

TR 90-19

THE ROLE OF THE MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR IN A XHOSA COMMUNITY

An Exploratory – Descriptive Study

by

CONSTANCIA LINEO PHORIE

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Social Science (Social Work)  
of Rhodes University.

Supervisor : Mr P. Rankin

December 1989.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Abstract	i
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Motivation for the study	3
1.2 Aims of the study	5
1.3 Scope of the study	6
1.4 Anticipated value of findings	6
1.5 Limitations and Problems	7
1.6 Definition of key terms	7
1.7 Organization of the report.	9
<b>2. TRADITIONAL OVERVIEW OF BLACK FAMILY AND MARRIAGE LIFE</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 The Black Family	10
2.3 Marriage in the Black Community	14
2.4 Preliminaries to Marriage	16
2.4.1 Lobolo	16
2.4.2 Lobolo negotiations	18
2.5 Marriage life	20
2.5.1 Introduction	20
2.5.2 Husband and Wife relations in marriage	23

	Page	
2.6	Marital breakdown and divorce	24
2.7	Re-marriage.	26
2.8	Conclusion	27
3.	<b>EMERGING CHANGES IN THE BLACK FAMILY</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1	Introduction	28
3.2	Changing role of the family	28
3.3	Industrialization and urbanization	29
3.4	The migrant labour system	31
3.5	Changes in marriage	31
	3.5.1 Lobolo	32
	3.5.2 Relationship between mothers and daughters-in-law	33
	3.5.3 Husband-wife relationship	34
	3.5.4 Companionship and expression of affection	35
	3.5.5 Changing role of women	35
	3.5.6 Infidelity	36
	3.5.7 Overcrowding and lack of privacy	37
3.6	Unemployment and Alcohol abuse	37
3.7	Increasing Social Acceptance of Divorce	38
3.8	Singlehood of Women	39
3.9	Conclusion	39

	Page
4. MARRIAGE COUNSELLING	41
4.1 Introduction	41
4.2 What is counselling	41
4.3 What is marriage counselling	43
4.4 Historical development of marriage counselling	45
4.5 Western marriage	47
4.6 Premarital counselling	49
4.7 Goals of marriage counselling	51
4.8 Treatment process	53
4.9 The role of a marriage counsellor	56
4.10 The counsellor	62
4.11 Divorce counselling.	63
4.12 Conclusion	65
5. CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN COUNSELLING	66
5.1 Introduction	66
5.2 Review of present mode of intervention in relation to the Black family	67
5.3 Counselling the Black family.	75
5.4 Conclusion	88

	Page
6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	89
6.1 Introduction	89
6.2 Research design	89
6.3 Sampling procedure	89A
6.4 Pilot study	89A
6.5 Data collection	90
6.6 Data analysis	90
7. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	91
8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	119
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 130
 APPENDIX	 139

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
7.1 Age distribution	91
7.2 Gender of respondents	92
7.3 Duration of marriage	93
7.4 Age distribution in correlation to duration of marriage	94
7.5 Family structure	94
7.6 Preparation received for marriage	95
7.7 Preferred source of help sought with a marriage problem	97
7.8 Opinion on expectations of extended family with regard to source of help to be used.	98
7.9 Source of help with marital difficulties before approaching FAMSA	99
7.10 Effectiveness of problem-solving methods suggested by people consulted	101
7.11 Referral source	102
7.12 Discussion of decision to approach FAMSA with spouse	104
7.13 Feelings about approaching an organisation outside the family	107
7.14 Help expected from FAMSA	108
7.15 Stage when professional help should be sought	112
7.16 Expectation of duration of counselling process	114
7.17 Time-off from work for counselling	116
7.18 Respondents views on the extension of FAMSA services in the community	117

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my grateful thanks to Pedro Rankin, my supervisor for his guidance, enthusiasm, interest and inspiration. I am thankful to my husband Jerome for his support, constant encouragement and interest in this research. I wish to acknowledge with thanks the bursary received from the HSRC. Sincere thanks are extended to Sarah Radloff for her valuable assistance in the computer analysis of the data, Mrs Sue Smith for her efficient typing and Mrs Glennis Harwood for helping in completing the typing of the thesis. I am also indebted to Penny Learmonth for proof reading my thesis and for her interest and encouragement, Linda Smith for motivation, support and encouragement. Thanks are also due to Family and Marriage Society of Grahamstown for allowing me to interview their clients. I am especially grateful to the respondents themselves for their willingness to share their views with me. I am thankful to the library staff for their willingness to help. Above all I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Almighty God for strengthening me and helping me attain my goal.

## ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is on the role the marriage counsellor should play in the Black community. This role is being placed in sharp perspective as a result of social change affecting the Black family. Problem-solving, including marriage counselling has traditionally been done by the extended family. This role of the family as a natural support system has been weakened by factors such as urbanization and Westernisation. This has prompted Black couples experiencing in particular marriage problems to make use of professional marriage counselling services from specialised and other welfare agencies. A major problem in the rendering of professional counselling services is that they are to a great extent based on Western civilization as far as basic philosophy and underlying assumptions are concerned. Thus intervention modalities used for marital problems in the Black community do not address the real needs of the people. The main objective of this study was to investigate how marriage counselling services are perceived in the Black community. It is expected that research findings would assist the helping professions make the necessary adjustments to make marriage counselling approaches more relevant to problems experienced in married life in the Black community.

The study revealed that the family in the Black community is still regarded as the main problem-solver although people do go beyond the family for assistance. The nuclear family has also started to emerge in the Black community and bonds to the bigger family systems are beginning to loosen. The research findings indicated clearly that there is a need for professional marriage counselling and that services of this nature should be extended further into the Black community. A problem in this regard however is that the community will have to be educated to use these services.

Marriage counsellors working within Black families will have to consider the crucial role the family plays in problem-solving. Intervention modalities used will have to be ethnically sensitive with an emphasis on task-centred and short-term approaches. Counsellors will also have to go beyond the clinical role normally associated with marriage counselling and applicability of a wide variety of roles must be explored.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The motivation for this study stems from the author's experience as a social worker employed by the FAMILY AND MARRIAGE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA (FAMSA) at their Grahamstown branch. FAMSA has the following aims as an organisation as stated in their constitution.

- (a) The dissemination of knowledge and information about marriage and family life and concomitant relationships.
- (b) To establish and maintain a counselling service for those in need of perspective and help in their marital relationships.
- (c) To be responsible for the recruiting, selection and training of counsellors as supervised staff members of the service with a panel of experts at their disposal.
- (d) To provide for education in marriage both on pre-marital and post-marital level.
- (e) To encourage research into matters of marriage and the problems related thereto.
- (f) To coordinate, guide and encourage all local efforts and activities in the field of marriage guidance.

The researcher was employed by FAMSA during the time of the study and was responsible for services to the Black community. In the researcher's experience as a marriage counsellor in the Black community, it was realized that the Xhosa people's marriages are influenced to a great extent by their customs and beliefs and that these often run counter to the underlying premises of marriage counselling. As a result of this, there is often confusion and lack of understanding of what the role of the marriage counsellor is, causing the community not to make proper use of this service. The researcher also experienced that most clients that sought help from FAMSA had material needs and that some of the marital problems were related to the husband's unemployment. The husband's frustration due to unemployment often resulted in heavy drinking which aggravated the tension in the home. The problems of overcrowding and being forced to live with in-laws as a result of a chronic lack of accommodation were also found to be common problems.

It is thus clear that the presenting of marital difficulties are in many cases symptoms of other family and community problems, not usually dealt with by traditional counselling. In addition to this it is suspected that some characteristics of marital counselling as a mode of intervention not always makes it an effective tool when used with Black families. The lapsing of time for example does not make it very appealing to Black clients.

Most clients were labourers and domestic workers who have to ask for time off from work. This seems to pose difficulties for the clients as the employers are not always sympathetic. Clients also did not seem to see the value of having all marital difficulties looked at in detail. There was often an expectation of having problems sorted out in one or two sessions, usually after a joint interview with the couple has been held. There was apparently no desire to uncover and work on the underlying problems over time but rather to solve only the present crisis instead. This also resulted in contracts that were made with clients not being honoured in many cases as undertakings were often not kept. The researcher realized that the cultural background of clients contributed a great deal to this perception of counselling.

The above problem in marital counselling with Black families seem to be caused by the fact that counselling models and techniques are based on the Western mode of intervention. This puts the relevance of the model for the Black community in question. It has also been found by various authors (Muller 1988, Gwyn 1981, Jones 1983) who studied the Black families that these methods have been ineffective and Black people have been found to respond unfavourably to them. They also argue that traditional social work theories are derived from experiences with White middle-class families and most of the clients from the Black community are from a lower-class background in a Third World situation. Black social workers are therefore armed with theory and methods that have been formulated and tested in the West, and they are then expected to apply these and be effective in their communities.

The situation described above prompted the researcher to embark on a research project of this nature. It was felt that marital counselling in the Black community should be explored in order to determine its relevance as a helping method. This may clarify possible adjustments to be made to make this mode of intervention more successful in traditional communities.

## 1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The following was accepted as aims for the study.

1. To establish Black client's perception of marriage counselling.
2. To enquire into the attitudes of clients from the Xhosa community of Grahamstown towards seeking help from a marriage counselling as an alternative to assistance offered by the extended family.
3. To establish what factors contribute to a married couple's decision to seek help outside the family.

4. To establish what the Black clients expectations are while seeking help from a service agency such as FAMSA.
6. To evaluate the present mode of intervention and establish how the role of the counsellor can be adjusted so as to be relevant to the needs of the Black client population.
7. To formulate questions for more precise future research.

### 1.3 SCOPE OF STUDY

Geographically the study was conducted in the Municipal area of Grahamstown amongst the Xhosa-speaking people. Functionally it was focused on the area of marriage counselling. It was more specifically focused on clients of FAMSA, Grahamstown. The subjects involved were specifically those who had made use of FAMSA services in the period between January 1986 and December 1987.

### 1.4 ANTICIPATED VALUE OF FINDINGS

- (i) The study should place marriage in the Black community in sharp focus.
- (ii) The researcher has the expectation that the community's response to professional forms of help in contrast with traditional forms of help will be highlighted.
- (iii) The study should clarify some of the problems experienced in the use of marital counselling with Black families.
- (iv) The findings of the study might help to improve marital counselling with the Black family.
- (v) The study should contribute to the effectiveness of services rendered by FAMSA.

## 1.5 LIMITATIONS

The study has the following limitations :

- (i) Even though the respondents interviewed had terminated counselling with FAMSA, there was still a tendency to want to relate the story all over again, which tended to take a lot of time.
- (ii) The researcher found that there was resistance in talking about issues that were still a source of discomfort for some respondents.
- (iii) The other factor is that the interviewer or researcher had been counsellor for the respondents at the time of their marital difficulties which might have influenced the respondents views.
- (iv) Some of the subjects that were part of the sample could not be contacted because of changes in their residential address.
- (v) Availability of literature specifically on marriage counselling was a problem. This did not however make the study impossible because literature on counselling with Black people in general could be used and that is more freely available although not in abundance.

## 1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Lobolo: The property transferred from the family group of the husband to the family group of the wife in respect of the marriage (SA Law Commission, 1985:12).

Marriage: A union between two people of the opposite sex, which is institutionalised by the payment of Lobolo in the case of the Black community.

Extended Family:

A "multi-generational, inter-dependent, kinship system which is wedded together by sense of obligation to relatives, it is organised around a family figure, it extends across geographical boundaries to connect family units to family network and has a built in mutual aid system for welfare of its members and the maintenance of the family as a whole." Martin & Martin as quoted in Green (1982: 111).

Counselling:

An interviewing procedure aimed at guiding the client towards a better understanding of his problems with a view to solving them and improving his social functioning. (Dictionary of Social Work, 1984) : 65)

MarriageCounselling:

"Process whereby professional skills and experience, within the context of an understanding and accepting face to face relationship, are brought to the assistance of spouses as they explore, evaluate and clarify feelings and issues, as they seek to communicate verbally and emotionally and as they can learn to choose courses of action which will lead to some resolution of their problems." Ruthledge as quoted in Trumpelmann (1981:2).

Xhosa:

The Xhosa have been named after their great chief of five centuries ago, living in the Eastern Cape between the highlands and the sea in the area bounded by the Bashee River to the north and the Keiskamma River to the south. Their tribal cluster includes Gcaleka, Ngqika, Ndlambe, Dushane, Qhayi, Gasela, Ntinde, Dange, Gqunukhwebe, Gwaki, Mbalu. (Gray and Mertens, 1973:1).

## 1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The layout of the dissertation is as follows.

- Chapter 1 :** is an introductory chapter which includes a brief description of the motivation, aims and scope of the study, the anticipated value of findings, limitations of the study and the definition of key terms.
- Chapter 2 :** Gives a detailed overview of the traditional Black family and marriage life, with specific emphasis on the Black family, preliminaries to marriage, marriage life and marital breakdown.
- Chapter 3 :** Is focused on the changes in the Black family and marriage life.
- Chapter 4 :** Discusses marriage counselling, its historical development, the nature of marriage counselling, the white model of marriage, marriage preparation, goals of marriage counselling, process of marriage counselling and the role of the marriage counsellor. Divorce counselling is also discussed briefly in this chapter.
- Chapter 5 :** Cultural considerations in counselling is the focus of this chapter with specific emphasis on the relevance of marriage counselling as a mode of intervention for the Black family. Consideration for counselling the Black family are outlined in this chapter.
- Chapter 6 :** This chapter is used to give an outline of the research, design and methodology.
- Chapter 7 :** The data presentation and analysis is found in this chapter.
- Chapter 8 :** In this chapter conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

## CHAPTER 2

### AN OVERVIEW OF TRADITIONAL BLACK FAMILY AND MARRIAGE LIFE

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to be able to understand the role of the marriage counsellor in the Black community, it is important to explain in detail what marriage means in this community. This chapter therefore seeks to discuss first of all the family as a social unit in the Black community. It plays a very important role in the lives of its members, not only for satisfaction of their physiological needs but also for the fulfillment of emotional and psychological needs. Preliminaries to getting married will be looked at, specifically the role of lobolo in validating marriage. Married life will be discussed with specific emphasis on the traditional husband-and-wife relationship, their roles, the mutual expectations and their relations with their social systems. Marital breakdown will also be discussed as well as situations that lead to divorce in the Black community. Remarriage will also be discussed briefly. Although the discussion in this chapter is on family and marriage life in the Black community in general it does apply to the unit of investigation in view of the many resemblances amongst different ethnic groups in the Black community in South Africa.

#### 2.2 THE BLACK FAMILY

The most significant feature of the traditional Black family is the importance of the larger kin group when compared with the nuclear family. Amongst the Black people the extended family was ranked as the primary source of social support. Individuals identified more with the family group than with individual groups, (Nzimande, 1987:33).

Members of the extended family could intervene in conflicts between husband and wife instead of having them sorted out privately by the couple. Relatives had much more influence over the decisions made by the couple (Maforah, 1987:263).

Martin & Martin as quoted in Green (1982:111) defines a Black extended family as

*"a multi-generational, inter-dependent kinship system which is wedded together by sense of obligation to relatives, it is organized around a family base, is guided by a dominant family figure, it extends across geographical boundaries to connect family units to an extended family network and has a built in mutual aid system for welfare of its members and the maintenance of the family as a whole. The extended family has an important role within the Black community as a social unit for providing psychological, emotional and material support to its members."*

Tshabalala (1986:73) stated that in the Black community context the extended family ties did not necessarily originate as a result of a need to withstand and survive against colonial powers but that its patterns were fully established long before there was contact with white people. He however, acknowledges the fact that contact with white people did bring a change in the character of this system. The extended family system was influenced but did not disintegrate.

Traditionally the extended family made provision for the welfare of children, family, mental health, recreation and care for the aged (Maqashalala 1975:152). Due to the nature of the functions performed by the family, it is Maqashalala's belief that in order to be in a position to talk about social welfare in the Black community the family should be considered first. He believes that in the social welfare field many of the programmes that are planned out of the family context are not able to meet a favourable response in the Black community.

This therefore implies that the bonds that the individual has with the kinship system cannot be overlooked when one considers working with the Black community.

It is important to point out however, that the family has lost some of the functions that it used to perform. Other institutions in society have taken a lot of these functions. This change in the functioning of the family has been brought about as a result of industrialization and urbanization. As people flocked to urban areas to seek employment the family bonds began to weaken. The social welfare function which was performed by the family was taken over by welfare agencies. In spite of this however, the extended family still has important functions to perform, because social work agencies are not readily accepted in the Black community. They are still approached with suspicion and reluctance.

Tshabalala (1986: 73) quotes Martin & Martin as outlining two functions of the extended family, one being leadership, which gives family members a sense of security, a sense of family, and a sense of group direction and identity. The second function is that of promoting the welfare of dependent family members in order to provide them with basic needs and a sense of economic security. Due to changes that the extended family network has undergone, various other support systems developed in urban areas to cope with the pressures of urban living. These are outlined by Tshabalala (1986:73) as follows:

**Mutual Aid System :** The mutual aid system developed in the Black community as a result of the traditional communal way of living which encouraged sharing and co-operation among members of the community. This system serves as a survival component. This is one system according to Tshabalala (1986:75) which has not disintegrated as a result of urbanization and industrialization.

Instead new support systems such as burial societies, clubs, food cooperatives and other informal networks were developed. Tshabalala (1986 :75) therefore argues that most people in the Black community will approach social work agencies only when the social network is no longer able to provide help.

**Financial and Emotional Support :** Tshabalala (1986:75) stated that the financial support provided by the extended family is less stigmatized than the one received from social work agencies. It would seem that help received from family members or other support systems preserves the individual's dignity and self-esteem. The extended family also provides moral support in difficult times such as losing a job, death, sickness sand others, resulting in a sense of emotional security. Studies by Mitchell, et al as quoted by Tshabalala (1986:75) concluded that African kin is the strongest whenever there is a crisis suffered by a member of the family. It is considered very important to support each other during this time, so that one may be supported when one is in a similar situation.

**Non-Family Support :** The non-family support system consists of neighbours and friends who provide social support to the family members they are friends with. In this situation one member of the family can have his own circle of friends. However a friend of one family member is usually friends with the whole family. In urban areas it is the non-family support system that prevails above the extended family. Some such relationships can be very intimate and are viewed as family relations. Tshabalala (1986:76), therefore emphasized the importance of considering non-family members when help to clients is being offered.

Though the extended family tends to make good use of its scarce resources, problems do result which affect the smooth functioning of this network. There are some threats to the survival of the extended family system today.

This happens according to Tshabalala (1986: 76) when some kin members fail to acknowledge the reciprocity of mutual obligation of the system. Urbanization and the present economic climate also tends to promote competition amongst members of the family for these scarce resources.

### 2.3 MARRIAGE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Marriage amongst many people in the Black community is still a highly valued and recommended institution. This has been confirmed in what De Haas says that most people regard marriage as desirable even if they can marry and divorce rather than not to marry at all (De Haas, 1985:308). This is further supported by the following observation of Stack:

*"Notwithstanding the emptiness and hopelessness of the job, experience in the Black community, men and women are still able to fall in love and form relationships which sometimes result in marriage against the forces of poverty and racism". (1974:120)*

In order to understand the customs relating to marriage in the Black community, we need to know that marriage involves a re-arrangement of a social structure. When marriage occurs there are certain changes that come with it in the existing relationships of the bride and the bridegroom. New social relations are formed not only between the husband and the wife, but also between the wife's relatives on one side and between the husband's relatives on the other. Through this process a whole new network of relationships is being established. The interest in the marriage is not only shown by the immediate family members but also by other family members on both sides. As stated in Wilsworth (1980:366) that

*"within the Black community the prevailing cognitive model for ordering human relations is one in which there is an emphasis on what Turner has called, 'I and 'thou' or the essential 'we'. This therefore indicates that the quality of self is perceived in group rather than in individual terms".*

She further stated that

*"the process begins with a newborn infant whose existential experience is one of closeness to the other and belongingness not only to own family but to fathers and mothers to all children". (Wilsworth 1980:366).*

The concept of group consciousness is very important to the Black community and is especially relevant to marriage. Marriage is an institution that varies from culture to culture, it is not a thing and cannot be circumscribed, (Whooley, 1975:248). It can be said to be a union between a man and a woman recognised by the community within which it exists and it is from such a union that children are born. Marriage must be considered therefore in relation to cultural concepts, attitudes, values and expectations of the people.

Schapera (1937) stated that African marriage traditionally was not a result of love and sex but more a result of social, legal and economic considerations. The choice of a marriage partner was not always surrounded by romance. Xhosa men used to consider an arranged marriage as superior to a romantic marriage, whereas girls on the other hand, preferred romantic marriages to arranged ones. It was men's belief then that it was impossible to train a woman if you are in love with her. According to De Haas (1985:308) this has changed drastically however as they began to realise that it was almost impossible to marry a girl without having had a relationship with her or her approval before hand.

Marriage among the Xhosa speaking people has been governed by the rule of clan exogamy and there are prohibitions against marrying into the clan of either partner, mother or grandmother, (Whooley 1975:255). Young people are not always aware of such prohibitions resulting in lengthy discussions before marriage. These discussions are usually carried out by men of the lineage who descended from a common grandfather. Apart from marriage prohibitions, there are other issues that are taken into consideration with regard to the family that one is contemplating marrying into. The family concerned should not be known for witchcraft, or for a bad reputation of the girls in the family. All these considerations even though they may seem irrational to the uninformed, indicate the seriousness within which marriage is approached in this community.

The act of marrying according to Preston-Whyte (1974: 193) tends to move both the bride and the groom towards social maturity. This is fulfilled finally when children are born. Marriage in this regard can be viewed as a rite of passage in this community. The man and the woman are transferred from the group of the unmarried to the group of the married. The whole transfer involving an important change of status in the society.

## 2.4 PRELIMINARIES TO MARRIAGE

### 2.4.1 Lobolo

One of the main features of a customary marriage is the agreement between family groups concerned for the transfer of property from the family group of the husband to the family group of the wife in respect of the marriage. The property which is transferred is called lobolo (ikhazi in Xhosa) (SA Law Commission, 1985:12). (The term lobolo will be used throughout instead of the term ikhazi). Traditionally lobolo was paid in cattle. In modern times the amount of lobolo is often calculated in money, but the amount stipulated is usually related to the value of an agreed number of cattle.

No custom has been so widely discussed or has given rise to so many misconceptions as the one of lobolo. Due to the fact that lobolo involves an exchange of material possessions and is often accompanied by considerable bargaining it was looked upon by some whites as a sale of women. Lobolo in the African culture is regarded as a guarantee of good treatment of the wife by the husband and his family group during the existence of the marriage.

This, however does not imply that if the wife is ill-treated she cannot leave and seek the protection of her own family group. In such circumstances the husband may be held liable and may forfeit the lobolo he paid. He may even be held liable for the outstanding lobolo upon termination of the marriage. Lobolo is regarded as a form of expressing gratitude to the wife's parents for allowing the husband to marry their daughter.

Only through lobolo can a man claim the children of a woman, once lobolo has been paid all the children of the marriage are his. Lobolo is also seen as a compensation to the group that has lost a member, to restore the disturbed equilibrium. It is however, important to note that there is no direct link between the amount of lobolo and the value of the girl. On the other hand lobolo is not a mere compensation because the man has a lifelong bond with his parents-in-law. He is expected to assist them whenever they need his help.

Lobolo also has a psychological significance for the wife in that it elevates her to a certain status in the community. It gives her the feeling that she is worth something and has not been given away for nothing. It validates her relationship with her husband. It is also said to be a test for the husband to see how honest and able he is to be a future provider for his family. According to Hunter (1961:190) a woman for whom lobolo has not been paid has no honour, no matter how many children she bears, her brother has a right to come and take her daughters. In a way then, lobolo legalises an illegal union and also gives the husband a right over all his children.

If lobolo has not been fully paid up, the father of the wife can detain his daughter together with her children until her husband produces the amount of lobolo demanded.

The essential feature of lobolo according to Hunter (1961:191) is that there is no finality in it, because cattle or money pass from the husband to his wife's parents throughout the lifetime of the husband. The rights over a woman which are transferred to her husband and his family group include rights in her both as a wife and as a mother. Into the first category fall the rights of sexual access and to her labour. In the case of adultery the husband can claim reparation. The second set of rights relate to the procreative powers of the woman. The husband and his family have rights to have control of all children born to this woman unless the marriage has been dissolved by divorce in which case lobolo could be returned.

#### 2.4.2 Lobolo negotiations

When marriage is suggested the bride's father sends men, usually the elders in the family, relatives or neighbours to demand lobolo. They are usually met by the groom's father and other male relatives who are usually chosen for their capacity to speak (Hunter, 1961: 191). Initially when negotiations start, exorbitant demands are made by both sides and they beat one another down. Haggling over lobolo is seen as good, provided the groom and his father-in-law do not take part in person in these discussions. It is unacceptable for them to enter into such discussions. Women are also not permitted to take part in discussions about lobolo.

The bride only gets feedback indirectly about how many cattle her family has received on her marriage. Lobolo also has religious connotations. Cattle are very closely linked with ancestral spirits. Cattle received as lobolo of a daughter are of special ritual importance.

The passage of cattle put the girl received in exchange for cattle in close relationship with ancestral spirits of the family from which the cattle come.

Although it is the giving of lobolo which validates a marriage, Manona (1980:85) stated very clearly that in a significant number of marriages lobolo is not given. This, he pointed out is related to the weakening of parental authority and the difficulty of applying the traditional sanctions which used to enable them to remove their daughter from her husband's home and keep her until the issue concerning lobolo has been resolved. The issue of lobolo also causes conflict between spouses in that women often believe that their husband is likely to desert them if no lobolo has been paid.

Another factor highlighted by Manona (1980:86) is the one which affects the giving of lobolo in that the man now must earn his own lobolo, he can no longer rely on the assistance from his parents or family member as it was in the past. The implications of this therefore are that the man cannot readily fulfill this obligation without putting money in the bank for a considerable number of years. Sometimes men do not give full lobolo due to being uncertain that the marriage will last especially under the present circumstances the social attitude towards divorce has undergone changes.

The amount of lobolo varies, even though it is considered an honour to give a high lobolo. It is accepted that the father of the girl may ask whatever he likes for his daughter, but the husband's economic position is usually considered. It is held that the attractiveness of the girl may also affect the amount asked. Although it is still given, the nature of the transaction is changing. Money, sheep, goats can be used as substitutes for cattle. The change to money tends to commercialise lobolo. Father's sometimes charge exorbitant amounts and do not take into account what the man is able to afford.

This affects the relationship between the husband and his father-in-law, who may feel unfairly treated. Lobolo has many facets but its importance lies in the fact that marriage is inconceivable without it. It remains an integral and a valued element in the constitution of a marriage (De Haas, 1985: 308).

## 2.5 MARRIAGE LIFE

### 2.5.1 Introduction

Amongst the Xhosa people there are a number of ways in which a man can become a woman's lawful husband. This can be done by elopement or ukuthwala. This is an old Cape Nguni custom of initiating marriage (Manona 1980:79). In the past it was a rare occurrence whereas today it is practiced quite often. It is still however regarded as a second class marriage due to the fact that in most marriages the couple concerned often initiate marriage before negotiation between the two families. In marriage by elopement, the man might in some cases inform some of his relatives of his intentions before hand, in other cases he does not notify anyone before he marries.

The usual procedure in such a situation is that the husband would fetch the woman at night from her home and report her presence to his parents on the following day in which her own family will then be notified of this. Elopement today is an informal form of marriage, which does not usually follow lobolo negotiations as the case was with a customary marriage. This form of marriage can then be distinguishable from customary marriage in that it is only established after several months of negotiations between the families concerned (Manona, 1980:81). This form of marriage is in most cases followed by a trip to the marriage officer to legalise the union.

Amongst Christians the marriage union is legalised during the wedding ceremony in church by the minister. Marriage as it appears is a process initiated once a couple themselves have made up their minds to marry. De Haas (1985:307) found that amongst some educated people minimal customary rituals are performed and celebrations are usually held privately and on a small scale. However with other people a wedding is a broadcast to the whole community. Many people are often aware of what is happening and anyone is welcome to attend the ceremony. People who come are expected to assist with gifts and general preparations for the occasion where they are able to (De Haas, 1985: 308). The slackening hold of tradition is seen in the curtailment of ceremonies and rituals which were previously associated with marriages. Today most marriages are instigated by the couple themselves without parents approval as the case was in the past. This change reflects the increasing independence of young people who seem to be acting more on their own authority and reject or overlook their parents authority (Manona, 1980:85).

As soon as a woman has been declared a wife, she is required to stay indoors until new clothing is made for her. The woman's married life will then begin after putting on this new attire. The mother-in-law is usually the one involved in this procedure. The husband's responsibility is to provide the money for the purchasing of this clothing. She is required to dress in a prescribed fashion. This new attire includes a long print dress, a black "doek"<sup>1</sup> and a scarf. A married woman is expected to wear a "doek" on her head, for the first few months of marriage, it must be worn above her eyes and she is expected to lengthen her dress to ankle level. She is also given a name which indicates that she is now married (Levin, 1946:145).

---

<sup>1</sup> cloth used to cover the bride's head.

In marriage the wife's first duty is to respect her husband and his people. As a girl she was uninhibited and as she enters marriage she is now bound by various restrictions laid down by her husband's family and insisted upon by her mother-in-law. She has to learn unconditional obedience through subdued behaviour (Manona, 1980:82). She has to respect her father and brothers-in-law the most. Respect is also shown when she does not call her husband by name, or use any word that resembles it. She must also show respect by never uncovering her head, by wearing a "doek" low over her eyes as stated above, by not removing the garment that covers her breasts, by never entering the cattle kraal, by not entering the house across the area between the cattle kraal and the door, by abstaining from certain foods, by never speaking except when spoken to and by generally submitting to her mother-in-law's instructions. This respect involves also the way she sits on the ground with her legs pulled together so that men may not see her knees (Levin, 1946:145).

Xhosa girls do find this to be very hard training. Whooley (1975:185) found that older married women will always relate the suffering of this period, regarding it not only as hard but also as a period that needed to happen without them having a choice.

Underlying this treatment certain concepts need to be understood : Xhosa people have a firm belief that a good character can be moulded through this kind of training which is tough and rigorous, (Whooley, 1975:185). After such training a Xhosa woman must be able to rule over her house effectively. Xhosa men are also in favour of such training. They would never suggest that their wives be treated differently because in that way their spouses could be spoilt and no man would want a spoilt wife (Whooley, 1975:186).

The husband is also required to respect the wife's parents. The wife is also required to avoid the rooms of her husband's senior male relatives and may not eat at the same table as they do.

This is however only maintained when these people live in the same household with the couple. In this community it is evident therefore that an ideal wife is the one who is diligent, hospitable and of a pleasant disposition (Levin, 1946:138).

### 2.5.2 Husband and wife relations in marriage

In the Xhosa community there is a well marked division of labour between men and women, with some kind of work being for men and the other kind for women. The wife has the role of preparing food, bearing and rearing children as well as keeping the household respectable. Men on the other hand are expected to be breadwinners and protector of the family. In this regard Beattie (1964:132) states that division of labour varies from culture to culture but in most situations it is always determined by the physical differences between the sexes. Traditionally there is no equality of status between the husband and the wife in marriage. The husband is the head of the family and is believed to have a link with ancestral spirits. The wife is expected to be submissive, humble and obedient. The husband sometimes also claims the right to beat his wife if she is not. Wife beating is thus a common occurrence and most men still see this as part of their custom. Today however, men are intimidated by the fact that their wives sometimes report the beating to the police.

As can be seen above the relationship of husband and wife is one of superordination and subordination. The wife occupies the status of a subordinate. She does not have a say in decision making on matters regarding the family, (Motshologane 1974:25).

According to Radebe (1983:67) this kind of relationship has changed drastically in urban areas. She is also supported by Rip and Steyn (1968:509) who states that the husband does not have the same say in family matters as the case was in the past. His status has eroded while that of the wife has increased. According to them (Rip & Steyn, 1968:510) the woman's status has been elevated by the Christian religion.

Due to the fact that she is able to receive the same education as her husband, she is more independent and can act on her own authority and can take legal action against anyone including her own husband (Radebe, 1983: 67).

Companionship between a traditional husband and wife was not found as they did not spend their time together. During the leisure time, the spouses would attend to their own activities on their own. Husband and wife would not usually visit together or attend any meeting or ceremonies in each other's company (Levin, 1946: 146).

Today the situation has changed (De Haas, 1985: 308) to the extent that amongst the educated the marital relationship has taken a Western derived connotation in that it includes expectations of partnership, emotions and closeness. With regard to sexual relations the wife is expected to gratify her husband's sexual desires, she is however not supposed to show interest in sex directly.

There are certain periods during which the husband and wife do not make love. This is during the time when the wife is menstruating and also some months before the birth of a baby. This is in some cases related to the belief that the husband's semen may affect the baby negatively. During these periods of abstinence the husband, with the wife's consent can go out with other women as long as it is kept a secret, because some wives believe that a man cannot be prohibited from having sexual relations, because it is unnatural, (Levin, 1946:154).

## 2.6 MARITAL BREAKDOWN AND DIVORCE

In the past, married life was lived out within patrilocal and patriarchal family structures. The authority vested in the head of the family was not only supported by the belief in the power of ancestors but also by economic realities (De Haas 1985: 313).

However a drastic change came with urban living in that there are often no kinsmen in the area to provide guidance to a married couple when cherished marriage expectations are violated. Divorce in the Black community starts in most cases when the wife runs home to her family after a quarrel or a fight between herself and her husband. As it is commonly held that the wife will run home, her husband is expected to go after her. The source of conflict will be discussed between the two families and ways of reconciling the couple sought. Depending on the nature of the outcome, the husband is usually fined by the wife's family for failing to treat his wife well. This fine can be anything ranging from a bottle of brandy to a payment of a cow. The fine is often based on the nature of the fight and whether there was an assault or not.

The family of the wife is often obligated to persuade their daughter to go back with the husband if he has made an effort to fetch her. It is not acceptable in most families for the wife to go back to her own house without her parents consent. The wives also seem to generally prefer to be fetched through the right channels by their husbands. The idea behind this is that the families must be involved in the conflict-resolution and also reprimand whoever is in the wrong. However, if the wife refuses to go back to her husband or the husband does not fetch her, the marriage may lapse.

Levin (1946: 181) found desertion to be the more common mode of separation. She found that divorce did not occur as frequently as desertion and that desertion was not as strongly condemned as divorce. In the Xhosa community marriage is dissolved when a wife is sent back home by her husband or if she leaves him and refuses to come back. If the wife leaves her husband and refuses to go back to him, he can demand the return of part of the lobolo. Dissolution of marriage in this community is on the increase, even though perseverance in marriage is more encouraged than divorce. A girl who refuses to stay with any husband is disapproved of.

The possible reasons for divorce in this community as outlined by Kayongo— Male & Onyango (1984: 19) are many, but the most common ones can be stated as follows: ill-treatment of wife by husband, extensive neglect of wife by husband, marriage of a husband to a second wife, mother-in-law conflict with wife, marriage forced by parents against their daughter's wish, the husband wanting sexual relations when the baby is only three months old, one of the children dying suddenly and wife being blamed for it, the husband threatening to kill the wife, and wife's inability to have children. It must be stated that these were the reasons that contributed to divorce in traditional Black marriages. There are many other reasons that contribute to marital breakdown in modern marriages and these will be outlined in the next chapter.

## 2.7 RE-MARRIAGE

Even though there are a lot of authors that address the issue of marriage in the Black community the issue of re-marriage is not normally addressed. This does not mean that people do not re-marry in the Black community, because they do. Traditionally re-marriage was mostly acceptable in a situation where the spouse died, it was mostly encouraged for the husband rather than the wife. In societies where the wife could marry again it usually happened when the husband's younger brother would take his brother's place as a husband. Examples of this would be found amongst Sothos. In cases of divorce, the person divorced was often viewed negatively and in most cases a stigma was attached to the woman. This resulted in resistance towards marrying a divorced woman. In some cases the commitment of the divorced mother to the care of the young children prevented her from re-marrying. This often explains the high percentage of single-parent families in the Black community. The issue of re-marriage is therefore much more acceptable for the man than for the woman. This area still needs further research especially in the Black community as with the increasing rate of divorce, re-marriages are on the increase.

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an overview was given of the traditional ways in which marriage life is conducted. Although social change is also making its impact felt on the Black family traditions and customs still have a stronghold on individuals. It is important though to consider any marital difficulties against the cultural background because only then would they be understood properly.

## CHAPTER 3

### EMERGING CHANGES IN THE BLACK FAMILY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter an account was given of the values, traditions and customs affecting family and marriage in the Black community. Brief mention was also made of some changes affecting the marital relationship amongst Black families. Marital friction and discord in the Black family should be understood in light of these societal changes. For that reason, this chapter will be used to give a more comprehensive view of the emerging changes in the Black family. It is however important to note that even though these changes occur, it should not be assumed that Black people have abandoned their culture. It must be stressed that the maintenance of tradition provides some form of security and identity, although social change without any doubt, causes confusion and uncertainty.

#### 3.2 CHANGING ROLE OF THE FAMILY

It is widely accepted that the family as the basic unit in society is the primary source of love and individual care for children and that it provides the setting in which a child's needs can best be met. Motshologane as quoted by Radebe (1983:60) views the family as important in ensuring the continuity of society by producing new individuals in each generation, and by passing knowledge, customs, traditions as well as intellectual, emotional and spiritual endowments to the new members.

At present there is a great concern in all societies that family life is disintegrating. This trend is also emerging in the Black family. Maforah (1986:262) argues that the European contact with Africa initiated highly disruptive changes which affect family life in the Black community. She claims that family production systems changed profoundly due to economic systems. This implies that the role of the family in providing for its members is curtailed. This sometimes necessitates that at an early age family members seek employment. Traditionally, socialization was a matter for the large kin group, that is the extended family, but today more and more socialization is now being taken over by educational institutions like schools and nursery schools (Kayongo—Male & Onyango 1984:12).

Political exploitation brought about forced labour, racial segregation and alienation of land. As it will be seen in the section on migrant labour, family life was disrupted through this system. The role of the father for example was affected as he was often away from the home and could not participate in the discipline of his children.

### 3.3 INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION

Contact between the Black and White communities have produced a lot of changes in the family life of Black people. Schapera as quoted in (Radebe 1983:61) tries to indicate this by stating that:

*"under the influence of European civilization, many of the natives have abandoned their original tribal customs and their social life is being reorganized on new basis by the adoption of European habits and customs, and by their introduction into the economic, religious and political systems of the Europeans"*

From this statement, it can be argued that the contact between the Black and White community had an impact on African society. Regardless of this however, there is still a strong reliance on traditional culture, although it might be weakening.

It also needs to be stressed that some of the changes in the Black family were forced upon it were beyond its control. The most obvious disruption of family life started when people moved to urban areas. Tribal ties weakened and sometimes broke down and Black family life was severely affected by this as it was firmly held by the kinship system.

Piek as quoted in Radebe (1983:60), points out that the stabilizing influence of the kin groups has gone with the passing generation. Most young people lead their own lives away from home and are not concerned about their parent's feelings in the event of their getting divorced. The younger generation therefore, seems to have welcomed freedom from the interference of the elders in the family.

Changes in the society due to urbanization and industrialization have contributed to the change in the family. However, Sociologists are reluctant to attribute these changes solely to industrialization and urbanization. They argue that the effects of social change on the family are not yet fully known. They seem to be unsure of the nature of the changes that occur in the family as a result of this. Various studies have however observed changes in the family life in most countries after periods of industrialization. Rip & Steyn as quoted in Radebe (1983:63) seem to support the notion that the process of urbanization and accompanying adaptation to the dynamic urban living has contributed to the changes found in the urban Black families. It can thus be accepted that societal change has an effect on the family even though the extent of this effect may not be fully known.

### 3.4 THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM

One of the main features of urbanization and industrialization is the migrant labour system. This system has had far-reaching consequences for Black families. Wage labour arose as part of the changes accompanying colonization. Workers were needed on the railways, in the houses, plantations, factories etc. Most of the wage labour in the colonial period was a direct result of colonial policies on land and taxation which forced people to obtain wage employment. From the outset, the migrant stream consisted of males. This implied that married males had to leave their families behind for long periods of time. Women had to adjust to the male absence during migration by taking on the husband's duties. This also made married men form new sexual relationships to combat loneliness and frustration at being away from their families. As men began to form these new relationships their families back home began to suffer financially due to the fact that children were born into the new relationships. This meant that the husband had to support two families from the low wages that he was earning. In this way the majority of women faced insecurity in their lives because of the unreliability of cash remittances from their husbands. This resulted in the children running a higher risk of malnutrition. (Kayongo-Male & Onyango 1984:37).

### 3.5 CHANGES IN MARRIAGE

As already stated in the Black community traditional marriage was not a result of love, but was usually arranged by parents. This is confirmed by Okeke (1986:10) when he states that traditionally

*"The African marries and then falls in love".*

Love marriages were seen as inferior to arranged marriages. A new wave of marriage practice has begun to emerge in the Black community today, however it is argued that it has been brought about through the direct influence of the Christian Western culture.

Today young people have more say with regard to whom they want to marry. The selection of a mate has now become an individual affair with less parental participation. There is a tendency amongst the youth towards getting married without the parents knowing about it. Some parents accept these decisions while others denounce them. Today there is also more emphasis on being in love and choosing a marriage partner for oneself. Parents however, do not see marriage resulting from love as successful, or the best. However, the youth of today insist on making their own choices. Parental authority seems to be declining. It has been said that the introduction of schools and churches have offered alternative value systems and have served as new sources of authority (Kayongo—Male & Onyango 1986: 26). They further state that closely related to this was the moral degradation associated with racial discrimination, which reduced parents dignity and often children's respect or their parents. This is indicated today by the children's leading role in fighting for liberation, where their parents are perceived to have failed.

### 3.5.1 Lobolo

There are some changes that relate to lobolo. It is still regarded by most families as important in the establishment of a marriage. In a significant number of marriages, lobolo is however not given. Manona (1980:85) argues that this change is related to the weakening of parental authority and the difficulty of applying traditional sanctions like 'ukuleleka', which enabled parents to remove their daughter from her husband's home and keep her until the issue concerning lobolo had been resolved. Presently there is little that parents can do if a man fails to fulfill his traditional obligations. This sometimes causes quarrels between the spouses mainly because many women still believe that they're likely to be deserted if no lobolo has been paid by the husband. The other change about lobolo is related to the fact that in the past lobolo was paid in cattle and today it is paid in money. This implies that the man must earn money to be able to pay lobolo. The family is no longer able to be of any assistance to him. He cannot, therefore readily fulfill this obligation without putting money in the bank for a considerable number of years.

The change in the stability of marriage and resultant increase in divorce rates has affected many men's view about lobolo. Some tend to avoid paying lobolo in full if there is uncertainty that the marriage will last.

In the past a customary union was seen by those involved in marriage, as a valid marriage union. A number of factors today tend to threaten that view. Most women tend to feel insecure in marriage that has not been legalised. They tend to feel that their rights as wives are not fully secured and therefore insist that the marriage be legalised either in court or in church. There is a tendency therefore of seeing the customary union as not valid in terms of the law. In most cases today couples tend to get married legally first with customary rituals performed afterwards.

The period of time that the married couple spends with the family today is also getting shorter. Some couples tend to spend their first days of marriage in their own house. In cases where they stay with the extended family, it is usually not longer than a period of six months, depending on the couple. The brides of today do not seem keen to be subject to the hard supervision and training of their mothers-in-law.

### 3.5.2 The relationship between a mother and daughter-in-law.

The relationship between the mothers and daughters in-law is particularly under stress as stated by Manona (1980:93). As the young wives of today become more educated and more financially independent, they tend to be more assertive and less subservient to their mothers-in-law. If the daughter-in-law fails to perform as expected, major frictions arise between the young wife and her in-laws. The source of conflict in this relationship is sometimes due to competition between the mother-in-law and the young wife, for her husband's income. Traditionally the mother-in-law was the one who was given the money by the son and she would decide on the amount of pocket money to give to her daughter-in-law. This caused a lot of dissatisfaction and distress for the young wife.

Sometimes the husband may take the side of his family, where his parents expect help from him. Parents sometimes demand money from their daughter-in-law. If she refuses, she is blamed for monopolising their son. She can also be blamed for supporting her own family and can be accused of selfishness or lack of respect.

Men therefore often find themselves in a difficult situation in trying to fulfill the traditional expectation of allowing their parents to have full control of their wives. In the process however, they run the risk of alienating their wives, (Manona, 1980:96). All this creates problems for the married couple, as the income is expected to be shared among the members of the extended family. This results in the income being over-stretched. Married women today prefer to set up their own household as soon as possible to avoid this competition for financial resources.

### 3.5.3 Husband–Wife relationship

Traditionally, the typical position of authority includes the normative head, the emotional leader, the supporter and the expert. The normative head is usually the father, his position given to him by the community. As head the father was treated with great respect, knelt down to and served the best food (Kayongo–Male & Onyango 1986:28). This normative position was strongly related to the head's control over land inheritance and traditional rites. The emotional leader was often the mother, who was closer to the children from birth and was supposed to create and maintain a happy home. The relationship between the husband and wife was one of superordination and subordination (Radebe, 1983:67). The wife was expected to be submissive and also did not participate in the decision-making process regarding family matters. As a result of the migrative labour system however the wife grew accustomed to making decisions by herself regarding the utilization of family property, the discipline of the children and other matters. When the man returned home from his place of employment, they had difficulty in adjusting to the role.

They sometimes had difficulty in dealing with their children, due to lack of a developed father-child relationship. The woman's status today is said to be increasing as a result of being exposed to education, resulting in greater independence from her husband.

#### 3.5.4 Companionship and Expression of Affection

The traditional husband-wife relationship is said to have been characterised by lack of public displays of affection. The husband and wife did not show affection for each other in front of friends, relatives and children (Maforah, 1987:263). Affection was expressed through respect and caring for each other's needs in a subtle way. Companionship was not found between the husband and wife. They did not spend their time together. They would usually visit friends separately. The situation today is different in that amongst the educated the marital relationship is taking Western derived connotations. Expectations of partnership, emotions and closeness are becoming characteristic of the modern marital relationship.

#### 3.5.5 The changing role of women

In modern families, husband and wife's roles are changing especially in urban areas. There is a great variation in the roles and status of women, new forces have contributed to the change in the position of married women. Some women still accept the role of the past, the one of taking care of the household, when the men go out and work. However others especially the more educated tend to demand equality with men and are more assertive. The spread of education and ability to earn money has made them more independent economically, whereas in the past women had to fulfill their traditional role and lobolo meant that their parents had to keep the marriage going. The women had no opportunities of earning money as they do today. Constraints are weakening and women are becoming less subservient to their husbands (Manona, 1980:89). Conflict arises as husbands expect the traditional roles of a wife to be fulfilled in spite of the fact that women often have full-time jobs.

Due to this, urban wives tend to be under a great deal of strain trying to manage a full-time job and much of the housework. Husbands tend to spend more of their time with friends and in leisure activities than in helping at home. Some tend to see their role as that of providing more for the family's maintenance. If the wife is working the husband tends to reduce his financial contribution and expects the wife to use all her wages for household needs, making his family role minimal, (Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1986:27).

Men seem to underestimate the changes that have occurred in the attitude of women. This can be illustrated by a situation where the husband may for example see his marriage as a way in which his parents can have somebody to look after them in their old age and assist in the household chores. This can cause problems because not all women see marriage in this way. Many of them today seek more freedom in marriage and therefore will not meet their husbands expectations.

### 3.5.6 Infidelity

Traditionally, most marriages were characterized by polygamy, which implied that a man could marry more than one wife. In the past this kind of marriage was easy to maintain economically. Today polygamy is more expensive an extra wife and children demand more resources, Radebe (1983:215) argues that infidelity in the Black community today is a result of poor adjustment to the Western culture with its monogamous marriages. She claims that extra-marital affairs are resorted to in an attempt to cope with marital change. Problems arise as women are no longer prepared to share their husbands with anyone else. Problems also arise when the husband holds the view that he can be involved in extra-marital affairs as a man. This is usually endorsed during the wedding ceremony when the wife is instructed to endure at all costs and not to question her husband's movements. Women today do not adhere to this standard and a lot of conflict in marriages of today is a result of this.

### 3.5.7 Overcrowding and lack of privacy

The family in the urban area is not able to enjoy enough space as it used to have in the rural areas. In rural areas, a married couple could enjoy privacy of having a hut to themselves and the entertainment of relatives was easier, (Kayongo—Male & Onyango, 1986: 58). Houses in the Black townships are usually designed for a monogamous family, consisting of the husband, wife and their children. They are usually housed in a four-roomed house. Due to the chronic shortage of houses, married sons tend to stay in the parental dwelling with their wives and children (Rip & Steyn 1968: 514). This situation makes adjustment to marriage difficult for the couple. They do not usually have privacy as sometimes they even have to share their room. Overcrowding therefore tends to deprive the couple of the privacy essential for maintaining a close relationship. Relatives from rural areas may come to seek work in town. While they wait for the period of 10–15 years to be able to qualify for a house, they usually stay with other people for some time. This causes further overcrowding. Being a lodger or having one can be difficult for the couple, especially the newly weds, who need privacy particularly for the establishment of a happy sexual relationship. Disputes and tension that arise can be due to interference indicating a person's need for privacy and to express individuality. If the couple is lodging at the home of the husband the strain is exaggerated by conflict ties of affection, envy and desire to have the beloved to one's self without interference from the in-laws. Cramped and uncomfortable housing can greatly add to the difficulties of marriage. Since these conditions are found in urban areas, family life for Blacks has an additional burden to bear.

## 3.6 UNEMPLOYMENT AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

As more people flock to urban areas, the scarcity of job opportunities is increasing. The majority of blacks that are already employed are often subject to long hours of work for very little and they are usually not any better off than those unemployed.

This has led to the development of the concept of the 'working poor' in the urban areas (Kayongo Male & Onyango 1986:86). With the advent of new productive technology, modern business organisations and the distinction between the rural and urban life, the problem of unemployment has emerged. The problem of unemployment has negative implications for Black males who see their role as that of a provider. Being unemployed means that the man might have to rely on his wife to provide for him. This is usually very unacceptable for the Black man. As a way of coping with himself and for his self-esteem, he may sometimes escape to alcoholism and develop drinking habits, or he may sometimes abuse his wife to ensure that his headship is still acknowledged by the wife. Drinking can become so excessive that the husband can develop a chronic dependency on alcohol. This can make family life intolerable for those around him and can drain the financial resources of the family which are already over-stretched, even further. In urban areas the problem of drinking is rife. Those who cannot afford drinks like beer and spirits usually drink home made liquor like 'umqombothi' which is sometimes called 'imbaba' or 'hlukuhla'. Alcohol abuse has far reaching effects on the family especially when the drinking party undergoes negative changes in his personality. Incidences of violence are not uncommon in these situations.

### 3.7 INCREASING SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF DIVORCE

Traditionally there was a stigma attached to initiating a divorce. In urban areas however amongst the educated, divorce is usually seen as an option out of a marriage which does not bring fulfillment. There is more emphasis on getting emotional fulfillment from marriage. When that does not happen according to the expectations of the couple, divorce is resorted to. The divorce rate amongst the educated city-dwellers is on the increase. It seems that education brings about the realisation of the rights and privileges of an individual in society. As the divorce rate increases married partners no longer feel bound to each other (till death do us part).

The stigma attached to divorce is decreasing. The lack of interdependence between the spouses makes marriages less meaningful and liable to break than when the spouses needed each other for the satisfaction of basic needs (Radebe, 1983: 116).

### 3.8 SINGLEHOOD OF WOMEN

Van der Vliet (1982: 228) in her study on the Black marriage found that there was an emerging trend amongst women of wanting to remain single. Those who were not married did not want to marry at all, whereas those who had been married also did not want to re-marry. This kind of response was found mostly amongst the educated and also the employed women. This kind of attitude can be attributed to the instability that the marriage of today seems to portray with women feeling that to remain single gives them a chance of being financially independent. The problem this poses to the community is that although these women may opt for remaining single they usually want children. This implies that they are likely to get involved with married men and this can continue to create competition between them and the men's wives for financial resources. This trend also indicates the women's unwillingness to be subject to the authority and headship of a male.

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an attempt was made to give an overview of changes that have emerged and are still emerging in the Black family.

It is clear that social change has left the Black family life and in particular the marital relationship, in a state of flux. Traditional values and norms that determined the role of husband and wife and the expectations about marriage have to a great extent lost their hold.

Women are no longer satisfied with their traditional role mainly because of more chances available to them now. They seem to have a need to be recognised as individuals and are protesting against the submissive role culture expects them to fulfil. They have discovered that their positions are disadvantaged compared with that of the male. The latter seem to enjoy freedom granted to them by tradition, while women do not enjoy the same freedom. This situation has brought about a great deal of stress and conflict, in the modern Black family as men want to continue to cling to traditional roles.

As a result of the dismantling and disintegration to some extent of the kinship support systems, married couples cannot depend on this resource in times of conflict and unhappiness – this seems to point to the need for professional services.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MARRIAGE COUNSELLING

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

It was pointed out in the previous chapter how emerging changes made their effect felt particularly on the marital relationship in the Black community. It should be quite clear that Black couples will be forced to make use of professional help, for the solution of marital problems. This is also more obvious considering the devastating effect disrupted marriages have on family life, and the whole community.

This chapter is used for describing the nature of marriage counselling. It will briefly explore the specialised nature of marriage counselling, and will trace origins of marriage counselling. It will also be pointed out on what model of marriage, marriage counselling is based. The modality itself will also be described. As marriage guidance involves marriage preparation and divorce counselling, these aspects will be discussed as well. The goals of marriage counselling and the role of the marriage counsellor will also be looked at in this chapter.

#### 4.2 WHAT IS COUNSELLING?

Counselling as a social work term and activity refers to "an interviewing procedure aimed at guiding the client towards a better understanding of his problems with a view to solving them and improving his social functioning" (Dictionary of Social Work, 1984:65). According to Minuchin as quoted by Rothmund (1989:6) the aim of counselling is the promotion of development in a relatively normal situation by using various procedures and techniques.

Counselling is thus used within social work to reach a client experiencing conscious discomfort and mild dysfunctioning, a client motivated to change his situation or functioning through personal growth, learning and readjustment.

It would seem from these definitions that counselling involves the enhancement of the individual. This development can either involve learning new ways of coping or it can also involve adjusting to one's situation. Brammer and Shostrom as quoted by Rothmund support the view that

*"counselling is a learning orientated process carried on in a simple one to one social environment, in which a counsellor professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, seeks to assist the client by methods appropriate to the latter's needs, and within the context of a total personnel programme to learn more about himself, to learn how to put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly perceived, realistically defined goals to the end that the client may become happier and a more productive member of his society"* (1986:6).

This definition by Brammer and Shostrom emphasises the importance of learning what the client can achieve through counselling. Through this learning the client can grow as a person and get to know himself better in order to be able to set achievable goals for himself with an understanding of his limitations.

Carl Rogers as quoted in Gerdes and Phillips (1976:25) defines counselling as a

*"technique by means of which individuals may be taught to adopt as their own, those habits of mind and emotion that will make them able to solve their problems as they arise"*.

This definition seems to emphasise the importance of equipping the client with skills that will enable them to tackle their own problems when they arise independently.

It is evident in these definitions that through counselling, people are helped to develop new ways of thinking and enables them to explore various solutions to problems, that might have seemed insoluble. Through this help modifications and adaptations to original ways are made and new ways are developed. It is Gerdes and Phillips (1976:25) belief that individuals have within themselves the capacity for growth and change. They however, contend that growth and change can be achieved only in the context of a good counselling relationship.

According to Greene (1965:27) the process of counselling cannot be seen as following the direction chosen by the counsellor but rather by the co-operative exploration between the counsellor and the client. Counselling according to him is aimed at bringing about an adequate adaptation to external reality with its work and relationship demands. It would seem that the counsellor needs to be aware of the importance of involving the client in decision-making, about the process that the counselling will take. The client is the one who knows best the reality of his situation and can also help the counsellor to understand it, and this will facilitate the counselling process.

#### 4.3 WHAT IS MARRIAGE COUNSELLING?

According to Stewart (1983:21) marriage counselling has been defined as a process in which a counsellor helps persons, couples or families to make plans and to solve problems in the area of courtship, marriage and family relations. Ruthledge as quoted by Trumpelmann (1981:2) provides a fairly comprehensive definition of marriage counselling as a

*"process whereby professional skills and experience, within the context of an understanding and accepting face to face relationship, are brought to the assistance of spouses as they explore, evaluate and clarify feelings and issues, as they seek to communicate verbally and emotionally and as they can learn to choose courses of action which will lead to some resolution of their problems"*.

Marriage counselling is defined by the Social Work Dictionary as "professional services to promote the marital relationship with a view to enhancing role performance in a marriage". (1984:83).

It is clear from the above definition that marriage counselling is focused on the relationship of the couple and provides for an environment in which the couple can explore feelings and clarify issues with the help of a professionally trained counsellor.

Marriage counselling is therefore different from personal counselling because it involves two people who are legally married with the variations of the traditional marriage, and it should also include couples that are staying together under one roof but not married.

Ruthledge as quoted in Trumpelmann (1981:2) distinguishes between marriage counselling as a profession and as an activity. The former, according to him, refers to marriage counselling implemented by persons of different profession with special training in marriage counselling. The latter refers to the application of counselling by professionals with no or partial training in marriage counselling. The main areas dealt with in marriage counselling are divided into four categories, premarital counselling, marriage counselling, family counselling and divorce counselling. Premarital counselling is focused on preparing couples for marriage whereas marriage counselling deals with the married couple and family counselling deals with the whole family, and it can also include grandparents. Marriage counselling is seen by most practitioners as a multi-professional and multi-disciplinary approach. The importance of working with other professionals is emphasised. According to Greene (1965:27) basic knowledge in marriage counselling includes understanding of human growth and development of the dynamics of personality, of motivation, of social and cultural factors and their impact on the individual and an understanding of the reciprocal nature of interaction patterns in marriage.

This implies that the marriage counsellor must understand a human being in totality, how he functions as a person, how he is influenced by the environment that he lives in. Greene (1965) further pointed out that this basic knowledge includes a disciplined awareness of one's own biases and attitudes as they affect counselling skills. Arbuckle as referred to by Greene (1965) pointed out that there is a fundamental relationship among the counsellor's self-concepts, his value systems and what occurs within the counselling situation. He reckons that professional preparation on its own without knowing oneself can be ineffective. The counsellor must therefore be aware of his own attitudes, role expectations, ethical and moral convictions concerning marriage. Marriage counselling therefore deals essentially with present relationships and conscious material rather than with preconscious material. The emphasis in counselling marital partners is marriage as a reciprocal human relationship between two people (Greene 1965: 28).

#### 4.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARRIAGE COUNSELLING

The field of marriage counselling is said to be a young field still finding itself. However, most of the ideas, techniques and goals now used in marriage counselling are said to be as ancient as the concept of marriage. Barker (1984:10) points out that if we consider all the ideas, values and techniques which have been used in marriage counselling, we can trace its genealogy through antiquity. The term marriage counselling was rarely used before the twentieth century. It was a few clergymen who started calling themselves marriage counsellors in the 1890's. Clergymen had been the primary providers of guidance in marriage and human relationships for centuries but this function had always been of secondary importance to them. They devoted a small percentage of their time to this. In the early 1900's, social work became the first profession to engage in marriage counselling as a full-time endeavour. (Barker, 1984:11)

This however, started under the sponsorship of the church. Social workers at the time were primarily concerned with helping the disadvantaged get needed financial help and information about how to meet subsequent needs. Their efforts to help troubled marriages came from the then prevailing belief that healthier family relationships would resolve people's economic problems. Social workers started as volunteers initially and as the demand for their services grew, they became trained full-time employees in social agencies. By 1910 many agencies with full-time trained social work staff started to specialise in marriage and family treatment. In 1911, many of those agencies formed the alliance now known as the Family Service Associations of America. Clergymen and social workers were the major providers of marriage counselling through 1920, but their dominance declined thereafter because of their very practical rather than systematic orientation. They told clients how to make their marriage work better. They educated couples as to their legal and social obligations and they emphasized the values inherent in family life. But their suggestions were then based less on available theory or knowledge of human psychology or sociology than on impressions and untested notions. Other disciplines such as anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and physicians started entering the field, multi-disciplinary marital counselling centres emerged in the 1930's. (Barker, 1984:12).

A first publication, a Marriage Manual was published in 1935 by Stones. The first book devoted exclusively to marriage counselling published did not appear until 1943. The first book was published by the Family Service Agency in America. At the end of World War II other text books were written by people like Goldstein (1945), Mace (1948) and others. It was during this time that Americans saw marriage as important and any attempt to save marriage was welcomed.

It is obvious from this development of marriage counselling that it has American origins and that it was based on the white American type of family. It was developed as a result of a need to preserve marriage and family life.

It is therefore important for the sake of this study to discuss briefly the European type of family and highlight differences between this type of family and Black family. The differences have a bearing on the type of counselling that these two types of families will need.

#### 4.5 WESTERN MARRIAGE

Okeke (1986) in describing the difference between an African marriage and a Western one uses the following phrases.

*'The African marries and then falls in love'*

A traditional African saying

*'I met her, and it was love at first sight'*

A Western saying

From this saying Okeke is trying to demonstrate that in a Western culture, love has always been seen as a basis for marriage, but it does not however imply that arranged marriages were not found in traditional white families.

Kellerman (1987: 535) describes the Western ideology of marriage in the following features

- (a) sexual relations that are restricted to marriage
- (b) between one man and one woman
- (c) who through mutual attraction
- (d) are bound to each other for life
- (e) with the objective of producing and raising children
- (f) in a neolocal residential setting
- (g) with the husband as breadwinner
- (h) the wife as housekeeper
- (i) so that the husband occupies the dominant position of authority.

He argues that the oldest of these features is that of patriarchy which through the Judaic tradition became part of the Western family structure. Descent was determined patrilineally, which meant the men had the right to own their wives and their children. With the rise of Christianity there were some changes in the way marriage and the family was conceptualised. In the Medieval societies of Europe the possibility of an ascetic relationship between man and woman gained a new significance, the one of romantic love. Initially he states, that romantic love was reserved for relationships outside marriage, an idea also confirmed by Schulz & Rodgers (1985: 232). Today love has become a basis for mate selection.

It would seem from this description by Kellerman (1987: 535) that the Western marriage is monogamous in nature and does not encourage polygamy. When one looks at this in view of the traditional Black marriage, it is important to note that though there are some monogamous marriages, there are no restrictions about having more than one spouse. Polygamous marriages are common in most traditional African states. Today, in the Black community, financial constraints however do not make it possible for a man to have more than one wife. According to Schulz & Rodgers (1985: 237) a Western marriage is a union involving exclusive sexual rights in the spouse. It needs to be stated here that in the Black community it is generally accepted that a married man can engage in sexual relations outside marriage, especially at the time when his wife is breast-feeding and is not permitted to have sexual relations with her husband. Although there are more conflicts resulting from this today than it was in the past, the men in the community however still maintain this attitude which does not seem to please their wives. The other very distinct feature that makes Western marriage different from the traditional Black marriage is the fact that the couple live independently of their parents or relatives. As it has already been stated, the Black family structure is extended, there is a great emphasis on relying on the family members, even when it comes to the marriage relationship.

This therefore implies that even though today most couples live independently, the ties with the extended family are still very strong. The family still continues to be involved when there are problems. This implies then that the nuclear-type of family in the Black community does not have the same meaning as in the White community.

Traditionally, there was no mention of love as the reason for marriage in the Black community. As it has been stated in Chapter 2, love played a far less significant role in the marriage relationship and public expressions of affection were not encouraged. This has been confirmed by Schulz & Rodgers (1985: 233), who states that

*"in many primitive societies, love relationships between husband and wife are suppressed on the grounds that they tend to estrange the couple from their kin".*

The concept of lobolo seems to be characteristic of a Black marriage, whereas in the Western marriage an engagement ring seems to have a similar function. From this brief description it is obvious that there are some differences between the Western type of marriage and the traditional African type of marriage. It would seem therefore, that some adjustments must be made in using the existing marriage counselling model. It must be noted that although Western ideals have influenced Black people, the transition will not be automatic and some of the customs of Blacks may never be thrown overboard. The researcher also accepts that both the Western and Black marriages are being influenced by changing value systems. At this stage however, there are significant differences which would necessitate changes when marital counselling models used for the Western marriage relationships are applied to the marriage relationships of Black people.

#### 4.6 PREMARITAL COUNSELLING

Premarital counselling is the counselling a couple receives in preparation for the demands, tasks and roles in marriage. The goal of this kind of counselling is to promote healthier marriages with improved mutual understanding.

Mace (1972: 23) argues that most people are poorly prepared for marriage and family living and yet it is an area where most people can find happiness and fulfilment if it is successful. He argues that the problem with lack of preparation is that there is no agreed time in life where young people get careful teaching about marriage. Secondly there is a persistent idea that no special knowledge is needed in order to live together as a married couple. "It comes naturally" (p.24). Many theorists have attributed the high divorce rate to the fact that most people enter marriage without any preparation, the unrealistic expectations that the couple bring into marriage put a lot of strain on the marriage relationship.

Mace (1972:29) argues that those who have prepared for marriage increase their chances for avoiding needless misery, of moving more quickly into the rich fulfilments that marriage has to offer and of reaching a deeper quality of relationship than they might otherwise be able to achieve. According to him, marriage preparation has the following benefits :

- (1) It helps the couple to understand clearly what marriage means and how to go about it.
- (2) Critical early adjustments will be a lot easier and quicker for a couple that has had preparation.
- (3) He argues that a couple that has been prepared has a better chance of reaching higher levels of fulfillment.
- (4) It is also said to increase the chance of being successful parents. The argument here is that there is a qualitative relationship between marriage and parenthood. Parents need to love their children as an expression and extension of their love for one another.
- (5) It is also Mace's belief that a prepared couple will begin to understand the wisdom of seeking marriage counselling in good time, if it is ever needed.

People tend to delay in coming for help and pre-marital counselling helps them to realise that there is no time to be lost and that they must seek help before the process of alienation and degeneration.

The premarital counsellor has a task therefore of encouraging and enabling the couple to make a thorough evaluation of themselves, each other and their relationship as a whole.

It would seem that marriage preparation as much as it is important, is not fully utilised by most couples. There is a tendency of perceiving marriage in idealistic terms.

#### 4.7 GOALS OF MARRIAGE COUNSELLING

The goal of marriage counselling is to help each partner through his relationship with the counsellor to develop awareness and understanding of his own feelings, attitudes, demands, expectations and responses and how these affect his marriage. It also has an aim of helping the client to handle more adequately those factors that have contributed to the problems in the marital interaction.

Greene (1965: 29) made it very clear that the focus in marriage counselling is on the reciprocal interaction between the spouses rather than one spouse's intrapsychic conflicts. Marriage counselling is said to be used to heal a marriage threatened with breakdown by discovering causative factors and by helping spouses develop insight into their own and others functioning and ways of relating. Rogers as quoted by Gerdes in Rothmund (1989:1) emphasised the therapeutic value of the client-counsellor relationship. He believes that healing is bound to occur if acceptance, listening, understanding and empathy are basic component of this.

The basic aim of marriage counselling is to make the crippled marriage more healthy, more able and fully functioning. It helps couples to work out solutions to their problems to the advantage of each other.

This however, does not imply the continuation of marriage only but also respects the possibility of separation and divorce. The counsellor needs to permit the couple to choose whether they want to continue staying together or to part.

Stewart (1983: 82–83) has outlined the goals of marriage counselling as follows:

1. Marriage counselling is limited to current problems in relationships between marriage partners. Emotion is expressed in counselling, but the past is not focused on, nor is the personality. The counsellor is concerned with how the partners understand their relationship to each other.
2. The counsellor helps the couple to begin to speak their feelings to one another again. Emotional communication is most difficult to re-establish once it has been destroyed. The counsellor therefore needs to create an atmosphere of safety and trust so that the couple can be open, relaxed and free.
3. The counsellor helps the couple to adjust to certain situations in the marriage which cannot be changed including each other's personality traits. The counsellor helps the client to accept his partner with his limitations.
4. The counsellor helps the couple to play down personal goals and to work towards ones which are mutually set. The person who is selfish is helped to play down personal goals and to work towards shared goal setting and goal seeking.
5. The counsellor helps each partner to understand the other and his/her role in the marriage, through counselling he is given an opportunity to adjust to what the mate and the marriage demands of him. This involves adjustment of two persons to another. marriage counselling therefore deals with the present maladjustments and misunderstandings between couples as they relate.

#### 4.8 TREATMENT PROCESS

The counselling process has been described in terms of phases. Authors such as Barker (1984), Gerdes & Phillips (1976), Lieberman et al (1980 ) and Humphrey (1983) seem to agree that counselling involves various stages which overlap throughout as couples attempt to achieve their goals. These stages will be described in terms outlined below:

(a) **Preliminary facilitation**

According to Barker (1984: 79) this phase involves the exchange of information between the couple and the counsellor before the actual first face-to-face contact. The purpose of this is to engage the couple in the treatment processes as soon as possible after they have made the initial contact, especially during the time of the crisis. This can involve things like brief ventilation, clarification of expectations, and also some hope that something can be done about the situation. It also involves having some clue of what the counsellor is like, and also what the offices look like. This kind of initial contact can make the couple more open to the counsellor. The preliminary facilitation phase is used to provide and obtain information (about the couple and about the counsellor).

(b) **Initial Encounter**

The adequate handling of the preliminary facilitation makes this phase a lot smoother. The major objective of this phase is to get the couple involved. This initial engagement of the couple in counselling should be perceived to be warm and caring by the couple. The counsellor needs to convey unconditional acceptance, as stated by Gerdes & Phillips (1976: 16). The counsellor needs to demonstrate competence, seriousness, concern and devotion to working with the couple to help achieve their goals. To actively involve the couple, the therapist needs to make the initial encounter a rewarding, positive and pleasant experience for them.

Diagnosis, treatment planning and treatment implementation are of secondary importance. Commitment of the couple is more important than the setting of goals. The couple needs to be committed in counselling enough to want to return. The counselling would then start with the positive aspects of the relationship. After this discussion of goals receives attention, and then a definition of the problem as seen by both is attended to. This session is concluded by discussion of overall outcome goals, homework assignments and the contract.

(c) **Goal Setting**

This involves listing outcome goals, process goals and methods of achieving the outcome goals and defining the treatment plan. The definition of goals is finalised in this phase. When the outcome goals have been written and everyone concerned agrees that they are the ones to be worked towards, the couple and the counsellor begin to discuss ways of reaching the goals (Barker, 1984:89). When the couple knows what to expect they are better able to decide whether or not they want to participate. Focusing on goals permits the partners to tell what is wrong with the relationship, but in a structured and specific way. Humphrey (1983:27) also emphasises the importance of maintaining the focus on goals. The counselling session concludes with the signing of the contract or verbal agreement that states the goals and expectations and what will be done to achieve them and what the mutual obligation between them and the counsellor will be, (Barker 1984: 89).

(d) **Overcoming Resistance**

People are generally uncomfortable about radical change even when their present circumstances cause them discomfort. The process of overcoming resistance begins with the initial contact. Barker (1984:93) argues that counsellors need to avoid responding to the resistant client by debating with them.

The counsellor needs to understand that resistance is due to the client's anxiety about change, fear of the unknown, fear of being seen as the guilty party. Barker (1984:93) argues that the counsellor in overcoming resistance, must find more healthy ways of meeting the needs which were fulfilled by the resistance. If for example the client is resistant because of fear of the unknown, the counsellor can deal with that by concentrating on expectations, goals and predicted outcomes. In this way the future becomes more predictable and less anxiety-provoking. This phase tends to continue throughout the treatment process. It returns when new methods are considered and when there have been setbacks.

(e) **Implementing Functional Change**

This phase is the longest of all phases. It includes interview strategies which help couples understand themselves, their partners and their relationship. It includes the working relationship which helps couples experience, understand, and work with the effective aspects of their marriage and the treatment. The feelings experienced in treatment reflect and influence those between partners. It also includes the tasks and techniques which counsellors assign to the couple. These tasks are selected to give each partner some practice at finding alternative and healthier ways of relating to one another. It also includes the counsellor playing different roles to bring out relevant understanding and behavioural changes. This has been confirmed by Martin (1976:9) that a marriage counsellor attempts to bring about constructive or creative change in those who come for help.

(f) **Termination**

Termination of the treatment process is as important as the beginning. Effective termination can solidify gains made in counselling.

Termination occurs when goals have been met, when the contracted period has been reached, when one partner fails to adhere to obligations, when there is an agreement between the counsellor and the couple that there is nothing further to be gained by continuing. The major objective of effective termination is to assume that the results have been stabilised. Stabilising the outcome suggests that goals should be reached fairly well in advance of the final session. This implies that there should be continued evaluation of progress. The counsellor continues to provide feed-back and suggestions for further improvement and encourages the couple in this with each other. In this way termination will not take the couple by surprise. In the last sessions the counsellor and couple review the work that has been done. They look at problems, the methods they used to overcome them, the setbacks and achievements of their objectives (Barker 1984: 97).

(g) **The Follow-Up**

During the termination phase the counsellor can give some specific suggestions that the couple can use when they encounter problems. The counsellor's decision to follow-up depends on the needs and circumstances of each couple. Some couples might prefer being called periodically, some will call in, some will be left on their own, and others will return for follow-up sessions. Follow-up is the phase which gives a sense of completeness to the extensive effort which went into the entire counselling process (Barker 1984: 98).

#### **4.9 THE ROLE OF A MARRIAGE COUNSELLOR**

There is enough stress connected with counselling an individual, it increases considerably when there is more than one person, because it puts greater demands on the skills and attention of the counsellor.

It is very important as counsellors to understand that it is a difficult thing to allow a third person into the intimacies of one's marriage. Couples may in some cases see a marriage counsellor as a threat to the marriage. He may become part of

*"a competitive triad, being used by one as a 'lever to make the other come to tow".*  
(Stewart 1982:91).

A counsellors role according to Greene (1965:31) includes the assumption that ability to help the client rests in the capacity of the counsellor to establish and sustain an understanding and compassionate relationship, to deal with the client without judging or rejecting him and to move with the client at his own pace as he struggles to resolve his problems.

The counsellor's role in marriage involves the capacity to relate to the two marital partners in an impartial, unbiased, receptive and responsive manner. It also involves the ability to utilize the experiences of each partner as a resource for understanding in detail the patterns of interaction that prevail in the marriage. In marriage counselling it is very important that the clients have trust in the confidential nature of the relationship with the counsellor and the agency from the onset. It is the counsellor's role to ensure that this has been established if counselling is to be effective. It is also important to ensure that each partner has confidence in the counsellors integrity and so be able to share and discuss feelings and attitudes freely knowing that what is shared will not be divulged to the partner without the other partner's permission (Greene 1965:31).

The counsellor observes the marriage and acts as a participant observer in the joint session. He has a role to help the couple to set up lines of communication while he observes the interaction. He helps each partner to understand what he or she is doing to disturb harmony in the relationship and enable him/her to accept responsibility for his/her actions.

Barker (1984: 3) argues that when couples experience marital difficulties, they do not always know what to expect from marriage counsellors. They are usually uncertain of how the counsellor will help. He contends that the ambiguity of the marriage counsellors role has caused serious negative consequences for both the field of marriage counselling and its consumers. This confusion on the role of marriage counsellor, Barker argues, is due to the fact that marriage counselling is a fairly new field even though the techniques and ideas used are not new.

The major roles of the marriage counsellor are explicit according to Barker (1984:131), in terms of the following :

- (1) host ;
- (2) maintenance person ;
- (3) engineer ;
- (4) focuser ;
- (5) catalyst ;
- (6) educator ;
- (7) reference model ;
- (8) mediator ;
- (9) side-taker ;
- (10) celebrant.

Barker (1984:131), however stated that these roles are not performed at once with all couples, but that some are called upon occasionally during the course of counselling. The counsellors skill lies in the ability to know when and how to perform each of these roles and when not to. The most effective counsellor is the one who will be able to change roles comfortably but those who find these transitions difficult will be frustrated.

### The Host

In marriage counselling the host role occurs through clearly defining the expectations, showing the couple what commitment to the counselling should be. This is a role that the counsellor engages in right from the beginning through to the end of the treatment. This helps to bring direction and helps the couple to be at ease knowing what is expected of them. In this way counselling structure is being provided (Barker 1984: 136).

### Engineer

The role consists of designing methods for the couple which will efficiently help reach their goals. He needs to show which of the possibilities will be most advantageous, least costly and the most durable. It is said to be a consultative function. The counsellor shows the client what is to be done and how to do it (Barker 1984: 138).

### The Maintenance Person

This role helps the counselling process to move. If there are obstructions, the counsellor is alert to them and seeks to remove them. This role does not occur throughout the counselling process but when there is a situation that calls for it. If the partners find that they are good at fixing those things that go wrong and are not prone to perceptual distortions, they rarely need the therapist as a maintenance person (Barker 1984:140).

### The Focuser

This role is called upon when the couple cannot focus long enough to settle something. This happens when the issue under discussion is related to other problems which remind the husband or wife of other incidents which were not resolved or unrelated issues even. Such behaviour can obstruct treatment plans unless it is part of treatment. The counsellor in this situation has a role to remind the couple of its goals, the methods, the subject, to retain the focus and to remain goal focused (Humphrey 1983:27).

### The Catalyst

Marital problems are always painful and for couples it is even more painful to bring them to a helping professional. Many find the pain so great that they deny there is a problem. They avoid the real issues, close their eyes to the threat. The role of a catalyst here is often active, verbal and causing confrontation. In this way, the counsellor can get the couple to face hidden fears. In such a situation the couple can be assured that the pain can be reduced through exposition of the problem. Some couples can respond to supportive encouragement rather than confrontation, but other couples require active confrontation about emotionally disturbing patterns and thoughts which they had tried to avoid. This role cannot be generalised, there will always be exceptions (Barker, 1984: 143 ; Humphrey,1983: 32).

### The Educator

The counselling process has an educational component, in that people are helped to discover more satisfying and effective relationships between themselves and their spouse. The counsellor regularly provides information, which tells the marital partners how to be more effective in relating to one another. The counsellor sometimes teaches about available resources which can be called upon for specific problems. (Humphrey, 1983: 31,; Barker, 1984:145).

### The Reference Model

The reference model is a means of teaching the couple alternative ways of interacting as they observe how the counsellor relates to them. Many times couples have problems because they have not had sufficient exposure to alternative behavioural responses. They usually imitate the behaviour of their reference groups, that is the group with whom the person identifies. (Barker, 1984:146).

### The Mediator

It is the activity of listening to both sides of a dispute and effecting reconciliation on the issue. The counsellor's role is to provide the couple with a means of resolving conflicts so they can do so on their own after treatment has ended. The counsellor is concerned with facilitating an exchange process whereby the couple can find ways to communicate, to compromise, to make decisions together. The role of mediator is essentially that of helping to enhance this interaction but not to make decisions, rather to act as a go-between. (Barker, 1984: 147 ; Kennedy, 1977:221).

### The Side-Taker

This role happens when one partner is stubborn, depressed, ill, a bully or rigid. The counsellor overtly takes the side of the other partner. There are dangers in taking sides, some of these include alienation of the partner who is sided against, or a loss of confidence in the counsellor can result. Other roles should be attempted before this role can be taken. It can be taken when there seems to be no other effective way of generating movement from the rigid relationship pattern (Barker, 1984: 150).

### The Celebrant

The counsellor plays the role of celebrant at various stages in the counselling process. In the beginning the counsellor welcomes the couple and introduces them to the procedure to be followed. The description and formal listing of goals is part of the celebrant role. When termination occurs the celebrant recognises the work the couple performed, the accomplishments they have made and the goals they have reach. The celebration and acknowledgement solidify gains made in counselling, improve durability and increase its applicability for non-counselling situations (Barker, 1984: 151).

#### 4.10 THE COUNSELLOR

The counsellor must present himself to his client as a human being, though it is true that in many respects he will appear to be a different sort of person from those whom the client encounters in everyday life. He must have warmth and insight, intelligence and good judgement. He must be genuinely interested in people without being inquisitive (Gerdes & Phillips, 1976: 30).

A counsellor must have some social skills and be able to establish easy and confident relationships with a client from the outset. The counsellor must be open-minded, tolerant and sensitive. The counsellor must be able to inspire confidence in others, and to melt away natural diffidence and hesitation, (Mace, 1948: 100). He must be free from prejudice and be as impartial as the judge. Rogers (1957) as quoted in Gerdes and Phillips (1976:30) suggests that the following characteristics must be present in the counsellor's behaviour.

1. The counsellor must have a fundamental respect and positive regard for the client as a person, he must allow the client self-determination.
2. In the relationship with the client, the counsellor should be congruent, he should not pretend to be different from what he really is. He must be aware of his own feelings. He should be aware of his own fears, his hesitations and doubts.
3. The counsellor must be able to understand the true meaning of his clients world, the clients description of his feeling 'as if' they were his own. He should move in the same world of meaning as the client.
4. The counsellor should accept the client unconditionally without making evaluations of "good and bad". What is said by the client must be accepted without passing judgement. In being empathic the counsellor must understand the client and he must convey to the client that he is being understood. He should not interpret the client's experience as he sees it but as the client expresses it.

#### 4.11 DIVORCE COUNSELLING

Divorce counselling involves guiding the couple as they make the decision of whether or not to divorce. It is accepted today that divorce is one of the options often chosen when tensions mount in marriage and affection disappears. As a counsellor it is important to accept the fact that sometimes reconciliation between the spouses may not be possible. The couple must be allowed to make a decision for or against the marriage. They need to be able to decide whether or not the problems can be solved in the best interests of both as stated by Johnson quoted by Stewart (1970:119) that:

*"the purpose of a good divorce is to make a wise decision i.e. to decide for a divorce if such a course promotes the welfare of those concerned, or to deny if the divorce would work more harm than benefit ... the process"*

Divorce is a traumatic experience to those involved, Okeke (1986:7) has likened it to death except that those involved remain alive. The counsellor needs to make the couple aware of the emotional cost of divorce on themselves and their children. It is important for a counsellor to understand that divorcing involves a considerable loss of self-esteem. Becoming divorced may involve losing friends, especially those who do not approve of divorce. It changes plans, habits, and the whole style of life for the couple (Stewart, 1970:122).

Divorce is also disruptive and traumatic for children. Children do not see divorce as desirable. They tend to blame themselves for divorce and sometimes imagine that they might have caused the divorce in some way. The short-term reactions of children to divorce are described by Parkinson (1987:54) as including a sense of insecurity, drop in scholastic performance, rebellious behaviour, disciplinary behaviour, regressive behaviour such as bed-wetting, tantrums, thumb sucking and attention seeking. (McCall & Stocking 1980:6).

The divorce counsellor is a facilitator, couples are helped to realise what opportunities they have or what obstacles might be there if they decide to divorce or remain married. Divorce counselling according to Parkinson (1987:13) is complicated by the fact that divorcing couples do not usually move through the process of divorce at the same rate, they seem to always begin from differing points and at different times. The counsellor needs to be aware of this in working with the couple. The spouse who initiated divorce may for example have strong guilt feelings, while the one who is being divorced may be overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy, helplessness and rejection. Divorce counselling is directed towards re-adjustment during a life crisis. The emphasis is on the stages of change the individual moves through as he deals with the process of separation and divorce. The counsellor needs to support the couple as they go through emotional, legal, economic, parental, community and psychological divorce. The counsellor cannot prevent the spouses from experiencing the pain of divorce. They need to be allowed to experience divorce. The counsellor needs to enable and encourage the couple or clients to verbalise the negative feelings they have.

It has been found by Storm & Sprinkle as quoted in Lyon (1985:266) that

*"if unresolved feelings of anger, disappointment and hurt are not dealt with, they often are disguised in ongoing custody and visitation disputes"*.

The counsellor also needs to prepare the couple to be able to explain divorce to their children, so that the children can be reassured that they did not cause the divorce and that their parents will not leave them. It is commonly held that the recovery for children depends mainly on how parents deal with divorce. The sooner the parents achieve stability and overcome conflict the sooner the child will settle down also. Through counselling, growth should be maximised and pain minimised as far as possible.

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that marriage counselling is important in preventing social disintegration.

As there are changes emerging in the society which are affecting marriage and family life negatively, there will be an increasing need for professional people to keep bringing stability to the family. This is even so, in view of the fact that the family is still viewed as the cornerstone of society. There will be a need to emphasise services such as marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, marriage and family counselling and divorce counselling.

#### 4.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a broad overview of marriage counselling as an intervention modality was given. It is a specialized form of intervention specifically focused on marriage and the marital relationship as the foundation of marriage.

If consideration is given to the circumstances and kind of society where this form of intervention originated it is clear that it was not intended for more traditional communities.

It was not the intention of the researcher to give a detailed analysis of marriage counselling, but to provide a basis for what is discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN COUNSELLING

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, marriage counselling as an intervention modality was discussed. In this chapter cultural considerations in counselling will be explored in order to uncover the particular way in which formal counselling is to be viewed when used in the Black community. Counselling as presented by trained professionals in social work agencies is a fairly new concept in the Black community. In the past the Black community relied on the extended family for advice and guidance when problems arose as already stated in chapter 2.

Most people today still consult with the family when there are problems and even though the family still plays this role, most of its helping and support functions are now also being carried out by social work agencies. It is the aim of this chapter therefore to outline and discuss how these agencies present their services to the Black community, and state any deficiency in the mode of intervention based on the view that it has Western origins. Various recommendations in working affectively with the Black family will also be looked at in this chapter.

## 5.2 REVIEW OF THE PRESENT MODES OF INTERVENTION IN RELATION TO THE BLACK FAMILY

The question of whether Western models, theories and methods of social work practice are relevant to other population groups has worried many professions. The main area of concern is whether these Western perspectives on practice are effective in responding to the social needs of more traditional communities. Loewenberg (1983:93) stated that

*"traditional social work practice theories were derived from experiences with White middle-class heterosexual individuals and intact families, but a large portion of today's client population does not fit this traditional demographic profile".*

This has been confirmed by Cohen (1985:6) who claims that social work in South Africa was developed from United States and British roots. He argues that this social work practice is inadequate and inappropriate in South Africa due to cultural diversities which exist. It can also be stated here that South Africa is a developing country, which is characterised with specific large scale social problems. The question of whether conventional social work is relevant still needs to be addressed.

Amongst the professionals in South Africa there continues to be controversy about the relevance of conventional social work for the developing world with specific large scale social problems. Slabbert (1984:114) emphasised the importance of evaluating critically the existing social work methods in terms of their relevance to the realities of our country. Numerous questions address the contradictions that possibly exist between policies, theories, and the practical realities to which these theories must be applied, especially in South Africa. Social workers in their attempt to help clients have been accused of contributing to the maintenance of the status quo.

The dilemma that faces Black South African social workers is that they are armed with theory and methods that according to Muller (1988:32) have been formulated and tested in the West, while on the other hand these same social workers are expected to provide or render services to a population which suffers from poor living conditions, unemployment and illiteracy.

Cheetman (1982:229) also confirmed that most social work training is still middle-class orientated despite the recruitment of more social workers from working-class backgrounds. Students who are recruited into professional training in this field usually come across curricula which do not equip them to cope with the needs of the working-class community. Courses of study do not usually address cultural aspects of social work practice but appear to be orientated primarily to the psychosocial needs of a white middle-class clients community. The psychosocial model used tends to emphasise individualisation, while in fact in the Black community group consciousness is emphasised. The student in other words is being trained into a profession whose primary values reflect those of white middle-class culture.

In the South African situation, this problem is further complicated by the fact that it still happens that White social workers trained according to Western models work with Black clients. Cultural and communication problems emerge in this situation. Black students, many of whom come from more traditional Black communities are also professionally socialised according to Western models. They may then experience problems in applying what they have learned in their communities and will also have problems of being accepted by their own communities, because the underlying philosophies of the social work intervention models they use are foreign to the communities in which they practise.

Slabbert (1985:115) argues that traditional social workers are still concerned with definitions of normality and pathology of individual clients. Clients are often seen as deviants who do not conform to the values and norms of society and needing to be rehabilitated. Slabbert challenges social workers to consider how one could apply this kind of approach to a politically divided society like South Africa. She further argues the extent to which the self-determination of Black clients can go, if the choice of home, work place and family solidarity is taken away. According to her, if the need for societal reform is not recognised, individual reform can become part of a vicious cycle which will never be fully resolved (Slabbert 1985:116). It has been argued by Edward (1982:453) that ethnocentrism and paternalism are the root of current dominant clinical intervention approaches for Blacks. He argues that treatment or intervention approaches to be used with Black clients, should have reference and meaning philosophically, socially, psychologically, historically and spiritually to their cultural frame of reference. This implies that the counsellor will need to understand the client's world of meaning in the client's terms, not against the standards of any other cultural group. According to Edward (1982:453), more research is needed to test culturally specific treatment intervention approaches. Curricula in human services programmes needs to eliminate the ethnocentric approach to professional intervention. Such changes will increase social functioning and make our society more humane.

Effective practice with Black families requires a much broader knowledge base. Emerging trends in Black families need to be addressed if the counsellor's role is to become relevant. As stated by Bryant, Solomon & Mendes quoted in Tufte & Myerhoff (1979:271) that

*"effectiveness in helping Black families to deal with characteristic problems they encounter, requires however that the helping professionals have a reasonably accurate knowledge of the forces that have created these facts".*

It is implied here that there is a need for a professional to understand the environment within which the client lives.

Understanding is very important for effective intervention. Social workers who lack understanding of the people they seek to serve are unlikely to be helpful. Lack of understanding can easily lead to a misinterpretation of the clients problems and definition of goals that are not relevant.

Lewis & Keung Ho (1975:370) in studying social work with native Americans found that the ineffectiveness of social workers in dealing with native Americans was a result of the methods and techniques used. They argued that the concept of social work intervention may be consistent with much of the white man's culture, but that it opposes the native American's cultural concepts of non-interference. They emphasise the importance of examining the techniques one seeks to use in treatment. If these are likely to be in conflict with cultural concepts, the social worker must search for an alternative approach.

Jones (1983:419) supported Lewis & Keung Ho by stating that human services workers are often ill prepared for effective work with Black people because they too often lack understanding of Black culture and the implications of this culture has for practice. Jones (1983:419) further argues that

*"the standard and values of the majority culture consequently are generally used as the normative frame of reference for assessing development, copying strategies and modes of interaction, while the culture of Black people is frequently devalued and greatly misunderstood. The Black family is often viewed strictly as an impoverished version of the White family, characterised by disorganisation and a tangle of pathologies".*

It is clear that absence of accurate information on Black culture leads to inaccurate and incomplete assessments of individual and family functioning, which ultimately affects the kinds of decisions made regarding appropriate intervention strategies.

According to Washington quoted by Jones (1983:420) additional models of social work practice have relied mainly on two dimensions of human behaviour, the psychological and the physiological. He argues that for social work to respond effectively to Blacks, social work curricula must recognise the fact that ethnicity and cultural pluralism form an integral part of human development.

Social workers need to develop understanding of the difference in lifestyle, norms and values of the people they work with, something which is stressed by Hartman & Laird (1983: 286) when they say that it is important to integrate knowledge of differing cultural style into the work that social workers do. Failure to understand can make the social worker assume that the clients share their point of view about problems. Loewerberg (1983:93) stated that social workers usually look inside the person for problem causes, whereas lower-class people suggest external causes for problems. Mayer & Timms (1970:76) also found that clients usually approached the counsellor with the need to find ways of reforming the other person. The social worker may in this situation have a goal of changing the client, while the client may be seeking help to have the other person changed.

Lewis and Keung Ho (1975: 380) also found that the social worker who is excessively concerned with facilitating the display of inner feelings on the part of the client, will need to be aware that the client may not wish to talk about topics that he finds sensitive or distressing. This is true especially in view of the fact that in the Black community for instance, children are not socialised into open expression of feelings. As adults therefore it continues to be difficult to express publicly one's feelings as this was never encouraged at an early age. Mayer & Timms (1970:76) emphasises the importance of understanding that the so-called 'inadequacies or deficiencies' in the thinking of working class people, when it comes to solving problems, is in fact a by-product of a different system of problem solving. They contend that the behaviour of these clients needs to be viewed in its proper context and not by middle-class standards.

In this way it will be easier to understand them. They argue that one system tends to dissolve or fragment the second system, so that the other groups ways of behaving and thinking may appear as illogical and inappropriate.

Contemporary social workers are faced with a challenge of becoming active in seeking knowledge of the real life problems clients encounter and the specific interventions that will be relevant and effective in helping them. Several authors (Loewenberg, 1983, 109 : Jones, 1983:49 : Fishman, 1979:189) state that knowledge about the population one works with is of utmost importance and that the clients themselves are the best informers of their lifestyles and cultural norms.

An effective way of helping according to Goldstein (1986:151) must be securely rooted in the cultural belief system of the people that it intends to serve. In this way it is responsive to the world as it appears to be from the clients cultural and personal perspective. Sotomayer as quoted by Goldstein (1986:151) stated that

*"the definitions of culture that are popular among human service providers are time-bound, value-laden and reflect the majority which often undermine the self-worth of the ethnic minority who is being helped".*

It is clear from this statement that social workers need to understand culture as the client understands it for intervention to be effective. Fishman (1979:192) stated that there is a need to educate workers in cultural diversity and that a data bank on culture including research material and specific information on ethnic groups will need to be developed. Fishman contends that the social service agencies and its personnel need to accept culture as an important variable in the successful delivery of social services. According to Jones (1983)

*"culture consists of those man-made artifacts, symbols, and institutions that man uses to adjust to his environment" (p.422).*

It would seem from this definition that culture involves people's way of life, thinking, coping and even their beliefs about life.

Social services should therefore, be provided to people in a way which is culturally meaningful to them and which enhances their sense of worth and empowers them. The worker, the service agency and its policies, supportive education and training programmes all have the obligation to meet the clients cultural and community background. (Green, 1982:4). This task will however be difficult if the worker, the agency, its policies and its educational programmes are representative of the interests of one group, namely the White middle and professional class. In this way little attention would have been given to the cultural background of clients, to understand how the background influences the way they make use of social services.

Pederson as quoted in Green, (1982:53) has described what he calls the 'culturally encapsulated counsellor' as a counsellor who is unable to engage the client on any but the counsellor's own terms. He stated that such a counsellor capitalises on the status differences that separates him from the client and uses these differences to establish an authoritarian relationship. Yet Dlamini (1981:30) has stated in her article that professional status is not easily emotionally acceptable in the Black community. What counts the most is the experience on real life issues that the client perceives the worker to have. For an example it is not readily acceptable for a young social worker who is not married to be involved in counselling a married couple as she is viewed to have no experience with marriage. Pederson stated that encapsulation is often found in situations where the counsellor has been socialised into a set of professional values and theoretical orientations that emphasise the characteristics of the client in isolation with only minimum reference to a larger social group.

It is important for the counsellor to understand that he cannot play God by supernaturally gluing the couple together. He must understand that decision-making is the couple's responsibility. The counsellor must display confidence in the couple's ability to make right decisions for themselves as soon as they know what they want changed in the relationship. Nowhere is the role of mediator of communication more important than in marriage counselling. Counsellors are called upon to hear the deep and sometimes confused messages being conveyed by couples who are not able to hear what the other is saying and to translate these so that the husband and wife can again begin to communicate directly (Kennedy 1977:221). Kennedy (1977) further emphasised the importance for counsellors to keep abreast of everything that is going on in their culture, they must make an effort to be informed about the major issues connected with areas of human liberation, marriage and the family. An acquaintance with the contemporary world is essential for counsellors who want to develop full understanding of their clients (p.225).

The counsellor needs to accept the client as he is. He must convey clearly to the client that his purpose is not to impose, condemn or control but rather to join hands with the client as he is reaching his own understanding of his situation (Herbert & Jarvis, 1976: 25). The counsellor must learn to listen, not only to the words spoken but to the feelings behind the words. In this way the client will be encouraged to reveal more of himself and exploration and understanding of his problems. Counselling, therefore consists of a patient building up of a relationship in which the client can be enabled to look more easily at the way in which he is bringing his emotions into the marriage, how he is using these in the relationship, and how and where they conflict or collude with the feelings of the spouse. Exhortation and advice do not have any part in counselling according to Herbert & Jarvis (1976: 28).

Pederson continues to say that

*"a technique orientated job definition contributes towards the process of 'encapsulation' by dogmatizing theoretical orientations and closing off any consideration of alternative ways of working with clients". (Green 1982: 53).*

From this quotation it would seem then that an encapsulated counsellor is much more committed to a set of beliefs, to process and techniques and to professional standards than to the concerns and background of the clients. It is essential however, for the counsellor to realise the importance of incorporating cultural factors into diagnostic and treatment processes.

### 5.3 COUNSELLING THE BLACK FAMILY

Black families do not only differ from other families in society in terms of their value systems and cultural patterns, but they have been subject to other forces and factors that have contributed to the state within which these families find themselves today. Any approach according to Barnes (1972:215) that seeks to provide counselling needs to be aware that Black people

*"exists in a society that does and has victimised them for many years, a society that keeps the mass of Blacks in an oppressed state, economically, educationally, politically and socially, a society that asserts in countless ways that Blacks are inferior, a society that uses the brutal, dehumanised conditions it creates as evidence for its claims and justification for its position.*

Many human service workers have failed to provide an effective service to Black people because they do not only lack understanding of the implications of the forces stated above on the family, but also have no understanding of the Black culture and the implications this culture has for practice.

The standards and values of the dominant white culture are generally used as the normative frame of reference for assessing development, coping strategies, and modes of interaction, while the culture of Black people is frequently devalued and greatly misunderstood (Jones, 1983: 419). It is very important as a counsellor to understand that Black culture is alive and present in all Black behaviour.

Before the social workers can begin to provide services effectively for the Black community, they must be knowledgeable about various conceptualisations that are essential to understanding Black culture. It is important that the social workers know and understand the living conditions, cultural patterns and value system of the people they seek to help. Certain areas of sensitivity require understanding and tact that can only come from intimate knowledge of Black people and their culture. Social workers are likely to continue in confusion unless Black behavioural patterns and lifestyles are viewed as culturally distinct (Weaver, 1982: 100).

Hall & King (1982:538) argue that understanding the value system and its importance to the client is useful in making diagnostic assessments and developing plans for intervention. They further argue that knowledge and understanding of Black culture in and of itself, will not guarantee success for the practitioner but together with sensitivity it is a beginning. In developing an approach to work with Blacks, Trader (1977:11–12) has suggested the following criteria in selecting the theory to support effective practice.

(a) Pathology—Health Balance

This seeks to establish whether the basic concepts on which the theory is developed focus on illness or on the well-being, also on whether the definitions of pathology or health are based on the expectations of the dominant group in society.

(b) Practitioner—Client Control Balance

Does the theory suggest that the practitioner has more responsibility in the process of changing than the client? Are clients viewed as inferior to practitioners. Can theory allow for shared control. Does the theory view people as dependent, interdependent or independent?

(c) Personal—Societal Impact Balance

In assigning causation for problems it is important to establish whether the theory embodies a personal deficit model rather than a societal model, whether the theory does account for political—economic influences on behaviour.

(d) Internal—External Change Balance

He stresses the importance of checking whether the theory emphasises internal psychic changes as opposed to changes that occur in society. Are the definitions for change based essentially on the dominant societal patterns or do they allow for a variety of patterns.

(e) Rigidity—Flexibility Balance

Does the theory allow for adjustment of concepts to the needs of particular groups? Can the theory accommodate new information about socially disadvantaged people. Does the theory relate to a view of the class structure of society? Does the theory demand uncritical adherence to its postulates? Does the theory make provision for continual evaluation? Trader argues that this criteria is important in avoiding conscious or unconscious tendencies to imitate the society's negative relationship to and treatment of the oppressed (1977:11). This criterion, she says, is used to encourage practitioners to reconsider the process of theory selection for practice with oppressed groups.

Traditionally a counsellor has been viewed as one with expertise, one who can study and diagnose the client and decide on the tentative plan of treatment. Goldstein (1986:153) however, stated that the cognitive helper does not fit in with this pattern but rather he is committed to the principle that the client alone is the ultimate authority about his existence. It is implied therefore here that the worker meets with the client and begins to learn to understand the client's world of meaning the way the client understands it. It is not the role of the counsellor therefore to analyse the client but rather to join with the client in making sense and finding meaning within the difficult circumstances of the client's situation.

This ties up with what Dlamini (1981: 31) said about starting where the client is. Goldstein (1986: 153) claims that for us to be able to understand we sometimes need to be able to put aside our theoretical assumptions and our social stereotypes. He reckons that it is the client's story that will give us an indication of how things really are from their point of view. The worker has a role to encourage the client to define his own problem the way he understands it. It is important to understand that we are invited by the client into his own world of norms and values and as counsellors we should not try to socialise the client into our own professional way of things. The worker should not be the one who determines the outcome of the helping experience but the client. The client is the one who is most knowledgeable about his situation, he is therefore the only one who can decide on the goals while taking into account cultural values and social context within which they can be achieved (Goldstein, 1986: 154).

This kind of approach challenges the counsellor to be creative, imaginative and willing to take risks due to the fact that the worker will not be bound by directions of an overriding theory. He will need rather to reassess his habitual ways of helping and help the client to discover alternative ways of resolving his troubles (Goldstein 1986: 154). This kind of approach by Goldstein seems to respect the individuality and uniqueness of the client as well as the client's ability to make decisions about his own life.

Gwyn & Kilpatrick (1981: 25) agreed with Goldstein (1986) and Dlamini (1981) that intervention should start with the hopes of the client. They stated that the direction of treatment cannot be opposed to what the clients cultural values permit. In their study of the low-income Black family, they concluded that this family has needs that cannot be met by traditional family therapy approaches. They stated that

*"Black families have been forced to develop internal helping mechanisms in their struggle for survival in society and when these mechanisms fail to meet the complex needs of the Black family, one finds a formidable deficiency in the alternatives offered to them by the professional family therapists in the community"* (1981: 25).

They believe that typical family therapy would be ineffective in engaging Blacks in treatment and suggested that innovations must be found. Sue (1981: 99) also stated that in order to be more responsive to the culturally different we must begin to determine the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counselling approaches. She also emphasised the importance of evaluating the relevance of a particular theoretical framework with respect to the needs of the client. She further quotes Calia (1968) who points out that in working with the culturally different, the counsellor must be willing to break away from the narrow definition of counselling activities (Sue, 1981: 100).

Sue (1981:100) further outlines a study reported by Berman (1979) which indicates that different groups and individuals need varying helping approaches and goals. In this study a group of white males, white females, and a third world group were shown videotapes of Black and White clients presenting job related counselling problems. Observers were asked to write down what they would say at the end of the tape. The finding was that white males asked more questions, white females used more reflection and paraphrasing and the Third World group gave more advice and made more interpretations. Atkinson, Maruyana and Matsui, as quoted in Sue (1981:101) also supported the fact that people of varying cultural backgrounds respond differently to the use of different counselling skills.

According to Sue (1974) the Rogerian conditions of respect for individuals, empathy, genuineness and warmth are very compatible with the values of many third world people. She however pointed out that the Rogerian process of paraphrasing and reflecting feelings and summarising can be incompatible with cultural patterns. Sue stated that Black people may for instance find that the patient waiting and reflective type of a non-directive technique antagonistic to their value (Sue 19981: 100). This is true in view of the fact that Black people are not socialised into outward displays of feelings, as stated earlier on and a counsellor who attempts to facilitate that may meet a lot of resistance.

Harper in Sue (1981: 103) contends that if a counsellor is to be effective with Black clients, techniques that bring a client to a level of awareness and action would be best. Directive, confrontative and persuasive approaches are more compatible. Edwards (1983: 432) also argued that the sensitivity approach is dysfunctional for Black clients. He stated that

*"preoccupation with the affective domain, stimulation and bringing to the surface, the feelings of pain, frustration, desire and anger can make Blacks ineffective"*.

He argues that consciousness raising for Blacks may be an exercise in futility. He contends that as Blacks are living in a community or society dominated by Whites, a cognitive rational state of being is necessary to keep these elements in balance. He continues to say that a Black who totally gives in to a 'touchy feeling' approach could become dysfunctional, wallowing in self-pity or reacting through violent behaviour.

This may be seen to imply that Blacks are not to be encouraged to share feelings, but the real crux of the matter is that Blacks need to be empowered so as to survive the hostile environment within which they find themselves. As a result the focus on feelings may not be encouraged in this community, not because they are non-existent but because they can be overpowering. Hall in Sue (1981: 103) also observed that lower socio-economic Blacks do not nod their heads or make little noises to show that they are listening to a person in the manner in which Whites do.

She stated that from a counselling perspective it would seem that Blacks do not feel obligated to give the traditional 'un-hum' that is often expected in some counselling relationships. Black people according to Sue (1981:103) tend to view the counsellors role as alien. When counselling is sought it is with the belief that advice about a specific matter will be obtained. Counselling is not viewed as a place where everything about oneself can be discussed or exposed.

This seems to tie up with Mayer & Timms' (1970:68) findings when assessing the working class impressions of casework. They found that in terms of expectations, clients had preconceived ideas about the way the workers would help them with their difficulties. Some thought that after the worker had listened to their problems, a conclusion based on the rights and wrongs of the situation would be reached. This does not imply that these clients had no idea of who was wrong or right, but they had the belief they were right and in fact expected the worker to agree with them. They expected the worker to assist in rectifying the situation. They expected to be given some kind of answer. They imagined that the counsellor would listen to them, then sum up the problem, give appropriate advice and then send them away to try it. These clients reacted with surprise to the worker's insight-orientated approaches, the non-activist approach of the worker and their emphasis on talking seemed to puzzle them. The worker's focus on them rather than the person they thought was responsible for the difficulty made clients wonder.

Mayer and Timms (1970:68) found that the clients interpretations of the workers behaviour carries a lot of misconceptions. Some thought that the workers were somehow not interested in them, or did not understand their difficulties and therefore failed to deal with problems effectively. Some clients assumed that the workers distrusted the authenticity of their stories and for this reason failed to do anything. In the opinion of some clients, lack of authority prevented the worker from acting in a reasonable way (in other words failure to force the husband to come to the agency.) These reactions contributed to the clients dissatisfaction and their premature termination.

From this Timms & Mayer (1970:77) found that the clients were almost unaware that the workers approach to problem-solving was different from theirs. It also seems to imply that the social workers themselves were also unaware that the clients entered the treatment situation with a different mode of problem-solving and that the clients behaviour during treatment was in part as a result of this fact (1970:77).

The workers viewed premature termination as a result of anxieties aroused by treatment, in other words, the clients could not look at ways in which they were contributing to the problem. The clients responses in this situation can be best understood in the context of their culture and their way of life. This is in view of the fact that the clients perceptions about what helpers should do, is a product of their cultural background. Hallowitz, (1980:303) stated that another problem in providing professional services is aggravated by the fact that the settings in which they are offered are often identified as serving the White middle-class population.

Poor Black families tend to shy away from such settings for fear of further rejection and frustration. This happens mostly because the service centres are usually situated in White areas or CBD areas which makes them identifiable as designed for certain people who live in those areas.

Hallowitz (1980:305) argues that in working with people in distress it is important to see them without delay in the office or home and that the traditional intake and diagnostic procedures be put aside. Attention should be given to the immediate problems for which the client is seeking help. He emphasises that the worker should reach out to the family when appointments are not kept and should see the client even if they are late or come in on the wrong day or at the wrong time. He claims that the process should not be viewed in terms of regular weekly interviews or the conventional fifty minute hour but as a continuum of contact whether it be by regular interview, irregular interviews, home-visiting or telephone communication.

This point by Hallowitz, though it has some validity, does not take into consideration the fact that it is not always possible for social workers, especially Black social workers who have very high case-loads to accommodate clients whenever necessary.

According to Weaver (1982:100) and Politi Ziter (1987:130) empowerment and the uniqueness of the Black culture are important variables for the intervention and treatment of Black families. Weaver claims that it is important for social workers to create a climate conducive to conveying a sense of self-determination and control within the family's present reality. Otherwise the family will feel a greater sense of powerlessness. Solomon in Politi Ziter (1987:131) has defined powerlessness as

*"the inability to manage emotions, skills, knowledge and/or material resources in a way that effective performance of valued social roles will lead to personal gratification".*

Solomon stated that powerlessness is pervasive in Black communities because of the extent to which Blacks have received negative valuations from the larger society. In terms of the family, powerlessness is the family's inability to control significantly its life situations and the forces impinging upon it (Weaver 1982:103). He therefore argues that the treatment skills used in providing services to Black families must deal with the concept of power. Power is defined as the actual or potential ability to influence behaviour of others, or control of resources that are essential to the functioning or survival of an individual or social system (Weaver 1982:102). Weaver argues that empowerment as a goal and process of intervention is of great significance in social work practice with Black clients. Empowerment according to Solomon as quoted in Politi Ziter (1987:131) involves the development of an effective support system and calls for the specialised use of problem solving to reduce the powerlessness of Black clients. Weaver defines empowerment as

*"a process whereby the worker engages in the set of activities with the client system that aims to reduce the powerlessness that has been created by negative valuations based on membership in a stigmatised group" (1982:102).*

Both definitions seem to indicate that empowerment involves helping the client to regain power within themselves that will help in resolving problematic situations in their lives. Weaver (1982:102–104) has identified three skills that have potential for empowering, these are discussed below as follows: 1. relationship building, 2. search for strength and 3. transactional process.

### Relationship Building

The relationship building is crucial when intervening in a Black family system. The relationship must not only be established with the family as a unit, but also with each member of that unit. The social worker needs to maintain an accepting environment in order for the client to feel free to participate in the relationship building. The message that the worker 'knows it all' must be guarded against. The family must be made to understand that without their full participation and views the worker will not be able to succeed in their intervention.

### Search for Strength

This involves emphasising the positive aspects of individuals and family systems. Weaver emphasises the importance of beginning with the strengths of the family system, because he reckons that families move on strengths not weaknesses. He argues that every family has some strength existent in it. The social worker must help the family make use of their own strengths in making choices and decisions that will enable them to achieve their desired goal. In this search for strength, the process has a potential for empowering.

### The Transactional Process

When the client system has a history of being in powerless situations or has strong feelings of powerlessness as is the case with most Black families, the social worker must create opportunities for the client to be in charge rather than be controlled. This is based on the teaching-learning process and rejects the traditional vertical transmission of knowledge from the expert practitioner to the inexperienced client, rather the role of the expert is seen as shifting between the worker and client. This process involves sharing of information, the worker and client's areas of expertise are identified and clarified during the beginning of therapy and these are integrated as an ongoing process in all of the sessions.

According to Gwyn & Kilpatrick (1981:263) an ecological approach is more appropriate in working with Black families in that it places equal emphasis on meeting immediate real needs (e.g. unemployment) as well as treating psychosocial issues surrounding a crisis. Some of the treatment techniques that use an ecological approach are outlined as the crisis-orientated family therapy, the use of non-professionals, home-visits, short-term therapy and family task assignments (Gwyn & Kilpatrick, 1981, 263).

### Crisis-Orientated Family Therapy

This is the practice of seeing families quickly for emergency situations. This approach helps to resolve such emergencies because families in crisis are more open to change. Therapeutic intervention is introduced as a specific method that can influence the future behaviour of the family. Gwyn & Kilpatrick (1981:264) found that this kind of therapy is especially appropriate for people who do not benefit from or respond to typical psychotherapy because of their ecological needs which call for an immediate and concrete response.

### Use of Non Professionals

Non-professional indigenous family counsellors are usually trained to see families in their homes and help them with emotional issues surrounding real problems such as housing, jobs, food, truancy and marital conflicts. This approach is usually part of a family outreach programme, especially for those who do not ordinarily seek professional help (Gwyn & Kilpatrick 1981: 264).

### Home Visits

Home visits are recommended in situations where the counsellor needs to have an understanding of a client's family set up. It also helps the counsellor to establish how the client interacts in a family setting. Home visits are recommended by most counsellors even though they are time consuming.

### Short Term Therapy

It brings the total family into the treatment process at a time of crisis and gears the treatment to a limited span. It also makes possible an early diagnosis and treatment plan focused on the nature of the family dynamics rather than on individual pathology. It provides an effective method for spotting areas in which change can be affected in the total life of the family. It is structured to meet the expectations of low income families in regard to providing concrete responses to immediate problems (Gwyn & Kilpatrick 1981:264).

### Family Task Assignment

It is this type of ecological perspective which treats environmental as well as emotional problems in a cultural framework, that can be most effective with the lower socio-economic class. Therapists who believe that family therapy is necessarily a long term intensive affair will more than misjudge low income families as families who lack motivation for change. This approach encourages the family to handle its tasks and provide for its needs in concrete terms.

### Making Intervention Successful

Family therapy measures must address both intrapsychic and environmental phenomena when dealing with low income Black families. Cultural family strengths must be recognised. There is a need for one to acquaint oneself with cultural aspects to avoid paternalistic treatment approaches that will be demoralising and demeaning to Black clients. methods of engagement that are deeply rooted in the family's world which reflect the family's priorities must be developed (Gwyn & Kilpatrick, 1981:265).

The analysis of the kinship network by Tshabalala (1986:80) has clearly indicated that treating only the identified client and not involving his family in therapy would be ineffective. He stated that treatment methods tend to be focused strictly on the identified client. No effort is made to involve even the nuclear family. Tshabalala emphasised the importance of applying treatment methods that involve more than a system. He reckons that the purpose of involving the whole social network is to increase communication within the network. The network is not involved only for the purpose of curing the client, but also to bring about relationship changes in the network. It is therefore very important for social work agencies to try and complement the existing networks rather than replace them or compete with them.

Involving the kinship network is not an easy task, Tshabalala has highlighted the problems that can come with that. The first problem would be the problem of reachability or immediate availability by kin members. Sometimes it might not be possible to assemble every kin, therefore the practitioner would need to work closely with the dominant figure in the family, to arrange time and dates for such meetings. The counsellor should also be careful of the duration of treatment, it would need to be limited. The counsellor would need to plan how he would effectively utilize the time available to prevent drop out rates which can be higher amongst kin members (1986:81).

#### 5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion it is important to note from these findings that the present mode of intervention has its origins in the West and its relevance to the South African situation is in fact still questionable. There are still doubts and controversies about the extent of its relevance, but it has become very clear that the existing mode of intervention cannot be blindly used with couples or groups that are culturally different. Some adjustments will need to be made. It would seem that cultural considerations have to determine how the counsellors define couple's needs and also how they function in a therapeutic situation. It has become very clear in this chapter that culture is a silent intruder in a counselling relationship and because its very silence has gone unnoticed, it must be accepted that counselling is culturally bound. It is important for a counsellor to recognise the differences in people. As stated by Sue (1981:163) that we cannot make all people the same by simply saying so or even treating them alike. When we do that as counsellors we will be reducing them to a common denominator, the double-edged sword which is capable of humanising and dehumanising them. It needs to be emphasized that though this chapter focused mainly on counselling in general, the principles highlighted do in fact apply to marriage counselling as well. The marriage counsellor needs to develop knowledge and understanding of these cultural concepts in order to be sensitive in working with the couple. Tradition and customs form an integral part of marriage and cannot be ignored when counselling is offered.

## CHAPTER 6

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to describe the research design used in this study. The sampling procedures, the pilot study, research tools used to collect data and how data is analysed will be outlined.

#### 6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design chosen for this study can be said to be exploratory—descriptive in nature because not much is known about marriage counselling with Black families. Little empirical information about the dynamics of the problem exist. It would seem therefore that through this study the problem could be investigated in an exploratory manner.

The role of the marriage counsellor in the Black community has up to now been a relatively unknown factor regarding social work services to Black communities. This study also seeks to lay a foundation for possible more precise future investigation in this regard.

### 6.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sampling procedure used in this study is availability sampling. The criteria for the selection of the subjects was that they had to fit in with the following categories.

1. They must have been to FAMSA in the period between 1986 and 1987 and had more than two interview sessions.
2. It was also important that those interviewed must have terminated counselling with FAMSA.
3. They must also have made the initial contact with FAMSA instead of coming as a result of the spouse's contact or of a letter written by the counsellor. The sample was made up of 30 respondents.

### 6.4 PILOT STUDY

The researcher decided to do a pilot study in order to test the questionnaire because of the nature of the problem under study. It was specifically intended to ascertain whether the questions were clearly understood. It was also used to determine the amount of time it would take to interview one person. The subjects that had been FAMSA clients in the past were used for this purpose. The respondents were asked to identify questions they did not understand and also to point out any defects in the questionnaire. After the pilot study was conducted the researcher adjusted the questionnaire slightly to make it more comprehensive.

## 6.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was done by means of the improved questionnaire. The researcher decided to use personal interviews instead of mailed questionnaires because of the nature of the study. The personal interviews were found to have more advantages, because they promoted flexibility which made it possible for the researcher to clarify questions that the respondents did not seem to understand. It was also possible to make sure that all questions had been answered. The majority of the questions were close-ended, but to facilitate more qualitative depth, room was provided for the motivation of answers. The open-ended questions were also used where respondents could give any answer they preferred.

### INTERVIEWING PROCEDURE

An appointment was arranged with the respondents individually. The interviewer conducted most interviews at the respondent's home. Some respondents preferred being interviewed at their place of employment during their free time. The interview was usually started by explaining to the subjects the purpose of the study and they were also assured of confidentiality. Building a relationship with the respondents was not much of a problem as the researcher had previously worked with respondents. Duration of the interviews varied from 15–20 minutes. Permission had to be granted by the respondents for their responses to be recorded while they were speaking.

## 6.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analysed with a main frame computer using the BMDP (Biomedical Computer Programme) statistical package.

## CHAPTER 7

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter seeks to present and analyse the data obtained when the research was conducted. Section A of the questionnaire (see Appendix) covers the personal characteristics of respondents. Factors such as the age, gender, duration of marriage and family structure will be outlined.

7.1

TABLE 7.1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

(N = 30)

AGE (Years)	N	%
21 – 30	4	13,3
31 – 40	15	50,0
41 – 50	9	30,0
51 – 60+	2	6,7
TOTAL	30	100,0

It is clear from the table that the majority of respondents fall within the age bracket 31 – 40. This may be due to the fact that marital demands may be more severe during this period. It is also clear from the table that the percentage of those who fall within the age bracket 41 – 60 seems to decline. This may be explained by the fact that as the couple grow older they tend to settle down, they have also adjusted to the marriage. Earlier in life the couple may also attempt to handle the problems themselves and may also use significant others. It may also be difficult to admit earlier in marriage that there are problems.

7.2

TABLE 7.2  
GENDER OF RESPONDENTS  
(N = 30)

GENDER	N	%
Female	21	70
Male	9	30
TOTAL	30	100

The findings seem to indicate that more females than males are willing to seek help with marital problems. An explanation of this would be related to the roles of males and females. It can be assumed that females may have more time to refer difficulties because of the fact that many of them do not work and are full-time homemakers. It is also possible that they work part-time which gives them the opportunity to visit a counsellor. Another explanation relates to the status and position of the husband compared with the wife. It could also be because of the caring role of the female. The husband could also be more reluctant to seek help outside as this can imply that as the head of the family they are not able to resolve their issues. The decision to approach someone else about one's problems may have implications for the Black male's pride. As it has been stated repeatedly – a man in the Black community has a role of protecting and providing for his family. Seeking help from outside may then be viewed as reducing the male status of protecting not only the family, but also the family name. There can be another side to this as well, the fact that most males are working and may not be in a position to get away from work to seek help.

7.3

TABLE 7.3  
DURATION OF MARRIAGE  
(N = 30)

<u>MARRIAGE YEARS</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
0 - 1	0	0
1 - 3	1	3,3
4 - 6	6	20,0
7 - 9	13	43,3
10 - 12	6	20,0
12+	4	13,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100,0</b>

There seems to be a sudden jump in the number of people looking for help after 4 years of marriage. There seems to be a decline after 10 years of marriage. In the beginning of married life the couple may stay in close proximity to family members which then acts as an additional support system. It is furthermore normally impressed upon them that marriage is no 'bed of roses' and that they must endure at all costs. That may cause them to be reluctant to seek help because it may signify failure. This therefore explains the very low percentage (3,3%) of people seeking help early in their married life. Very few people seem to seek help after 12 years of marriage, which can be explained by the fact that the couple could have come to grips with many of their difficulties resulting in more stability in the relationship. Another reason is that the couple might have exhausted available helping resources that the couple know of and there could have been feelings of giving up on the marriage. The other factor could be that the couple could be more traditional in their view about seeking help outside the family and they may see marriage as a private matter and may not be open to discussing it with outsiders.

TABLE 7.4AGE DISTRIBUTION IN CORRELATION TO DURATION OF MARRIAGE

AGE	LENGTH OF MARRIAGE												Total
	N less 1	%	N 1 - 3	%	N 4 - 6	%	N 7 - 9	%	N 10- 12	%	N 12+	%	
21-30	0	0,0	1	25,0	2	50,0	1	25,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	100,0
31-40	0	0,0	0	0,0	4	26,7	11	73,3	0	0,0	0	0,0	100,0
41-50	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	11,1	5	55,6	3	33,0	100,0
61-60+	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	50,0	1	50,0	100,0
Total	0	0,0	1	3,3	6	20,0	13	43,3	6	20,0	4	13,3	100,0

It seems from this table that most respondents between the ages 31 and 40 had been married for a period of 7 - 9 years at the time of the contact with FAMSA. It is interesting however to note that there are those who have been married for 10 years at the age of 60. This could have been a second marriage. It can be said therefore that those respondents that sought help were of a mature age and had had a reasonable number of years in marriage. This information seems to indicate that in the later years of marriage a decision to seek help is more acceptable than in the earlier years of marriage. The fact that couples had married at a reasonably mature age could have contributed to this as well.

7.5

TABLE 7.5FAMILY STRUCTURE

(N = 30)

STRUCTURE	N	%
Nuclear	24	80
Extended	6	20
TOTAL	30	100

It seems from this table that most people are starting to live independently of the extended family.

Even though independence here does not imply cutting relations or acting without consulting with the family members on measure issues, but rather it means residential independence. This trend that is emerging can be explained by the fact that in urban areas, four roomed houses do not usually make provision for the extended type of family. The other factor is that living in urban areas is more expensive and it is not always possible to feed and clothe a large extended family. It may also be that the married couple may not be keen to live and be under the supervision of the extended family especially in view of the fact that today the relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law is strained.

7.6

TABLE 7.6PREPARATION RECEIVED FOR MARRIAGE

(N = 30)

	N	%
Yes	11	36,7
No	19	63,3
TOTAL	30	100,0

This table shows that the majority of the sample did not receive preparation for marriage. This seems to indicate that most people are ill-prepared for marriage. Those who said they did get preparation, said it was in the form of a brief lecture.

A large majority of respondents (66,7%) that received preparation had received it from the family. A small number (11,1%) had received preparation from a social worker, while none of the respondents had any preparation from the minister, despite the fact that the minister plays a predominant role in marrying people. It also appears from the findings that the family had played a predominant role in preparing the couple.

This seems to confirm what Radcliffe-Brown (1970:44) said describing marriage of an African, that it is not any concern of the state or political authority, it is a contract between two bodies of persons, the kin of the woman who agree to wed their daughter to the man and his kinsmen who pledge themselves that the terms of the agreement will be carried out. When the respondents were asked to describe the kind of preparation they had received, many stated that it was a brief talk during the ceremony which emphasised the importance of marriage to them. They were told that marriage was not easy but that the success of it lies in perseverance. Issues such as respecting one's partner and the family members was greatly emphasised. Female respondents stated that issues such as not questioning movements or behaviour of one's husband were emphasised. When the respondents were asked how much of the preparation they had was helpful, all of them said that although the preparation was very brief, they did find it helpful. It gave them some clue of what was expected of them. The 63,3% of the respondents that did not receive any preparation were asked to state why. Some stated that they simply did not know its importance, some did not know of it, and some had never had it mentioned to them. Some stated that they did not know of anyone who had been prepared for marriage, their parents had never mentioned it. Some stated that the only preparation they knew of concerned issues like lobolo, lobolo negotiations and wedding ceremonies. Some respondents stated that they were young at the time of the marriage and the parents were the people who were very involved in organising the marriage. Some stated that they were in love at the time and love seemed to be enough to make a marriage occur. Some stated that their parents (especially the mother) were too keen to have them married and get lobolo so much so that there was no question of whether they were ready or keen to marry or not. It must be mentioned here that the concept of marriage preparation is a fairly new concept in the Black community. Its importance and benefits are not know. The kind of preparation that the young couple are exposed to is very vague and too general for the couple to understand. It emphasised perseverance without really focusing in detail on what the couple will need to endure.

The couple usually enters the marriage with no clue of which areas in marriage could possibly cause problems. The couple therefore enter the marriage with a belief that perseverance will cure a bad marriage. A need for preparation for marriage was indicated by 93,3% of the respondents, stating that they would have preferred being more prepared for marriage. This percentage includes those who had said that they had some preparation.

7.7

TABLE 7.7PREFERRED SOURCE OF HELP SOUGHT WITH A MARRIAGE PROBLEM

(N = 30)

SOURCE OF HELP	N	%
Family Members	26	87,7
Friends	0	0,0
Neighbours	3	10,0
Professional Person	0	0,0
Other	1	2,3
TOTAL	30	100,0

It is important to note from these findings that the professional person and friends were not considered as possible sources of help when the respondents encountered marital problems. It seems the respondents would readily consult the neighbours if the family for some reason is not available to help. This seems to confirm what Kadushin (1972:109) said, that the prospective client first has to recognise that she has a problem that she cannot resolve on her own, she may then choose an informal, non-professional source for help, such as a relative or a friend. The neighbours are seen as possible helpers. This is not surprising especially in view of the fact that in urban areas neighbours do play an important role where the family is not available or cannot help, especially when there is an immediate crisis.

7.8

TABLE 7.8

OPINION ON EXPECTATIONS OF EXTENDED FAMILY  
WITH REGARD TO SOURCE OF HELP TO BE USED

(N = 30)

	N	%
Family have expectation	25	83,3
Family have no expectation	5	16,7
TOTAL	30	100,0

This question was included in view of the strong and dominant role of the family in the life of the individual. It was based on the assumption that the family will be consulted first in case of difficulties. Most respondents (83,3%) seem to clearly have a strong belief that the families had this kind of expectation. Motivation of those who felt that the family had expectations regarding sources of help to be used in case of difficulties were as follows:

1. Marriage belongs in the family, the family has a lot to do with the marriage.
2. The family's expectations are due to the fact that they are usually a helping hand to a married couple throughout their married life especially in times of hardship. The marital disputes cannot be handled behind their backs. It would be seen as undermining them and can cause further stress in the relationship of the couple.
3. Some stated that family members see themselves as people with more experience than the couple themselves; their expectation is therefore that the wisdom they have can be used by the younger generation.
4. One respondent stated that sometimes the cause of marital disputes is due to witchcraft and the family members through their experience can also advise the couple to seek help with regard to that.

From all that which the respondents said it seems that they thought that the family members had expectations of being recognised by the married couple for the experience they have supposedly accumulated in life. While on the other hand due to their involvement during the inception of the marriage it is understandable that they would expect to be consulted when something went wrong. The respondents that answered no to the question were very few and when they were asked about their reasons, some stated that their families were not living in Grahamstown and could not therefore be consulted for every problem, in most cases they would not be able to intervene. Some also stated that if the couple did not have good relations with the family members, there are usually no expectations.

7.9

TABLE 7.9SOURCE OF HELP WITH MARITAL DIFFICULTIES BEFORE APPROACHINGFAMSA

(N = 30)

SOURCE OF HELP	N	%
Family Members	26	80
Friends	0	0
Neighbours	6	20
Professional Person	0	0
Other	0	0
TOTAL	30	100,0

It is evident from the findings that most respondents had sought help from family members before they approached FAMSA. These findings seem to suggest that the family plays an integral role in the married couples' life. It seems to confirm what is often said, that the influence the family network has on the individual may determine the individual's motivation to seek help when problems arise and the decision of where such help is to be sought is determined.

The above findings confirm the commonly held views that the African kin is the strongest whenever there is a crisis suffered by a member of the family. It would seem that the family is often consulted for its supportive role to its members. The reasons given for the family as a source of help are as follows:

They saw the family as the appropriate people to approach due to the fact that marriage is a private matter and it helps to keep it within the family. It was also felt that one cannot go around discussing one's marital problems with people one does not trust.

They argued that the family can be trusted and that they can keep secrets.

They also seem to believe that the family is there to protect its members rather than harm them. The respondents that had chosen the neighbours stated that the neighbours were the only people they could use at the time, due to the fact that the family were not within close proximity of them. This seems to relate to what is often called a non-family support system consisting of neighbours and friends who provide social support to the family members they are friendly with. It can be seen that in the urban area it is the non-family support system that seems to prevail above the extended family.

7.10

TABLE 7.10  
EFFECTIVENESS OF PROBLEM-SOLVING METHODS  
SUGGESTED BY PEOPLE CONSULTED

(N = 30)

	N	%
Always effective	2	6,3
Effective most of the time	16	53,3
Sometimes effective	5	16,7
Not effective	7	23,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100,0</b>

The majority of respondents (53,3%) felt that problem-solving methods suggested by those consulted were effective most of the time. A small percentage (6,3%) of the respondents thought the suggested methods were always effective. Ineffectiveness could have been measured against the lack of improvement or failure to effect change in a problem. Effectiveness of problem-solving methods could also depend on the respondent's experience of success and achievement in using the suggested techniques to solve the problem. However on average it seems that these methods are considered favourably by the respondents.

In general it can be said that the majority of respondents felt that the methods of problem-solving suggested by the family are effective to varying degrees. It is also to be expected that marital partners will again make use of sources previously consulted if success was experienced. Less than 25% felt that methods suggested by sources consulted were not successful. It can be expected that people in this category will tend not to use these resources again and would :

- (1) either give up trying to look for help ; or
- (2) would look for other sources of help.

7.11

TABLE 7.11  
REFERRAL SOURCE  
(N = 30)

SOURCE	N	%
Self	3	10,0
Family	4	11,5
Friends	12	40,0
Minister	2	6,7
Police	1	3,3
Employer	3	10,0
Other	5	18,5
TOTAL	30	100,0

One would expect the family to be the most important source of referral in view of its importance in problem-solving. This is obviously not the case, judging from the high percentage of friends as sources of referral.

The apparent reluctance of the family to refer could be due to the fact that referral could be seen as a sign of defeat. The other possible reason could be lack of awareness of resources available in the community, or sometimes they may be aware of these but be reluctant to refer without knowing how these resources work and how they can help. They might not want to take responsibility for referring their family members to a place that might cause more harm. Another possible explanation is that the family may not regard it as proper to refer a marital problem to outside sources for help. If this is true, the couple may be deprived of an additional source of help. The friend's willingness to refer may be due to the fact that they may not have the same vested interest in keeping the couple themselves as the family. They are not so subjectively involved with the couple, making it easier to refer them. A very low percentage of respondents used self-referral to gain access to professional services. This however does not seem to be a popular method.

This should perhaps be seen in view of the expectations of the family, that they should be consulted first. The person or couple may be so desperate that they may ignore the family.

A small number of the respondents were referred by their employers. This is not surprising considering the kind of relationships employers often have with their employees and the intimate knowledge the employer often possesses about the employee. It can also be accepted that the referral by the employer is an expression of caring. It can then be assumed that the employer will have knowledge about the employee as a result of the interest in the employee.

In most situations the employer may know of the services available and may readily refer the employee. The fact that police do refer some respondents is not strange because in most marital disputes involve violence and the police are usually consulted. In their reluctance to get involved in marital disputes they would refer the couple. A very small percentage of couples were referred by ministers of religion and 18,5% were referred by other sources. In many cases it was people who have previously used the services of FAMSA. This ties up with what Mayer & Timms (1970:136) also found, that people who have been clients themselves can serve as referral agents, and they tend to convey a very positive picture of the agency based on their own experience. Other referral sources were colleagues at work. Sometimes as the clients searched for help they approached any agency which referred them to FAMSA.

7.12.

TABLE 7.12DISCUSSION OF DECISION TO APPROACH FAMSA WITH SPOUSE

(N = 30)

	N	%
YES	3	10,0
NO	27	90,0
TOTAL	30	100,0

The reaction of the spouses of those respondents who did discuss their decision to approach FAMSA with them were varied.

Some respondents stated that their spouses did not react at all, they simply kept quiet and ignored them, while others said that their spouses were angry that they had taken a private matter of their marriage and exposed it to a stranger. Others stated that their spouse seemed to be embarrassed by this action and they tried to negotiate with them to withdraw the action. It seems from all this that the spouse's response was one of being threatened, uneasy and anxious about the situation.

The reaction apparently also depended on the way the respondents had approached their spouses in the first place. FAMSA was described by the respondents as a place where the other would be brought back to his or her senses. This could determine to a great extent how the spouse responds to the proposal to approach FAMSA. Anger of some spouses also suggests their discomfort in exposing personal problems to an unknown person.

The respondents who did not discuss their decision to approach FAMSA gave the following explanation for such a step. Some stated that at the time of their decision to approach FAMSA, they were separated from their spouses and they could not inform them of their decision.

Other respondents stated that they were not communicating with their spouses at the time, and they were not able to mention their decision to their partners. Some respondents said that they did not want to appear to be just threatening but wanted their spouses to realise the seriousness of the matter by actually approaching FAMSA. Other respondents avoided telling their spouses because they did not want to be persuaded otherwise. They felt that if they had discussed the decision with their spouses beforehand, the spouses might have asked for forgiveness and this would have made it difficult for them to stick to their decision. Others clearly stated that they wanted a letter from FAMSA to come as a shock to their partners. This seems to suggest that the respondents viewed FAMSA not so differently from the police station. This seems to tie up with the researcher's experience as a counsellor, that people that come for help tended to state that they have come to lay a charge against their partners. Hill and Sippel (1988:39) in their study also confirmed that the couple in conflict may not want to come together for counselling, and that only a small number of couples appear to have made a joint decision to work on the relationship. Other respondents stated that they wanted to approach FAMSA first and have some understanding of how FAMSA works before they could consider involving their partners.

### 7.13

The important role of the family in its member's welfare has been clearly stated in Chapter 2. It was considered important by the author to establish the reasons that had made the respondents seek help beyond their families. Most respondents stated that they had consulted their families for help on several occasions and an attempt to help had been made but for some reason the help was not effective. The same respondents stated that earlier in their married life the family's intervention was very effective, but it seemed that it became less effective with time. The decision to take further steps was reached when they realised that they had approached their families repeatedly for the same problem and the problem could not be solved.

Some respondents indicated that they felt that their spouses were no longer taking the family's disciplinary action seriously. Approaching FAMSA for these respondents was a way of seeking a place which they perceived to have more authority than the family. It must be noted that the family's intervention in the Black community is very authoritative. The couple is usually told what is wrong and they are often rebuked, or, whoever is in the wrong is told to behave better. It is thus possible that respondents came to FAMSA because they felt that the approach of the family was not working or that they had a need for more understanding, which they hoped to get from FAMSA. It is quite clear that the action of coming to FAMSA had different meanings for different people.

Other respondents described their reasons as follows:

They did not have access to the family because they were residing elsewhere. They also felt that even if the families were willing to come, it was often not easy to wait for them in times of crisis. In most cases there was a need to have an immediate intervention. FAMSA seemed to be the most appropriate place at the time. Some respondents indicated that they could not call on the family members anymore because in the previous sessions they had had with them, they had felt unfairly treated and felt that family members were not being objective in their intervention, but tended to take the side of the spouse. Some stated that the family in some cases had been informed of the conflict but they had showed no concern. Some could not approach their families because the relations with them were not good, they thought that consulting them would probably aggravate the situation. Some had been to the family and the family had in fact encouraged them to seek help from someone else.

It seems from all of the descriptions given above that FAMSA was approached when the couple had a reason not to have gone to the family. It was not a decision reached without considering the family. In other words FAMSA served as an outlet where the family could not help. It was not chosen and preferred above the family.

7.14

TABLE 7.13  
FEELINGS ABOUT APPROACHING AN ORGANISATION  
OUTSIDE THE FAMILY  
(N = 30)

FEELINGS	N	%
Guilty	2	6,7
Ambivalent	13	43,3
Confident	3	10,0
Anxious	10	33,3
Other	2	6,7
TOTAL	30	100,0

It is quite clear from the above table that there is considerable anxiety and ambivalence amongst respondents about going beyond the family. This again emphasises the important role of the family in the lives of married couples. The couple may be unsure about how the family will view their action. They might also be ambivalent about how their action would affect their marriage relationship. Few respondents (10,6%) seemed to feel confident about approaching FAMSA. This is compatible with the relatively high percentage scored on ambivalence and anxiety about going outside the family.

The feelings of guilt experienced by the respondents may have been due to the fact that they had approached the organisation without informing their family members or their spouses. They might have felt that they were betraying their family members, more especially in the light of the fact that places like FAMSA are not seen as different from the police station. There might have been a feeling that their step to FAMSA would be interpreted negatively. In terms of the relationship, some respondents stated other feelings such as being desperate. They stated that they approached FAMSA in a state of crisis and the predominant feeling at the time was to have the problematic situation resolved, while others said that they had no hassles with regard to approaching FAMSA.

They had full information on it and therefore it was easier for them to seek help from FAMSA.

7.15

TABLE 7.14HELP EXPECTED FROM FAMSA

(N = 30)

HELP EXPECTED	N	%
Advice	2	6,7
Support	6	20,0
Solution	14	46,7
Guidance	5	16,7
Other	3	9,9
TOTAL	30	100,0

The fact that the highest frequencies were recorded for support, solution and guidance is perhaps indicative of the perception people with marital difficulties have about the counsellors role. The relatively high percentage of respondents that expected a solution may perhaps be interpreted as a reflection of an unrealistic expectation held. They may expect the agency to solve their problems for them. The expectation for support could have arisen as a result of the respondents having considered some options in restoring a situation, but needing someone to support them in their decision. Support could have had different meanings for the respondents concerned, some might have needed support as a result of not having a strong family system in their vicinity and a need to get it from somewhere was evident. They could have needed support also to cope with a bad marriage.

For the purpose of this study guidance was used differently from advice. Advice was seen more as involving the giving of an answer to a problem, while guidance was taken to imply providing an environment within which the client can explore various alternatives and come up with a solution themselves.

The expressed desire for guidance by respondents in a conflict situation may indicate the need respondents may have for someone to bring direction in a difficult situation. Other respondents (9,9%) stated that they had a need for a mediator in a conflict situation, someone who would serve as a go-between.

These varying expectations seem to confirm the fact that couples in marital crisis generally do not know what to expect from a marriage counselling situation.

#### 7.16

The respondents were also asked whether the help they got was according to their expectations. The majority (63,3%) confirmed this and a minority (36,7%) felt that it was not according to their expectation. Those satisfied with services rendered felt that their problems were solved. The respondents that had stated that the help was not according to their expectation attributed this to the fact that their spouses refused to cooperate. While others had expectations of being helped with divorce and their expectation was not met. Some stated that they would have liked the counsellor to have been a little harder in dealing with their spouses.

#### 7.17

The respondents were asked to share their views with regard to how in their opinion help from FAMSA differs from the help that they obtained elsewhere.

Most respondents (56,7%) stated that FAMSA seemed to have the same aim as the family, that of trying to save marriage and of building healthy families. They also said that there was a similarity in the approach used by the family and FAMSA in that the couple is called in, and discussions are held with both parties present. The parties are given an equal opportunity to express themselves as it is usually done in the family. This seems to indicate the importance of joint interviews, as these are emphasised both in the family or non professional and professional counselling.

The respondents (43,3%) that stated that the help they got from FAMSA was different, stated that at FAMSA there was no mention of who was wrong or right. Some stated that sometimes the family tends to take sides. They can agree with one side of the story and be biased against the other partner. An example cited was of a wife running home after a conflict, giving her side of the story only. Some families tend to accept the story as true and when the husband arrives they are ready to condemn him without listening to his story. Some viewed FAMSA as different in terms of the fact that the couple's decision making is encouraged. They are not usually told what to do which is the family's approach. Some also seem to see FAMSA as having more authority above the family because it could suggest other steps to be taken, if one of the parties is not willing to co-operate. When the respondents were asked to mention examples of situations where they think FAMSA can suggest further steps, family violence was mentioned. This normally devastates the family and hence there is a reluctance to involve the police. FAMSA however can refer people easily in this regard without feeling guilty. Some respondents also commented on the fact that their information is kept in records at FAMSA so that when there is a need to refer, it is easily accessible. There was also a comment to the fact that FAMSA uses trained professionals in marriage counselling, this makes it possible for couples to learn something about marriage whereas the family members usually use experience as a point of reference.

#### 7.18 INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS IN COUNSELLING

The respondents shared their views about whether the family should be involved in counselling or not. An overwhelming majority (93,3%) support the involvement of the family, which again confirms the role of the extended family. It also has implications for counselling in the sense that the family will have to be considered by the counsellor. The respondents motivated their views by stating that marriage is a family matter and if it goes wrong the family must be involved as a whole in having it resolved.

Respondents also stated that family members can sometimes be the reason for the conflict in marriage, so excluding them in counselling may have little effect on the marriage problem. Some also stated that involving the family can also clarify some of the misconceptions that the family may have about the agency. They also felt that if the family is involved in counselling they can begin to be more supportive towards the couple and that can be a remedy to the marriage. Some believed that the involvement of the family can serve a very important role of educating the family on different or alternative ways of resolving problems. Involvement was also encouraged by respondents because some felt that it can bring the pride back in the family in that they would not see the agency as a threat. Those respondents that said no stated that the family involvement was not necessary because they are the first people to be consulted when problems arise. If they fail to help there is no need to involve them further. Some stated that if the couple is having problems due to the family members interference, involving them would not be such a good idea.

Other respondents stated that if members are not able to be objective, their involvement can be destructive to the counselling process in that they may want to take the side of one party and may want the counsellor to side with them as well. Some felt that it might not always be possible to involve family members in that on some occasions they do not live in the vicinity of the couple. Some respondents stated that the involvement of the family might help only for the young couples who still depend a lot on the family, but older couples have learned to fight their battles on their own, so seeking help from the outside agency becomes easier for them. While others said that marriage is for two people, family members must not interfere, especially in situations where they might not approve of the marriage. Some felt that the involvement must be left to the discretion of the counsellor. They felt that there are no rules that must be made about this, but it must be only used where it will benefit the marriage relationship. It seems that from these respondents views, involvement should depend on the nature of the problem.

7.19

TABLE 7.15STAGE WHEN PROFESSIONAL HELP SHOULD BE SOUGHT

(N = 30)

STAGE	N	%
For guidance before marriage	14	46,7
After marriage when there are problems	4	13,3
When the family cannot help	10	33,5
When the partner has deserted you	0	0,0
When considering a divorce	2	6,7
TOTAL	30	100,0

It is worth noting that two stages at which help should be sought mentioned by most respondents is before marriage and when the family cannot help. The fact that nearly 47% of respondents suggested that help be sought for guidance before marriage seems to indicate that they felt that their problems could have been prevented by such a step.

It is interesting to realise that a fairly high percentage (33,3%) of them still thought that help should be sought after the family has been consulted and was not able to help. It appears therefore from this that the role of a professional person is seen by some respondents as secondary to that of the family. In other words the professional person must come in where the family is not able to help. For some respondents the professional person must be consulted as soon as the couple has realised that there are problems which they cannot solve. Implied in this answer is the assumption that the married couple must first be given a chance to solve their own problems. A further implication of this response is that the expertise of the professional person is acknowledged in the sense that he must be called in when the couple is unable to solve their own problems. It cannot be assumed therefore that all people who have marital difficulties will need the help of the professional person, the need may not arise at all. None of the respondents thought that one should seek help when they have been deserted.

Desertion might be viewed by respondents as an extreme crisis situation which one should try and avoid as far as possible. Various efforts should be made to prevent that from happening. The other explanation to this could be that desertion is not common hence the respondents did not think it would be a reason to see a professional person. There are other reasons that would force the couple to seek help before a stage of desertion is reached. Some respondents (6,7%) felt that a professional person must be consulted when one has some thoughts about divorce. This may perhaps indicate the amount of caution that some people may want to take when a decision to divorce is being considered.

The hesitancy with which divorce is approached may also indicate that it is not viewed so much as a positive step to take in most cases, hence the respondents view that a professional should be consulted while divorce is considered. There may also be a belief that an effort must be made to save a marriage to prevent a break-up, approaching a counsellor may be another way of trying to prevent divorce.

#### 7.20

This question was intended to establish the respondents view on how soon they would have liked to see the counsellor, whether they expected to see the counsellor immediately or whether they had an understanding that an appointment might be necessary.

Many respondents (70,2%) claimed that they had no expectation to see a counsellor immediately. The reason being that they thought that the counsellor would be busy at the time. Some that had been referred by other people who had been clients in the past advised them to make an appointment. They had then come with the intention of making an appointment. Some also stated that although they did not expect to see the counsellor immediately, they would have liked to have seen the counsellor immediately. Some said that making an appointment by telephone was not always possible and coming in to make an appointment involves asking for time-off from work.

Thirty percent of the respondents that said they had an expectation to see a counsellor, stated that they had thought that the counsellor was freely available during the working hours. They did not know that there would be a need for an appointment. Others stated that due to their desperation to tell their problem to someone, they had thought that provision was made for crisis situations. It seems that it would have helped to see someone in a state of crisis as the respondent might have been more motivated at the time to do something about the situation.

7.21

**TABLE 7.16**EXPECTATION OF DURATION OF COUNSELLING PROCESS

(N = 30)

DURATION	N	%
One session	7	28,8
Two sessions	0	0,0
Three sessions	3	10,3
As long as it takes to have a problem solved	17	58,6
Other	3	10,3
TOTAL	30	100,0

Most respondent's expectation is that counselling should continue until the problem is solved. This seems to correspond with Table 7.15 where the majority of respondents stated that their expectation of counselling was that it should provide a solution to a problem. This also implies that there should be no rules about the duration but that it must depend on progress being made in solving the problem. It seems to suggest that if it takes ten sessions it will still be acceptable. The length will depend solely on the goals that must be achieved. Goal achievement for the couple may be calculated in terms of the improvement in the relationship.

The respondents that stated that counselling should last for one session, seem to think that the success of counselling depends on the motivation and the cooperation of the couple to have the issues worked out. It must be noted here that the respondents view of one session is characteristic of the way the extended family functions with regard to resolving marital disputes. One joint session is usually held and the problems are usually discussed and resolved in that session. The aim of the counselling is usually not focused on the relationship as a whole but rather on the cause of the immediate conflict in the here and now. The focus of intervention is on the problem which is considered to be a priority. Three sessions were also chosen as the possible duration of counselling. This choice seems to suggest that the spouses would each like to have an individual interview in order to state their grievances and the third interview would be a joint interview, which would then be used to settle the matter. This could be regarded as a variation to the procedure followed when the problem is solved by the family. Other respondents felt that it was not for them to say how long counselling should take, but they felt rather that the duration should be decided upon after the discussion in the first interview, with the client and particularly the counsellor, would have some understanding of the nature and severity of the problem and the willingness and the attitude of the couple towards the resolution of the problem. Some respondents stated that the duration of the counselling also depends on whether the spouses involved can get the time off from work for other sessions. From all these views it seems the respondents saw the duration of counselling as dependent on the following factors, nature of the problem, number of problems, character of the spouses, cooperation of the spouses, and possibility of getting time off from work.

#### 7.22

Respondents were asked to state whether they would like to involve their spouses in counselling. Twenty percent of the respondents said that they would not involve their spouses in counselling and stated that sometimes a counsellor is merely approached for advice about a matter with the spouse's presence not regarded as essential.

Some stated that sometimes a counsellor may be approached by one spouse to gain some understanding with regard to their behaviour and may not want their spouses to know about it. They also stated that sometimes the reluctance to involve the other spouse is due to the fact that their spouses are stubborn people who are not willing to come for counselling while they, as individuals may have a need to discuss their situation with a professional person to get his opinion on a matter. It was also stated that in some cases when one is considering a divorce or have made a decision to divorce, they may not want to be brought together with their partner. From the above it is clear that reasons for not wanting to include the spouse varies. It is interesting that these respondents felt that there were good reasons for not wanting to include their spouses.

7.23

TABLE 7.17TIME-OFF FROM WORK FOR COUNSELLING

(N = 30)

	N	%
YES	28	93,3
NO	2	6,7
TOTAL	30	100,0

Respondents were asked whether they should ask for time-off from work to go for counselling. Most respondents felt that it is important to take time off from work when one is experiencing problems. The respondents that said yes to the question stated that having personal difficulties can be disruptive at work and therefore one should ask for time off in order to have the matter resolved. They felt that one can explain the situation to employers and ask for time off. Some stated that sometimes one can take leave depending on the seriousness of the matter. They stated that some marital problems weigh heavily on one's emotions, therefore it is important to seek help rather than overlooking the situation.

Some stated that asking for time off from work is not an easy task, because some employers are unsympathetic and may not be keen to release people. They stated that asking for time off sometimes calls for an exposure of one's problem which would place the person in an awkward situation, when one wants to keep the matter private. They felt that having services available after hours would be of great help and people's problems would not interfere with one's work requirements. These findings seem to suggest that even though people may be keen to ask for time off from work it may not always be possible or acceptable to their employers. Asking for time off may also cause people to be threatened with loss of their job. Feelings and attitudes regarding asking to be excused from ones job varies considerably. This is mainly determined by the perception of the anticipated reaction and attitude of the employer.

7.24

TABLE 7.18

RESPONDENTS VIEWS ON THE EXTENSION OF FAMSA'S SERVICES  
IN THE COMMUNITY

(N = 30)

	N	%
YES	30	100
NO	0	0
TOTAL	30	100

All respondents supported the idea of FAMSA extending their services into the community. They stated that FAMSA services were not known by most people in the community. They felt that people usually hear of FAMSA when they have marital problems. It is not a service that people generally know of. They stated that in their view FAMSA is rendering a valuable service and that it would benefit the community if more people knew about it, what it does, and how it helps people.

They stated that if more people know about it, this would help to clarify the misconceptions that people seem to have about it, especially the people who tend to see FAMSA as a place where they can lay a charge against their spouse, rather than a place which aims at building up families. When the respondents were asked for suggestions with regard to the extension of services. Some stated that people could be educated and made aware of FAMSA services through pamphlets, posters and talks at churches. Some stated that pamphlets can reach many more people. They felt that most people do go to church, so talks through churches can reach many people. Other respondents suggested that advertising on radio can also help. They stated that most people do listen to radio quite often and advertising on it can reach a lot of people not only in Grahamstown but in the whole region of the Eastern Cape.

#### 7.25

Respondents were asked what their views are with regard to recommending the use of a marriage counsellor to other people. All respondents stated that they would recommend a counsellor to other people. They also stated that sometimes when people have difficulties and the family cannot help, it helps to know that there is a place outside the family that one can approach for help. Some stated that a place like FAMSA uses people who are trained in counselling so couples can benefit from their knowledge. Some stated that young couples can also gain or learn about marriage by coming to FAMSA for guidance. It was also stated that FAMSA is like a home for people who do not have families living in the vicinity. Some stated that seeing a counsellor helps because they are sure of privacy and that sometimes approaching FAMSA is better than exposing ones' problem to a friend. They also stated that sometimes when one is upset, divorce becomes an easy way out and coming to FAMSA helps one to calm down, think carefully and act constructively. Some stated that FAMSA is recommendable in that it works in the same way that the family does.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The researcher would in the first place like to note that the literature review revealed important shortcomings as far as "ethnic-sensitive" social work practise is concerned. A general scarcity of literature exists as far as professional helping in Black communities is concerned. General issues are discussed but it is clear that the relevance of specific knowledge, conceptual framework, approaches and techniques have not been properly researched. This has had serious and far reaching complications for the rendering of specific social work services in the Black community. Very little South African literature exists giving the development of some "indigenous" material some urgency.
- 8.2 Although the research was done on the role of the marriage counsellor in particular, the findings also relate to professional helping in general in the Black community. Some of the impressions gained by the researcher is also applicable to social work intervention in general.
- 8.3 A clear trend that emerged through the whole study is the importance of the family in the life of the individual and particularly in problem-solving as it relates to marriage. It seems to be an expectation that the family be approached first in the event of marital problems and only if they cannot help should the troubled couple go for outside help.

The main reason why people go beyond the family for help is because it is regarded as ineffective. There is however, a considerable measure of anxiety and ambivalence in people about approaching people for help outside the family. The males particularly seem to be more reluctant to seek help outside the family. This reluctance may be a result of the expectation that men should lead their families in the community. Seeking help from outside may be viewed as a failure.

- 8.4 The majority of the people in the sample did not get preparation before marriage. Those who did, consulted the family, but the preparation was brief and inadequate. though it is significant that the biggest percentage of respondents in the sample would have preferred preparation.
- 8.5 An interesting finding is the fact that friends seem to serve more as a link between married couples and professional sources than the family. The family seem to be a source mainly used for problem-solving before help is sought from professional sources.
- 8.6 The majority of people come to marriage counselling after they were referred by someone. However very few people discuss plans to make use of professional help with spouses.
- 8.7 The nuclear-type of family seems to be emerging in the community where the study was conducted. This was borne out by the fact that the majority of respondents regarded themselves as part of a nuclear family. This is characteristic of life in urban areas which does not permit extended types of families to live under one roof. Though the nuclear type of family is emerging it still maintains very strong links with the extended family.

- 8.8 The majority of respondents expected support, guidance and a solution to their problems from the professional marriage counsellor. It cannot be assumed that the respondents' need for a solution is necessarily an expectation they have of the counsellor. It could be an expressed need, but with the understanding that the solution will be reached through the involvement of both the counsellor and the couple concerned. Generally the majority of respondents did find the help offered in accordance with their expectations.
- 8.9 There is a strong support for the involvement of other family members in counselling sought from a professional person. This again is evidence of the strong position of the family in the Black community. This is also indicative of the respondents need to have their family introduced to other methods of problem solving and also to clarify the misconceptions the family may have about professional help.
- 8.10 The two situations that stood out amongst the others about when professional help should be sought is for guidance before marriage and when the family cannot help anymore. This is indicative of the respondent's experience of marriage, and once again their reverence to the family.
- 8.11 The majority of people involved in this research felt that counselling should continue until the problem is solved. Another significant percentage felt that one session should be enough. The fact that a certain percentage expect the counselling to last only one session may make it difficult for the counsellor to work on the problem adequately. It is however important to note that this is indicative of the respondent's background of problem-solving. Problem-solving does not usually exceed more than one session if it is done by the extended family.

- 8.12 High value is placed on involvement of the spouse in counselling. This indicates that respondents felt that the solution of marital problems is a shared responsibility.
- 8.13 The majority of people involved in the research thought that one should ask time-off from work in order to make use of counselling. It is important to note however that though this is a commonly held view, a desire to have counselling services available after hours was expressed very strongly. This was attributed mainly to the fact that employers can be uncooperative and also that the respondents themselves would not want their problems to interfere with their work commitments.
- 8.14 There was a strong feeling from all respondents that marriage counselling services should be extended further into the community. This seems to indicate the respondents view that existing services are in fact not adequately known in the Black community, especially in view of the fact that marriage counselling is a fairly new concept in this community.
- 8.15 All respondents viewed FAMSA positively as the organization rendering marriage counselling services and felt that they would recommend the use of a counsellor to other people. This indicates general acceptance of FAMSA services by the respondents.

On the basis of the findings stated above the author seeks to make the following recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that research into the area of marriage counselling in the Black community be stimulated. It was difficult for the researcher to find any literature pertaining to marriage counselling in the Black community. Lack of literature and research in this case signifies a lack of knowledge. This state of affairs makes it difficult for the marriage counsellor to fulfill a productive role in a helping relationship with married couples experiencing problems.
  
2. Welfare and other organisations rendering marriage and family counselling services to Black communities should accept responsibility for developing expertise in working with Black families. It is important that the services rendered by welfare organisations to the family must not be seen as replacing the services that were once provided by the family, but rather to complement these and seek to strengthen them. In initiating services in the Black community the community itself must be involved at all levels of the organisation. This would facilitate communication about what they want and what would be relevant and acceptable in the community and the way the community can best be reached. This would lead the community viewing the agency as seeking to help it, rather than with suspicion as the case is now. It would also promote an understanding in the community about how the agency functions and what the role of a social worker is. The agency in this way will not be seen as being there to usurp the authority and power of the family. Involvement at the committee level would also promote participation of the community in ensuring that the agency's aims are reached. As an example in the case of FAMSA which seeks to promote healthy family and marriage life, the cooperation of the community in this regard is of utmost importance.

If the community itself is involved either as committee members or as volunteer counsellors, it would be possible to convey to the agency whether the services rendered by the agency do not meet the community needs, especially in view of the fact that most of the Black communities are characterised by poverty, unemployment and overcrowding. Counselling may just not be what the people need at the time, it might not be a priority. This knowledge would prevent a waste of time, money and effort. It is the responsibility of the welfare organisations to equip their professional practitioners with the knowledge necessary to do the task at hand.

3. The marriage counsellor must acquaint themselves with the historical background of the community concerned, develop understanding of the customs, of the value systems, of the beliefs of the community. It is also important for the counsellor to develop strong bonds with the members of the community as this will facilitate communication between the social worker and the people, and will prevent the worker from being seen as an outsider. It will also help the worker to be exposed to the way the Black families function, because this has implications for practice. The worker needs to develop full understanding of the socialisation process for example, understand fully what marriage in the community concerned means, the customs and beliefs and values governing the way of life in the community. This kind of knowledge must also be made available to people who seek to make the services available to the Black community to prevent prejudice and bias. The supervisors that seek to supervise Black social workers also need to understand the community within which the supervisee works to prevent misunderstanding.

4. The extended family of the married couple should be allocated a special place in marriage counselling services. In doing so its position will be acknowledged in relation to that of the individual. The relationship between the professional person and the family as a natural support system should be explained in order to determine the exact role the counsellor should play in the support of the family.
  
5. The findings have indicated that the involvement of family members in counselling is seen as being important. The life of the members of the community is centred around the family, as a source of emotional, physical and psychological support. "Social work" in the Black community was traditionally handled by the family. In providing any kind of service in the Black community it is important to acknowledge the individual couple's relationship to the extended family. It is important not to overlook the influence the family has on the couple. Where the couple indicates the need to involve the family members, the counsellor should be open and willing to accommodate the other members of the family. This however has implications for the worker because it would demand more skills in handling an extended family in therapy. Social workers will have to be trained to use counselling models providing for the extended family. Interaction in the extended family that evolves around problem-solving should be understood and used by the counsellor who should possess the necessary skills. The family also needs to be consulted as they can play a supportive role to the couple in this regard. This support needs to be encouraged as much as possible. It is also important to involve the family in counselling, to enable it to share its views on how the couple can best be helped, especially in view of the fact that the family has traditionally been involved in counselling members needing counselling. They may have adequate understanding of the couple and have the knowledge of their marital history and this knowledge can be valuable in counselling as it would facilitate an understanding of the couple.

It is however important to note that the permission of the couple is still important in this regard.

6. It is advisable that the emergence of the nuclear family in the Black community be acknowledged by organisations rendering marital counselling. It is important to understand how the nuclear type of family in the Black community differs from the Western communities. The ties that the nuclear family have with the extended family in the Black community cannot be ignored in rendering services.
7. It has appeared from the findings that most of the respondents tended to seek help when everything else had failed. This therefore implies that at the time of seeking help, the clients are usually experiencing a crisis, which often forces them to seek help in the first place. This therefore implies that adequate knowledge of the theory of crisis intervention is important. It also implies that for all the agencies providing services in the Black community especially a provision for this kind of service must be made available during working hours and also after hours. Services need to be available after hours as it has clearly been indicated in the findings, that asking for time-off from work is not always possible and has many other complications. This also requires that social workers working in the Black community need to be trained in crisis-intervention in order to be better skilled to handle crisis situations when they arise. The crisis-intervention can be effective in that people are usually highly motivated to change or do something about the problem in a crisis situation and the counsellor can use that to the advantage of the clients.
8. It seems from the findings that long-term counselling does not quite fit in with the Black community's way of doing things. Due to the traditional way of counselling by the family, counselling is usually short-term in nature, and the problems are usually resolved in one or two sessions.

This seems to indicate that a task-centred approach with its characteristic focus on clearly delineated tasks should fulfill a great need. Counselling should be flexible and allow the clients to express their view on this an acceptable duration should be negotiated with the couple. This implies that if the couple or client does not see the need for many sessions the counsellor need not impose this on the client. Short-term counselling would also suit those clients that may have difficulty in committing themselves to long-term counselling due to reasons beyond their control. This must not be seen as implying that long-term counselling is not applicable in the Black community, but rather that provision be made for short-term counselling where necessary.

9. The marriage counsellors should take it upon themselves to identify as many opportunities as possible for preventative work in view of the clear need for preparation for marriage. The youth in the Black community should be involved in educational programmes that will help them cope with the challenges to be faced during their impressionable years. There is a need to provide services that will develop the youth emotionally, psychologically and socially. The cultural background in this regard should be taken into consideration. Marriage preparation courses must be made available to young couples planning to get married. This can be done mainly through churches with the help of ministers. Marriage enrichment courses should also be promoted to prevent marital breakdown.
10. The value of educating the community on the nature and purpose of marriage counselling can never be under-emphasised. This will perhaps make the institution of the extended family regard the professional helper not as a competitor or threat to its own position. It will perhaps also encourage potential clients to feel less anxious and ambivalent when the decision to seek professional help has been reached.

11. Natural helpers could be identified in the Black community and trained as volunteer counsellors, especially in view of the fact that there is a chronic shortage of Black social workers in South Africa. The social workers that are presently in the field are usually overloaded and cannot begin to address all the needs of the community adequately. Volunteer counsellors who are trained can help to reach people that the social worker may be unable to reach. It is important to point out that although such people may be recruited as volunteers, in most cases the reality of poverty and unemployment in the Black community may make this difficult. It may then benefit the community if these lay workers can be employed. This implies that State subsidy would have to be considered in this regard. The training of community members as lay professionals can enhance the agency profile in that community members are the people that understand all the structures in the community. They are the people who understand the functioning of the family better and can reach people at all levels. They are not usually bound by overriding theories as social workers sometimes are, and can be viewed in the community as part of the community, unlike the social workers who are sometimes viewed as seeking to protect the interests of the Government.
  
12. There are at present certain shortcomings in the training of Black social workers. The theories and intervention models under which they are trained are based in most cases on the Western societies. In the training itself, there is no adequate reference to the communities that they will work with, and this could be very problematic. The researcher acknowledges the fact that not everything taught is irrelevant, but it is important that ethnic sensitive social work should receive more attention in social work education in South Africa. In this regard it is essential that social workers working with Black married couples give their employing organisation as much systematic feedback as possible in order for adjustments in approaches in intervention to be made.

The above recommendations were not all directly related to the role of the marriage counsellor but the intention of this research was that it should also provide a broad and general framework for the role of the marriage counsellor in the Black community.

13. In conclusion it can be stated that it appears as if the role of the marriage counsellor in the Black community is not merely clinical and that there is room for community development. Research should however be done to determine which aspects of the generic roles of the social worker should be strengthened in order to make it more relevant to the needs of the Black community as far as married life is concerned.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALLEN, G.R.  
1976  
The graduate students guide to thesis and dissertation  
Jossey-Bass Publishers, Washington.
- ARKAVA, M. & LANE, Y.  
1983  
Beginning Social Work Research  
Allyn and Bacon Inc. Massachussets.
- ARGYLE, J.  
1978  
Social system and tradition in Southern Africa  
Oxford University Press, Cape Town.
- BANK, W.M.  
1972  
The Black Client and the Helping Professionals in  
JONES, R. Black Psychology  
Harper & Row Publishers, London.
- BARKER, R.L.  
1984  
Treating Couples in Crisis  
Free Press USA.
- BARNES, E.J.  
1972  
Counselling and the Black Student in  
JONES R. Black Psychology  
Harper & Row Publishers, London.
- BEATTIE, J.  
1964  
Other Cultures  
London: Broadway House.
- BELL, R.  
1983  
Marriage and Family Interaction  
The Dorsey Press, Homewood, Illinois.
- BERRY, J.W. & LONNER, W.J.  
1975  
Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology.  
International Association for Psychology,  
Amsterdam.
- BRIELAND, D. COSTIN, B.L.  
ATHERTON, C.R.  
1975  
Contemporary Social Work: An introduction to  
Social Work and Social Welfare  
McGraw-Hill Inc. USA.
- CARTER, L.H.  
1978  
"The Black Instructor: An essential dimension to  
the content and structure of social work  
curriculum"  
in Journal of Education for Social Work  
Vol. 14 No.1.
- CHANDLER, S.M.  
1980  
"Self-perceived competency in cross-cultural  
counselling" Social Casework Vol. 161, No. 6.
- CHEETMAN, J.  
1982  
Social Work and Ethnicity  
George Allen & Unwin, London.
- CLIFFORD, W.  
1966  
A premier of Social Casework in Africa  
Oxford University Press, London.

- COHEN, M.H.  
1985 "The idea of Social Work: Is Social Work relevant to a developing South Africa ?" *Social Work* Vol. 21, 22-23. March.
- DAVENPORT, T.R.H.  
1980 *Black Grahamstown, the agony of a community.* South African Institute for Race Relations:Johannesburg
- DE HAAS, M.  
1985 *Changing Patterns of Black marriage and divorce in Durban* (unpublished M.A. thesis University of Natal).
- DE JAGER, C.J.  
1971 "Traditional Xhosa Marriage" in de Jager E.J. ed. *Man:Anthropology essays* (Struik:Cape Town).
- DICTIONARY OF SOCIAL WORK  
1984 Government Printer, Bosman Street, Pretoria.
- DIXON, W.  
1985 *BMDP Statistical Software* Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- DLAMINI, N.  
1982 "The Psychosocial Model." *Social Work* Vol. 18 March No.1.
- DREYFUS, E.A.  
1979 "Counselling the divorced father." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy.*
- EDWARDS, A.W.  
1982 "The consequences of error in selecting treatment for Blacks" *Social Casework: Family Service Association of America.*
- FAMSA CONSTITUTION
- FISHMAN, R.G.  
1979 "A note on culture as a variable in improving human services in social service agency." *Human Organisation* Vol. 38.
- FREEMAN, D.R.  
1982 *Marital crisis and short-term counselling* The Free Press, McMillan Publishing Co. New York.
- GERDES, L. & PHILLIPS, J.  
1976 *An Introduction to marriage counselling.* FAMSA, Pretoria.
- GOLDSTEIN, H.  
1986 "Education for Social Work practice a cognitive, cross-cultural approach." *International Social Work Journal* Vol. 29 No. 2 April.
- GRAY, F. & MENTERNS, A.  
1973 *The Xhosa* Purnell, South Africa.
- GREENE, B.L.  
1965 *The Psychotherapies of marital disharmony* Free Press, New York.

- GREEN, J.W.  
1982  
Cultural awareness in the Human Services  
Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- GRINNEL, R.M.  
1985  
Social work Research and Evaluation 2nd Edition  
Itasia, Illinois, Peacock Publishers.
- GWYN, F.S & Kilpatrick A.C..  
1981  
"Family therapy with low-income Blacks: a tool  
or turn-off." *Social Casework:Journal of  
Contemporary Social Work*. Vol.62, No.5. May.
- HALL, E.H. & KING, G.L.  
1982  
"Working with the strengths of Black families."  
*Child Welfare* Vol. 61.
- HALLOWITZ, D.  
1980  
"Counselling and treatment of the poor Black  
family." in Munson E.C. *Social Work with  
families theory and practice*. Free Press, New  
York.
- HAMMOND-TOOKE W.D.  
1974  
*The Bantu Speaking peoples of Southern Africa*  
Routledge & Kegan Publishers: London.
- HARTMAN, A. & LAIRD, J.  
1983  
*Family Centred Social Work Practice*  
The Free Press, New York.
- HELM, B.  
1982  
"Social Work and Social reality: A Southern  
African Perspective" *Social Work* Vol. 18 March  
No.1.
- HERBERT, M.A. & JARVIS,F.W.  
1970  
*Marriage counselling in the community*  
Pergamon Press.
- HILL, A & SIPPEL, G.  
1988  
"Intake procedures and some factors which  
influence the initial engagement of clients in a  
marriage counselling agency". *Social Work* Vol.  
24, No. 1 Stellenbosch.
- HUMPREY, F.G.  
1983  
*Marital Therapy*  
Englewood Cliffs New Jersey.
- HUNTER, M.  
1961  
*Reaction to Conquest : effects of contact  
with Europeans on the Ponds of S.S.:* London,  
International Africa Institute, Oxford University  
Press.
- INGERSOLL-DAYTON, B.  
ARNDT, B. AND STEVENS, D.  
1988  
"Involving grandparents in family therapy."  
*Social Casework : The Journal of Contemporary  
social work*. Family Service Association of  
America.
- JOHNSON, J.J.  
1972  
"The Black Psychologists : Pawn or  
Professional" in Jones R.L. *Black Psychology*  
Harper and Row Publishers, London.
- JONES, F.  
1972  
"The Black psychologist as consultant and  
therapist." in JONES R.L. *Black Psychology*  
Harper and Row Publishers, London.

- JONES, R.L.  
1972  
Black Psychology  
Harper and Row Publishers, London.
- JONES, R.L.  
1983  
"Increasing staff sensitivity to the Black client." : *Social Casework: Journal of contemporary social work* Vol. 64 419-425.  
Family Service Association of America.
- KADUSHIN A.  
1972  
The social work interview  
New York, Columbia University Press.
- KAYONGO-MALE & ONYANGO, P.  
1984  
The Sociology of the African Family :  
Longman Inc. London, New York
- KELLERMAN, A.P.R.  
1987  
"Expectations of and committment to marriage."  
in Steyn, A.F. et al, *Marriage and Family Life in South Africa*, research priorities H.S.R.C. Pretoria.
- KELLY, N. & KELLY, V.  
1984  
"Supporting natural helpers – a cross cultural study." *Social Casework* Vol. 66 No. 6 June.
- KENNEDY, E.  
1977  
On becoming a counsellor  
A basic guide for non-professional counsellors,  
Seabury Press, New York.
- KHAN, V.S.  
1979  
Minority families in Britain, Support and Stress.  
The McMillan Press Ltd. London.
- KRIGE, E.J. & COMAROFF, J.H.  
1981  
Essays on African Marriage in Southern Africa  
(Juta:Cape Town).
- LANDIS, P.H.  
1975  
Making the most of marriage  
Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- LEBONA, E.  
1973  
"Reality of marriage." in Verryn T.D. *Church and Marriage in Modern Africa*. The Ecumenical Research, Groenkloof, South Africa.
- LEWIS, G.& KEUNG-HO, M.  
1975  
"Social Work with Native Americans."  
*Social Work Journal*, 379-382.
- LEVIN, RUTH  
1946  
Marriage in the Langa Native Location  
(unpublished M.a. thesis University of Cape Town).
- LIEBERMAN, R.F.  
1980  
Handbook of Marital Therapy  
Plenum Press, New York.
- LOEWENBERG, F.M.  
1983  
Fundamentals of Social Intervention  
2nd Edition, Columbia University Press, New York.
- LOWE, G.  
1985  
"Is American Social Work education relevant to South African Social work education. Some thoughts on professional imperialism." *Social Work* Vol. 21 October No. 4.

- LUM, D.  
1982 "Toward a framework for social work practice with minorities." *Social Work Journal* Vol. 27 National Association of Social Workers Inc. 244-248.
- LYON, E. SILVERMAN, L.  
HOWE, G. ARMSTRONG, B.  
1985 "Stages of divorce: Implications for service delivery." *Social Casework Journal of Contemporary Social Work* Vol. 66 No. 5 May Family Service America.
- MACE, D.R.  
1948 *Marriage Counselling*  
J.A. Churchill Ltd. London.
- MACE, D.  
1974 *Getting ready for Marriage*  
Oliphants, London.
- MACE, D.& V.  
1974 *We can have better Marriages if we really want them.* Abingdon Press, Nashville.
- MADONIA, J.F.  
1983 "The trauma of unemployment and its consequences." *Social Casework: Journal of Contemporary social work.*  
Family Service Association of America.
- MAFORAH, N.F.  
1987 "The changing role of the Black family and its adaptation to the present needs." *Social Work Stellenbosch* Vol. 23 October No.4.
- MAIR, L.  
1971 *Marriage*  
Penguin Book Ltd. Middlesex, England.
- MANONA, C.  
1980 *Labour, Migration, Marriage and Family Life in a Ciskei Village*  
M.A. Thesis Rhodes University.
- MAQASHALALA, T.N.V.  
1975 "The changing role of social workers in a changing Society." *Social Work* Vol. 11 No. 3 August, Stellenbosch.
- MARTIN, P.  
1976 *A Marital Therapy Manual*  
Mazel Inc. New York.
- MAYER, E.J.& TIMMS, N.  
1970 *The Client Speaks: Working class impressions of casework.*  
Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- McCALL, R.B. & STOCKING, S.H.  
1980 *Divorce its Effects on Families*  
Boystow, South Africa.
- MITCHELL, W.A.  
1977 "Some contributions from sociology in the training of social workers." *Social Work* Vol. 13 No. 3 Stellenbosch.

- MOTSHOLOGANE S.R.  
1974  
Influence of Urbanisation and Status of Husband and Wife in the Tswana Family (unpublished M.A. thesis Turfloop University of the North)
- MUDD, E & GOODWIN, H.M.  
1965  
"Counselling couples in conflict marriage." in Green, B.L. *Psychotherapies of Marital Disharmony*, The Free Press, New York.
- MULLER, R.  
1988  
"Swart Maatskaplike Werkers in Fokus." *Social Work* Vol. 24 No. 1 Stellenbosch.
- MUNSON, E.C.  
1980  
*Social Work with Families Theory and Practice*, Free Press, New York.
- NZIMANDE, S.V.  
1987  
"Family Structure and Support systems in Black communities." Steyn A.F. et al. *Marriage and Family Life in South Africa : Research Priorities* H.S.R.C. Pretoria.
- OKEKE, K.  
1986  
*Made for Love, Marriage as it was meant to be*, Lion Publishing Co. England.
- OLIVIER, B.  
1984  
"Psychiatric social work with Black patients – a transcultural approach." *Social Work* Vol.20 March No.1.
- OOSTHUYSEN, G.  
1987  
A Survey of attitudes of members of selected professions towards marriage guidance and counselling in the Grahamstown Community. (Honours dissertation, Rhodes University)
- OPPONG, C.  
1981  
*Middle Class, African marriages* George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd. London.
- ORTEN, D.J.  
1987  
"The role of clinical social work in a developing society." *Social Work Stellenbosch*, Vol. 23 June No. 2.
- PARKINSON, L.  
1987  
*Separation, Divorce and Families* McMillan Education Ltd.
- POLITI ZITER, M.L.  
1987  
"Culturally sensitive treatment to Black alcoholic families." *Social Work* Vol. 32, No.2
- PRESTON-WHYTE, G.  
1974  
"Kinship and marriage" in Hammond-Tooke, W.D. *Bantu-speaking peoples* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- RADCLIFFE-BROWN, A.R. & FORDE, A.  
1950  
*African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* Oxford University Press, London.
- RADEBE, M.D.  
1983  
*A Study of Marriage breakdown among urban Blacks.* (Unpublished M.A. thesis: University of South Africa.

- RAMPHAL, R.  
1983 "Meeting the needs of troubled families." *Social Work* Vol. 19 August No. 3.
- REID, S.  
1977 "Making social work education more responsive to the needs of Black students." *Journal of Education for Social Work* Vol 13. No.3 (70-75).
- REID, W.J. & SMITH A.D.  
1981 *Research in Social Work*  
Columbia University Press, New York.
- ROTHMUND, G.H.  
1989 "Marriage and family counselling versus marriage and family therapy." *Social Work Practice*. Vol. 6-8.
- SCHAPER, I.  
1937 *The Bantu-speaking tribes of South Africa*  
George Routledge and Sons Ltd.
- SCHULZ, D.A. & RODGERS, S.F.  
1985 *Marriage, the Family and personal fulfillment*  
Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- SEAWRIGHT, J.R.  
1961 *A social casework to marriage counselling*  
Ph.D Thesis University of Witwatersrand Press, Johannesburg.
- SELLTIZ, C. WRIGHTSMAN, L.S.  
& COOK, S.W.  
1976 *Research methods in Social Relations*  
Holt: Rhinehardt & Winston New York.
- SILVERMAN, A.G. KAHN, B.H.  
ANDERSON, G.  
1977 "A model for working with multigenerational families." *Social Casework* 131-135.
- SLABBERT, M.  
1984 "An appraisal of critical social work and South African social problems." *Social Work* Vol. 20 June No. 2.
- SMALL, A.  
1987 "Thoughts on making social work education relevant to South African needs." *Social Work* Vol. 23 No. 1.
- SMITH, P.  
1958 *Africa in Transition*  
Max Reinhardt Ltd. London.
- SOGA, J.H.  
1931 *The Ama-Xosa : Life and Customs*  
Lovedale Press, South Africa.
- SOUTH AFRICAN LAW  
COMMISSION  
1985 *Marriage and Customary unions of Black Persons*
- SOLOMON, B & MENDES, H.  
1979 "Black families, a social welfare perspective." in Tufte and Myerhoff. *Changing images of the family*. New Haven, London.
- SPECHT, H.  
1977 *Integrating social work methods*  
George Allen and Unwin Publishers, London.

- STACK, C.  
1974  
All our time: Strategies for survival in Black Community. Harper & Row, New York.
- STEWART, C.W.  
1970  
The Minister as a marriage counsellor  
Abingdon Press, Nashville.
- STEYN, A.  
1987  
Marriage and family life in South Africa:  
Research priorities: H.S.R.C. Pretoria.
- STEYN, A.F. & RIP, C.M.  
1968  
"The changing urban Bantu family."  
Journal of marriage and family. August  
(International department).
- STINNET, N. WALTER, J. &  
KAYE, E.  
1984  
Relationships in marriage and the family  
McMillan Publishing Co. New York.
- STRIJDOM, H.G.  
1987  
"Analyses of South African marriage and divorce  
statistics." in Steyn, A.F. et al. Marriage and  
Family Life in South Africa, Research Priorities  
H.S.R.C. Pretoria.
- SUE, D.W.  
1981  
Counselling the culturally different: theory  
Practice. New York: Wiley.
- TAYLOR, R.J. & CHATTERS, L.M.  
1986  
"Pattern of informal support to elderly Black  
adults: Family friends and Church members."  
Social Work National Association of Social  
Workers, Vol.31 No.6.
- TRADER, H.P.  
1977  
"Survival strategies for oppressed minorities."  
Social Work Vol. 22 (10-12).
- TRUMPELMANN, C.M.  
1981  
Die effektiwiteit van Huweliksberaad – 'n  
Verkenning. Pretoria : South African Institute for  
Sociological, Demographic and Criminological  
research. Human Research Council.
- TSHABALALA, M.  
1986  
"Kinship Networks: An analysis on the use of  
kinship systems or the promotion of mental health  
among the Nguni." Social Work, Stellenbosch,  
Vol. 22 No. 2 June.
- VAN DER VLIET, V.  
1982  
Black marriage expectations and aspirations in an  
Urban environment. Unpublished M.A. thesis  
University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,  
South Africa.
- VAN STADEN, S.M.  
1987  
Research on divorce counselling in Steyn A.F. et  
al. Marriage and family life in South Africa  
Research Priorities H.S.R.C. Pretoria.
- VERRYN, T.D.  
1975  
Church and marriage in Modern Africa  
The Ecumenical Research, Groenkloof, South  
Africa.

- WALLIS, J. H.  
1968  
Marriage guidance : A New Introduction  
Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- WEAVER, D.R.  
1982  
"Empowering treatment skills for helping Black families". *Social Casework the Journal of Contemporary social work.* (100-105).
- WHOOLEY, P.  
1975  
"Marriage in Africa, a study of Ciskei" in  
Verryn T.D. *Church and Marriage in Modern Africa.* The Ecumenical Research Groenkloof, South Africa.
- WHOOLEY, P.  
1975  
"Equality in marriage" in Verryn T.D.  
*Church and Marriage in Modern Africa.* The Ecumenical Research Groenkloof, South Africa.
- WILLIAMS, C.W.  
1979  
"Issues in the treatment of Black families" in  
*Smith College Studies in Social Work* (179-191).
- WILSON, M.  
1981  
"Xhosa Marriage in historical perspective" in  
Krige and Comaroff. *Essays in African Marriage in Southern Africa* (Juta: Cape Town).
- WILSWORTH, M.J.  
1980  
Strategies for survival: Transcending the culture of Poverty in a Black South African Township (Institute of Social and Economic Research: Rhodes University, Grahamstown).
- YOUNG, M. & WILLMOT, P.  
1957  
*Family and kinship in East London*  
Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Response  
Number

SECTION A

AGE

(a) In which age group are you?

1	2	3	4
21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 60	61 - over

 03

GENDER

(b)

1	2
Male	Female

 04

(c) How long have you been married?

1	2	3	4	5	6
under 1 year	1 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10-12	12 +

 05

(d) How would you describe your family structure

1	2
nuclear	extended

 06

SECTION B

Counselling

1. Did you receive any preparation before marriage?

1	2
Yes	No

	07
--	----

If yes who did you consult for preparation?

1	Family members
2	Minister
3	Social Worker
4	Other - Please specify

	08
	09
	10
	11

Describe briefly the kind of preparation you received.

(ii) Was the advice you received helpful?

1	2
Yes	No

(Please motivate)

	12
--	----

(iii) If you did not get preparation please state why not.

(iv) Would you have preferred preparation?

1	2
Yes	No

	13
--	----

(v) What do you think one should do when confronted with a marital problem one cannot handle?

1	Seek help from family members	_____	14
2	Seek help from friends	_____	15
3	Seek help from neighbours	_____	16
4	Seek help from professional person	_____	17
5	other - please specify	_____	18

(vi) Does the extended family in your opinion have any expectations with regard to sources of help which could be used in cases of marital problems?

1	2
Yes	No

	19
--	----

Please motivate:

- (vii) Before you came to FAMSA who did you go to for counselling with your marital difficulties?

1	Family members
2	Friends
3	Neighbours
4	Minister
5	Other - please specify

	20
	21
	22
	23
	24

State briefly the reasons for the choice you made.

- (viii) How would you describe the effectiveness of the problem solving methods suggested by the people you consulted about your problem?

1	Always effective
2	Effective most of the time
3	Sometimes effective
4	Not effective

	25
	26
	27
	28

- (ix) Who referred you to FAMSA?

1	Self
2	Family
3	Friends
4	Minister
5	Police
6	Employer
7	Other

	29
	30
	31
	32
	33
	34
	35

- (x) If you were referred by someone else was pressure put on you to come to FAMSA?

1	2
Yes	No

	36
--	----

- (xi) Did you discuss your decision to approach FAMSA with your spouse?

1	2
Yes	No

	37
--	----

If you did, describe your spouse's reaction.

If you did not, why not.

- (xii) Describe briefly the reasons that made you go beyond the extended family to seek help.

- (xiii) How do you feel about approaching an organisation or people outside the family for help with marital problems?

1	Guilty
2	Ambivalent
3	Confident
4	Anxious
5	other - please specify

	38
	39
	40
	41
	42

(xiv) What kind of help did you expect from FAMSA?

1	Advice
2	Support
3	Solution
4	Guidance
5	Other - please specify

	43
	44
	45
	46
	47

(xv) Was the help you got according to your expectations?

1	2
Yes	No

(Please motivate)

	48
--	----

(xvi) Did the help you got differ much from the help you got elsewhere?

1	2
Yes	No

(Please motivate)

	49
--	----

(xvii) Do you think other members of the family should be involved in counselling when help is sought from a professional person?

1	2
Yes	No

(Please motivate)

	50
--	----

(xviii) At what stage do you think help with marriage should be sought from a professional person?

1	For guidance before marriage
2	After marriage when you and your spouse cannot solve difficulties on your own.
3	When the family cannot help after you took the problem to them.
4	When your partner has deserted you
5	When you are considering a divorce.

	51
	52
	53
	54
	55

(xix) When you approached FAMSA did you expect to see a counsellor immediately?

1	2
Yes	No

	56
--	----

(xx) How long do you think counselling should take?

1	One session
2	Two sessions
3	Three sessions
4	As long as it takes to have the problems solved
5	Other - Please specify

	57
	58
	59
	60
	61

(Please motivate your choice)

(xxi) Should you bring your spouse along for counselling?

1	2
Yes	No

 62

(xxii) Should you ask time off from work to come for counselling?

1	2
Yes	No

 63

(xxiii) Do you think that FAMSA should extend its service further into the community?

Yes	No
-----	----

(Please motivate)

 64

(xxiv) Would you recommend the use of a marriage counsellor to other people?

Yes	No
-----	----

(Please motivate)

 65