet have common themes linking them to the experiences of all reentry women and all women in general. In providing career development programs

and counselling for these women, it is important to be cognizant of the intertwining of life's roles that create the individual woman. Padula (1994) suggested the concerns of reentry women, namely vocational, family, financial issues, and issues of personal development, underlined the necessity for development of counselling, advisement, and educational programs designed to meet their needs. As reviewed in the study conducted by Krumboltz (1993), "We need to move beyond career development to a broader emphasis on fostering the development of individuals considered as whole persons in relation to the work in their lives" (p. 148). Krumboltz stated, "career and personal counseling are inextricably intertwined - let's act as if we believe it" (p. 148).

Recommendations for Practice

It is recommended:

1. Counselling services be available specifically for reentry women and this include academic, career, financial, and personal counselling in order to meet all the needs of reentry women.
2. Counsellors be specifically trained to counsel women as a unique group of individuals and women planning to reenter post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both, for the special needs and experiences they bring to the counselling situation.
3. Counsellors be aware of the role changes and adaptations within marital or partner relationships, and the likely necessity of such changes if family support is to be experienced by reentry women.

4. Counsellors of reentry women be familiar with theories related to personal development and career development, thus providing more effective counselling for women.
5. Counselling of reentry women specifically focus on enhancing the self-confidence and self-esteem of the clients throughout the entire reentry process.
6. Schools (at all levels of education), colleges, and universities, offer more programs on career education and these programs be compulsory subjects for all students.
7. More information and career counselling centers for reentry women be established throughout the province in order to provide accessible and available services for all women in rural and remote areas.
8. More counselling centers for women in general are available in rural and remote areas.
9. Advertising of all available counselling centers for women is enhanced to adequately reach all women who require these services.
10. More colleges, universities, and places of work, provide daycare centers so women with children have access to efficient childcare facilities.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended further research is required in the following areas:

1. The extent of support reentry women receive from spouses, significant others, and children relating to moral, emotional, and physical support in sharing childcare and household duties.

2. Support systems for reentry women from the perspective of role changes and adaptations within marital relationships associated with reentry.
3. How satisfied women are with reentry after they have been attending post-secondary institutions or have been in the workforce for a period of time, and if this level of satisfaction varies for different age groups and marital statuses.
4. If there are sufficient numbers of counselling services available for women, especially in rural and remote areas, and whether these services are effectively and efficiently meeting the needs of women.
5. The survival skills reentry women develop to assist in coping with reentry experiences and demands of multiple roles.
6. How institutions can better serve reentry women and the unique demands placed on them by multiple roles.
7. How reentry women can be better prepared to confront fears associated with reentry challenges.
8. If the choice of occupation for reentry women is influenced by significant variables in their lives, such as the barriers they encounter, support groups or lack of support groups, age, marital status, and multiple roles.
9. To interview larger representative samples of reentry women in order to compare similarities and differences of responses in greater detail to determine experiences related to reentry and the type and extent of services that should be made available for reentry women.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Letter of Explanation

Participant Letter of Explanation

Dear Participant:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am currently conducting a thesis study in partial fulfillment of a Masters of Education Degree.

As part of my study I am doing research in the area of women who reenter post-secondary institutions, the workforce, or both, after a period of absence. I am particularly interested in the experiences they encounter related to reentry, such as the following: (a) reasons for reentry; (b) barriers to reentry; (c) supports; (d) positive aspects they encounter; and (e) counselling services and needs.

Your participation in this study will be of great help in understanding these experiences, and will hopefully assist in providing more efficient and effective services to address the issues and concerns of reentry women, both now and in the future.

This study will involve an audio-taped interview of each participant, which should take approximately one to one and one-half hours, and a written narrative by each participant relating your experiences as a reentry woman. The narrative may be completed on your own time, within a mutually agreed upon specified time.

Please be assured of the following:

1. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time, and you have the right to answer only those questions you choose to answer.
2. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human resources, Memorial University of Newfoundland.
3. Permission has been received from the center for Women Interested in Successful Employment, Bay Roberts, Newfoundland, to conduct this study at the center.
4. All information will be held in strictest confidence. All interviews, tape recordings, and narratives will remain anonymous and no individual will be identified. Participants will not be required to write their names on any information.
5. Only I will have access to the information and upon completion of my study all information will be destroyed.
6. The results of the study will be available to you at your request.

Should you have any further questions regarding this research you may contact my supervisor, Dr. Mildred Cahill at 737-6980, or if you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact the Dean of Education, Dr. Barbara Burnaby, at 737-8588, or the Associate Dean, Dr. Roberta Hammett, 737-3402.

Your assistance in conducting this study will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Reid

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

I _____ hereby consent to take part in a study of significant factors related to experiences encountered by reentry women, undertaken by Marilyn Reid. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that all information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified. I understand that only the researcher will have access to the information contained in the interview, audio tape, and the written narrative, and that all information will be destroyed following the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Consent for Audio Taping

I _____ give consent for the audio taping of my interview by Marilyn Reid, graduate student at Memorial University of Newfoundland as part of her thesis study on significant factors related to experiences of reentry women. I understand that participation is voluntary, that information contained on the audio tape will be confidential. I understand that only the researcher will have access to that information, and that the information will be destroyed following completion of the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

PART A

A. Motivations

1. What personal reasons did you have for wanting to return to post-secondary school or the workforce?
2. What reasons, other than personal, have motivated you to return?
3. Who do you feel has been your main source of motivation for reentry? How so?
4. Was your decision to reenter, your own, or were you influenced by other factors? Could you elaborate, please?

B. Barriers (Prior to Reentry)

1. Prior to entering the WISE program, what factors presented barriers, or obstacles to your decision to enter?
2. How accessible was the WISE center for you in relation to the following:

- location
- transportation
- admission requirements
- educational requirements
- class scheduling

3. How would you describe your self-confidence at the time you were making your decision to reenter?
4. What was the greatest obstacle, or barrier, you encountered when you were making this decision?

C. Barriers (While Participating in the Program)

1. Now that you are participating in the WISE program, what barriers or obstacles do you

feel you are experiencing?

2. How accessible is the WISE center for you in relation to the following:

- location - transportation

- class scheduling

3. How have the academic and time demands of the WISE program affected you?

4. How would you describe your self-confidence at this time?

5. What do you consider is the greatest obstacle for you as a reentry woman?

D. Support Systems

1. Explain the extent of support you received or are receiving from the following:

- spouse or significant other

- children

- parents

- friends

- counselling services, such as school, career, or personal counsellors

2. How would you describe the support you receive from your spouse or significant other?

3. Considering all of the significant people in your life, whose support do you consider most important to you and why?
4. Are you aware of any support groups that are available for reentry women? If so, what are they?

E. Multiple Roles

1. Now that you are a participant in the WISE program, how do you perceive your role has changed?
2. What stresses do you experience associated with the addition of a new role to your life?
3. What positive aspects do you experience associated with the addition of a new role to your life?

4.Are household duties shared? With whom? Has this changed since you began WISE?

F. Positive Aspects

1. Has your decision to reenter changed your life?
2. How has your reentry affected the following:

- accomplishment of long-awaited goals?
- level of self-confidence?
- future school or work opportunities?

3. What do you feel is the most significant outcome of reentry for you?

G. Counselling Services

1. Prior to attending the WISE program, were you involved in any other type of career or personal development or counselling group? If so, please specify.
2. How do you perceive the accessibility and availability of counselling services for you?
3. How effective do you think present counselling services are for meeting the specific needs of women?
4. Do you believe counselling services should be available specifically for reentry women?
5. What do you think the important issues should be for such counselling?
6. Are there any services not being offered for reentry women that you would like to see offered?
7. Do you perceive that reentry to post-secondary schools and the workforce is more attainable for women than in the past? Please elaborate?
8. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

PART B

Which of the following responses applies to you:

1. My age is:

2. 19 to 25 years
3. 25 to 29 years
4. 30 to 34 years
5. 35 to 39 years
6. 40 to 44 years
7. 45 + years

2. Highest level of education achieved prior to entry to the WISE program:
    3. less than high school
    4. high school diploma
    5. adult basic education (ABE) or equivalent
    6. some college
    7. college diploma or certificate
    8. some university
    9. university degree
    10. graduate degree
    11. other (please specify) _____

3. Length of time since last attending formal education:
    4. < 1 year
    5. 1 to 5 years
    6. 6 to 10 years
    7. 11 to 15 years
    8. 16 to 20 years
    9. > 20 years

4. Length of time since you were a member of the workforce:
    5. < 1 year
    6. 1 to 5 years
    7. 6 to 10 years
    8. 11 to 15 years
    9. 16 to 20 years
    10. > 20 years
    11. have never been a member of the workforce

5. Marital status:
    6. single, never married
    7. married or common law
    8. divorced/separated
    9. widowed

6. How many children do you have? _____

7. How many of these children require childcare? _____

8. Following completion of the WISE program what do you plan to do?

    1. attend a post-secondary school (i.e. college or university)
    2. enter the workforce
    3. other (please specify) _____