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The Emotional Lives of Men: The Complexities of Expressing Emotions

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
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ABSTRACT

This research responds to the widely held view expressed in academic and popular literature that men have difficulties expressing themselves emotionally. Both popular and academic literatures on men's emotional lives often approach the topic as though men are in crisis, in need of change, and that they require instruction from professionals on how to express themselves. This thesis explores the complexities of how men express themselves emotionally. Six male participants took part in individual interviews about their emotional lives. Four of these participants also took part in a focus group discussion on the same topic. Findings challenge stereotypes of men as emotionally challenged. All participants were competent in expressing a range of emotions and did so verbally, through body language, in particular settings and using a range of material objects. These accounts provide insights into their emotional lives. The participants' candour, when talking about their emotional lives, challenges common stereotypes of men's reluctance to talk about their emotions. My analysis suggests that stereotypes of men's inability to adequately express their emotions need to be qualified as they are not applicable to all men. This demonstrates the need for a broader range of research and literature which includes multiple groups of men and their views of their emotional lives.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE

The ways in which men express their emotions is an important yet under-researched topic. This thesis explores how men express themselves emotionally, and how men conceptualise and give meaning to their emotions. Academic research and literature on emotions is plentiful, various studies have been conducted and books written on human emotions (Russell & Feldman Barrett, 2009). There are a variety of topics covered within this literature. However, few of these topics explore men's everyday emotional lives. Similarly, in the academic literature on men, there are numerous studies and books written about men who are in trouble or who perpetuate problems in society such as violence (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010). This prompted me to expand the literature search into popular literature, which offers a wider variety of publications on men's views on men's emotional lives. However, popular literature is often under-researched and tends to focus on prevailing stereotypes of men as emotionally inarticulate. This thesis responds to the limited amount of academic literature on men's everyday emotional lives.

In recent decades some scholars have begun to define and understand men and the cultural practices of masculinities (Connell, 2005; Jandt & Hundley, 2007). This literature includes research conducted by psychologists, sociologists, educationists and many others, often using differing paradigms and methodologies. Many scholars have written books to explain differences between men and women and processes of male socialization (Adams & Savran, 2002; Beynon, 2002; Gardiner, 2002; Holmes, 2009). There is also a wide variety of research articles that have been published on men's *issues* and *topics*. Some of the most common *issues* include; men's health, violence against others, misogyny, sexual deviance and a crisis in masculinity. Common *topics* in this literature are on men's grief, fatherhood, sex, and conceptualizing men, masculinity, and masculinities. With the exception of some of the literature on fatherhood, grief, and sex, most of the academic literature is responding to negative aspects of some men's lives and is overtly prescriptive. There is sparse positively-orientated research that has been conducted with men, especially those who are not in trouble (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010).

Popular literature contains various types of books on men's emotional lives, some of which offer insights into how men express themselves emotionally. These books include; biographies of famous men, collections of short stories, self-help books, or simply literature on men. Many of the authors write about personal experiences or observations in their lives, and they invite their readers to explore these. Popular literature offers some valuable insights and useful suggestions for the reader which may help them understand or negotiate a relationship with themselves or a man in their life. Benefits of popular literature include how it reaches the masses for a small price, and texts are usually responding to common concerns. The style of language is often aimed at lay people even though the authors are usually trained and skilled professionals (Watkins, 2007).

Popular literature also has limitations. While currently offering more insights than academic literature, many popular publications are over-generalized and simplistic, and are rarely supported by scholarly research. It is common for popular literature to portray men as uncaring, unfeeling and brutish (Strinati, 2004), or attempt to explain what men are like and how to navigate them (Watkins, 2007). Authors of popular literature may express relevant insights, however many of these authors do not provide support for their claims. Scholarly work requires a level of accountability from the author, including analysis of previous work and justification of methods and research design if the work is to be published. Popular literature does not always achieve that level of literary scrutiny (Watkins, 2007).

The literature search influenced the rationale for the chosen methodology for this project. This thesis attempts to respond to the limited amount of scholarly research on men's views of their everyday emotional lives. The questions central to this research were, how do men express themselves emotionally; and how do men explain their everyday emotions? Working from a theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, this project viewed the participants as the constructors of their understandings of their emotional lives, and situates the participants' views as 'real' because the participants conceptualize them as such (Flick, 2006). The purpose of this chapter is to explore what is commonly written in academic and popular literature on men's emotional lives and how this literature informs my research.

The remainder of this chapter is presented in four sections. Section one considers common assertions relating to masculinities, including how boys and men are socialized, scholarly debates regarding the use and misuse of hegemonic masculinity and ‘the crisis of masculinity’. The section concludes with some examples of how media provide part of the context for men’s understandings of emotion. Section two explores men’s relationships with the significant people in their lives. I start with a review of the literature on men’s friendships with each other and with women. I then consider some common representations of men’s friendships in the media. Next, the contribution popular literature offers to the topic of men’s relationships with their partners, and men’s relationships with their parents is explored. The final part of section two discusses what is written about the relationships men have with their children, and some recent arguments for the ways in which men father. The third section looks at some of the common literature on men’s emotional lives. Firstly, the focus is on some of the common stereotypes of men’s emotional lives, which are prevalent in academic and popular literature. Following this I discuss some literary examples that promote men’s emotional lives as valid, and arguments to challenge the belief that men are unemotional. The section concludes with literature on men’s views of their emotional lives, including a discussion on the limited amount of publications available on this topic. The final section presents some arguments to highlight the significance of the study of men’s emotional lives, followed by a description of the rest of the thesis.

Common Conceptualizations of Masculinity/Masculinities

Social science research into men is awash with references to masculinity. Research into what the term masculinity means has spanned decades and still there are multiple definitions assigned to the term (Beynon, 2002; Mankowski & Maton, 2010). Boon (2005) identifies key arguments in literature on masculinity. Some of these include the meaning of masculinity is political, and centres on the ownership of power held and exacted by the one who exhibits ‘masculinity’. Another is that the term masculinity relates to high testosterone levels. Boon also notes some arguments that suggest masculinity is influenced by social, cultural, and biological traits which can be expressed by men and women. Connell (2005) discusses the term masculinity as being used to describe the ownership (by

women and men) of masculine attributes, some of these attributes include; physical strength, power, stoicism, emotionally reserved, and physical characteristics commonly seen in males.

Academic literature on men and masculinities often uses the concept 'masculinity' as a male-centred cultural construct applicable to all or most men (Roussel & Downs, 2007). More recently authors such as Beynon (2002), Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Roussel and Downs (2007), have challenged the use of the singular term when it is used to describe multiple types of masculinities. As Beynon (2002) notes "masculinity is composed of many masculinities" (ibid, p. 1), whilst the uses of the terms are dependent on the contexts in which they are used in (Jandt and Hundley, 2007). Due to the multiple meanings assigned to masculinity and the variety of cultural constructions of masculinities it is important to clarify how these terms are used in each study. For the purpose of this thesis the term masculinities is used when referring to multiple types of cultures which men may identify with as a part of their gendered identities. The term masculinity will be used to describe the ownership of masculine attributes, (including: physical strength, power, stoicism, emotionally reserved, and physical characteristics commonly seen in males). However, I do this reluctantly because the term masculinity and masculine are extremely fluid terms that are often used ambiguously, as are femininity and feminine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Diversified understandings of gender and masculinities have enabled critical evaluations into the multiple types of masculinities. These evaluations have resulted in various studies on aspects and phenomena occurring within men's lives (Brod, 1990). Many scholars have focused their attention on how the cultural constructs of masculinities are changing. According to Jandt and Hundley (2007), the communication of masculinities alters according to time, place, culture, sexual orientation and a multitude of other factors. Further, with the increase of globalisation and mass communication boys and men are now presented with a variety of masculinities to draw on as an influence for their own gender identities (Seidler, 2006a).

Scholars have made considerable contributions to understandings of how boys are socialised into manhood. Much of this literature discusses contemporary

issues that boys and young men are facing as they develop an understanding of their own and others manhood and masculinities. Seidler (1997) argues that exploring how boys are socialised into manhood is such a prevalent topic because boys are growing up in a world that is very different to the world in which their fathers grew up in. Seidler (1997) explains how this has caused “a feeling of cultural dislocation as young men can no longer rely upon what their fathers may have taught them” (ibid, p.2). More recently, Seidler (2006a) explains how young men are negotiating what it means to be a man in an increasingly globalised world, which is changing some of the common perceptions of what it means to be a man. Exploring various masculinities is more complex, and no longer simply inherited from father to son; given sons are also negotiating their masculinities through interactions with global cultures.

Some scholars assert that boys’ socialisation into manhood has increasingly become a role taken on by females; as a consequence of the large number of single mothers raising boys and the large number of female educators (Bonde, 2003). Bonde further explains how this view often neglects the socialisation that occurs for boys from other extracurricular activities such as sports. There are many other arenas where boys can receive ‘face-to-face’ socialisation if they do not participate in sporting activities; including from relatives, family friends, peer groups, teachers, and workmates. The socialisation of boys by women has been considered to be problematic when there is minimal input from men. Barnett and Rivers (2004) dispute this claim as being a gender myth, and they emphasise the point that effective socialisation occurs because of the individuals’ techniques, not their gender.

Kimmel (2003) introduces the analogy of the ‘Goldilocks Dilemma’ to refer to the ways in which some boys and men understand and negotiate their masculinities in relation to common socialized expectations. Kimmel explains how Goldilocks’ quest for ‘just right’ is comparable to the quest for some men to find a fitting description of their manhood or masculinities. For Goldilocks, everything was too much, too hot, or too cold, as with men, “either insufficient or overly exaggerated” (Kimmel, 2003, p. xii). Kimmel raises an interesting point, and to follow on from the Goldilocks story; eventually she found, what for her was, ‘just right’. It took her several attempts at what was ‘wrong’ to find what was

'right'. Beynon, (2002) proposes that "the 'male gender script' is still too narrow...while it has been widened for girls, it has remained too constrictive for boys" (ibid, p.80).

Academic literature on men's gender roles predominantly explores the negative aspects of some men's lives and gender, and frequently misses the positive aspects. Currently, stereotypic gender characteristics for men include; the rejection of 'feminine' attributes, especially expressing emotions (with the exception of anger); and the acceptance of homophobic attitudes, competitiveness, aggression, success and power (Mankowski & Maton, 2010). These characteristics are supposedly the main reasons for the high rates of male violence, substance abuse and lack of parental involvement, all of which contribute to stereotyped gender roles of men. More recently, researchers have begun to explore how the commonly prescribed gender roles for men can be harmful to the men who incorporate them and to the women in their lives (Mankowski & Maton, 2010). However, there is little research into the lives of men who reject the current stereotypical gender characteristics and roles. An exception is literature on gay men. Within the literatures on masculinities, hegemonic masculinity and the crisis of masculinity are often associated with all or most men. While these concepts are applicable to some men, the frequency in which they are used has resulted in many viewing these concepts as stereotypes.

Hegemonic masculinity is one of the most commonly discussed types of masculinities in academic literature. The term is often used to describe types of men who believe and behave as though their gender entitles them to subordinate women and other men (Connell, 2005). More recently, scholars have discussed how enacting hegemonic masculinity is not exclusive to the subordination of women by men. Hegemonic masculinity now transcends beyond gender power and is also enacted upon masculinities which do not fit the proposed standards of 'being a man', for example, homosexual men, feminist men, house husbands, and many others (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). When hegemonic masculinity is discussed, it is often done so as though it is the prevailing type of masculinity or that it is synonymous with the term masculinity. The use of the term hegemonic masculinity has now become so widely used, some scholars are questioning the application of the term (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity is one of the most problematic types of masculinity, and has attracted a lot of attention from academics in a quest to understand it and to 'fix it'. Clearly, not all men subscribe to hegemonic masculinity as much of the literature implies. Seidler (2007) discusses this issue and proposes that not all men's experiences fit with hegemonic masculinity and when certain stereotypes perpetuate this as true, men's understanding of their own masculinity is distorted and confusing. This confusion can lead to concealing true emotions in favour of 'saving face' or not appearing vulnerable. Seidler's argument underpins the view taken in this thesis that not all men comply with the narrow norms and stereotypes embedded in hegemonic masculinity.

In academic literature, popular literature and media there is a frequently stated concern that men and masculinities are 'in crisis' (Segal, 1997; Faludi, 1999; Clare, 2000). Despite widely stated concern, there seems to be little consensus on the specific nature of this proclaimed crisis (Beynon, 2002). There are suggestions by academics and the media that there is not just a single crisis occurring in men's masculinities, but multiple crises (Beynon, 2002). With no consensus on what exactly the crisis of masculinity involves, numerous perspectives are offered by scholars with differing paradigms, including questioning whether the crisis of masculinity is new or even exists (Beynon, 2002). According to Johansson (2003), the crisis of masculinity is being generated by the pressures rising from the continual questioning of how masculinity is defined on personal, social, and cultural levels. Beynon (2002) takes a broader and less individualised view of the 'crises' occurring for men. His research is directed toward understanding the crises of masculinity; however Beynon focuses less on locating pathologized failings of men and masculinities, and more on societal and structural changes and pressures affecting men in contemporary (often Western) settings. These pressures and changes include:

- unemployment causing financial and emotional stress
- underemployment creating insecurity among men in employment
- multiple types of masculinities of which the acceptance fluctuates between normal and abnormal, such as homosexual, metro-sexual,

machismo, laddism, corporate, yuppie, sporty, domestic, and many others

- difficulties for men in recognising and expressing their emotions
- the stigma surrounding seeking professional help for mental and physical illnesses
- higher suicide rates than women
- the increase of divorce which can leave men isolated from family life
- women's achievements at being single parents, which may contribute to men feeling inadequate and redundant as fathers and partners
- the higher incidents of men being involved in violent crimes and other crimes such as theft
- that young men's education achievements are less or lower than those of young women
- a backlash of feminism which left men feeling their masculinity has been displaced
- the media frequently stating that masculinity is fraught with issues and problems

One of the common stated causes of the 'crisis of masculinity' is the changes to social systems, particularly the changes since feminism (Brod, 1990; Levant & Kopecky, 1995; Faludi, 1999; Beynon, 2002; Eskilsson, 2003; Johansson, 2003). As Meuser (2003) explains, "in any relation between two parties, changes on one side always have consequences for the other side" (ibid, p.128). Before feminism, men had been accustomed to the prevailing social structure, which included holding the majority of power and control over women and their families (Faludi, 1999). In exchange, men's main role was to provide financial security for their family; and consequently men's gendered identities were established formally by

being a good provider (Levant & Kopecky 1995). Of course men also had hobbies and ‘informal’ ways of structuring their identities. When women were allowed the opportunity to also contribute financially, some men’s gendered identities were challenged (Beynon, 2002). Not all men were resistant to the changes inspired by feminism. Some men welcomed the changes and quickly adapted to the new expectations of them, while some men fought alongside women for equal rights (Levant & Kopecky, 1995). However, for the men whose gendered identities were reliant on their ‘right’ to having power and control over women, their gendered identities became ‘wrong’. Their social systems had taught them to work hard for their families, because in order to be a good husband and father, they had to be a good provider. This was no longer automatically the case. The men whose gendered identities or masculinities were entrenched in beliefs of their dominance over women, started to question their masculinity and some men have not stopped questioning (Levant & Kopecky, 1995).

Contemporary issues, such as those referred to by Beynon, are likely to be affecting many men, women and families. While it may be difficult to claim that there is *not* a crisis affecting masculinities, it is also problematic to state that such a crisis exists. To some extent, the crisis of masculinity has become an over-generalised and homogenising ‘catch-all’ phrase for any issues or problems associated with masculinity (Beynon, 2002; Meuser, 2003). Consequently, there is little attention paid to the specific issues or problems masculinities are facing, and there is little research conducted with men to obtain their views on the crisis of masculinity or of the key issues in men’s lives (Beynon, 2002). Faludi (1999) explains how she fell victim to believing that men and masculinities were in crisis:

I was operating from an assumption both under-examined and dubious: that the male crisis in America was caused by something men were *doing* unrelated to something being done to them, and that its cure was surely to be found in figuring out how to get men to *stop* whatever it was. (p.7)

This quote from Faludi (1999) emphasizes how it is important for researchers to be reflexive and to examine the social and cultural lenses through which they approach a particular topic of study.

Other arguments against the simplistic reference to a crisis of masculinities are that the crisis is not in masculinities but in other aspects of certain cultures of masculinity. For example Brod (1990) proposes that the crisis is not necessarily in masculinities; rather the crisis is a result of conflict between the old and new systems of patriarchal power. Meuser (2003) explains that the phenomenon of a crisis of masculinities is really a continual questioning of one's masculinity and the masculinities around him and should not be considered a crisis necessarily. Men's masculinities can have aspects which are problematic and there are issues associated with changes occurring in the cultures of masculinities, but should all men be tainted with a label of being in crisis? Such a label is problematic especially when there is yet to be a consensus on what the crisis of masculinity involves, or the cause, or the specific effects.

Many scholars are exploring media and the influence of media on social interaction and social phenomena. Often the media is blamed for 'everything that is wrong with young people today', or depicted as an epidemic which is seeping into homes and infecting young people. The Columbine shootings in the USA were reported by the media as being linked to the perpetrators participation in the culture of Heavy Metal music (Snell, 2006). Beauty magazines exploit women, and now men, by encouraging consumerism and vanity (Wolf, 1990), while 'men's' magazines objectify women by sexualizing them (Tragos, 2009). There is an abundance of literature about the negative influences media is having on people, especially youth. Most commonly the literature discusses these 'issues' and 'problems' as being a result of media influence; with boys or men as the perpetrators; and girls or women as the victims.

More recently there have been discussions in academic literature on how masculinities are being shaped or co-constructed by the media and popular culture (Boon, 2005; Hodgetts & Rua, 2010; Kivel & Johnson, 2009; Tragos, 2009). These discussions do not focus solely on blaming the media, rather exploring the influence of media as a societal phenomenon, and offering some perspectives on how media consumers engage with media content. For example, Tragos (2009) discusses how the television shows 'Monster Garage' and 'American Chopper' inspires passion for creating and fixing motor vehicles while reasserting one's masculinity. He explains how the garage is a place for some 'hands-on' work with

other men, similarly, the online communities created for both shows, also provide a space for men to talk (or type) about their shared interests in motor vehicles (Tragos, 2009). Hodgetts and Rua (2010) also explore the positive aspects of media and how media can facilitate men's relationships with other men, and their families. They discuss how a seemingly insignificant act like watching a rugby game can become quality time shared between a father and daughter (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010). Hodgetts and Rua's study included the use of media examples to encourage research participants to discuss their views, a method that produced some valuable insights into the participants' perspectives (see Hodgetts & Rua, 2010). Media is such a prevalent entity in so many peoples' lives, it is understandable that scholars are devoting their time and efforts to researching how people use media (Kivel & Johnson, 2009; Tragos, 2009).

This section explored academic literature which focuses on explaining men, and the various constructs of masculinities. This literature contributes a variety of perspectives which are encouraging many dialogues amongst academics involved with researching and writing about masculinities. These dialogues are important to the growth of masculinities studies. Unfortunately in academic research, there are few perspectives on what masculinities mean to the men who embody them, including how they would explain their own masculinity and how they perceive other types of masculinities. Research into men and their masculinities needs to become less rigid and social research could benefit from greater use of ethnographic approaches in studying men's masculinities (Seidler, 2006a). As noted by Seidler (2006a) "Recognising ways that intimate lives are tied up with national and global cultures allows us to explore what young men are learning to become" (ibid, p.11).

Men's Relationships

Emotions are often expressed in the context of ongoing relationships. Academic literature on men's relationships often focuses on abusive, competitive, deviant, and destructive interactions. There are few academic publications that explore men's views on their (non-negative) relationships, or the dynamics of these relationships and the emotions that are experienced within these relationships. An exception is some of the literature on fatherhood. Popular literature does,

however, offer a significant amount of literature on positive (and also negative) heterosexual men's relationships. Often the relationships discussed in popular literature are with their partners, mothers, fathers, and children. While popular literature offers a larger contribution to the topic of positive, heterosexual men's relationships, it is often prescriptive and intended for female consumers (Watkins, 2007). This section explores some of the common academic and popular literature on men's relationships with a focus on what is written about heterosexual men's, positive relationships. The first topic is men's friendships with other men and with women, and the second is men's relationships with; their wives, or partners; their mothers, and fathers; their children, daughters, and sons.

Men's positive, non-sexual friendships with women and other men are not common topics within academic or popular publications. When scholars explore friendships between men, it often focuses on what is wrong with the friendships. Some scholars argue that some men want the dynamics of their friendships with other men to be similar to the commonly prescribed dynamics in women's friendships, however they are restricted in doing so out of fear of being mislabelled as homosexual (Nardi, 1992). The academic literature that explores men's friendships with women often discusses the dynamics of heterosexual couples and the friendships between the couples, or friendships that include sex as a part of the friendship (Swain, 1992).

Messner (1992) explains how prior to the 1970s, men's friendships with other men were promoted as having stronger bonds than women's relationships with other women. Friendships between men were considered as the 'norm', while friendships between women were considered as lacking because they did not include the same characteristics as men's, such as; "bravery, loyalty, duty, and heroism" (Nardi, 1992, p.1). These characteristics were not typically found in friendships between women which rendered women's friendships as 'lacking'. This has now changed and since the 1980's popular literature, the media and sometimes academic literature refers to men's friendships as being limited in emotional expressiveness (Messner, 1992). It is assumed that 'true' or 'good' friendships between men should include characteristics "[which are] often expressed in terms of women's traits: intimacy, trust, caring, and nurturing" (Nardi, 1992, p.1). This perspective is questioned because women's friendships

with other women were used as the standard relationship by which men's friendships should be measured against (Messner, 1992). Consequently, friendship relationships have become feminized. Furthermore, Walker's (1994) arguments are contrary to many stereotypes on men's emotional lives. Walker explains that men are emotionally expressive; her study indicates that while men commonly express themselves through shared activities, they also share their feelings with close male friends.

Popular literature offers little on the positive aspects of friendships between men. However, media offer various depictions of positively oriented, non-sexual, friendships between men. Some examples of these can be seen in popular television shows such as; *House*, *Top Gear*, *Scrubs*, *Everybody Hates Chris* and many others. The friendship dynamics between these male characters differ for each show, although they are not always positive or 'healthy'. These programs offer a wider variety of representations of friendships between men than what is offered in academic and popular literature. Similarly, with friendships between women and men, some of the popular television shows that offer examples of these friendships are; *Friends*, *Will and Grace*, and *How I Met Your Mother*. Many of the friendships between the male and female characters in these shows depict non-sexual, but intimate friendships.

The media has also been an influence for terminology of close friendships between men, a good example is the term 'Bromance', which is a combination of the two words and meanings 'brother' and 'romance'. The definition of this term can be found online in the *Urban Dictionary* and *Wikipedia*, and it is used predominantly by popular culture and the media. The term was coined by Dave Carrié who was the editor of a skateboarding magazine; *Big Brother*, and he used the term to describe the close heterosexual friendship between guys who spent a lot of time together because of their common interest in skateboarding (Elliott, 2007). The term has been used to describe relationships which are not sexual but very intimate male friendships between television characters, for example; *Boston Legal's* Denny Crane and Allen Shaw; *House's* James Wilson and Gregory House; *Nip/Tuck's* Christian Troy and Sean McNamara; *Flight of the Concords'* Bret and Jermaine; and *Scrubs'* JD and Turk ("Bromance," 2010). It has also been used for off screen, real life relationships between movie stars, such as; Matt

Damon and Ben Affleck and George Clooney and Brad Pitt (“Bromance,” 2010). The term ‘bromance’ was introduced to me by one of the participants during his interview. When I asked where he had heard it, he said he could not remember. A *Google* search indicated that the term had been in use since the 1990s and was becoming a frequently used term in popular culture. When a search was conducted for the term in academic journals, no results were found.

The dynamics of heterosexual, intimate, sexual relationships is a topic frequently written about in popular literature, especially in self-help books. One of the most published and well known authors of popular literature is John Gray. Gray is an internationally acclaimed author and has written over sixteen books, the most well known is; *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* (1992). In this book Gray uses a metaphor to highlight gender differences where men are portrayed as the Roman god Mars and women as the classical goddess Venus. Gray focuses on explaining what the differences between men and women are and how this influences their behaviour. Similarly, Allan and Barbara Pease also explain some of the issues in men and women’s relationships in their book: *Why Men Lie and Women Cry* (2003). They also discuss the differences between men and women focusing on the relationship troubles that are experienced because of those differences. They also discuss men’s desire for healthy fulfilling relationships, but men’s presumed inability to achieve this.

Popular texts such as those by Gray and Pease and Pease offer their readers advice on the appropriate or effective behaviours that are associated with ‘good’ or ‘healthy’ relationships. Such books are presented in lay language and include some referencing. They do not explicitly judge men and women for their perceived shortcomings, but unfortunately they often refer to the dynamics of relationships as having ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ interactions. Gray tends to assume that men and women’s personalities and behaviours are biological facts, rather than socially influenced. This common approach amongst popular authors is disputed by Barnett and Rivers (2004) for being too simplistic. According to Barnett and Rivers (2004) such perspectives perpetuate gender myths and stereotypes that portray gender identities as being defined solely on biological factors. Moreover, the ideas in Gray’s books could be adopted to excuse certain behaviours in

relationships, while his advice to the reader to manipulate situations is also problematic (Barnett & Rivers, 2004).

Relationships between husbands and wives, girlfriends and boyfriends are not the only relationships popular literature covers. Boys and men's relationships with their mothers are often referred to in popular literature, and sometimes academic literature, often using Freudian theory. Freud declared that from childhood a boy loves the warm, caring relationship he has with his mother so much that he wishes to covet the relationship from his father (Freud, 1917 cited in Rabinowitz & Cochran, 1994). Some scholars expanded on Freud's theory, and others dismissed it as lacking in scientific rigour. However, many authors of popular literature cite Freud's theory as being relevant for men's relationships with their mothers today. It is suggested that men are still grieving for the relationship they had with their mothers when they were young boys (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 1994). This may be a reason why popular literature so often discusses the mother/son relationship in the context of issues occurring between the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships. A commonly expressed view is that women who marry men will incur conflict from their husband's mother. Allegedly, the mother/son relationship forges such a strong bond that no other woman who enters her sons life will ever be good enough (Pease & Pease, 2003).

Academic and popular literature on boys and men's relationships with their fathers is often discussed in terms of what is lacking in the relationship, and exploring the effects of the fatherless son (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). It is often assumed that when a boy is growing into a young man he starts to challenge his father's role as the male head of the family, which encourages the father to reaffirm his dominant position, causing a competitive and hostile relationship between the father and son (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 1992). While there are many boys and men who experience un-fulfilling, distant or absent, competitive, or violent relationships with their fathers, there are also boys and men who have not experienced such negative dynamics with their fathers. Men can experience their relationships with their fathers as being fulfilling, nurturing, encouraging and filled with love (Kay, 2009). Unfortunately, prevailing stereotypes of boys' relationships with their fathers continue to dominate and promote father/son relationships as problematic.

Before discussing literature on fathering, it is important to conceptualise some terminology. Kay (2009) offers a concise and current explanation of the common uses of the terms father, fatherhood and fathering. According to Kay, father is a term that can involve various dynamics, or lack thereof, between a man and child/ren, and includes biological or social connections. The term fatherhood is used when discussing the cultural roles, responsibilities, rights and statuses associated with being a father. Fathering relates to the specific practises associated with parenting that is carried out by men. Due to cultural, social, and biological influences, these terms can still vary depending on the context of the relationships between the father and child/ren. However for the purpose of this thesis, they are sufficient.

The importance of fathering is frequently discussed within academic and popular literature. More recently there has been a larger contribution of academic literature on the various ways men father their children and how men are negotiating their roles as fathers who are actively involved in their children's lives. Prior to this, academic literature was dominated by discussions and research on 'bad' fathers (Kay, 2009), whereas in popular literature books on parenting often focused on mothering and were predominantly written for female consumers (Starker, 1989). Nonetheless, there is now a wider variety of popular literature written for different types of fathers, such as fathers who are non-resident; are single, primary caregivers; are homo-sexual; are widowers; have daughters; have sons; have autistic children; and many more. Social expectations of fathers have also changed in many but not all societies. Previously, it was common to accept mothers as the primary parent who had relationships with her children and fathers as an entitled role of authority as the financial supporter of the family (Seidler, 2003). Today's fathers are now expected and are expecting to have more involvement with raising and socialising their children and in the everyday aspects of their children's lives (Barnett & Rivers, 2004; Kay, 2009). This is not to say that all fathers are willing or able to fulfil these expectations; however this thesis will focus on the fathers who are actively parenting. It is also important to note that there are arguments that research into fathering is still being compared to mothering, rather than validated as an equal, while possibly different, method of parenting (Aitken, 2009).

Some scholars argue that there is still inadequate research into the methods of fathering (Aitken, 2009), and others argue that scholars have indeed contributed a lot of research into the methods of fathering, especially leisure activities as a method of fathering (Kay, 2009). Relevant to this thesis is the literature about the shared activities between fathers and their children. Whether it is watching a documentary on television, playing along with their child's make-believe game, teaching their child to ride a bike or watching and supporting their child at a soccer practise, the shared activity is an important element for many in the fathering of their children (Kay, 2009).

Literature discussed in this section has focused on men's relationships with their friends, partners, parents and children. As discussed, there is very little written about the positive relationships men have in their everyday lives, as the focus is often on problematic relationships. When men's friendships are explored in academic literature, often these friendships are discussed in terms of being competitive, homophobic and lacking in expressions of emotions. Men's relationships with spouses are rarely discussed in academic literature but are often discussed in popular literature. Unfortunately, popular literature on men's relationships with their spouses is based on stereotypes and appears to be predominantly written for a female audience (Watkins, 2007). Much of the popular literature on men's relationships with their parents focuses on theories developed nearly a hundred years ago, while academic literature focuses on problematic relationships men have with their parents. Fathering is one of a few topics commonly written about in academic literature as a positive aspect of men's emotional lives. The academic literature on men's relationships requires more research into the positive relationships men have with the significant people in their lives.

Men's Emotional Lives

“For humans to understand their place in the world, we need to understand the nature of emotion” (Russell & Feldman Barrett, 2009, p.2). This quote highlights the importance of understanding emotion when considering the everyday lives of men and enacted masculinities. Psychological research into emotions has spanned decades, resulting in a variety of explanations depending on the psychologists'

context and theoretical perspectives (Cornelius, 1996). Yet, there is currently no consensus on what emotions are (Cornelius, 1996; Kagan, 2007; Russell & Feldman Barrett, 2009). Cornelius (1996) explains four prominent psychological approaches to the study of emotions in his book *The Science of Emotion*. These are: Darwinian, Jamesian, cognitive and social constructivist. The Darwinian approach focuses on the use and adaptive functions of emotions and proposes that mammals and humans share similarities of expressions of emotion (Cornelius, 1996). The Jamesian approach includes a variety of theories which focus on the belief that “the experience of emotion is primarily the experience of bodily changes” (Cornelius, 1996, p.12). The cognitive approach suggests emotions are the result of thought and the appraisal of events (Cornelius, 1996). The social constructivist approach views emotional expressions as socially constructed (Cornelius, 1996). Averill (1980) defined emotion as “a transitory social role (a socially constructed syndrome) that includes an individual’s appraisal of the situation and that is interpreted as a passion rather than an action” (Averill, 1980, p.312).

The various perspectives and approaches used to study emotions have provoked much debate among scholars with opposing views. Some scholar’s contest that only one of the theoretical approaches to emotion research should be adopted, others disagree. Rimé (2009) states his position as inclusive of many of the theoretical approaches on emotion. He also argues for the inclusion of social sharing as an important yet often neglected aspect of emotion research, “emotion contributes to the process through which groups reconfigure their shared knowledge, beliefs, and expectations” (Rimé, 2009, p.94). This thesis also works from Rimé’s perspective that multiple theoretical approaches including social sharing are significant when researching emotions.

More recently scholars have paid considerable attention to the variety of ways in which emotions are expressed through shared experiences places and objects. Emotions are not simply a bodily affect exclusive to the experience; they are also shared and co-constructed through places, activities and objects. Human geographers have contributed a considerable amount of scholarship on the ways emotions influence people’s use of spaces and the ways emotions are experienced in relation to place (Thien, 2009). Scholars of sports and leisure research offer

perspectives which incorporate shared activities as a form of emotional expression (Kay, 2009). Archaeology has inspired other disciplines to explore and research the emotional meanings people assign to objects (Olsen, 2003).

These perspectives offer techniques, which allow for deeper exploration into the complexities of emotional experience and expression. Consequently, adopting such perspectives and techniques provides rich information into the complexities of men's emotional lives. This section discusses some of the common stereotypes on men's emotional lives including the ways men's emotional lives are often compared to women's emotional lives. I explore some of the ways men express themselves emotionally, with a focus on 'doing' emotions. I also present arguments for considering the various ways men express themselves emotionally as valid. Finally, examples of men's views on their emotional lives are presented.

Over the past thirty years men's emotional lives have become a key topic for academic research. Often men's emotions are presented as being problematic and there is a common trend to stereotype men as being less emotional than women (Beynon, 2002) or to propose that men are unemotional (Robertson, Lin, Woodford, Danos, & Hurst, 2001). More recently, there has been an increase in research that explores men's emotional lives using a more holistic approach. This growing body of literature disputes the notion that men's emotional lives are lacking in substance or limited when compared to women's emotional lives. While there is not yet a significant amount of research and academic literature available on men's everyday emotional lives, some recent studies focus on the ways male participants explain their emotions in their own words. Popular literature, however, offers a variety of books on men's views of their emotional lives.

One of the most frequently offered stereotypes of men's emotional lives in media and popular literature is that men are less emotional than women. Academic literature also frequently insinuates that men are less emotional than women, and some scholarly work states this as the case. However, more recent publications use exploratory methods and perspectives when researching men's emotional lives, and avoid making simplified comparisons with women's emotional lives. Robertson and colleagues (2001) provide a good example of this

in their clinical study which was conducted to measure men's emotions and assess what impact masculine socialization had on how comfortable men were with expressing themselves emotionally. Their main goal was to examine the common stereotype that the majority of men are hypo-emotional "that they do not experience significant levels of emotional responsiveness or that they do not express their emotions effectively" (Robertson, et al., 2001, p. 393). The results of this study show that the stereotype of men being hypo-emotional was not accurate. All of the men in the study experienced physiological responses to the stimuli regardless of the gender-role stress group they associated with. Furthermore, men in high gender-role stress groups expressed their emotions using structural exercises in preference to verbal exercises, while men in low gender-role groups preferred to express their emotions by talking.

Another common stereotype about men's emotional lives is that men have *always* been 'un-emotional'. This stereotype was challenged by Armengol-Carrera's (2009) exploration of a diverse range of historical and contemporary literature. Findings from this study support the argument that throughout history men have had fulfilling and rewarding emotional lives and still do. Men's emotional lives are often examined in comparison to women's (Robertson, et al., 2001; Beynon, 2002) and as Armengol-Carrera's (2009) research shows, there is also a tendency to do this when exploring men in history and in establishing the validity of their emotional lives. Seidler (2007) promotes the view that men's emotional lives have their own intrinsic meaning and validity, beyond comparison with female ways of explaining and expressing emotions, a perspective this thesis also promotes.

Common stereotypes, such as those of men being less emotional than women, do not progress with the goal of a gender equal society. As Seidler (2007) argues; "we need to be able to engage with the very different gendered and sexed experiences of generations of men who are challenged by different issues than those that have shaped prevailing theorizations of men and masculinities" (ibid, p. 10). Epstein, Calzo, Smiler, and Ward (2009), attempt to do this in their study on men's emotional responses to casual sex. In contrast to the prevailing stereotype, Epstein and colleagues found that most of their participants experienced an emotional connection to the women they had casual sex with.

Popular literature has further perpetuated the stereotype that men are unemotional or less emotional than women. In addition, some authors of popular literature explain how men should change their emotional ways to be more like women in how they express emotions. An example of this can be found in Moir and Moir's (1998), book called *Why Real Men Don't Iron*. This book is about the biological and social differences between men and women, and these authors question "...why men can't be like women" (ibid, p.9). The authors propose that men are emotional beings, but that their emotions are relatively simple compared to women's which are often exaggerated and complex. Instead of exploring men's emotional lives, in their own right, such authors often perpetuate the idea that there is a standard or 'norm' for which others should aspire to. Ironically, feminists have been struggling to change such expectations for women. Moir and Moir are suggesting women's expressions of emotions are the standard or 'norm' and men should aspire to express their emotions in the same way.

Not all publications within popular literature set out to only validate men's emotional lives in comparison to women. Anthony Clare writes about men's emotional lives in a positive sense. He does not try to demonize men, put them down or compare them to women. He states; "There is no need to create a 'new man' in the image of women. There is need for the 'old man' to re-emerge." (Clare, 2000, p.221). Men's emotional lives and the ways in which men express themselves emotionally are often perceived to be less valid (Seidler, 2007). Consequently, men's emotional lives are an important topic for research, especially men's views on their emotions and on how they are expressed.

Some popular authors note common perceptions of men's emotional lives, and offer advice for those who do have difficulties with expressing themselves emotionally. Steve Biddulph is one of these authors, he writes about his concerns for men's emotional well-being. The focus of his book *Manhood* is about the confusion some men encounter with their masculinity. He explains how from an early age "[men] pick out one of several standard masks" (Biddulph, 2002, p.1). This mask becomes the front for their identities even when it does not fit with their reality. This book could be conceived as a somewhat condescending guide of 'how to be a man', or even obsolete if the reader does not fit the persona to which Biddulph refers. Another example can be seen in Mathias' (2009) book; *Just in*

Time to be too Late. This author notes how few books are written about men in an exploratory way. She uses personal experience in a detached but funny style, and enlists the help of a variety of men, all of whom were eager to talk about being men, expressing themselves emotionally, and what they value in their lives. Mathias does not write about what is wrong with men. She explores who they are, what they like, how they express their emotions and what they think.

Scholarly work is also contributing to the recognition of how men's emotional lives are valid within their own right. For example, Patrick and Beckenbach (2009), conducted a qualitative study on men's perceptions of intimacy to show that; "intimacy has been defined from the perspective of the researcher, and not from the perspective of the participant" (p.48). They carried out semi-structured, narrative-based interviews with five male participants. The results of the study showed a high level of consistency in the themes that were created by the participants, and that all the participants felt a need and desire for intimacy. "...men wanted time and a place to become vulnerable, but did not want to have to 'act like women' in order to do so." (p.55). A significant amount of text in their report is the participants own words. While the researchers do interpret what the participants said, they first present the participants' views verbatim. The researchers did not use women's explanations of intimacy as they sought to encourage the participants to explain their experiences. However, it is likely that because of societal influences, the participants' perceptions of what intimacy means to them has already been influenced by women's perceptions (Burr, 1998).

Clare (2000) discusses some of the issues men are dealing with in their lives, and how these issues affect the people in their lives. The issues referred to by Clare include antisocial behaviour (i.e. crime, violence, abuse, drug misuse, and risk taking), self-destructive behaviour including suicide, failure to illicit help, and repressing emotions. However Clare (2000) also includes views of a more optimistic nature than much of the literature on men's emotional lives. While he states his concerns, he also argues that men do value their emotional lives "...men are coming out of the emotional closet... [They] now accept the importance, the maturity, of not merely acknowledging feelings but expressing them in a civilized and open way" (Clare, 2000, p.3). As Clare (2000) discusses, more men are becoming honest about their emotional lives. The staunch, stoic man is becoming

a persona of the past; men's emotions are being validated by men themselves, and by society (Beynon, 2002).

As noted previously, it is a common stereotype that men are unemotional or less emotional than women and are only now beginning to come out emotionally. Nonetheless, the presence of men's perspectives on their emotional lives is increasing in both popular and academic literatures. One example of this work in academic literature is a study by Walton, Coyle and Lyons (2004). They analyse men talking about emotions and how they 'do' emotions. For the study, Walton, Coyle and Lyons recruited 16 men from two social groups "...the men's talk is analysed to examine how they construct 'emotions' and the rhetorical functions which these constructions perform in their talk." (Walton, Coyle & Lyons, 2004, p. 403). The study found that the participants "constructed men as emotional beings, but only within specific, rule-governed contexts" (ibid, p.401).

Within popular literature, two significant books present men's perspectives of their emotional lives. The first is *Stories of Manhood* edited by Steven Biddulph (2000). The book is a collection of stories, narratives and cartoons about men, which provide an insight into men's perspectives on their emotional lives. Similarly, *Real Dads* (Holland, 2002) is also a collection of stories from men, but with a focus on fathering, fatherhood and adjusting to the changing roles when becoming a father. These two books offer the reader a glimpse into the ways some men explain, experience, and express their emotions. Most of the stories are not consistent with typical stereotypes about men's emotional lives. On the contrary, these stories show how some men do offer clear explanations of their emotional lives. Although women's expressions of emotions are still often promoted as the standard to which one should aspire, men are expressing themselves emotionally in different ways to women.

In sum, there are few academic publications on men's emotional lives especially publications that do not feminize the validity of the ways men express their emotions. There are many publications in popular literature on men's emotional lives, however, they are dominated by stereotypes that promote men as either being unemotional or less emotional than women. Also, popular literature frequently informs the reader that men should change the ways they express their

emotions to be more like women. Increasingly, scholars are producing research and literature that draws attention to the importance of exploring men's emotional lives without feminizing or stereotyping the validity of the ways men explain and express themselves emotionally.

Why Study Men's Emotional Lives?

As this chapter has discussed, there is limited academic literature on the specific ways men express themselves emotionally. There is a lot of scholarly work that aims to explain how masculinities are conceptualized especially in response to the changing gender roles over the past few decades. However, it is predominantly literature *about* men from the researcher's perspective and scholarship (not to dismiss that contribution), or concepts used to define and categorize men. There is also a fair amount of academic and popular literature that explores the cultural constructs of what it is to be a man and how boys are being socialized to those cultural constructs. Unfortunately, much of the academic literature focuses on hegemonic masculinities and a common concern that masculinity is in crisis (Segal, 1997; Faludi, 1999; Clare, 2000). More research into the dynamics of men's relationships and men's views on their relationships is needed. Popular literature currently dominates what is written about men's relationships with their girlfriends, partners and wives and often written for and read by women. While academic literature focuses on men's relationships when there are problems, issues, or deviance within the relationship. Fathering is one topic that receives a significant contribution from academic and popular literature, much of this literature tends to tell men how to be fathers and more recently there has been more examining of men's views, experiences and methods of fathering. Unbalanced arguments and literature which is dominated by feminized views does not help the men who are trying to understand the relationships they have with the significant people in their lives.

The complexities of men's emotional lives are another area which is in need of more scholarly research that focuses on men's perspectives rather than prevailing stereotypes. The quantity of popular literature focusing on how men should be men, how to understand them, and how to change them, indicates there is a widespread interest in understanding men's emotional lives (Starker, 1989). We

should be exploring how *men* give meaning to their emotions and how they express their emotions to others, rather than focusing on what is ‘wrong’ with men’s emotional lives and how they need to be fixed. More scholarly research is needed, which does not feminize men’s emotions but explores men’s emotional lives in collaboration with men (Thomas, 1990; Nardi, 1992; Beynon, 2002; Levy, 2005). Some scholars are producing more collaborative research and studies on men’s emotional lives to contribute to academic literature (Newton, 2002). This is the intent of my thesis.

The remainder of this chapter outlines the structure of the thesis, which explores the complexities of men’s emotional lives. This is done by ‘collaborating’ with a small group of men to explore their views on their emotional lives, especially how they express themselves emotionally. These men were approached to participate in this study because I noticed that the ways in which they lived their emotional lives was not consistent with many of the prevailing stereotypes on men’s emotional lives.

The following chapter explains how this study was conducted. This includes explaining; the theoretical position that was central to the research processes; the research rationale that informed the use of methodology and methods; the research procedure, which explains how the research was carried out; a brief discussion on the participants; the method used for analysis; and finally the ethical commitments which were adhered to during the research project.

The third chapter, titled *Expressing Emotions*, presents the participants’ views of some of the ways they express themselves emotionally. This is done by focusing on how their emotions are expressed to the significant people in their lives such as family, wives, partners and friends. Following this are some of the social protocols and etiquettes the participants identified when they express their emotions to others and to whom they are most likely to express themselves emotionally.

The fourth chapter; *Conceptualising Emotions*; presents an analysis of the participants’ explanations of their emotions. The core focus is on the ways the participants explain some of their everyday emotions through telling stories which were initiated by the objects the participants classed as being important to them.

This is followed by an outline of the participants' explanations of some emotion words to elaborate and clarify their definitions. The fifth and final chapter; *Discussion*, provides a summary of the thesis with some recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

As discussed in the first chapter; within the small amount of academic literature on men's emotional lives, there are only a few studies that focus on men's experiences. This thesis focuses primarily on these experiences. It was important that this study was, as much as possible, about the participants' perspectives on their emotional lives. To do this I draw on symbolic interactionism, which is used as a theory that has been developed specifically to explain the meanings that people attribute to their experiences, events in their lives, and the objects they come into contact with (Flick, 2006).

Symbolic interactionism comes from the 'Chicago School' of sociology that was historically aligned with the development of social psychology in the USA (Bloor & Wood, 2006). George Herbert Mead is known as the pioneer of symbolic interactionism. He argued that in order to comprehend the society one lives in, symbols are used as a central method for communication, as most interactions between people consist of exchanging symbols (Giddens, 2003). Symbols are used to describe something. Some of the day-to-day symbols people use are words; such as pen, or fork. Symbols are also used for non-verbal communication such as hand gestures or road signs. Different symbols will have different meanings for people. "Symbolic interactionism is all about those basic social interactions whereby we enter into the perceptions, attitudes and values of a community, becoming persons in the process" (Crotty, 2003, p.8). This is why the theory of symbolic interactionism is used, to find out what certain symbols mean to different people (Flick, 2006).

The use of symbolic interactionism is a popular theory for qualitative research on interpersonal interactions and the ways in which understandings are constructed through those interactions (Giddens, 2003). This is because it focuses on exploring the 'taken for granted' aspects of people's lives. The primary methodological tenet of symbolic interactionism is "that when a person defines a situation as real, this situation is real in its consequences" (Stryker, 1976 cited in Flick 2006, p. 67). To explore how the participants express themselves emotionally, I first had to understand their views as being 'valid'. Incorporating symbolic interactionism into this research allowed for a deeper exploration into

the details of the participants' perceptions of their emotional lives and their social interactions. Using objects and places as symbols of their emotional lives also gave me a rich collection of narratives and perspectives from the participants. This was because objects and places hold emotional meanings for people (Nobel, 2004); they are symbols of emotions and emotional experience.

I began the research, using observation, which helped to develop questions relevant to the participants and this research, as "it is the process of observing that situation-specific questions emerge" (Uzzell & Barnett, 2006, p. 304). The positioning of 'participant as observer' is useful in that as a researcher I have an existing, established role with the participants and within the shared social lives of the group (Dallos, 2006). The benefits of this type of observation allowed me to collect information that was rich in quality, relevant to the research and within a reasonable time frame. The social and cultural contexts surrounding the participants led me to question more specific to this study; how do men express themselves emotionally?; how are friendship, love, success, joy, pride, fear, jealousy, and stress explained from men's perspectives? The remainder of this chapter presents the recruitment procedure and discusses the participants of this study. Following this is a discussion of the methods, including; participant as observer, the focus group, and the interviews. Next, the analysis process is discussed and finally the ethical commitments.

Participants and Recruitment

The research involved six men; four of them participated in a focus group discussion and all six participated in a semi-structured, one-to-one interview. Participants were recruited from my social network. Trust and cooperation in interpersonal relationships with participants is an important aspect in qualitative research (Harrington, 2003). Building trust can be a long process when the beginning of the relationship coincides with the beginning of a research project. As I was engaging with participants who I already had a friendship with, trust was already established in the relationship. This was beneficial because we had an existing rapport. Consequently, the participants allowed me access to study their lives early on, which resulted in collecting rich data within a small amount of time. Limiting the imposition on the participants' time was also important. Often

participants do not directly benefit from participating in research, so using existing relationships meant I could minimise the amount of time they were giving to me and this study.

The recruitment process officially began with an information sheet (see appendix 1) being sent to my male friends who had verbally expressed an interest in the research project. A few days after they had received the information sheet I sent them a text message to organize the focus group. A few weeks after the focus group, I began to organize times to meet with the participants for the interview. Not all of the participants who participated in an interview were available to participate in the focus group.

My intention was to explore the most common aspects of the participants' emotional lives, such as the ways they express love, fear, happiness, frustration and compassion. I did not set out to explore the most intimate details although those topics were always available for discussion if the participants initiated it. This was because I have social relationships or friendships with their wives or partners and I felt it would make the participants' partners uncomfortable if I was approaching their husbands or partners with topics concerning intimate details of their emotional lives. While the participants' wives and partners did not participate in this study, it was important that they felt comfortable with their husbands or partners discussing their emotional lives with me. In the information sheet (see appendix 1) I recommended the men talk to their partners and families about the study they were participating in, while not disclosing what other participants discussed. I also offered to discuss the purpose and goals of the study with the participants' partners, but not any content discussed by participants.

All of the participants identify as Pakeha/White New Zealanders, and although some participants have Maori ancestry they identify predominantly as Pakeha. All the men were born in New Zealand, many in differing regions. Four of the participants have lived and worked overseas, and all have travelled overseas at some point. All of the participants are in full-time employment, their jobs include; joiner, foreman, landscaper, construction manager, engineer, and sales manager. Their education levels vary between university or polytechnic degrees, and trade certifications. All the men either own one or more properties or plan to in the near

future. All six men identify as heterosexual, four are married, one is in a long-term relationship and one is dating. Two of the men are active fathers, and two hope to become fathers in the next few years. All of the men from the focus group know each other socially, and some have a close friendship and socialise frequently. The participants range in age from 23 to 33 years of age. For recreation they all enjoy some form of physical activity. Some of the sports they take part in include; hunting, surfing, riding motorbikes, wakeboarding, water skiing, snowboarding, squash, golf, riding mountain bikes, horse riding, and netball. They also spend their spare time; with their wives or partners, with family, with friends, renovating their own or friends' homes, building, playing drums or the guitar, or playing Playstation. During the friendships I have had with these men I have experienced their positive attributes which include their; honesty, hard working, respectful, kind, friendly, humorous, loyal, loving, and compassionate natures. The participants were given the option to choose their own pseudonyms, and most of them did this. The pseudonyms for the men in the focus group are; Fred, Gary, Lance, and Seth. The pseudonyms for the men who participated in the interviews are; Adam, Ben, Jake, Rex, Steve, and Warren.

Participant as Observer

There are four types of observation that are commonly noted as a form of research (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Dallos, 2006). These are; 1. Complete participant, where the researcher hides their observational interests from the group under study but at the same time is completely involved with the group (Dallos, 2006). 2. Participant as observer, where the researcher has an existing rapport with the participants and does not hide their observational activities (Dallos, 2006). 3. Observer as participant, when a researcher becomes a member of the group specifically to observe the group (Dallos, 2006). 4. Complete observer, when the researcher observes the group but has no personal contact with the members of the group during observation (Dallos, 2006).

Due to the existing relationship I had with participants, the observation method used for this research project was participant as observer. My role in the social group is as a female friend to the participants. This role was maintained throughout data collection along with the additional role as researcher. After data

collection was complete, my role returned to just being a female friend. The primary benefit of this method is having the existing knowledge of the group processes and dynamics. This knowledge resulted in several benefits to the research project, such as; a developed rapport between researcher and participants; an understanding of the social cues and acceptable behaviours within the social group and with the individual members of the group; access to information and histories of the participants; and a more sympathetic approach as a researcher. The most notable limitation of the use of participant as observer is that the researcher's access to some private information may be limited by participants (Dallos, 2006). This limitation was apparent because of the existing friendship I have with the participants and their wives, partners, friends and families. Nonetheless, this limitation was outweighed by some of the participants' declarations that they would not have participated in this study at all had the researcher been unknown to them.

Focus Group

There were two primary reasons for conducting a focus group discussion. Firstly, meaning is often constructed between human beings through social interactions (Millward, 2006). A focus group allowed me to observe such meaning-making processes and how the meaning of emotions could be socially negotiated amongst the group of men. Secondly, focus groups provide a forum to discuss perspectives and stories. When a focus group is used as one of the first methods in data-collection these perspectives and stories can assist with the construct development in the research (Millward, 2006). The data collected from the focus group helped to inform the design of the interviews including; structuring questions which were appropriate; developing questions in case the participant required prompting; clarifying data from the focus group and following up on topics the participants discussed on a one-to-one basis.

The focus group was designed to encourage conversation around two primary topics (see appendix 4); the first was how the participants expressed themselves emotionally, the second was how the participants explained their emotions. Media articles were used to initiate discussion. Prior to the focus group, participants were asked to choose a visual media clip or movie clip which expressed an emotion

they identified with or which encouraged an emotional reaction in them (see appendix 1). The focus group was held in the evening on a week day, at my home. This location was chosen because it is a place participants often frequented for social occasions. Audio recording was used to record the focus group; all of the participants agreed to this and signed the consent form (see appendix 2). The participants were also asked to complete a demographics sheet (see appendix 3). As all the participants knew each other we did not conduct introductions, however, the option to do so was made available to them. The participants were re-informed of their right to withdraw from the study and the ethical obligations I was required to abide by, including keeping their anonymity.

The focus group started with each participant discussing the clip they had chosen, why they chose it, and what emotional responses the clip had provoked in them. After all the participants had discussed their clips, we took a fifteen minute break. The second half of the focus group was exploring the participants' responses to three clips I had chosen from the television series *Top Gear*. After each clip was presented to the participants we discussed some of the central themes of the clip and whether or not they agreed with the ways in which men's emotions were expressed in the clip. The goal was to use prompts to encourage the participants to discuss how men express themselves emotionally, and this approach worked well. The focus group was approximately two hours long. Afterwards we sat around for an hour talking socially, eating pizza and drinking beer.

Interviews

Interviews were one-to-one and semi-structured using an object narrative technique. The one-to-one interviews allowed for the participants and myself as the researcher to have a private discussion with their views being central to the process. A semi-structured format meant I could cover the main topics but allow the content to develop by what the participants felt was relevant within those topics (Breakwell, 2006). An object narrative technique was used to gain a personal insight into the participant's emotional lives. The use of object narratives in research helps participants to explain themselves in their stories of their possessions (Hurdley, 2006).

Interview times were arranged at a time suitable to participants. The location of each interview was at the participant's discretion, with some choosing to do the interview at their homes, while others chose my home. My home was offered as an option because all of the participants had previously been to my home on social occasions. Also, due to the nature of conducting interviews, a quiet and private venue was required; some participants felt my home would offer this more so than their own home would. Each participant was given a verbal explanation of their rights as participants before the interview began. They were given a consent form (see appendix 2) to sign, which consented to being audio-recorded. If the participant had not taken part in the focus group, they were also asked to fill in a demographic sheet. Each participant was told that if they wanted to change the topic, take a break from the interview or stop at any point, to let me know, and we could do so.

Participants had been asked to bring between three to five objects with them to the interview, as noted in the information sheet (see appendix 1). Some participants could not bring all the items they had nominated for discussion, for various reasons. The interview schedule was designed with this in mind so it did not impact the interview because the focus was on the narrative *of* the objects not *the* objects. The participant was asked to choose the order in which each object would be discussed. The first set of questions related to the objects the participants had selected to discuss (see appendix 5). Participants were asked why they chose these particular objects and what meaning these objects had for them. The second set of interview questions were about objects they no longer owned, but would have selected had they still owned them. This was a technique adapted from Hodgetts, Chamberlain and Radley's (2007) journal article on the significance of talking about what is not visible in photo-production projects. Asking about what can not be seen is a technique which can provide the researcher with additional information on their participants' lives and histories. If the participant had not taken part in the focus group the interview was concluded at this point. If the participant had taken part in the focus group, there was a third set of questions to clarify and expand on topics discussed during the focus group. After the last set of questions, the participant was offered the opportunity to discuss anything else they wanted to. Most participants did continue to talk about

their emotional lives. Some of this information was kept out of the transcripts at the request of participants. The participants were reminded that they could call or email me if they had anything further to add, and also that a hard copy of their interview transcript would be made available to them so they could make clarifications, edits and corrections.

Analysis

Narrative and thematic analysis techniques were used for analysing the information collected from the participants during the focus group, the interviews and observation. The primary reasons for using multiple research methods are to firstly, ensure for a rigorous study, both during data collection and analysis (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005), and to triangulate the data, which allows for the possibility of finding similar themes from different sources (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2006). Narrative analysis is an appropriate method of analysis when the research data includes participants' own stories about their identities and experiences (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Riessman, 1993). Narrative analysis is also beneficial for inquiry into social life given that, "culture speaks itself through an individual's story" (Riessman, 1993, p.5). For this research project the narrative analysis was informed by thematic analysis techniques, this was so similarities and differences between the participants' views could be highlighted at the various stages of analysis (Breakwell, 2006).

The first step toward analysis was transcribing the focus group audio-recordings, which was done verbatim including; non-speech sounds, such as laughing, um, ah, or throat clearing and pauses in discussions that lasted longer than three seconds. During transcribing, common themes and anything requiring clarification were noted for analysis and included in the interview structure. Some of the themes only pertained to one individual, and other themes were common among the group. In the case of commonly occurring themes, these were included in the interview schedule for all participants. Individual themes, and their clarifications, were isolated to the individual who raised them. The interviews were transcribed in the same way as the focus group.

Analysis of the transcribed interviews and focus group began by firstly reading through the transcripts and using a colour coding system to separate

conceptualising emotions and expressing emotions. The second stage was to read through the transcripts and identify main themes. This involved using the themes found in the focus group transcripts as well as noting new themes. Five main themes were identified; two themes were found predominantly under conceptualising emotions and three under expressing emotions. The third stage included rereading the transcripts to explore sub-themes. This was done by using colour coding and symbol coding. Themes were colour coded with post-it notes and sub-themes were symbol coded by drawing the symbol on the appropriate coloured post-it. Identified themes and sub-themes under conceptualising emotions were on the left hand side of the transcript, and expressing was on the right. Stage three was followed by a two week gap to allow a fresh perspective on the data. Then, the final stage involved printing out a second copy of the transcripts and rereading them. A further more detailed analysis of the data was conducted by making more substantial notes in the margins of the transcripts.

Ethical Commitments

As a student in the Psychology department, I am required to operate in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand (2002). The safety of the participants was central to the process; and therefore, the main ethical considerations for this research project were privacy and confidentiality of the participants, informed consent, and the need for the value of the research to outweigh any human cost.

The appropriate means were taken to ensure the identities of participants were kept confidential. All details of participants were kept in a safe and secure location. Due to the nature of focus groups and the fact that the participants all knew each other well, it was clear that participants of the focus group might be able to identify what other participants had said. This issue was explained to the participants via verbal and written notification along with the additional strategies adopted to ensure confidentiality. Different pseudonyms were given to each participant of the focus group and the interviews, and those participants who attended both were given two pseudonyms. This meant that focus group participants would not be able to identify who said what in the interviews.

All raw data, such as consent forms, was kept in a locked draw in my home office. All electronic data was secured by a password-protected file. Upon completion, the majority of information was destroyed or secured by password unless participants requested otherwise for their information. In regards to the interviews, I was the only person who knew the identities of the participants. In regards to the focus group, those who participated in the focus group may be able to identify other participants when reading the thesis. My supervisors were privy to the majority of information collected from the participants, with the exception of the participants' real names.

An information sheet was given to all participants before any research was carried out. The information sheet (see appendix 1) contained information on the participants' right to withdraw without penalty or prejudice; their rights not to answer any questions if they chose not to for any reason; their rights to confidentiality; the measures that would be put in place to preserve confidentiality, and that the information collected is solely to be used for the research project and thesis.

Informed consent was obtained from the participants before both the focus group and the interviews began. Participants were asked to sign a consent form (see appendix 2) which stated they had received an information sheet about the research project and they understood the research project, including their right to withdraw.

The value of the research had to outweigh any human cost (The Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand, 2002). Due to the recruitment process which involved me, as the researcher, inviting people from my current social group to participate, care and consideration for any cost to the participants was a high priority. Researchers have an ethical and professional obligation to prioritise the care and the consideration for their participants. The nature of this research meant that I had to also prioritise care and consideration for the friendships the participants and I have. The research explored the emotional aspects of the participants' lives; which meant that if the participants were to experience discomfort, actions to rectify this would have been taken.

CHAPTER THREE: EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

One of the aims of this thesis is to explore the complexities of how men express themselves emotionally. As briefly noted in chapter one, emotional expressions can be co-constructed and shared through activities, in places and with objects. Emotional lives do not only exist within the person experiencing emotion, they are complex, often shared and involve more than just understanding the emotion and naming it (although naming is a vital component). Emotions are shared in relationships with other people, using various methods, in different settings and following particular social protocols (Rimé, 2009). Often these are taken for granted because they are actions that occur frequently, seem logical, normal, or 'just feel right'. In order to explore the complexities of men's emotional lives, it was important to go beyond asking the participants to simply name and explain emotions. It was also necessary to explore the participants' emotional responses to media, and objects. This was to encourage their narratives on their emotional lives, which revealed how they 'do' emotion in; certain relationships, various settings, and with objects.

When considering the complexities of men's emotional lives it is important to explore the ways in which men express their emotions with others. Relationships are an important aspect to people's well-being, and they are also a common site for a variety of shared experiences and emotions (Fitness, 2006). Often some of the most powerful emotions are experienced within the significant relationships we have with others. Human beings tend to seek others out in order to share their emotional experiences (Fitness, 2006). This is evident in the rituals and events various societies take part in, such as weddings, funerals, births, graduations, Waitangi Day, and ANZAC Day. We seek others to share in the activities of these rituals (Thien, 2009). There are also shared activities which strengthen relationships through the shared experiences, such as taking part in active leisure time with friends or families (Kay, 2009). These shared activities are often the sites for shared emotions and shared emotional experiences.

Shared emotional experiences often occur in places and with objects. Arguments for considering places as instrumental for sharing and eliciting emotional expression can be seen in works such as Thien's (2009) research into The Royal

Canadian Legion. Thien explores the Legion as a place that offers more than a space to honour and remember those involved with war and peace efforts. Her research highlights how people's shared understandings and experiences offer a common locus for emotional expression. Often these shared experiences in place, also include objects. Thien (2009) discusses the memorabilia on the walls of the Legion. This is a good example, but objects can communicate more than remembering histories. Sporting equipment such as a bike can mean shared active leisure time (Dant, 1999). A wedding ring can represent the shared love and commitment between two people (Noble, 2004). Displaying a photograph of a group of friends shows others they are likeable (Hurdley, 2006). Objects represent a large component of our daily lives (Olsen, 2003), and they communicate a wealth of information, especially about people's emotional lives.

As this thesis has already discussed, it is often assumed that men lack in emotional expressiveness (except when angry). I argue that men's emotional lives are more complex than the prevailing stereotypes assume. Men's expressions of emotion include various forms of communication, including verbal, acts, and objects. In order to explore these forms of communication, the participants were asked to discuss the ways they expressed their emotions. They explained this by drawing on various circumstances in which they would express themselves emotionally. These circumstances are covered in this chapter in three sections. The first section explores the participants' explanations of the expressions of emotions which tended to focus on how their families, wives and partners expressed emotions towards them. The second explores how the participants express themselves emotionally with their friends. This includes exploring their explanations of acts of friendship and bromance. The third section explores some of the social protocols the participants identified when expressing emotions, including; general etiquettes of expressing emotions; and who emotions are expressed with.

Families, Wives and Partners

When the participants talked about expressing emotions they tended not to talk about themselves or the particular emotion directly, but would refer to how emotions were expressed to them by others, especially by their families, wives

and partners. This is a common occurrence when people are asked to recall situations where emotions were experienced and expressed (Rimé, Corsini, Herbette, 2002). For example, during the focus group, Seth, Lance and Fred discussed one of the media clips brought in by a participant. Their discussion was about how the father in the clip showed love and care for his son by building him a flying fox. The participants' responses to the media clip are consistent with the literature on fathering through active leisure time (Kay, 2009). It is also possible that the participants are reflecting on the ways their fathers behaved with them. They all expressed expectations of fathering their own children through building them play equipment and participating in active leisure time with their children. Rex discussed how the seemingly insignificant act of his dad buying him a guitar meant his dad was expressing an interest in Rex's desire to learn the guitar;

“One day my dad took me into town ‘cos I wanted to play the guitar and he brought me a guitar. We went to town specially to buy this guitar and it was cool. He spent a bit of money”

Rex frequently notes the effort his father went to, to buy him a guitar; and the active words in the quote above signal that Rex views effort and gifts as methods of expressing emotions (Noble, 2004). Rex further explains that on a different occasion his father also brought his brother a guitar, but his brother's girlfriend, at the time, sold it. Rex expressed disappointment in his brother for allowing this, as he believed that their father's gesture was important and should be respected. However, Rex's brother may not have attributed the same sort of meaning to his guitar as Rex. This reflects a frequent phenomenon in gift-giving (further discussed in chapter four) that the meanings that are tied to giving and receiving gifts differ depending on the circumstances and people involved (Noble, 2004). It is possible that Rex's brother viewed the guitar as simply an object, and when he no longer played the guitar, he no longer had a need for it.

Similarly to Rex, Warren and Adam also talk about their fathers putting in time and effort with them, and their views further emphasize how spending time and effort with someone is a way to express emotions such as, care, love, and enjoyment. Warren understood his father's involvement as an expression of care;

“The old man likes to see us achieve cool things you know, he’s achieved and really likes to see us do the same thing which is cool, he’s there to help us”

Adam also discussed his parents and he frequently talked about his parents’ love for him. Adam’s perspective of his parents shows how appreciative he is for all his parents’ efforts and sacrifices they made for him. Adam talks about their selflessness when he was participating in a sport that concerned them, and he also implies that he hopes to mimic the qualities that his parents expressed to him with his own children in the hope that they will experience similar, beneficial results. Porter and Samovar (1998), discuss how we learn to identify and understand emotions by watching other people’s behaviours, and by experiencing emotions in different contexts. In Adam’s case, what he experienced from his parents’ behaviours was that when you love someone, you do things for them even when it scares you or takes time and effort;

“they spent so much time and effort for me and like dad had [work] and he had to get up real early and make sure all that was done so he could take me to [his sport]...I see photos and they’re watching me and they’re frowning cos’ they’re worried...I guess if I knew then what I know now I wouldn’t have done that sport because I don’t want to stress them out, but they would do anything to make me happy...I hope I could behave as good when it’s my turn”

When the participants discussed the ways they showed their families, wives and partners how they felt about them, spending time was the most common theme. Ben discussed how important family time was to him; and that it constitutes a large part of their lives. Ben explained how he wants to take part in activities with his wife and kids so he can enjoy their company as well as being a father and a husband. Ben also discussed his parents, his siblings and his in-laws and how important it was for him and his wife to have regular quality time with them. He explains;

“A lot of people don’t get to see their parents for weeks or months at a time, sometimes ‘cos of choice sometimes not, but it’s nice that my parents are here and it’s good for our family”

Ben also discussed what it meant to him when he was away from his family or when they were all too busy, which meant they did not get quality time together. He discussed work trips and how hard it is on his wife when he is away. After two days on a business trip, Ben says the novelty of the trip has worn off and he just wants to be at home with his wife and kids. Andersen and Guerrero (1998), explain that non-verbal expressions of intimacy and interpersonal warmth include spending time with people, especially 'focused' time. Ben's discussions on time with his family and time away from his family show that spending time with the significant people in his life is important to him, so it could be assumed that if he did not love and care for these people he would not emphasize the importance of spending time with them.

For Adam, activities with his parents were a significant part of his childhood. Adam talked about his future and how ideally he would like to have a job that would give him the ability to spend as much time as possible with his family and wife. He explained how when he had children, he did not want to spend all his time at work, he wanted as much time with his wife and kids as possible, he explains;

"Spending time with them, and it was like, it was our time and it was, it meant a lot to me to be able to hang out with them like that... [Activities mean] you can have that quality time with family and stuff"

When asked how spending time with his family and participating in activities with them, was different to just having a dinner with them, he explained;

"I guess in some way it's less formal or you're getting to do fun things at the same time getting to see each other and enjoy it, I suppose any time with family is cool"

Steve talked about travelling with his parents and how the time they spent together overseas had been a good opportunity for him to spend some quality time with his parents. He explained;

"I suppose we do see a fair bit of mum and dad, but we don't usually get to do stuff with them"

Steve also talked about spending time with his daughter, just the two of them;

“Spent the day mucking around with [my daughter] today, I don’t usually get to spend time with her, well not as much”

Steve draws on two types of ‘spending time’; sharing activities with his parents, and hanging out with his daughter. It seems that Steve values a variety of types of time with the significant people in his life. Steve notes that he and his daughter do not often spend time together, just the two of them. The lack of time spent with significant people is also noted by Jake and Warren. During Jake’s interview, he mentioned his sister, and when asked if he was close to his sister he explained that he was not very close because of the age gap between them. He further explained that lately, they were spending more time together; and he expected them to become closer because of this. Warren talked about spending time and playing with his nephew the whole time he was home. He explained that he did not get to see his family very often and wanted to spend as much time as possible with his nephew.

The participants discussed time with families in varying degrees. An extended length of time was recognized as a way to bond with family members, as Jake and Warren discussed. For other participants, quality time often meant having fun together, or participating in activities together. Also, the act of just spending time with family members was noted as significant. We learn emotions as we grow and we develop ways to articulate the emotions we experience by how others express their emotions to us (Porter and Samovar, 1998). This may be a reason why the participants in this study, would often explain how emotions were expressed by viewing how other people express their emotions to them. It is also possible that some of the participants had never been asked to explain the ways they express themselves emotionally, so they explored how others expressed emotions to them.

Another way the participants approached the topic of expressing their emotions was by discussing what they wanted for their families or wives. Ben talked about teaching his kids to ride their bikes and making it an activity for the whole family to take part in. He explains that the whole family can continue with this activity as the kids turn into teenagers and even adults;

“I think it’s something that we’ll probably do for a good deal of our lives because it’s something kids do”

Again, the notion that active leisure time is important to the participants is raised by Ben. This was further emphasized by Adam when he talked about wanting to teach his kids that fun did not need to involve expensive toys, and he planned to show them this by taking them on family holidays to the beach. Objects have been discussed, so far, as a form of material culture and the gifting of objects has been described as one way to show love and care in a relationship (Noble, 2004). However, if gift-giving is the primary method used to show care and love in a relationship, it can lead to a superficial understanding of love and care (Dant, 1999). Adam insinuates that quality time as an expression of love and care is a more significant act than the act of buying his kids expensive toys. Adam also talks about the type of life he wants for his wife and children;

“I want my wife to be able to stay at home with the kids and that be her full time job...I know that means I need a really good job, but I don’t want to be one of those people that are away from their family all the time”

Adam highlights a common dilemma that working parents often face; the need to financially provide for the family while not working so much that there is no time to spend with the family (Such, 2009). While Adam notes that his wife will be a stay-at-home mother, he also views his role within the family as more than just the financial provider. This view is contrary to common stereotypes that propose that when men’s primary purpose within the family is as the financial provider, they avoid participating in family life (Such, 2009). As Such explains, men are expecting to participate in family life more, including domestic work, and leisure time with their families.

In some cases, the participants expressed their emotions to their families, wives, and partners by telling them how they felt or by using symbolic means to let others know what they felt. For example, when Warren was asked how he showed his wife that he loved her, he said;

“I tell her, if I say I love her I mean it”

Rex's response was similar; he explained that he would not say that he loved his partner if he did not mean it. He also explained that he liked to buy her presents or flowers unexpectedly, just so she knew he appreciated her and everything she does for him. Warren explained that when he was overseas he would ring his family quite often, so they knew he was safe and what was happening in his life. Warren and Rex's examples show that they know verbal communication of their emotions were important to the significant people in their lives. Men are often stereotyped as being uncommunicative with verbal expressions of emotions, especially when compared to women (Beynon, 2002). Yet Rimé, Corsini and Herbette (2002) report on studies that found men were just as likely to share their emotions as women were.

A feeling of protectiveness towards their families, wives and partners was discussed by the participants as a form of emotional expression. During the focus group, the participants discussed being protective over a participant's daughter. This discussion began in response to Lance's media clip which showed a father and his best friend making it clear to a young man, who had arrived to take the daughter out on a date, that they expected the daughter to be treated well. Some of the participants discussed how they look forward to doing the same thing for their daughters, nieces and friend's daughters. Their conversation was as follows;

Seth: *"everyone wants to do that, when their daughters or nieces go out [on a date], everyone's like yep we're doing that!"*

Lance: *"and it goes with your kids like you know with friends, that your mates are also gonna be there for your kids, it's cool"*

Fred: *"oh, I'm looking forward to doing something like that with [daughter], it would be cool"*

Lance: *"yeah, just the ones you don't want around her"*

Fred: *"yeah, it will be a good test of character for them [the boys who want to date the girls]"*

Lance: *"yeah, if he keeps coming back he must be into her then"*

The participants were positively anticipating the thought of being able to give the boys, who want to date their daughters, 'a hard time'. This could be perceived as dominating or controlling behaviour. However, from the context of the conversation this is not necessarily the case. The participants imply that they have an understanding of what teenage boys are like and they want to ensure the boys' interests are sincere. The participants are expressing a sense of protectiveness over their daughters, and friends' daughters, Witte (1998) explains that the feeling of protection over another person is often aroused by fear. To the participants expressing protectiveness over the significant young women in their lives shows they are fearful that heartbreak or harm will be inflicted them. This is also a way of expressing care for others (Witte, 1998); in this case, exhibiting behaviours of protectiveness means they care.

Similar expressions of protectiveness were seen during Adam and Ben's interviews. Ben talked about being protective over his wife's safety when they are out riding their bikes;

"[My wife] hasn't fallen off yet, that will be a worry when that happens, I'm quite precious with her when we're out, and I don't let her do something that she doesn't feel safe about"

Ben shows concern about his wife's physical safety, but also over her level of comfort. Ben's quote highlights that protectiveness is not only about a response to a fearful situation, but also an expression of love, support and care for someone else's feelings. Adam also expressed a need to be protective towards the feelings and emotional states of significant others. He explained how he did not want to worry his wife when he called to let her know he had been in an accident and was on his way to the hospital;

"I didn't want her to panic; I wanted to make sure she was cool"

Adam explained how he kept his voice calm to try to reassure her he was not worried. Adam's sense of protectiveness for his wife was significant enough that it overpowered his own pain and fear.

When the participants explained the ways they expressed themselves emotionally, such as wanting good things for their partners, spending time with

their families and expressing protectiveness over them, most of their explanations and examples included many nonverbal methods of communication. Such nonverbal methods of communicating emotion can be more difficult for people to understand; in comparison to verbal communication which is naming the emotion one is feeling (Fussell, 2002). It could be conceived from this research that the stereotype of men not being expressive with their emotions is not because they are unable. Rather, that the nonverbal methods used by some men, to communicate their emotions, make their expressions of emotion harder to be identified by those who are not attuned to the subtleties and are expecting more overt and verbalized expressions.

Friendship and Bromance

A particular topic of interest was how my participants express friendship. This section explores three main themes that emerged in the data collected during observation, the focus group and interviews; the first covers how the dynamics of friendships are understood by the participants; the second presents the participants views on how friendship is expressed including some examples of expressing friendship through shared activities; and the third explores the participants' close friendships or bromances and how these relationships are expressed among the participants and their friends.

For the first part of the focus group each participant was asked to choose a media clip which invoked some sort of emotion in them. Lance showed a media clip that he felt portrayed friendship. Lance had chosen a scene from the movie 'Bad Boys 2', and the clip showed the two main characters, who are police officers and best friends, working together even though they are having an argument. Lance explained that he chose this clip because it showed what he believed to be true friendship;

“[They] have a wicked bond and they're arguing and throughout the whole movie they argue and they bitch and moan but they're still the closest buds”

Lance's views of what symbolises close friendships between men acknowledges that harmony is not a required component in a friendship. Feeney, Noller and

Roberts (1998) explain that conflict in relationships is a common occurrence, and what is important to sustaining a relationship is how conflicts are dealt with. Lance identifies that the characters from the clip have a strong friendship bond that survives conflict within the friendship and possibly strengthened because the expression of conflict is accepted and dealt with, in the friendship. When a relationship experiences conflict and one of the parties withdraws from the conflict rather than dealing with it, hostility and anger is often felt by the other party (Feeney et al, 1998).

Lance's emphasis on friendship was followed up during the interviews, where the participants were asked to describe what the term friendship meant to them. Each participant responded with some examples of how friendship was expressed as well as an explanation. Gary explains:

“you're bonding with someone...I suppose that's what really makes you friends is having things in common, like at the moment I'm bonding closer with two people cos' our lives are similar at the moment...I suppose its things in common really, that you do, that you have in common emotionally and things that you do for fun”

Rex explained what type of people he had friendships with;

“they're always fun, have positive attitudes, always keen to do things, I can always talk to them and relate to them, they are as giving as what I am, just helpful and friendly”

Adam explained what a friendship which was very close was like;

“a bromance, it's like when you meet people from different ends of the country and you're interested in the same things, you're so similar and you just get on, you can go months without seeing them and as soon as you see them again you get on like you were hanging out the day before...just a friendship but close...you know he's the type of guy that would always be there for you”.

Warren explained the difference between mates and close friends, he discussed how both mates and close friends are people who share the same interests and are

good to socialise with. However, close friends are people who are trustworthy, whereas a mate has not necessarily earned trust;

“you can tell a good friend is a guy you can trust a hell of a lot and can rely on...a mate, well you can't really trust them...they're just mates...you wouldn't leave them alone with your wife...you couldn't let them drive your Ute cos' you don't know them well enough”

The participants identified a variety of characteristics involved in experiencing a friendship. Gaines (1998) describes friendship as “nonkin peer relationships that are voluntary and are characterized by relatively high levels of emotional (but not physical) intimacy” (ibid, p. 507-508). He also identifies friendships as having different relational bonds to the other significant relationships people have, such as family members or spouses. The relational aspects he identifies are the choice to have a friendship and daily contact not being required, aspects not commonly found in relationships with family or spouses (Gaines, 1998). While this is a reasonable definition for explaining friendships in general, it is not sufficient to explain the types of friendships the participants of this study describe. The participants identify multiple dynamics, expectations and emotions that are involved within their friendships, and in their beliefs of what friendships mean.

Many of the participants explained that one of the common aspects to a friendship was the importance of friends sharing similar interests, which is consistent with Baier's (2010) views on making and sustaining friendships. She explains that common interests are important in friendships but friends do not have to share all their interests in order to keep friendships. What is often conducive to sustained friendships is when the interests differ between friends, yet respect and understanding of the un-shared interests remains (Baier, 2010). Interestingly, Warren's view was that sharing similar interests was important but not enough for developing a close friendship. He explained that 'trust' was what differentiated a mate from a friend, and if trust was not present in the relationship, it wasn't a friendship.

The focus group was designed to encourage the participants to start thinking (and talking) about what acts of friendship look like. This was the rationale behind showing the *Top Gear* clips. By showing the participants clips of men expressing

acts of friendships, we could start a dialogue about whether or not they agreed with the clips. During observations which preceded the focus groups, I had noticed that a common act of friendship expressed in male friendships is mocking each other, which is also known as friendly banter or 'giving stick'. I wanted to explore this act further, which is why I chose the third clip to show at the focus group. The participants explained why this clip did not show acts of friendship. The third clip showed one of the presenters from *Top Gear*, Jeremy Clarkson, interviewing Simon Cowell, a television personality best known for his role as a judge on the television show *American Idol*. The theme of the clip was on friendly banter and giving each other 'stick'. Jeremy and Simon were mocking each other throughout the interview; and the participants were asked if they would behave in a similar way with their friends. The participants responded by dissecting Jeremy and Simon's behaviour toward each other. They explained that while it was common and acceptable to mock friends there was also etiquette to follow. The participants believed the presenters from the clip were not partaking in friendly banter; but that they were being rude and nasty to each other. The participants thought the clip showed false acts of friendship, and they explained why:

Gary: *"I felt embarrassed watching it 'cos it was nothing to do with anything...it was like, where did that even come from?"*

Seth: *"...like we give each other stick but its funny and you don't care but I guess it depends on how they do it"*

Lance: *"yeah and there's certain levels too that everyone knows"*

Seth: *"that you don't cross"*

Fred: *"sometimes you can even push it too far with your mates"*

Interviewer: *"is the style of conversation, between Simon and Jeremy common?"*

Gary: *"nah"*

Fred: *"'cos they're not actually mates"*

Lance: *“It’s definitely the sorta thing you can do when you got good friends and your relationship’s good but not with your work mates or colleagues or a new customer or supplier, you start telling them that their ugly then that’s not gonna go down well”*

Gary: *“yeah”*

Fred: *“Yeah, that’s not right, they’re either gonna punch you in the face or you’re never gonna get their business again”*

Lance: *“yeah, ‘cos you only know them in a work situation”*

Seth: *“like if you’re sitting around having a beer with your mates, it’s a bit different then, it’s a bit different than a professional environment”*

Lance: *“yeah, you don’t know what goes on, what pushes their buttons and stuff like that aye”.*

Throughout the focus group the participants would often give each other ‘stick’, and it was acceptable as they knew each other socially and were familiar of the group dynamics and etiquette. While observing the participants outside of the focus group and interviews, I noticed that they would not make fun of each other about topics which were serious or if there was any known insecurity felt by that person. Generally, the topics which were deemed as acceptable to make fun of had to be initiated by that person. For example, Lance could make fun of himself for doing something embarrassing, and by doing this; the others knew that it was an acceptable topic to make fun of him about. The goal of friendly mocking, or ‘giving stick’, is not to be cruel, rude or offensive, as the purpose seems to be comedy that does not generate division or conflict.

It is possible that there is a further purpose for friendly mocking besides comedy, in terms of providing a sign that indicates that the mocker knows about the life of the mocked. It seemed that for some of the participants, it was important to show others that they knew details of their friends’ lives. Messner (1992) discusses how men often express intimacy in their friendships by talking about: the experiences they have shared together; the experiences they have not shared but have informed each other of the details; or similar experiences they

have had themselves. These shared experiences do not need to be personal details; on the contrary, knowing the details of friends' day-to-day lives seemed to be significant to the type of friendship they had. This became apparent during observation, and was expressed by some of the participants during the focus group and interviews. Some participants would emphasize that they knew the details of the other participants and of their other friends' lives. The more experiences that they shared together the more this implied a higher level of intimacy in the friendship. However it is important to note that not all men's friendships are valued by the level of intimacy within the friendship. While high levels of intimacy within friendships between women are a commonly valued attribute, this is not necessarily the case for men (Messner, 1992). Also, the term intimacy may not be appropriate in some circumstances, the word bonding may be more suitable.

Other acts of friendship included 'being there for a friend'. Jake explained how he always had friends who were there for him if he needed them. Rex explained how his friends had been there for him in many circumstances and he always tries to do the same for them. Some of the situations which were explained as 'being there', and represented an act of friendship were; not getting angry when they accidentally broke something, helping with building and renovating houses, financial assistance, being available if they needed to talk, standing up at weddings as a best man or a groomsman, having fun together, taking a friend to the hospital and visiting them in hospital.

Two main attributes were identified as being central to men's expressions of friendship and connection. These were working together to complete a task and socializing. The second clip, from the show *Top Gear*, was about the three main presenters trying to work together to complete a challenge of building a car. The participants were asked to comment on how they thought the presenters were working together, which led to a discussion on working with friends, and making friendships out of workmates;

Lance: *"they weren't working together that well"*

Seth: *"they weren't, they weren't synergizing"*

Lance: *“yeah, their chemistry wasn’t working together, they’re better off being friends than working together”.*

Seth: *“you know how there’s fully people like that aye?”*

Gary: *“what’s that?”*

Seth: *“like you could be their mates, but like, people are cool out of work but some people in work are just...”*

Gary: *“yeah, yeah, yeah, dicks”*

Seth: *“yeah”*

Lance: *“we get like that”*

Seth: *“nah, you’re good to work with... {Pause}...they were definitely, they weren’t working as a team, they were working against each other”*

Working well together was identified as an important aspect to team work, and this was reiterated in the participants’ interviews. A good example of this was the participants working on each other’s homes and bartering on their time and skills. For the purpose of this thesis, renovating and working on each other’s homes using a bartering system on their time and skills will be referred to as ‘trading homers’. The word ‘homers’ was used by the participants to refer to instances where they practice the skills from their paid employment, but are doing the work for their family or friends.

Trading homers is a verbal agreement (usually) between two parties; the recipients of the work and the executors of the work. The recipient is the party who is receiving the work, for example, when their house needs painting. The executors are the people painting the house. The recipient is also expected to participate in the work, to the extent that their skills enable them to. The trade agreement is dependent on the work that needs doing at the recipient’s home and the work that needs doing at the executor’s home. All materials are paid for by the recipient and food and beer is expected to be provided, whilst time and the completed job is the commodity which is traded. Wives and partners of the

recipients and executors are also expected to help with some traded homers, where their skills and abilities allow for it.

The success of trading homers depends to a large extent on the strength of the relationships between the parties involved. These people all need to enjoy each other's company, have a strong work ethic, have a sense of humour, respect each other, and have an existing friendship. Trading homers involves an understanding between parties that: the work to be completed will be at the discretion of the executors and with consideration of the recipients' time schedules; that slacking off is not accepted; practical jokes are highly probable; food and drinks are to be provided; and the time spent doing the traded homer is to be productive but also fun.

During their interviews, the participants would refer to traded homers that had been completed in the past, or were planned for the future. Jake and Warren discussed their plans for building and renovating their homes in the future and discussed organising trading homers. Jake explained that his brother, some friends, and work mates were going to help him with his property. Warren explains his plans;

“We’re thinking we’ll get the builders to close the house in [the stage where the internal walls are jib stopped] and then get our friends to come have a barbeque and we paint the walls of the house at the same time, drink some beers, maybe the next day go to the beach and hang out”

Steve talked about how beneficial it was to be a part of the homer system, a system which he had grown up with. He also explains how the trading homers system does not work amongst all social groups;

“we’re very lucky...we’ve done painting swaps and other trade swaps it’s definitely been very, very helpful, you can get through so much more when there’s a big group of you, it doesn’t wear you down cos’ you can get it all done in one week... I always thought it was quite normal, ‘cos my families always had working bees and stuff” ...my boss has always said there’s no way he would organise any of his friends to come along to a working bee because they just wouldn’t turn up or turn up late...it’s just not something

they'd do with his group of friends, they'd turn up for a party or something but not to paint someone's house, I think we're pretty lucky that we all do that sort of stuff, and they're fun times"

Rex's perspectives were similar to Steve's, Rex talked about his home and all the help he had from friends and the benefits of trading homers;

"we had all our friends around to help with the painting and gardens, a friend helped us with the wiring, it's been a big team effort, and it was fun times... we share on each other's knowledge and help each other out as much as we can, it's good, it's cool, it's good to help out and I know my friends will do the same if I ask them"

Rex and Steve both discussed how grateful they were to have their friends help with painting their houses. They also said that they had fun while working. Previous observations of the participants indicated that gratitude and fun are two expressions of friendship which are central components of a traded homer. It was observed that there was an unspoken etiquette for the recipients to behave in a genuinely grateful manner toward the executors, and for the executors to complete the work without genuine complaints. It is common place for the male participants to give each other 'stick', for executors to make insincere complaints, and recipients to make insincere demands or criticisms. This behaviour was consistent with the discussion in the previous section, on acts of friendship. Frequent members of trading homers were open to including new members. During observation, new members participated in trading homers with success. The participants talked about the attributes which had resulted in unsuccessful traded homers in the past, and these included; the recipients behaving in an authoritarian and ungrateful manner; not completing work; the executors behaving self-righteously or grudgingly while completing work; and recipients taking advantage by avoiding the role as executor. Unsuccessful traded homers were not observed during the observation period.

Expressions of companionship and affiliation do not always have to involve building or creating. For example, wakeboarding was discussed during the focus group and interviews with reference to one of two activities. One meaning was the activity of wakeboarding where they would spend their time participating in the

activity and drinking beer. The other meaning was the act of going out on the boat and participating in multiple activities, such as; driving the boat around and exploring the lake or river; fishing off the boat; drinking beer; wakeboarding; experimenting with other objects towed by the boat; and hanging out and talking. The importance of active leisure time for building strong friendships between men (Nardi, 1992) is expressed by Ben;

“we wakeboard sometimes we go out, just to go out, we don’t even do anything in it, we just drive it and hang out and sometimes fish off it, drink some beer...talk, devise new plans about the next best thing we’ll get”

Another form for the expression of friendship is the bromance. As discussed in chapter one, the term ‘bromance’ refers to non-sexual but intimate, relationships between men. I was first made aware of this term by Adam, during his interview. He explained that he used the term mostly when referring to his close friends. We also discussed bromance on a few occasions during observation; and Adam would often give some examples to help explain his perspective:

“when you meet a guy and you instantly get each other, like you’re from different places but you are the same, like, you like the same things and doing the same things...when you feel comfortable with someone like they’re family and like he’s your brother and also a best mate...you tell each other personal stuff but don’t feel embarrassed cause you’re like family, yeah...It’s sorta like when you meet a girl, but it’s not gay, like you don’t want to have sex with them but you are excited that you’ve met someone that you really get on with...You can be away from each other for months but when you get back it’s just the same, and sometimes you get mad at them or they get pissed at you but you’re still bromances”

Some of the other participants also discussed close friendships they had with other men; they did not define these relationships as bromances, however, their explanations did share some similarities with bromance. As Gary discussed earlier in this section;

“At the moment I’m bonding closer with two people that have similar interests...I suppose it’s things in common really, that you do, that you have in common emotionally”

This relates back to the discussion on shared experiences increasing the level of intimacy within friendships between men (Messner, 1992). However, this participant explains that the shared experiences have increased the level of bonding, and he does not use the term intimacy.

This section sought to expand on the idea that not all men’s friendships involve competition, homophobia and lack emotional expressions (Messner, 1992). While such stereotypes are predominant, in this research much broader experiences of friendships between men are evident in the participants’ views on friendship, which included some very specific ideas on what friendship meant to them. As discussed, the participants emphasised that sustaining their friendships depends on the group, and on enjoying social time spent achieving a common goal. The degree of cooperation (rather than competition) between the men is also evident in the ways in which the participants explain how their friendships with each other have practical benefits, such as help with building and renovating their homes, and also in providing a sense of belonging to a supportive network of friends (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010).

Sharing in similar interests was a commonly stated requirement for developing and maintaining close friendships. The participants’ accounts reflected their common interests in physical activities, but also common emotional states. Close heterosexual friendships such as those experienced by the men in this study are frequently denied or are trivialized in media, popular and academic literature (Levy, 2005). The friendships amongst the participants did not appear to be stilted and homophobic, as these men clearly value the experience of heterosexual companionship and intimacy; so this is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Social Protocols of Expressing Emotions

This section covers some of the social protocols the participants identified for how, when and to whom they express their emotions. This is done by firstly

exploring some of the methods the participants identify and use for emotional expressions. Secondly, the participants discuss their views on when and where it is acceptable to express their emotions. Thirdly, the participants identify the people that they express their emotions with; including the type of relationships they have with these people.

It is commonly assumed that men do not talk about or share their emotions (Armengol-Carrera, 2009). My participants stated that for them, talking is the most common method they used for expressing their emotions. In the time I have known the participants, there have been many occasions where they would discuss their feelings. When they were asked in their interviews, how they expressed their emotions they all said that they talked about them. Jake discusses his views on talking about emotions;

“I’m not really a typical staunch male or whatever, I can talk about stuff...and there’s heaps of [males] that talk to me about stuff and, you know, everyone’s got problems, relationship problems and things and people seem to have no problem talking about it, I can’t think of any people that wouldn’t talk about stuff like that, even people that I’m not real close with...there’s talking about it [your emotions] and then there’s really talking about it...you don’t really go into how its making you feel but just laying out what it is cos’ of course it’s upsetting, otherwise you wouldn’t talk about it so you won’t describe how upsetting it is but you’ll just describe what it is, you don’t really delve into that side of it”

Adam, Rex, Steve and Warren all explain that talking about how they feel is commonly practiced. Whether they discuss their emotions in more depth is dependent on the nature of emotions. Adam explains;

“I always say how happy I am, I express that, I like to tell my wife how happy I am and how awesome it is being married to her, still brings a tear to my eye when I say that, so that’s all good, I don’t think there’s anything wrong with that”

Rex comments;

“I talk, depends what the issue is really, like sometimes I just ignore it if it’s not bad but if I want someone’s opinion then I’ll talk about my emotions, just really depends aye”

Steve’s views on emotions were;

“I suppose if one of us wants to talk about stuff like that [emotions] then we will”

Warren makes the statement;

“Yeah, I’m an open person so if there’s something on my mind I just say it; I don’t beat around the bush or hide anything”

Some of the participants mention that if their friends talk to them about their emotions, then they will be receptive and reciprocate by talking also. As Ben explained, it is not acceptable to make fun of friends whilst they are being open about their emotions. Again, this is in contrast to stereotypes that perpetuate men as avoiding other people’s emotions or mocking other men who are expressive with their emotions (Levant & Kopecky, 1995).

The participants also discussed when and where they would talk about their emotions, and some of the acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing their emotions, which was often dependent on the time and place. Adam;

“you know when there’s not one huge problem, but lots of little ones and then they all sorta add up and life just gets too hard sometimes and you just can’t handle it, I become emotional at those times too and then you go see someone like mum or dad and they have a chat to you and put life into perspective again, make it all better”

Adam discusses how he will go to his parents when life gets difficult because he knows they will be a source of support and help him to work through the difficulties he is experiencing. When Ben and Steve were asked if they would seek help from a friend when they wanted to talk about their emotions, they explained that they were unlikely to unless it was very serious. Most of the time

they would allow the conversation to develop at the right place, such as when they go out on the boat. Ben discusses;

“I’d say: ‘do you want to go out on the boat?’ and then the personal topics would come up, that we would want to come up, not necessarily intentionally but just because they do... [The boat is] a good place to talk, comfortable”

Steve’s response was similar to Ben’s. Steve explains;

“well it depends on how bad it is really, if you need to talk to someone I suppose you’d just go find them, most of the time I’d just wait [for an opportunity to present itself]”

Whereas Adam was more intentional about seeking out his parents for emotional support, Ben and Steve were more inclined to wait for an opportunity which was conducive for emotional disclosure. Waiting for a suitable opportunity to express emotions is a common practice for both men and women (Barbee, Rowatt & Cunningham, 1998), yet it is a behaviour more frequently associated with men (Walton et al., 2004). People express themselves in various ways and in different contexts, so it is too simplistic to assume that a person is not expressive emotionally because it is not seen or done in a way that is understood.

The expression of emotions being dependent on the context of a situation was also discussed in relation to crying. Some of the participants identified weddings, their children’s birth and funerals as acceptable occasions to cry, although they also said they felt embarrassed at crying in front of other people. Some participants explained that they felt comfortable crying in front of their wives if what they were crying about warranted that kind of emotional expression. Adam discusses his views on concealing emotions and why it is acceptable to express them when and where they are felt;

“I think men can be just as emotional as women, I think a lot of them try to hide it, but sometimes you can’t really...I think if you’re that happy then why not...if you’re that affected, that overwhelmed by something, then that’s just life...emotions are weird cos’ if you stand back you can think level headed and you can make decisions on facts but once you’re

emotionally involved you can make totally different decisions about it, same thing but you're emotionally involved, I think that's what makes us human as well"

Adam points out that some emotions are too powerful to hide and that it is human nature to be emotional. His point supports the notion that not all men hide their emotions for fear of being viewed as feminine or weak (Porter & Samovar, 1998).

When the participants were asked about whom they would express their emotions with they all said their wives or partners, their families, and friends. The most commonly stated people the participants would talk to about their emotions were wives or partners, friends and mothers. It is common for people to access the significant people in their lives, such as their partners, friends and parents, when they want to talk about their emotions (Barbee et al., 1998). Two participants explained that they would usually talk to their mums and friends, Jake discusses;

"I've always had mates that I could talk to about relationships and whatever, two in particular, especially if you're going through the same thing at the same time...I'll talk to my mum more than dad which is weird...I just feel more comfortable talking to mum, it just seems that mum is easier to talk to, I don't know why"

Similarly, Ben discussed who he would talk to;

"mum's certainly the first one that we go to, or that I go to...I talk to friends too, they talk to me as well, a good example was a while ago when my mate was thinking about breaking up with his girlfriend, he rang me to talk about it, which normally you think guys don't tend to do, but he rang to tell me how he felt and to discuss what to do"

Jake and Ben both state that their mothers are significant people they would go to, to talk about their emotions. Some may attribute this to the belief that women are more nurturing and emotional, which allows men to feel safer when they express their emotions (Gray, 2002). Another possibility is that the act of accessing a mother to talk to about emotions is because people tend to seek out people who they are comfortable with (Barbee, et al., 1998). If a person has had a

good relationship with their mother and they feel comfortable disclosing their emotions to her, it seems logical that they would seek her out to talk to. Too often it is assumed that women are more emotional and more emotionally receptive than men, and the 'obvious' choice of person to talk with. While Jake and Ben nominated their mothers as people they would express their emotions with, they also nominated their friends which again, illustrates that men will talk to other men about their emotional lives.

As discussed, the participants identified that they would seek certain people out, if they needed to talk about their emotions. To explore their seeking behaviour further some of the participants were asked if they would access therapy, counselling or a psychologist to help them or to talk to them about their emotions. This was because it is frequently asserted that men are reluctant to access such professional services (Beynon, 2002). The participants explained that they would access therapy but only as a last resort, and believed therapy or counselling was for serious issues or problems and not for everyday problems people face. This may be because they feel they have enough suitable people in their lives who will give good advice and be there for them when they need them. They do not seem to view the use of therapy as a sign of weakness, as one of the participants explains;

“if I needed to I probably would but I’d try other avenues first, like I know they are professionals but...I believe if you have good friends or wife to talk to... like mum and dad seem to sort out my life so easily...so friends and family, I would definitely try that first but if that didn’t work or I was still really unhappy then yeah I would go [to therapy], I don’t think there’s anything wrong with it and its becoming more acceptable I think, it’s like something I probably wouldn’t be ashamed of doing...because I’ve got people in my life that would be happy I was getting better, they wouldn’t like ‘oh you homo you’re doing this, blah, blah, blah’...where as maybe a decade ago it would be like that”

As this participant explained, he expected the people in his life to see therapy or counselling as a positive step towards 'getting better'. These views do not parallel those that Beynon (2002) notes in his book, which state that men are unlikely to

seek help. This may be due to numerous factors such as generational changes, cultural norms and attitudes or possibly that help is sought from sources other than professional services like therapy.

This section has covered some of the social protocols the participants identified for expressing emotions. They discussed the ways in which they would and would not express emotions. They explained the circumstances in which they would express themselves emotionally, and the people who they were most likely to share their emotions with. The participants' responses are not consistent with many prevailing stereotypes of men's emotional expressions. These participants were all very forthcoming with their perspectives and if they wanted to emphasize their explanations they would identify how other people would express emotions to them.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the participants' views on the ways in which they express themselves emotionally. Their views demonstrate that men are not emotionally inexpressive as many stereotypes suggest. The participants were clear and concise when explaining the ways they express themselves emotionally, and their narratives were articulate and laden with examples of how they 'do' emotion. The participants drew on how they are emotionally expressive within their relationships, frequently discussing how sharing experiences with family and friends was of importance. When they discussed spending time with their families, they explained that the time ranged from active leisure time to just hanging out. The participants also identified wanting good things for their families and being protective of their families, wives and partners as a form of expressing love and care.

The participants discussed the ways they expressed themselves emotionally within their friendships. Their views show that men have friendships that are based on common interests and sharing common activities (Walker, 1994; Kay, 2009). The participants have some specific ideas on what constitutes friendship, and what does not, and they explained the qualities they expect to have in close friendships. Of particular interest were their views on the social protocols for expressing their emotions. They explained some of the acceptable and

unacceptable behaviours when they express their emotions and when other men are expressing emotions. The participants also explained who the people were that they would express their emotions to, and what sorts of situations they felt as appropriate for expressing their emotions. The men also included their views on accessing professional assistance such as therapy or counselling. They explained that they would access professional services but only if they had a serious need to do so.

The participants' explanations on their emotional lives showed that men's expressions of emotion are far more complex than what is often suggested in popular and academic literature. The men in this study presented views that add knowledge to understanding men's views on the ways in which men express themselves emotionally. This chapter has shown that not all men fit with the stereotypes of men being unemotional, or inarticulate at expressing their emotions (Robertson et al, 2001). This further supports the need for more collaborative research with men to explore their views of their emotional lives.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUALISING EMOTIONS

This chapter explores two ways in which I encouraged participants to explain their emotions; object narrative, and defining and explaining emotion words. The chapter begins with a brief discussion on objects as meaningful components in these men's emotional lives. Following this is the analysis of the participants' narratives and explanations of their emotions when using the objects they choose to talk about. The final section of this chapter briefly discusses how verbal communication helps to understand emotional lives, followed by the participants' definitions and examples of some of their everyday emotions and the significant emotions that they discussed in the focus group and during their interviews.

The objects the participants chose to discuss in their interviews yielded rich information about their emotional lives. The participants were asked to choose three to six objects which were significant to them. The significance of the objects varied in terms of; being significant to their daily lives; the level of importance they currently held for the participants; and the level of importance they held for the participants' histories and futures. The participants chose a variety of objects, including; jewellery, houses, musical instruments, photo albums, a car, a horse, a family batch, a pen, and all six chose at least one piece of sporting equipment. I approached this research from the perspective that objects are not fixed in their existence, rather that the participants' objects are items that act as an inanimate spectator, or that influence the participants' daily lives, or the most significant aspects of their lives. Many objects communicate messages between people; they are gifts of sympathy, love, care or acknowledgement (Dant, 1999). Displayed objects deliver messages of history, personality, status and pride (Hurdley, 2006), and some, such as art or antiques connect people who are long gone to those in the presence of the object (Dant, 1999). Functional objects offer leisure, education, self-development and acts to mediate shared experiences between people (Berger, 2009). Objects are more than just manufactured items created for certain purposes, they are multi-functional items that are significant in a multitude of ways, for various reasons, and depending on the people who use or own them (Noble, 2004).

Berger (2009) identifies six types of functions objects or material culture has, these are; functional, non-functional, dysfunctional, manifest function, functional alternative, and latent function. This section focuses on three of the six types of functions objects have. The first is manifest function; the object is used for the purposes it was made for, for example; a car was made as a mode of transport and when the car is used to get from one place to another, the objects function is in this case obvious. The second is functional alternative where the object is knowingly used for other purposes; for example, remodelling, restoring or upgrading the car so it can be used as an object to have fun in, or as a status symbol, or simply to enjoy the process of re-creating the car. The third is latent function; aspects of the object are unintentional, often unnoticed but might be very important, for example; remodelling the car may have had a positive impact on the self-esteem of the person remodelling, or an opportunity for a time and activity shared with others. When the participants of this study discussed or explained the objects they had chosen, manifest function, function alternative, and latent function were identified as types of functions the objects had for the participants.

Sentimental Objects and Received Gifts

The participants who chose a piece of jewellery were asked what the item meant to them, and they all responded with stories or answers that explained the sentimental value of the objects. Both Warren and Steve chose their wedding ring as their first object to talk about. It is customary in many countries, for rings to be exchanged during a wedding ceremony, although the custom for men to receive a wedding ring only became tradition around 1940 (Howard, 2003). The wedding ring is described by Haas and Deseran (1981) as being a 'love token' that is symbolic of trust, love, commitment and a legal (and spiritual) union between two people. The sentimental value and the symbolic meaning of a wedding ring can be fairly easily sought by asking someone who has or had a wedding ring. Research into wedding rings as a form of material culture is not as accessible. When Warren was asked about his wedding ring and what it meant to him he responds;

“my wedding ring is important to me really...it means everything...a sign of my commitment to [wife]”.

Similarly, Steve responds about his wedding ring;

“it means that I’m married to my lovely wife, I don’t get to wear it very often cos’ I can’t wear it at work, so its sort of nice when I do get to wear it...its pretty special to me, there’s not really a lot of things that I have that are special to me, I mean material things, but this is one of them”

Rex and Warren both chose pieces of jewellery that were given to them by their partners. The importance of these items of jewellery, to Warren and Rex, seemed to parallel the importance the wedding rings held for Warren and Steve, Warren explains;

“when we got engaged [wife] gave it to me...it’s something that I love...I never take it off, it’s a bit of [wife] with me all the time...it’s just important to me, it’s something that’s been there for a long time and I want it to be there forever...it’s symbolic of my relationship with [wife], you know”

When Rex was asked about his piece of jewellery he says;

“my partner brought it for me, I can’t remember why she brought it for me or when exactly, I just know I’ve had it on for about four years and it never comes off, and if it does come off I notice it straight away and I feel lost without it...it just means a lot to me”

Warren explains how he came into possession of the item followed by the symbolic value this item represents to him, he refers to it as ‘important’ and that it represents the history and expectations for the future of his relationship with his wife. For Rex a gift from his partner was a particularly significant object. He notes that he cannot remember why or when he came to possess his particular item, but he implied this reflected the length of time he had been in a relationship with his partner. The wedding rings and items of jewellery were all described as being “important” and “special” to the participants, as was the practice of wearing them. Displaying these items of jewellery by wearing them is an act which Hurdley (2006) describes as a method of sharing one’s history and current status, with others. In this case, I would suggest that the items of jewellery were significant of their relationship with their wives or partners.

One participant chose a pen as a sentimental object, because the pen mediated the meeting between him and his (now) wife. The participant explained how when he was in Europe waiting for a train, a girl came up to ask if she could borrow his pen to fill in her rail pass;

“It was the start of a conversation which lead to dinner, which lead to being married...it doesn't look very important but it carries a high importance to me”

The participant and his wife also used that pen to sign their marriage certificate. The absence and the presence of the object are of great significance to this participants' narrative (Noble, 2004). If the 'girl' was in possession of a pen, she would not have had a need to talk to the participant, and if the participant was not in possession of a pen, he would not have had the opportunity to extend his conversation beyond 'no, sorry, I don't have a pen'. This is a good example of the participants' object having both a manifest function (to write with) and a latent function (as a conduit for a conversation with a stranger). The participant had kept the pen and he and his wife increased its sentimental value by signing their marriage certificate with the pen (Noble, 2004).

By choosing the pen as an object, the participant chose his wife as a topic for discussion (Hurdley, 2008). Similarly to Warren, Steve and Rex's decisions to choose their items of jewellery, also allowed them to tell their stories about their lives with their partners or wives. When the participants were asked why they had chosen the piece of jewellery, they explained the importance these items held for them and discussed how these items were special above other objects they had in their possession. Interestingly, Rex acknowledges how he responds if his item of jewellery comes off. The value that people place on their objects can increase when the object is broken or lost (Olsen, 2003). Rex and Warren both talk about wearing their item all the time, which may increase their desire not to lose their items. It is important to note that the participants' views of their sentimental objects are not fixed, and that over time and through significant events the meanings they assign to objects will probably change (Berger, 2009). For example the importance of a wedding ring may increase for a person when their spouse

passes away, or the importance of the wedding ring may decrease for a person whose marriage has ended on bad terms.

Some of the objects chosen by the participants were gifts they had received. The act of giving and receiving gifts is important in many societies (Berger, 2009). As a form of material culture gifts have multiple meanings and perform many functions within relationships (Hurdley, 2008). Gifts are often discussed in terms of reciprocity and in terms of the significance gift giving has on the dynamics of relationships (Appandurai, 1996; Berger, 2009). Received gifts are also discussed in terms of the meanings and sentimental value they hold for the person who has received the gift (Hurdley, 2008).

The items of jewellery Warren and Rex were discussing had been gifts from their partners, yet the significance of jewellery was less about them being a gift and more about the symbolism of the objects. However, two of Rex's other objects, a guitar and a set of drums, were chosen because they had been given to him as gifts. Rex said his guitar is more of a sentimental item than a functional object at the moment. He explained that while he doesn't play much anymore, his guitar is still significant because his father took him out to buy it and when he was learning to play his mother would encourage him to practise by asking him to play for her. Rex also chose his drums which he explained have more of a sentimental value to him, although he does play them when he has the chance. He explained how the drums were a gift and how the gesture of the gift meant more than the drums themselves because of how noisy drums are. Rex discusses how these two objects are not used much, but are still kept and valued because they were gifts. Hurdley (2008), discusses how objects can become meaningful on a different level when the object is given as a gift, she explains; "Even if the object itself might be mass-produced, stories about it make it a personal production" (ibid, p. 723). This is evident in Rex's views on the objects that were gifts.

In this section I have presented the participants' views on the objects that have sentimental value for them, and the objects that were given to them as gifts. The men in this study explained the significance their objects have to them, often giving detailed narratives in order to explain the emotional meanings they attribute to the object. These views show that objects are not simply inanimate;

rather they are used to make meaning in peoples lives (Hurdley, 2008). The gifted objects that were chosen to discuss showed that the participants valued certain items because of the emotional meaning and history of these objects. As this section shows, the gifted objects were not only kept because they were still used frequently or because they were high in monetary value. The gifted objects represent thought, care, consideration, and self-sacrifice for the participants, from significant people in the participants' lives. The use of objects in the interviews allowed for the participants and me to have conversations about their lives, and allowed them opportunities to tell their stories. These conversations and stories revealed some of the complexities of their emotional lives, without me having to pry too much.

Built, Renovated and Restored Objects

Ben, Jake, Rex and Steve chose objects which they had built, renovated or restored, when they discussed these objects they talked about how integral these objects were in their lives. Ben explains what his boat means to him;

“it means a little bit of who I am, I renovated it which put my personality into it, I believe, it’s been a big part of my life for the past three years, that’s why I chose it to discuss”

Ben acknowledges that the boat has more than a manifest function when he explains that it is a part of who he is because of the labour he put into renovating it. Objects that are modified by the owner often increase in importance to the owner because of the work and time put into the object (Dant, 1999), and as Ben explains, renovating his boat put his personality into it.

Jake, Rex and Steve chose their houses as an object to discuss; Rex seemed to have more of an emotional attachment to his house than Steve and Jake. Steve and Jake viewed their houses as a source of financial security and investment. Rex focused on the shared experiences he and his partner had through the processes of building and explained what those experiences meant to him. Rex talked about the amount of time and effort he and his partner had put into their home how much it meant that they had so many friends who helped with the house;

“it’s a huge thing we done together and a big part of our life...at the start a lot of people told us that we couldn’t do it and we done it...seeing what we achieved every night, when I have shit days I can come home and I know I’ve achieved this... we spent a lot of hours on it, we had all our friends around to help...it’s been a big team effort”

Rex talked about how the work he and his partner had done on their home had been a positive experience for them and he thought the project had strengthened their relationship. When Rex was asked if he would sell the house he replied;

“Oh yeah, I mean the house is cool and it does symbolise a step in our life but we’ll always have the experience, the biggest thing is the experience more so than the actual object”

Rex provides a good example of how objects, specifically houses, can represent so much more than just the object itself (Hurdley, 2007). A house is a place where belongings are kept, and sleep and leisure time are conducted. Houses are also spaces where shared experiences and social exchange occurs and emotional lives are expressed (Dant, 1999). In addition, for Rex his house was also a place that, through its construction, assisted in the development of part of his current identity and in multiple ways; he expressed his creativity in its construction; bonded with his partner; experienced acts of friendship; and increased his self-esteem. Rex was an active participant in the construction of his house; during this time his house was a site for social practices that strengthened his affective relationships. In the process of building his house, his house also became a significant part in the construction of Rex’s identity (Olsen, 2003).

Using Objects for Leisure Time with Families and Friends

Messner presents the view of Swain (1989, cited in Messner, 1992) who explains that women’s friendships are often based on talking about intimate details of their lives and men’s friendships are often based on ‘doing things’ together. All of the participants chose at least one piece of sporting equipment as an object to discuss. Adam and Ben chose their boats to discuss; their boats are used for water-skiing, wakeboarding, and fishing. Adam discusses how the boat represents quality time with family;

“at the time it just felt like fishing, but now you realise it’s so much more than that, it’s like...spending time with [family], most people are like ‘it’s just a boat’ but it’s the experiences and memories you have in it”

Adam was asked if he would still have those feelings about the boat if it was sold or swapped, he replied;

“I would, yeah, boats are just so cool cos’ they encourage that family sort of thing...quality time...and it’s like a fun sport too, like fishing, skiing, wakeboarding or whatever but you don’t even have to do that you can just hang out on the boat”

The significance for Adam is in the activities and interactions the boat allows him to participate in, showing that some objects offer the opportunity to bring people together through shared activities (Dant, 1999). Ben also chose his boat, when he was asked what the boat meant to him, he explained;

“the boat means social time”

Both Adam and Ben discuss how their objects are more than just items they use; the objects represent leisure time and play with family and friends. Leisure activities were discussed in the first chapter, in relation to fathering. Ben chose another piece of sporting equipment as an object to discuss, after we discussed his boat (his first object) he commented on how the discussion was more involved than he had thought it would be. Ben said;

“I’m a bit torn now, because I don’t want to use my little toys as my main topic”

When Ben was asked what he wanted his main topic to be about he said his family. I asked if there were any of his objects that include time with his family or are symbolic to his relationship with his family, he said his mountain bike. Ben explained how his mountain bike represents family time, and how he had been riding for years but his wife and kids did not yet have the level of time and practise he had. Ben talked about how the family activity of riding bikes together was a time for learning for them all. He was learning to teach them some of the

skills he had acquired over the years and they were learning those skills. Ben discusses;

“really it just means family time, doing something together and probably mostly for [my son], cos’ of his age...you know, everyone remembers when they were five and they got their first bike...its like watching all that again, like I went through...that means a lot”

Ben starts by explaining the bike as an object that facilitates their family time, also as an object which gives him the opportunity to teach his family some skills in bike riding, an activity he seemed proud to do. Ben continues to talk about his relationship with his son and explains how the activity of biking contributes to building and strengthening their relationship. Ben alludes to his own childhood when he talks about getting a bike at five years old, signalling he wants his son to experience similar events as Ben did, with his bike. The bike in Ben’s case is an important tool that is used for an activity but also a tool that allows for multiple dynamics in his relationships with his family to occur.

Warren’s piece of sporting equipment represented similar meaning to his activity as Ben’s did. Warren participates in the sporting activity with his father and brother’s and described it as an activity which involves the rest of his family. He explained how important this object was to him because it was a tool that gave him great enjoyment when using it and participating in the activity which included, quality time with his family. Family life was a reason for one participant to choose his family beach house or ‘bach’ as an object. He explained how his father intends the bach to be passed down to future generations and how excited he is to share the fun activities, which he has had with his parents, with his children. To him, the bach represented fun and time with family.

These participants have all discussed how important their objects are because they allow for leisure time with their families. Often they refer to activities with their fathers or their sons, suggesting these relationships had special significance, possibly because leisure activities are a primary method of fathering (Kay, 2009). The participants’ objects represent how important it is for these participants to share in leisure activities with families. This emphasises how social, leisure and play activities are important elements when building positive experiences with

significant people in their lives (Dant, 1999). So far, objects used for leisure time with families have been discussed, but some of the participants also chose objects that are used for their social leisure time.

Jake described himself as quite a sporty person, he explained that the piece of sporting equipment he chose to discuss was the one he was currently using most, but if it was a different season in the year he may have chosen a different item. This led to a discussion on some of the most important sporting equipment he uses and the activities he participates in. When I asked him why he chose sporting equipment as an object to discuss, Jake explained that he was a social person and enjoys physical recreation, and the sporting equipment conveys this. Steve and Rex, also choose sporting equipment as their objects because of the social aspect their equipment represented. Steve explained why he chose his wakeboard as one of his objects;

“it’s real fun, go out for a wakeboard, it’s with the boys, have a few beers, some fun, get wet, get some exercise... wakeboarding’s always fun, I suppose my wakeboard itself is not really that important, it’s the activity really”

Participation in sporting activities is an important part of developing a masculine identity for young boys, as it helps boys to bond with others while playing and striving to achieve a win (Messner, 2007). However it is often the case that as the boys grow up, they lose the focus of playing and bonding, and focus on the striving to achieve or competitiveness of the game (Messner, 2007). This does not seem to be apparent among the participants’ views of the sporting activities they take part in with others. One participant explained that he had stopped playing a sport because the element of competition was minimizing the fun of the sport. The participants frequently talked about their chosen activities as ‘fun’, ‘social’, ‘family time’, ‘good exercise’. For each participant, their sporting equipment represented participation in a fun activity with their family, friends or both. At no point did the participants discuss winning or competing with others when taking part in the activities.

Sporting objects have been the primary focus for objects used for leisure, however, two participants chose musical instruments as objects used for leisure

time. They both chose their drums and their guitars. Jake talked about his drums and why they are a significant object to discuss in his interview;

“They just mean fun...I’ve won stuff from playing, a bit of income as well but that’s all secondary, first thing is fun”

Jake also chose his guitar but for quite different reasons to choosing his drums;

“[guitar is] probably just more a personal thing that I do by myself, it’s just something I do when I’m by myself and feeling it...like an outlet”

Rex’s explanation of his guitar is similar to Jake’s;

“having a guitar was always good for me to let out emotion, like if something was going wrong or something wasn’t cool I could play...and if I was bored I could play and mix things up”

Jake’s explanation of his drums shows that while they are used as a means for extra monetary income, that is not the primary reason for playing. His view highlights the variety of ways that people make use of the objects in their lives (Dant, 1999). This is again shown in Rex and Jake’s comments on how the use of objects gives them the opportunity to express their emotions. Their objects are musical instruments, which are designed with the manifest function of creating musical sounds. Rex and Jake also have described the functional alternative aspects of their musical instruments; to express their emotions through playing them.

This section has focused on the participants objects which are used for leisure time with their friends and families. I have shown how the uses of these objects are more extensive than what the objects may have been designed for. Some of the participants explain the ways they use a boat in terms of what it was designed for. However, they also explain how the boat is a place where they can share their emotions with their friends. As Adam pointed out at the beginning of this section, the specific boat chosen as one of his objects is not what holds significance for him. The significance is the opportunities that the boat offers. This section illustrates how objects can act as a conduit allowing for shared experiences that illicit emotional responses.

Nostalgia and Objects No Longer Owned

Many of the objects already discussed symbolise recent histories of the participants and their current ways of life. The following objects represent the participants' sense of nostalgia about the lives they lived with the objects, and objects they no longer own but still think of. Through objects people can show others aspects of their lives in the past where they: may have lived overseas, were loved, and were creative and talented. While the participants may still live those lives and have those qualities, others may not always see them in those roles (Noble, 2004). The objects act as a medium to communicate to others or to remind themselves, what 'once was' confirming peoples identities as more than what is currently seen. When the objects are gone, still the owner can find ways to keep them present through photographs, or parts of the object, or something symbolic of what that object represented to the owner (Noble, 2004).

When Rex chose his surfboard as one of his objects to discuss, nostalgia was evident as he explained how surfing had been a big part of his life and while he does not surf much now, he always has a surfboard in case he wants to. When Rex was asked why he chose his surfboard as one of his objects he said;

“when you're surfing it's a completely different buzz, a different way of living, you go on all these adventures with mates, it's quite a social thing, keeping my board is a reminder of those times”

Rex identifies that his surfboard is kept as a reminder of past events that brought him joy. He also refers to a past life that he enjoyed and by keeping his board he could still access that life again as long as he has his board. The board in this case links Rex to his past and in keeping the board the life he lived is not gone, just possibly on hold.

Steve chose two photo albums to discuss, this type of object allowed us to talk about a variety of aspects in his life. The first album contained photos of life with his family and his wife before they got married and had kids. The second photo album included photos of his current life, with his wife and kids. He explained how both albums are equally important even though each album shows photos of two very different lifestyles. As Steve and I flipped through the pages of his first

album he explained the context that the photographs were taken in, the album became a story-book and he was the narrator. Steve introduced me to his journeys overseas and the events that occurred on the days the photos were taken. Not all of the photos were in order of time, so Steve would move through the pages trying to find photos that matched with the story he was telling. This first album showed Steve's history with his parents and siblings, and as he talked about the shared history with them, he would often talk outside the photos, telling me what his parents were doing now and how life had changed so much for himself and his siblings;

“we're all grown up now, adults, responsible”

Steve says this with some nostalgia for the past but with pride for their present. He moves on to talk about the histories he and his (now) wife share, and he explains how they met, how he proposed and the life they shared before being married and having children. Steve talked about his wedding day as a follow on from talking about his wife, there were no photos of his wedding day, and he explains;

“They're in a different album and I couldn't find it, but I still want to talk about it”

Steve illustrates how photographs can initiate a variety of topics and aspects of people's lives to discuss; and he also shows that the absence of objects, or photographs, does not render a story insignificant. When Hodgetts and colleagues (2007), discuss the use of photovoice as a method of research, they explain how photographs not taken are as important as the photographs that are taken. This is emphasised again, in Steve's interview, when he tries to find his favourite photo in his second album. The photo is not there so he resorts to explaining it to me. The descriptions of the photo and context of which it was taken in were so detailed; I could imagine the photo for myself. Steve spent more time talking about the photo that was not there than he did on any other single photo, possible because, as he said, it was his favourite photo. Or possibly because in order to satisfy that I understood the photo and what it represented to him he had to recreate his photo through a detailed narrative and in the process talking beyond the photo that was taken but missing (Hodgetts et al, 2007).

Steve continued to talk about the other photographs in his second album. He discussed his wife and children and the love, joy and pride he has for his family. Steve's photo albums held great importance for him, this may be because they contain snapshots of his life, past and present, and were proof of his life and the lives of the significant people in his life. Noble's (2004) participants in his study all explained that photo albums would be one of the objects that would be rescued if the house was on fire. This was because photos represented; proof of lives with others and experiences lived; a token of someone who is gone but not forgotten; and material evidence of connected lives. By saving their photo albums they were saving evidence of their lives (Noble, 2004). Similarly, Steve chose his photo albums as one of his significant objects to discuss, as these objects represented material evidence of lives lived by him and the connections he has with the significant people in his life.

During their interviews, the participants had been asked if there were any objects they would like to discuss but did not bring with them because they no longer had the items. Discussing objects that are no longer in the possession of the participants provides an added insight into the participants' lives by exploring the history they have experienced but which is no longer represented by an object (Hodgetts et al, 2007). Two participants identified a car and a horse as objects that were significant to them but for practical reasons, they no longer had these objects. The participant who chose to talk about his car explained that he no longer had the car, but it was significant because he had put a lot of time and effort into fixing the car up. He sold the car so he could travel overseas. He now has a work vehicle, and he never replaced the earlier car. While the car is no longer in his possession, a framed photograph of the car hangs on his wall, symbolic of a stage of his life gone but still present through a photograph that represents memories and experiences he had with the car (Noble, 2004). The participant explains;

“it was a labour of love that cost heaps...but now I'm practical and I have a work Ute”

Nostalgia was evident in discussion with the participant who talked about his horse as an 'object' he no longer owned (The horse had died a few years prior to

the interview). He discussed how the horse represented what was nearly his chosen career path, a decision he often thinks about. He continues to talk about the horse and how one of his chosen objects, his family's business, intertwines with the horse;

“It probably happened that at the time he got put down, I was working more...I was probably at that point where it was make or break”

He chose to work in the business his father had started, and explains that he chose the business as one of his objects to discuss because it represented time with his parents and because of the location of the business, it meant he could be close to his wife and kids throughout his working day. This participant considers what his life would be if he had chosen a different career, he explains that he does not regret his decision because the life he has with his wife, children and family is so rewarding and fulfilling.

This section illustrates how the participants' emotional lives and emotional histories are linked with objects. This is especially prevalent with objects in the form of photographs, as Steve's interview showed. He had chosen two photo albums to illustrate the depth of his histories; one album was filled with photos prior to having children, and the other filled with photos of his life with children. The narratives derived from Steve's discussions of his photos were full of explanations of his emotional history and emotional life. Of particular interest was Steve's description of the photograph that was missing, and how it was so detailed I could imagine it for myself. Steve offered a variety of explanations for the ways he attached meaning to certain photographs because of what they represented. His discussions on his emotions were detailed and complex, these traits are often suggested to be non-existent in men, which is another stereotype showing to be not applicable in this study (Walker, 1994).

Participant Explanations of Some Emotion Words

So far I have discussed some of the men's views on how they 'do' emotion, however it is also important to explore some of their everyday emotions through verbal descriptions. Non-verbal forms of communication are very important to the ways we communicate with others, and often non-verbal communication is the

mode used most often (Fussell, 2002). It is also important to explore how we verbally communicate emotion. For example, one could assume that a person seen crying is doing so out of sadness, yet this is only one possibility, as they could be crying out of anger, happiness, or grief. In order to understand the specific reasons for their tears, they would need to explain what those tears mean in words (Fussell, 2002). Verbal descriptions of emotions help people to develop a more detailed understanding of others emotions, assuming they are telling you the truth.

Patrick and Beckenbach, (2009) highlight the importance of researchers exploring what emotion words mean to their participants. Their study on their male participants' views on intimacy showed how a commonly used word, intimacy, can hold very different meaning for different people. The men in this study provided definitions for many of the most common emotions they experience. Many of these emotions were raised by the participants during the focus group, which initiated further discussion during their interviews. When the participants were asked to explain these emotion words, they would often give examples to explain their definitions. This section presents the participants' views on some emotion words by exploring the examples and definitions they used to explain what some of their most common emotions mean to them. These include; enjoyment, happiness, pride, jealousy, anger, fear/concern, and guilt.

During the interviews, the participants would often talk about how they get joy into their lives. They explained that joy meant having fun and when they explained what fun meant, the descriptions all differed. Joy is described as being in a state of lively happiness and frequently shared with others (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). For Adam, enjoyment meant quality time with family and friends, and being away from the everyday life stressors. He explains how holidays with family are worth the expense;

“If you work it into your budget and instead of having the latest and greatest car or equipment, you put that money towards having a nice trip, that to me, is enjoying life and spending it with family”

Similarly, Ben discussed how he enjoyed travelling overseas and now that he has a family he looks forward to travelling with them. Travelling was also discussed by Steve, who chose multiple activities which he enjoys, he talked

about how much fun he has wakeboarding, and he explained how travelling and living overseas were some of the most enjoyable experience he had had;

“it was pretty cool, enjoyable, miss it sometimes, we had a lot of fun...had a great time, saw lots, made some cool friends, so yeah, those were good times”

For Jake the sports he plays represent enjoyment. Many of his sports also include competitions. While Jake enjoys wining, he places the most value on the activity and social aspects of playing sports. Jake explained that he has stopped playing one sport because the competition started to mean more;

“I stopped playing cos’ I got good enough to worry about not getting good scores. So when it got past the social aspect and just going out with your mate and hanging out and having a good game, I dropped it because it became way too competitive...it wasn’t fun anymore, the fun factor was disappearing so I dropped it”

One of the most positive and rewarding emotions is happiness, and this is especially true when it is shared in social situations (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). Happiness was one of the most common emotions the participants talked about, with some participants describing what the term meant to them while others gave examples. Jake frequently talked about the things that made him happy, referring most often to sports and activities that he took part in. When he was asked how he would describe happiness, he replied;

“I suppose happiness to me is things going right, just everything in your life, like relationships, everything that you do, everything just going well, having the things that I want to have really...it’s a mixture of emotional happiness and material happiness I suppose, a good balance all round”

Ben talked about the two happiest days of his life, the first was the day his daughter was born and the second was his wedding day. He explained how both days were different, and how the love he felt on those days made them the happiest in his life so far. Steve’s experiences of happiness were similar to Ben’s; his wedding day and the days his children were born were also the happiest of his life. Steve once explained, during observational research, how he never knew love

and happiness like the kind he felt for his children and wife. During observational research, Rex also talked about his happiness, he described happiness was about having good friends and family in his life, being there for them, helping them out and them reciprocating. Warren described his life as a happy life, he explained;

“I’m good, I’m happy, I got good mates, good family, beautiful wife who’s perfect, not much more you want really, well health, healthy family”

Adam spoke frequently of what happiness was to him, he contributes this frame of mind as being instilled in him by his parents. Adam explains how his parents prioritised his happiness and encouraged him to do the things that brought him happiness even if it scared his parents;

“I think, look at the simple pleasures in life to make you happy...when I was two and a half, I had a seven and a half year old brother that died from a throat infection and up until then he was a healthy, happy, awesome normal kid...it’s just like, how quick things can change and mum and dad have always just lived for the moment and told me to make sure you’re healthy, out of trouble, just be happy...I just realise how lucky I am with mum, dad and my wife, and my friends”

Andersen and Guerrero (1998) explain pride as being one of the most social emotions; this is because when a person shares their accomplishments with others and receives praise, pride is usually experienced. The participants frequently referred to the accomplishments they were proud of and they provided multiple examples. Rex talked about his house being an accomplishment and how proud he was to show his parents, and other people that he had achieved his goal of building a house;

“the biggest thing was when mum and dad came up, and I got to show them what we’ve done...that’s the biggest buzz is showing people this house cos’ a lot of people know me, probably as a person who doesn’t give a shit about a lot of things, like, I just like to have fun...it was a huge time in my life, a huge accomplishment”

Ben discussed how his progression in his job has been an accomplishment, but he is most proud when he makes his family happy. Jake discussed

accomplishments in sports, he talked about how winning was an accomplishment that drove him to play better and enjoy the sport more. Jake also discussed how he had worked hard at his job and had been promoted, which was an achievement but work was mostly a way for him to maintain his lifestyle. Adam discussed how he felt many New Zealanders define achievement and accomplishment by the material possessions they have and use to show others. This perception did not fit with his own, Adam was proud of the possessions he had earned, but mostly he was proud to have people in his life who loved him.

Steve talked about the significance for him and his wife in owning their home and the pride he has in the home as a source of financial security. Similarly, Jake also alluded to a sense of pride in the financial investment of owning his home, he explained;

“I don’t know how emotionally attached I am to it because it’s more of an investment [property]...it’s important in the way that it’s my first place”

The men in this study explained the different ways they experience pride through their accomplishments. They explain how the significant people in their lives are the people they seek appraisal or approval from. Doing this intensifies their experience of pride, such as Rex’s discussion on building his home. Pride is not always reinforced by those known to us, so some people aim to get the approval of those unknown to them (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). This was not common in the participants’ explanations.

Jealousy is also a social emotion; it has varying degrees (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998), and can be experienced along with other emotions such as pride, happiness, betrayal, or anger. For example, one can be proud and happy about another’s achievements while also feeling jealous of the results that come with their success. Another example is when a person feels betrayed and jealous because their partner is spending more time with someone else. The concept of jealousy first came up during the focus group. The participants had watched the second *Top Gear* clip and were discussing the jobs the presenters got to do. Seth explained that he was jealous of what a fun job the presenters appeared to have. Fred, Gary and Lance agreed with Seth’s views of the presenters. During Jake’s interview, he explained;

“Jealousy stems from insecurities and I’m not an insecure person so I don’t really get jealous...if I do get jealous then I just get angry, some people get upset”

These examples of jealousy range between minor feelings of being jealous, such as being jealous of the presenters’ jobs on *Top Gear*, to intense feelings of jealousy, such as jealousy turning into anger.

Anger is one of the most powerful emotions and is often socially shared (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). Not all expressions of anger are negative, as sometimes anger is a useful emotion when one has to protect themselves from an attacker, nor is anger always expressed as violence (Canary, Spitzberg, & Semic, 1998). During the focus group the emotions, anger and frustration were brought up often. One participant discussed how politicians made him angry when they behaved like children, when they were supposed to be in a position of governing and acting professional. Gary told a story about a car accident he had been in where the driver was drunk. Gary had repeatedly told the driver to slow down and when the car crashed Gary had thought his girlfriend was dead. He explained how angry and scared he was; angry at the driver and scared for his girlfriend. The participants also discussed anger and frustration in response to the second clip of *Top Gear*. When they were asked about the types of emotions they had seen in the clip, their responses were observations of either anger or frustration as being evident emotions. Jake described anger during his interview and talks about whether or not he is an angry person;

“Anger’s got so many different forms like competitive anger, outrage anger...fear...frustration...you can’t really sustain anger for ages...no one that knows me would probably say I’m an angry person but my family and the person I’m going out with might say I’m a little bit angry...it drives me more than swallows me, it drives me to do stuff”

Fear can be experienced for a large variety of reasons; the most basic is fear for personal safety (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). During the focus group and interviews, the participants did not explain what fear and concern felt like, instead they gave examples. In their example the participants would often refer to fear as concern, or concern as fear, or concern alongside fear. Some of their examples

included; fear of being too drunk to know what was going on, fear for a girlfriend's life, fear turning into shock after being brutally assaulted, fear for a friend who was in a coma, fear for a wife when watching her nearly have an accident, fear turning into anger, concern for a daughter who has to have surgery, concern for a wife who is dealing with fears of her own, and fear as a sought-after component in sporting activities.

Guilt is another emotion that results from social interaction (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). Lance explained how guilt was one of the worst emotions to feel. As a young adult, Lance had made a mistake, and due to the burden of the guilt, he turned himself in, even though the consequences could have meant jail. Often those who feel guilt, make attempts to rectify the situation (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). This is not always the case, some people who feel guilty rationalise the situation in a manner so they do not feel guilty any longer (Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998). This was not evident in Lance's discussion; he explained that he felt so guilty the only way to stop the feeling was to take responsibility for his mistake.

This section illustrates how the men in this study conceptualise and articulate some of their everyday emotions. As it can be seen, the participants offered in-depth explanations on some of their everyday emotions such as happiness, joy and pride. Interestingly, the participants frequently used examples of the emotion words they were describing. It seemed they were trying to emphasize their views and ensure that I was developing a clear understanding of their explanations. This was especially prevalent in Adam's discussion on happiness. He explained the tragedies his family have endured, but also how his parents always emphasized to him the importance of happiness. This has taught him to value the happiness he gets from having the significant people in his life. Many emotional expressions are not fixed, given that people change as they learn and grow (Porter & Samovar, 1998). The participants' explanations of their emotions are relevant to the contexts of their situation at the time they were interviewed. This further supports the need for more continual research into the complexities of men's emotional lives.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on how the men in this study conceptualise their emotions. They did this by discussing the emotional meanings of their objects and

by defining and giving examples of what their views of emotions are. This chapter supports the aim of this thesis; to show that men's emotional lives are far more complex than what is suggested in many academic and popular publications. The men in this study offered in-depth explanations on their emotions as well as the emotions they experienced from other people.

The use of objects to encourage the participants to talk about their emotional lives, proved to be an effective method, resulting in detailed descriptions of emotional lives lived through objects (Noble, 2004). These object narratives do not offer a complete view of the participants' lives. They do provide examples of how men conceptualise their emotional lives. In doing, so, these men have illustrated their ability to conceptualise their own emotions as well as other people's emotions, an ability which is often stereotyped as rare, ineffectual, or absent in men (Robertson et al, 2001).

It is important to note that the importance people attribute to a sentimental object can change depending on the person's situation and the situation of the object (Berger, 2009). The participants' explanations of their objects may be different if they were asked to discuss them at a different time to when their interviews took place. They may not choose the same objects and if they did, the meanings of the objects may have changed over time. The meanings people attribute to objects are not always fixed, just as people change, so to do the meaning that objects hold for them.

A particular stereotypical assumption regarding men's emotional lives is that when men explain their emotions they are not articulate with their explanations (Robertson et al, 2001). This stereotype does not fit with the participants in this study. All of the participants who explained what their emotions meant to them were clear, concise and responsive. This suggests that the participants had pre-existing perceptions of how to describe their emotions. Not all emotion words were explained directly, as it was more common for the participants to offer examples of emotions, rather than simply a definition. Also, some participants explained what particular emotions meant by explaining their opposite. For example, Adam questioned the aspiration of many New Zealanders who think

material possessions will equate to happiness; he believes this is not what happiness is about.

The men in this study had a wide range of emotional experiences, and utilised a range of techniques to effectively explain what certain emotions meant to them. Many of the emotions explained by the participants in this section, were emotions that are explained as intensified with the social sharing of the emotion (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This thesis illustrates the complexities of men's emotional lives. The aim of this research was to respond to the limited amount of academic literature on the complexities of men's emotional lives. This was done by exploring how one group of men at this point in their lives explain the ways in which they express their everyday emotions. The premise from which the research proceeded was that men's emotional lives are much wider and more complex than is suggested in contemporary, popular and academic literatures.

As the literature in this thesis shows, further study into men's emotional lives is required. Often literature on men is responding to issues or problems with men (Seidler, 2007; Hodgetts & Rua, 2010). There is currently little research that explores the complexities of men's everyday emotional lives or men's perspectives on the positive dynamics of their emotions (Walker, 1994; Robertson, et al., 2001; Walton, et al., 2004). There is, however, a wealth of academic literature that conceptualizes terminologies such as men, masculinity, and masculinities (Connell, 2005; Jandt & Hundley, 2007). Popular literature offers a larger collection of books on men's emotional lives. While popular literature is often responding to common concerns, the books are frequently over-generalized and rarely supported by scholarly research (Watkins, 2007).

There are signs of development in this field of research. In the past fifteen years, there have been more academic publications which are exploring men's emotional lives in a holistic way (Newton, 2002; Connell, 2005). This literature is predominantly on topics such as, men's health, on fatherhood, and how men deal with grief. While such a trend is encouraging, literature on other areas of men's everyday emotional lives is not yet as plentiful (Walton, et al., 2004).

Men's emotional lives are an important area for research requiring further attention (Seidler, 2003). A primary reason for this is because popular literature offers more literature on men's emotional lives than contemporary academic literature. Also it is important to regularly and continually research men's cultures (and other cultures), especially when considering how quickly cultures change with globalisation (Seidler, 2003).

This chapter considers core findings from my research in relation to existing literature pertaining to men's emotional lives. These findings are also discussed in terms of support for further research into the complexities of men's emotional lives. The first section focuses on men and emotions and illustrates the complexities of my participants' emotional lives. The second section discusses how my participants' views about their emotional lives contradict common stereotypes and suggested crises. Finally I consider the methodology of this study and the benefits of object narratives.

Men and Emotions

The results of this study demonstrate that men's emotional lives are complex and multi-layered. The men in this study use a wide range of ways to express themselves emotionally. They explained that verbal communication is one of the most frequently used methods for expressing how they feel. This is especially prevalent in the participants' explanations on some of the social protocols for expressing their emotions to others. This is in contrast to much of the literature on men's emotional lives, as discussed in chapter one, where it is frequently perpetuated that men do not talk about their emotional lives (Gray, 1992; Pease & Pease, 2003). A widespread assumption is that women talk about their emotions more often than men do (Walker, 1994). However, more recently scholars are presenting arguments showing that men are verbally expressive with their emotions (Robertson, et al., 2001; Walton, et al., 2004).

Often popular and academic authors use feminized notions of emotions (Seidler, 2007), rather than exploring men's understandings of what particular emotions mean to them. For this reason the men in this study were asked to explain what certain emotions meant to them. The participants offered many in-depth explanations, often followed with personal examples to emphasize their views. A good example of this is Jake's discussion on the various types of anger he experiences. Further examples of the participants' explanations of emotions include Adam's views on happiness; where he explained that it is the simple pleasures in his life that make him happy. When Rex talked about pride, he explained how showing his parents his accomplishments gave him pride. When the participants explained fear, often they explained their fear for others such as

their children, wives, girlfriends, and friends. These examples of the participants' explanations of emotion words highlight the importance of exploring how people give meaning to words (Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009). It was also common for the participants to explain their emotions using examples where they had shared their emotions with others.

Sharing emotions was a common theme throughout the participant accounts. This is in contrast to much of the popular literature on men's emotional lives (Gray, 1992; Pease & Pease, 2003). Often my participants referred to the ways they shared emotions in relation to active leisure time and shared experiences. A minority of scholars have begun to explore men's emotional expressions in the form of 'doing' emotion through material practices (Walker, 1994). My participants engage emotionally with other people through shared activities. For example, Rex discusses how his relationship with his partner was strengthened through the processes they experienced together when they were building their home. Adam and Ben talked about quality, active, leisure time with their families being very important to them, and they explain how these shared experiences strengthened their relationships. My participants' views are consistent with much of the literature on material culture (Dant, 1999; Berger, 2009). For example, Dant (1999) uses an example of how a windsurfer can act as a conduit to shared experiences between people. He explains how the processes involved with learning how to windsurf involves social negotiation which is important to peoples' understandings of social values. Shared activities help people to understand their social groups and understand themselves within their social groups (Dant, 1999).

The sharing of experiences does not have to take place with all parties involved in the same situation; simply knowing someone has experienced a similar situation can be conducive to emotional sharing. This is evident in my participants' discussions on friendship and in Thien's (2009) chapter on The Royal Canadian Legion. Much like my participants, Thien's participants also explain the bond they share with other men who have experienced similar situations. In Gary's interview, he talked about friends who were in a similar situation as he was, and it caused them to bond more so, because of the understanding they had for each other. The sharing of experiences adds a sense of

familiarity (Fitness, 2006), which for the men in this study, is considered conducive to sharing emotions.

Participant accounts highlight how dynamic their emotional lives are and in a manner that contradicts the assumption that women's emotional lives are more meaningful and expressive than those of men. Women's emotional lives are often presented as the standard to which men should aspire (Beynon, 2002). This is problematic because it is too simplistic to set such rigid standards for how people should express their emotions. I also question what the implications are for men (and women) who are told that they do not express their emotions 'properly'. It is conceivable that some men may stop sharing their emotions altogether, for fear of reprimand. Rimé (2009) explains that the sharing of emotions helps people to understand their social environment. If men stop sharing their emotions then this absence could presumably hinder understandings of our social environment. This supports the need for more research into the complexities of men's emotional lives, which will hopefully encourage more holistic understandings of men's emotional lives, and reduce the stereotypes of men as unemotional.

Masculinities and the Lack of a Crisis

Another common feature in the literature on men and emotion is the use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity to explain why men are unemotional and to support the view that there is a crisis in masculinities. Many men do not fit within the various categories of masculinities that academics have constructed and many do not recognize a crisis in their sense of self as men (Beynon, 2002). The men in this study did not appear to be in crisis and they have not behaved in a manner that is reflective of hegemonic masculinity. It could be fair to say that the crisis of masculinity is not applicable to all men, nor do all men believe and behave as though their masculine attributes entitle them to exact power over those who do not appear to have those same masculine attributes.

The universalized assumptions about men and masculinities being in peril were not apparent in the lives of my participants. It is unreasonable to assume that men will not have problems, issues or even crises at some stage in their lives. However, the men in this study explain that when they are confronted with problems, they access help and support. Some participants noted that if they were

told they needed professional help for a problem, they would probably act on that advice. It was also explained that they would not put their friends down if they were using professional services, instead they would be happy they were getting help. Recently, the media has placed a significant amount of attention on ‘getting help’. This can be seen in the television advertisements with John Kirwan, which focus on Kirwan’s battle with depression. The campaign is referred to as ‘The Kirwan Touch’ and has become a significant influence for encouraging people (especially men) to access help if they are feeling down or depressed (Ralston, 2009). This campaign has gained such success because many men can identify with Kirwan; possibly because he is an ex-All Black, ex-Warrior, and current rugby coach. This campaign illustrates the power media can have on influencing people’s emotional lives.

The media is often the topic for research which focuses on the negative impact it has, especially on youth (Snell, 2006). However, men are responding to media to influence and co-construct their masculinities in positive ways (Boon, 2005; Hodgetts & Rua, 2010; Kivel & Johnson, 2009; Tragos, 2009). This was the rationale for choosing clips from the television show *Top Gear*. The series shows men (and sometimes women) sharing experiences with cars and other motorized forms of transportation, with the main goal of having fun. The presenters of the show are all car enthusiasts; however they are not the ‘stereotypic male car enthusiasts’, who are promoted for being competitive in racing, demeaning towards women, and ‘emotionally tough’. *Top Gear* is a good example of how the media can influence changes to common stereotypes.

As discussed in chapter one, it is often perpetuated in popular literature and sometimes in academic literature that men’s friendships are lacking because they do not include the characteristics of intimacy, trust, caring, or nurturing (Nardi, 1992). What is often overlooked is what those characteristics mean to men in their friendships with other men. The positive dynamics of friendships between men are rarely explored; instead men’s friendships are frequently compared to the dynamics of friendships between women. Men’s friendships should be explored in and of themselves, limiting the amount of comparisons made to women’s friendships (Messner, 1992; Beynon, 2002; Levy, 2005). This was why I choose to explore the relationships my participants have with the significant people in

their lives. The results show that these men have relationships that do include intimacy, trust, care and nurturing, contrary to what many authors suggest.

People require human relationships for their survival and well-being (Fitness, 2006). When considering this, it seems unfortunate that scholarly research into men's relationships is dominated by literature on deviant, destructive or problematic relationships (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010). Yet, men's relationships with the significant people in their lives are not solely negative, as many men's relationships are fulfilling for all those involved (Kay, 2009). The men in this study show this when they discussed their emotional lives with their partners, families and friends. They identified spending time with their families and partners, especially quality time, as an expression of love and care. Similarly, with friends, the participants explained how doing things with friends was one way to express fun and enjoyment with their friends.

When the participants discussed their friendships with other men, they offered explanations on the different types and common dynamics within their friendships. This can be seen in Warren's explanation on the difference between a 'mate' and a friend, and in Adam's discussion of the type of friendship which is called a 'bromance'. The dynamics found in friendships such as a bromance, contradict many stereotypes that men's friendship are lacking in a sense of closeness, intimacy, and care. As this study shows, the participants often discussed dynamics such as intimacy, care, closeness and many other attributes of their friendships.

Popular literature offers a larger amount of literature on relationships men have with their wives, partners or girlfriends, than academic literature. However popular literature is frequently intended for a female audience (Starker, 1998; Watkins, 2007) and frequently discusses how men should change to be better partners. Often popular literature (such as Gray, 1992 and Moir and Moir, 1998) assumes men as under-emotional in their relationships with their wives. The participants in this study frequently talked about their relationships with their wives or partners. In their discussions, they would often state how much they love these women and how important they are.

There is little research and literature on the dynamics of adult to adult relationships between men and their parents. The men in this study referred to their parents on many occasions and discussed the memories they have, such as being taught to ride a bike, or being taken to town to pick out a guitar. They also discussed how important it is to have their parents in their lives especially so they can see the achievements of the men and provide support when times are hard. These men seemed to value their relationships with their parents, and this is a dynamic which is rarely discussed in the literature on adult men's relationships with their parents. The dynamics which are often discussed is boys' relationships with their mothers, or their fathers. This literature usually focuses on problems or issues of these relationships (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 1994). Positive dynamics are rarely discussed, yet the men in this study *only* discussed the positive aspects of their relationships with either parent or both parents.

As discussed in chapter one, fathering is one of the few aspects of men's emotional lives that is well covered in academic and popular literature. When the participants discussed fathering, they would often refer to shared leisure time in relation to what they 'do' as fathers, and what they hope to 'do' when they become fathers. Kay (2009) explains that this is because "fathers place leisure at the heart of their parenting" (ibid, p. 1). This is consistent with the participants' views in this study and the frequency with which they referred to how important it was for them to participate in shared leisure activities with their children and/or their families. An example of this can be found in chapter four, when Ben talks about teaching his son how to ride a bike. This was an experience Ben had with his father, an experience that he values and wanted to share it with his own son. The other participants also discussed some of the positive experiences they had with their fathers and how they aim to follow their father's example with their own children.

This thesis has illustrated some of the positive dynamics which the participants' value in their relationships with the significant people in their lives. Their views are not consistent with much of the popular and academic literature on men's relationships. Nor are their views consistent with the suggestion that masculinities are in crisis. I argue that there should be more scholarly attention directed towards

the ways men explain positive friendships between men, rather than feminizing the dynamics of what makes for a positive friendship.

Methodological Considerations

The methodology of this research was based on a symbolic interactionist perspective, which informed the qualitative methods used to generate empirical materials with the research participants (Flick, 2006). Also, symbolic interactionism focuses on the ways people make meaning from their interactions with objects, places, and people (Flick, 2006). Using multiple qualitative methods provided multiple opportunities to gather information under differing settings allowing for rich data collection (Bloor & Wood, 2006), while also limiting the imposition of unnecessarily taking up the participants' time. Employing narrative analysis of the empirical materials generated allowed me to explore the participants' views while taking into account the context in which the story was told (Riessman, 1993). The use of object narrative assisted me with the gathering of rich information on the participants' emotional histories and encouraged them to discuss some of their understandings of emotion words. This methodology enabled me to conduct research that focused on the participants' explanations of their everyday emotional lives. The results from using this methodology for this research project showed how the participants conceptualized their everyday emotions and the processes they use to express their emotions on multiple levels and in a variety of circumstances. The empirical materials constructed with my participants on how they express their emotions supports the premise of this thesis; that men's emotional lives are much wider and more complex than what is presented in contemporary popular and academic literature.

The participants offered definitions of emotions which were clear, coherent and elaborate. This challenges many stereotypes which perpetuate men as being inept at understanding their own and others' emotions (Robertson et al, 2001). The participants predominantly used two techniques when explaining their emotions. The first was using the objects to discuss their emotional lives, from which explanations of the emotions they brought up were derived. The second technique was to explain the most common emotions the participants' experienced or common emotions they saw people close to them experience. The participants

would explain their definitions of the emotion words by using examples to illustrate their explanations. The focus was on their constructions of emotion words and the meaning emotion words have for them.

In conclusion, this thesis explored how men express their emotions. It is not sufficient enough for popular literature be the predominant source on men's emotional lives. Academic literature needs to incorporate more views from men who are in different life stages, and from a variety of cultures. This would offer a more well-rounded view of the complexities of men's everyday emotional lives and foreground challenges to common stereotypical views that promote men as being unemotional. The men in this study are not unemotional or under-emotional. They do not have to resort to what are commonly understood to be feminine ways of expressing themselves emotionally. On the contrary, these men's emotional lives are complex and dynamic. I hope that future research explores these complexities with a view to supporting men's emotional lives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Information Sheet

Information Sheet

Esmae McKenzie-Norton

Ph: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern:

My name is Esmae and I am a student at the University of Waikato. I am studying for my Masters of Social Sciences. My thesis topic is Bloke Culture, specifically how men express themselves emotionally. To do this I will be conducting a research project which explores how men explain their every-day emotions and how men express themselves emotionally. I believe this is an important topic because there is very little research and literature available on this topic, and hopefully my thesis will add to the small but growing research and literature on what it means to be a man in contemporary society.

I'm not looking to explore the most intimate details of your lives; I'm interested in how you explain your emotions, what emotions are common in your daily life and how you share these with other people. For example: How do you explain words like love, compassion, fear or frustration? What or who do you care about most? How do you make such things known to other people? What types of emotions are most common and important in your life? And how do you share these with other people? I am inviting you to participate in a focus group and or interview.

The focus group:

The focus group will be a group of guys who you already know socially; it will be held at my home: it should take about 2 hours: drinks and food will be provided. There will be two topics for discussion. Please see the attached outline which includes the purpose, structure and the topics to be discussed.

The interview:

The interview will be between you and myself and should take about an hour and it can be anywhere you feel comfortable. The topic for the interview will be how you express yourselves emotionally. To help with this conversation, I would like you to bring at least 5 objects with you; they can be anything that holds importance to you, including a photo-album, car, boat. We can go to the objects or place if the items are not moveable objects (for example, your house) or are places (for example, your workplace).

Your name will not be used at any point; you will be given a pseudonym/nickname, which you can choose. As there will be others at the focus group, they will know what you have said so what you talk about is up to you, but no one outside of the focus group will know what you have said. If you take part in both the focus group and interview you will be given two nicknames, that way you will not be identifiable to others from the focus group. I will be audio-recording both the focus group and interviews, I will be the only person with access to the audio recordings and the only person who will listen to them. I am bound by research ethics not to disclose any real names to anyone and to keep recordings and any information confidential. If you choose to take part I recommend that you discuss what this project is with your partners and or family, but please do not discuss anything said by others participating. If your partners or family would like to discuss this project with me, I am happy to do so however I can't discuss any information that you or others participants have disclosed to me. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage, for any reason and without further questioning. A draft transcript will be made available for any comments and corrections. Also a summary of the results will be sent or given to you.

If you would like to take part in this project or have any questions please contact me via phone: [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED].so we can arrange a suitable time for the focus group and or interview.

As this project is part of my Masters Thesis at the University of Waikato, I have supervision from two lecturers at the university; they are Dr Otilie Stolte and Associate Professor Darrin J Hodgetts. If you have any concerns about this project please contact either Otilie, on [REDACTED] ext [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED]. Or Darrin, on [REDACTED] ext [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED].

This project has received ethics approval from the ethics committee of the Psychology Department, University of Waikato.

Thank you, yours sincerely,

Esmae McKenzie-Norton BSocSci (Hons)

Appendix 2: Consent Form

University of Waikato Psychology Department

CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT'S COPY

Research Project: How do men express themselves emotionally?

Name of Researcher: Esmae McKenzie-Norton.

Name of Supervisors: Dr Otilie Stolte and Associate Professor Darrin Hodgetts

I have received an information sheet about this research project or the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had the chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research project and consent to the interview or focus group being audio-taped. I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee (Dr Robert Isler, phone: [REDACTED] ext. [REDACTED], e-mail [REDACTED])

Participant's Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

=====

University of Waikato Psychology Department

CONSENT FORM

RESEARCHER'S COPY

Research Project: How do men express themselves emotionally?

Name of Researcher: Esmae McKenzie-Norton

Name of Supervisors: Dr Otilie Stolte and Associate Professor Darrin Hodgetts

I have received an information sheet about this research project or the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had the chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research project, and I consent to the interview / focus group being audio-taped. I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee.

Participant's Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Demographic Sheet

Demographic Information

This information will only be used for demographics and I will be the only person with access to this form. You do not have to answer any question if it is your preference.

1. What age range do you fit into?

18-22	23-27	28-32	33-37	38-42	43-47
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2. What ethnic group do you identify with predominantly?

NZ European/Pakeha	NZ Maori Iwi:	Australian Anglo Saxon	European Anglo Saxon	Tongan
Samoan	Chinese	Indian	South African	Other <i>(please specify)</i>

3. What is your current relationship status?

.....

4. Do you have any children?

No	Yes
----	-----

4. a. If Yes, How many?

5. Do you own your own home?

No	Yes
----	-----

5. a. If Yes, How many?

6. What do you do for a living?

.....

7. What level of education do you have?

.....

8. Have you travelled overseas?

No	Yes
----	-----

8. a. If Yes, What was the reason/s ? eg: Holiday, O.E.

.....

Cut-----

9. What is your name:

10. What pseudonym/nick name would you like me to use when I refer to what you have discussed?

Focus Group nick name	Interview nick name
First preference	First preference
Second preference	Second preference
Third preference	Third preference

Appendix 4: Focus Group Outline

Focus Group - Researcher's Outline:

Introduction:

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group.

A few things I have to go through before we begin:

- *Firstly, your name will not appear in any part of my thesis, I am bound by ethics so I can not repeat anything said here tonight. Out of respect for others in this focus group, I would suggest that if you talk about this focus group with anyone you only discuss the things you have said.*
- *Secondly, I will transcribe the conversations from tonight and you will each receive a printed copy to make any corrections to or request removal of anything you've said. Everyone's nickname will appear next to what they've said.*
- *Thirdly, you have the right to withdraw at any time without further questioning, you have the right to withdraw your printed information before February 2010. You do not have to answer any question if you don't want to.*

Procedure:

Questions which will be asked during stage 1 – Media examples from participants:

- *Now we will talk about each person's media example, This will include each person describing the media clip they chose and briefly discussing what type of emotional expression stood out to them and the type of reaction they had to it. After each person presents their clip we can all discuss what we think or feel about that clip.*
1. *Explain or show the media clip you chose*
 2. *What type of emotional expression stood out to you?*
 - *Was it about friendship, fatherhood, embarrassment, love, grief?*
 3. *What was your reaction to it?*
 - *Did it make you laugh or make you feel sad because you can relate to the situation, or did it make you envious of the situation, or did you feel sorry for the man/men/people in the clip, or do you disagree with the type of emotional expression present in the clip?*
 4. *What does everyone else think?*

- *Do we all feel the same way about the clip, if we have seen it previously what reaction did we have about it?*
- *If so do you agree with what...just said about it?*
- *What was your reaction to the clip when you saw it for the first time?*
- *Do you still react that way?*
- *If you haven't seen it what is your response to... description of the clip?*

Take a break, have a beer or drink.

Questions which will be asked during stage 2 – *Top Gear* clips:

- *Now I will present some clips I have chosen from the TV series Top Gear, after each clip we will have a discussion on what sorts of emotional expressions were clear to you and whether you would express yourselves in the same way or whether you would express yourselves differently.*

Clip 1: The caravan trip. THEME: Stuffing up.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B6srQTTEAA#>

Richard is directing James who is trying to back the car up to the caravan and misdirects James who ends up backing the towbar into the caravan wall. James is trying to park the caravan and backs into someone's tent. Jeremy sets the caravan on fire and then someone's tent.

- *What sorts of emotions did you see in that clip?*
- *Have you ever done something goofy like any of the above scenes?*
- *Do you remember what you were thinking as you did it?*
- *How did you feel about what you had done?*
- *Was anyone there to see you do it?*
- *What was their reaction like?*
- *How did you respond to their reaction?*

Clip 2: The challenge of building a car together. THEME: Working together.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOxHV6QfJkg#>

Richard has a good knowledge and ability for putting the car together. Jeremy wants to be capable but is really following directions and trying to tell the others what to do. James is focusing on doing the job properly and isn't as concerned with the time restraints.

- *What sorts of emotions did you see in that clip?*
- *Do you do many projects with other people?*

- *What is an example of a project you've done recently?*
- *Why were you apart of that project?*
- *Can you identify with Richard, Jeremy or James?*

Clip 3: Jeremy interviews Simon with friendly mocking. THEME: Bloke talk.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJuhLCGZR0Q>

Jeremy interviews Simon Cowell, Simon gives Jeremy stick about looking older and some other friendly mocking is bantered back and forth.

- *What sorts of emotions did you see in that clip?*
- *If one of your mates gave you stick about looking older like Simon did to Jeremy, how would you react?*
- *Would you be offended? If so, would you let them know or would you hide it?*
- *Do you think Simon and Jeremy's conversation is a common style of talk between guys?*
- *If so, why do you think guys mock each other when they are friends?*

Conclusion:

- *This concludes the focus group, thank you for participation and if you have any questions or you want to add anything to what has been discussed please call or email me.*
- *There is pizza and beer, please help yourselves.*

Appendix 5: Interview Guide

Interview guide – to be used for one-to-one interview

Participants will have been asked to bring to the interview 3 to 5 objects which are important to them or they have an emotional attachment to. This is to encourage them to construct a narrative around the objects they choose to bring. If the participant does not bring objects with them they will be asked to name and describe the 3 to 5 objects they would have picked and brought with them.

Introduction to the participant:

The intention of this interview is to explore the objects that you have brought with you and what they mean to you.

Questions to ask about background and/or focus group

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Questions for the interview:

I will present each item to the participant and ask the following questions if the participant needs prompting to discuss the items they brought.

1. Where did you get this item from?
2. What does it mean to you?
3. Why did you choose to bring this particular item?
4. Is there a significant story you of this item?

After each item has been discussed individually the following questions will be asked if the participant needs prompting.

1. Which of these items is the most valuable to you?
2. What makes it valuable?

3. Would you consider letting any of these items go (selling, gifting, throwing away)?
4. Are there any items that you think about but no longer have?

The following questions may or may not be asked, depending on the participants need for prompting.

1. What made you choose these items to bring with you today?
2. How did you find the process of choosing items for today's interview?
3. Are there any items you would have liked to bring but didn't/couldn't?
- 3a. If so, what is significant about those items?

Additional questions to ask (q's formulated during the interview):

.....
.....
.....

Closing the interview, the main points of the interview will be summarised for the participant.

1. Is that an accurate summary of our discussion?
2. Is there anything we haven't covered or anything further you'd like to talk about?
3. Do you have any questions about this interview or study?

Appendix 6: Post-Interview Sheet

Post-Interview Schedule

Participant:

Date:

Time:

Duration:

Location:

Equipment used:

General layout of location and how we were positioned:

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Participants demeanour:

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My demeanour:

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General overview of the interview:

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Other notes:

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