Healing from hate-crime in an unsafe and exposed position
Black lesbian women in South Africa

Helande efter hat-brott i en otrygg och utsatt position
Svarta lesbiska kvinnor i Sydafrika
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .................................................................................................................47
BEING A BLACK LESBIAN IN SOUTH AFRICA .................................................................................47
EFFECTS OF THE TRAUMA ...............................................................................................................48
HEALING AND COPING WITH THE TRAUMA ..................................................................................49
THE PROCESS OF HEALING ..............................................................................................................50
REMARKS AND FUTURE RESEARCH ..............................................................................................51
REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................................53
LETTERS OF CONSENT ......................................................................................................................54
INTERVIEW GUIDE ............................................................................................................................56
Abstract
In March 2011 the South African government agreed to address the issue of “corrective rape” due to a petition made by a lesbian activist group. The knowledge of how many women that are raped in South Africa because of their sexual orientation is impossible to achieve since the South African police do not make any distinctions of the motive behind the rape when it is reported. There are “Gay advocacy groups” that claim that there are 10 cases of corrective rape every week just in Cape Town, but these figures have not been confirmed. The gravity of the problem is still eminent as women come forth witnessing about the hate-crimes committed against them.

This study is an attempt to gain knowledge about the situation for these women that exist under the radar of official statistics. Through interviews the study tries to shed light on how the women perceive their situation and through theories from the professional field of social work the aim is to analyse their recovery process, if there is one, after being the survivor of hate crime.

This research shows that the women lived in an exposed position filled with fear, making them alienate from society. The study also found that the women face a number of problems that interfere with their process of recovery and healing. It also disclosed factors that made healing possible even in a violent society like the South African. The support system that surrounded the women was scarce in regards to for example family, but the greater when including the LGBTI community.

The research lifts forth how social work can change the lives for people living in an exposed position in society.
Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Sida for funding us and thereby giving us the opportunity to go on this research journey. It will forever be part of our lives and we will carry the things that we learnt in our future professional life. Travelling to South Africa got us in contact with the Atkins family and we are amazed by their warm hospitality and generosity as they welcomed us into their home with open arms. We would also like to thank the other students from our University, who were out on the field at the same time as us, and our supervisor Johan Gärde. Thanks for the feedback and support.

This has been a difficult task and we would not have pulled through without support from our families and friends. One person that we would like to thank above all is Pernilla Pergert. Without your knowledge, ethical standpoint and expertise we would have been surely lost.

Last, but certainly not least we would like to thank the participants of our study. Our hearts go out to you and we commend your strength and courage. We would like to end these acknowledgments by quoting one of the participants urging for unity in order to accomplish change:

Mandisa: “What I can say is that to the lesbians and gays out there. Being a lesbian, being a gay is not a sickness. Something you should be proud of. Cause we are created by one God all of us, black, white, green. We were created by one creator so killing each other, raping […] let's make it stop 'cause as one we can do anything. If we stick together.”
Disposition

We have chosen to dispose this report as follows: We start with an Introduction to guide our readers into the focus of our research, which leads up to our Aim and research questions. Next we want to give the reader a fuller picture of the context and field of expertise that the research is conducted in through presenting Background and previous research. We start with previous research within our field – social work – that we later on discuss in relation to the result of the study. Malmberg has written the Group therapy section and Dahlström has written about Supportive counselling. The following section is a brief summary of the history of South Africa followed by the section Rape in South Africa that show different angles of the phenomena – Apartheid, inequality and rape, Violent society and rape, Legal system and HIV/AIDS. These sections are written by Dahlström. Next we introduce the reader to the target group – Black lesbians in South Africa, which contains the two key elements for the study – LGBTIs and Hate-Crime. These sections are also written by Dahlström with some contributions by Malmberg. After that we make a thorough explanation of the methods we used to gather and analyse our data – Methodological approach. Here the reader gets the opportunity to follow the research procedure step by step also including Ethical considerations, Reliability and validity and Methodological discussion. These sections are mainly written by Dahlström with Malmberg as the author of Analysis of the interviews. In the next step of our research paper we will put forth our Theoretical frame of reference based on three models/theories that we later use to understand and analyse the data. This section is written by Malmberg. The Results are presented in the following part of the paper, which starts with a short presentation of the participants of the study. The result is displayed in themes – Being a black lesbian in South Africa, Effects of the rape and Healing and coping with the trauma. This section is written by Malmberg. The result is analysed in the next section where we connect the data with the theories that we have chosen. This segment also includes a discussion linking the result to previous research. In Remarks and future research we present some of our remarks concerning the study and point out gaps in the field of research. The last three sections were co-written by the two authors.
Introduction
In the spring of 2012 the authors of this study travelled to Cape Town, South Africa to investigate the situation for black lesbian women that had been raped because of their sexual orientation. Before arriving they had read articles and research about the situation for women that were openly lesbian. The articles and reports portrayed a situation where danger, discrimination and difficulties were part of their life situation. “Corrective rape” was a term that drew the attention of the authors to the exposed position of black lesbian women within the South African society. To understand the position of these women the authors set out to explore what attitudes the black lesbian women met, and how these women themselves described their situation. The term “corrective rape” has its roots in South Africa and is used when men rape lesbians in order to convert them to heterosexuality. This hate-crime is just one of many hate-crimes against lesbian women in South Africa. The hate-crimes ranges from violence and harassment to rape because of their sexual orientation, but in this research the main focus is on how rape as a hate-crime affected the women’s lives. The goal is also to understand what the healing process of the participants looked like and if there was any healing process at all for these women since they live in such harsh realities.

During the visit in South Africa the authors found, through speaking with people and visiting both white and black communities, that the society is strongly religious and that most of the population is Christian. The South African churches are in general negative to homosexuals and have great influence over public opinion in the country. This together with a wide spread aversion against same-sex relations and homosexuals make the South African context complex for the LGBTI:s (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersexual).

Aim and research questions
The aim of this research project was to gain a deeper understanding of the healing process for black lesbian women that have been the target of rape as a hate-crime in South Africa. A second aim was to identify factors that were beneficial and non-beneficial in the process of recovery and thereby be able to point out what kind of interventions that are needed. The research questions were as follows:

- What consequences does the rape as a hate-crime have on the women’s lives?
- Is there a healing process for black lesbian women that have been the target of rape as a hate-crime and if so what does it look like?

These research questions are relevant in order to be able to adapt the interventions of social work with this exposed group in society.
**Background and previous research**

**Social work**
Social work is defined differently in different countries (Meeuwisse, Sunesson & Swärd, 2007). Preliminary results from a study performed by the authors with social workers in South Africa show that they primarily work with advocacy, therapy and were providing shelter for lesbian and heterosexual women. Furthermore, most of the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were focused on advocacy and empowerment, which is common for developing countries (ibid). In the present study the word “counsellor” is used, however no distinction is made between “social worker” and “counsellor”. The reason for this is that there is no clear distinction between the two in this particular study. Even though social work is a disputed term this definition could be seen as universal:

> Professional social workers are dedicated to service for the welfare and self-fulfilment of human beings; to the development and disciplined use of specific knowledge regarding human behaviour and society; to the development of resources to meet individual, group, national and international needs and aspirations; to the enhancement and improvement of the quality of life of people; and to the achievement of social justice (IFSW Europe e.V. p. 4)

**Supportive counselling**
Gorden (2004) describes that the method of supportive counselling is focused on strengthening and the development of an individual’s internal resources. In the development of the individuals coping capacity the aim for the individual is to be able to use her internal resources to be able to master her life and to increase her capacity to in problem solving. Other goals are to decrease the individual’s areas of stress and to better cope with her surroundings and people that she interacts with (Ibid). Gorden explains that the method is used to help and support individuals that have an unstable life situation with a high degree of uncertainty. The groups and individuals that that are benefited by supportive counselling is usually defined by low self-esteem, low motivation and show signs of having a destructive lifestyle or are acting out in a destructive way (Ibid). When the individual is in crisis the counsellor may have to be flexible with availability and even allow a phone call if need be. During the periods of low motivation the counsellor might have to focus on the basic need of the client in order not to keep contact with her (Ibid). Even though the counsellor needs to be flexible Gorden points out that during periods of motivation it is of essence that the counsellor provides the individual with reassurance that the counsellor will constitute a stable point in the individual’s otherwise chaotic world. In supportive counselling the counsellor also has to be aware that the individual often lacks strong relations to a significant other. The supportive
counselling is a self-strengthening method that based on the unstable situation for the individual often results in a relationship between individual and counsellor that last for a long period of time (Ibid).

**Group therapy**
Lorentzon (2010) describes the group as an organism that contains of each individual’s experiences in life. He makes a clear distinction between the self that is evident in a relationship of two and the self that appears in the group and he underlines that the *social self* only can develop in a group environment. Lorentzon means that the suffering that the individual is experiencing is closer attached to the social self and therefore is favourably treated in a group environment. In the group there is not just the listener, but also the witness/es and we become the self that we only speak about in counselling. Lorentzon points out that people often feel alone and alienated in their suffering, even if they intellectually know that they are not. In the group therapy it becomes clear that they are in fact not alone with their experiences (Ibid).

We notice that others can understand our own stories in a new and more real way, and that our own stories can help others. We start to feel that the suffering that once was evil, wrong and lonely actually provides the group with strength and vitality. The pain unites instead of being the cause of separation (own translation Lorentzon, 2010, p. 86).

Sandahl (2007) means that one of the major ideas with group therapy is the fact that we are social beings and exist in relation to others. He refers to research that has concluded that group therapy has better result when compared to individual therapy. Dialog is the healing factor in group therapy and Sandahl mentions that S.H Foulkes (1898-1976) “points out that personal communication leads to a better social integration and thereby to mental health” (own translation, Sandahl, 2007, p.335) Sandahl (2007) compares the safety that needs to be accomplished in the group to the alliance between the counsellor and the patient. One factor that is of importance in group therapy is that the climate is allowing the individuals to be open and give spontaneous reactions to the participants. The safety of the group enables the individuals to learn from and help each other, which strengthens their self-esteem (ibid).

**History of South Africa**
When attempting to depict the history and the present South Africa there is a plethora of events, conflicts and occurrences to take in to account. Few countries have had such a turbulent past with conflicts that have engaged people in every corner of the globe. When attempting to write about events that have occurred in South Africa it is important to underline that the history and present South Africa is described differently depending on
whom you ask and what books you read. Since the first explorer Diaz came to the country in 1488 there has been a race for the vast resources that this country holds. There have been wars fought between the different native tribes and the Boer (Dutch immigrants), the British and different native tribes and the Boer and the British (Afrikagrupperna 2012). South Africa’s dramatic evolution holds eras of both race separation during the apartheid years to latter days of reconciliation and efforts to create a nation that includes all citizens regardless of the colour of the skin. The system of apartheid divided the population of South Africa in to four different racial groups where the white minority (about 13% of the population) where the only ones that had the right to vote. The separation of the races where enforced on all levels of society from trivial things like which park bench to use, to where black persons where allowed to live. A big part of the black population where forced to live in so called “homeland communities” outside the cities and work for in the mining industries (Giddens, 2007). The African National Congress (ANC) was founded in 1912 and was the most important black organization to arrange the struggle against the apartheid system and the government. The ANC was banned by the nationalist government after the Sharpville massacre in 1960 when police opened fire on demonstrator demonstrating against apartheid laws. The ban of ANC forced their leaders to either to go in to exile or facing imprisonment (Afrikagrupperna 2012). The struggle against apartheid continued up till 1991 and in 1994 the first free election was held, the election resulted in a victory for the ANC and Nelson Mandela was elected president. The challenges for South Africa are many, and after the first election great efforts were put in to creating jobs and build houses for the poorest and most disadvantaged. But still today unemployment, crime and HIV/AIDS are problems that South Africa struggle with. Focusing on rebuilding the nation was the first step when ANC took power. The second step was to heal the scars of apartheid that runs deep through the South African society. During Nelson Mandela’s first term as president large effort was placed in reconciling the crimes that had been made during the apartheid years. A truth commission was established and between the years 1996-1998 there was hearings all over South Africa to unveil the crimes that was committed during the apartheid era (Giddens, 2007). The new constitution that was adopted in 1996 is perceived as one of the world’s most progressive and stands in stark contrast to many other constitutions in Africa. The constitution forbids discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexuality, pregnancy, handicap, religion, belief (Giddens, 2007).
Rape in South Africa

Apartheid, inequality and rape
The researcher Helen Moffett sets out in a study called *These women, they force us to rape them* from 2006 to see if and how the heritage of the South African nation is connected to the high levels of rape and sexual violence of today. The findings support the theory that the apartheid background of South Africa, with its categorical divisions between people depending on categories like class, gender and race, partly can explain the high prevalence of sexual violence and rape in the South African society. Moffett (2006) points out that there are deeply entrenched values and norms connected to the role of women within society. Moffett (ibid) describes that there is a widely common assumption about women and in what way they are supposed to live their lives. Today many crimes that are directed towards women are backed up by the idea that women should not exercise their rights too openly and freely. Moffet (ibid) states that if a women speaks back, stands up for herself or in another way exercise her freedom and rights she is risking the reaction of some men that take on as their duty to punish and teach her a lesson. This “logic” is similar to the apartheid ideology that was in place for 50 years. Racial violence was socially accepted and regarded as something that was necessary to correct black people that broke the norms and to teach them where their place was in the hierarchy of society. The system of punishing and correcting women that break the norms in society, is in place to maintain power over women in a hegemonic and patriarchal structure. Moffet (ibid) argues that this is not so different from the apartheid system, except for the fact that the controlled section of society is women instead of non-whites. Moffett highlights two of the key problems that have its roots in the legacy of apartheid. One is that the South African history has led to a society where racial issues of black and white is perceived as having number one priority. This makes issues of gender equality harder to put on the map since they are perceived as secondary to issues of inequality based on race. Secondly there is a tendency of apartheid to drive violence in to the intimate and domestic spaces and in to everyday life of women (ibid).

The situation of women in South Africa is problematic at the best. There has been some progress over the years both with a high number of women within the parliament and on other prestigious positions within society. Even though, for the lot of women in South Africa, there is discrepancy between the rights enshrined in the constitution and their opportunity to exercise their rights without fear of reprisal from community and/or society. Moffett (ibid) explains that there must be and shift in the patriarchal thinking of women as property of South African men if there is any hope of minimizing the gender violence. Moffet (ibid) recognizes
the effect the heritage of apartheid has on society today, but stresses that in order to change the situation for South African women one have to address the existing patriarchal structures and how to deconstruct them.

**Violent society and rape**

When describing the situation in South Africa there are numerous reports as evidence of a highly violent society. In many of the research reports there are statistics and surveys that underline that the violence is very real within the South African society. The focus of this study is on rape and not the many other forms of violence that exists within the society.

Using numbers and statistics to present an accurate picture over how many women that are victims of rape is difficult, but there is research that can complement the picture and give us some information about the magnitude of the problem. Blij and Rumney (2009) states that most of the rape and sexual assaults never get reported which makes comparisons with other countries difficult. Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) use a metaphor of the iceberg of sexual coercion where tip of the iceberg symbolises the reported number of rapes. Through studies and research report more of the iceberg can be revealed, but no one knows its full extent.
Even though comparisons with other countries are difficult there are some staggering statistics that highlights that the number of women that has been sexually assaulted or raped in South Africa is at epidemic proportions.

Jewks et al (2009) interviewed 1738 men in a survey to understand men’s health and use of violence. Their findings showed that 27.6 % of the men interviewed had raped a woman or a girl and almost half of those men stated that they had raped one or more women/girl (ibid). A CIETafrica (Community, Information, Empowerment and Transparency Africa) report suggests that 40 % of reported rapes involve child victims. In addition to the high rates of victimisation in South Africa, very few of the reported cases result in conviction. In a CIETafrica study where 394 rape survivors participated, 272 survivors reported the rape to the police; five cases were referred by the police to the court and only one lead to a conviction (Blij and Rumney, 2009).

Bilj and Rumney also tries to explain why the South African society have such high number of rape and what attitudes and/or myths that lies behind the reason for high occurrence of rape. Bilj and Rumney refer to Jewkes (2005) and Wood (2007) who have sought to disclose the perpetrators attitudes, why they rape and at the same time why there is such a high number of underreporting of rape and sexual violence. Jewkes suggests that there are social attitudes that tolerates and also in some way inspires sexual crimes. Firstly she reveals that there is little social pressure from the families and society on boys who commit these crimes to deter them from committing them. The pressure is instead put on the women who are usually seen as responsible for provoking the man. Secondly the use of coercion is widely accepted including use of violence as long as the men do not break specific cultural norms, like raping someone who has got a higher social status. Jewkes argues that young men are given a carte blanche to do whatever they want as long as they can get away with it. Also incidents of rape are often trivialized especially if they occur within a relationship where sex is seen as obligatory (Jewkes, 2005).

Important findings in research is also put forth by Jewks and Wood where they “found evidence that some women are said to ‘invite rape’, as a result of their conduct which breaks accepted boundaries of female behaviour, such as being intoxicated. In these circumstances women shoulder the burden of blame and responsibility (Bilj and Rumney, 2009, p. 421)”.

The phenomenon of putting the guilt and blame on the woman is not unique for South Africa but can be seen in many legal systems. Research from the USA found that the “character” of the victim influenced the jurors in rape cases, and character traits like breaking
gender roles or acting in a way that may be perceived as careless was taken in to account, effecting the outcome of the trial (Bilj and Rumney, 2009).

Legal system
Charnelle van der Blij and Philip Rumney have done a research report on the changes in South African law reform during the last decade. They focus their report on faults within the South African law system and how rape and sexual violence as a crime is perceived. They also try to interpret what the impacts and limitation of the new law reform from 2007 will have on the criminal justice system in South Africa.

In 1999 a Bill of Sexual Offence was introduced and the bill has been grinded back and forth from 1999 to 2007 resulting in the Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (here after 2007 Act), which contributes to important changes in the law regarding rape in South Africa. One of the most important changes in the 2007 Act is that it changed the definition of rape being based on the person’s lack of consent to “coercive circumstances”. Before the 2007 Act rape was defined as a male having vaginal intercourse with a female without her consent. This represents a shift from focusing on the consent to taking into account the conditions of the sexual encounter. There was also a widening of sexual penetration from only vaginal to including all different ways of penetration.

Section 3 of the 2007 Act defines rape as follows: Any person (‘A’) who unlawfully and intentionally commits and act of sexual penetration with a compliant (‘B’), without consent of B, is guilty of the offence rape (ibid, p. 418).

The widening of the definition of rape in the new law reform is a step forward, but there has not been a dramatic increase in reported cases and there are still problems enforcing the new law as well as problems within the legal system in the treatment of the complains (Bilj and Rumney, 2009).

HIV/AIDS
Bilj and Rumney report - *Attitudes, Rape and Law Reform in South Africa* also emphasises of the deadly combination of HIV and a high number of rapes. Although there is no statistics that relate to the spread of HIV because of sexual assaults and/or rape there are statistics that show that sexual transmissions are to 80 % the reason for the spread of the disease. In a society where there still exists a belief in traditional myths of how to cure HIV and where the number of rapes is extremely high the HIV epidemic is not going to slow down. The myths concerning HIV and how to cure it there are many and they range from curing oneself by having sex with a virgin to the use of traditional which doctor curses that are said to have
healing effects. Another large problem in the struggle to minimize the spread of HIV is the scepticism towards condoms. With a patriarchal society where sex is seen as obligatory in the relationship, the use of condoms within a relationship is usually not widely accepted since many men see the use of condom within a relationship as a signal that their partner has been cheating on them. This results in a fear in the women of suggesting condom use because of the consequences (Bilj and Rumney, 2009).

**Black lesbians in South Africa**

LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersexual)

In December 2011 the Human Rights Watch (hence forth referred to as HRW), released an 86-page report based on 121 interviews with black lesbians and transgender men. The report is called “We’ll Show You you’re a Woman”, and reveals the violence and the discrimination against black lesbians and transgender men in South Africa. Even though hate-crime is directed against transgender men as well as lesbians, this research has focused on the hate-crimes that are targeting lesbians. The report is very extensive and it might be because “corrective rape” is a relatively new phenomenon and that little research has been done on the subject. The report starts by outlining that after the first democratic elections in 1994 and with the new constitution of 1996 South Africa was the first country in the world with a constitution that stated that citizens were not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation. The constitution also delegated the government to create six state institutions that would ensure the equality and inclusion for the citizens including the LGBTI communities. During the early 90’s the LGBTI movement managed through court appeals and hard work to outlaw sodomy and grant same sex marriages the same rights as heterosexual marriages. This and many other changes in the law has led to a constitution that is very progressive and where the LGBTI communities on paper have almost exactly the same rights as other citizens (there are still paragraphs of the constitution that are not totally inclusive). Although the constitution granted the LGBTI communities the same right as other citizens on paper the shifts of social attitudes where not as quick and there is still a wide gap between the public attitudes against LGBTI persons and the constitution. LGBTI persons are still perceived with a great deal of negative attitude within the society and community. This goes hand in hand with different forms of discrimination, including everything from direct violence for breaking gender norms to extreme prejudice visible in many different forms and on all levels of society. This reality becomes more pressing since the state and the legal system is failing to sufficiently enforce the constitutional rights and protections. The report investigates all the different forms of
discrimination and abuse, ranging from murder, beatings and rape to verbal abuse in the streets or to be kicked out of your home or church because of your sexual orientation. The one criterion is that the discrimination and abuse is directed towards black lesbian women and transgender men. These acts are in many cases exercised by individuals or groups but also by state agents like police or judges and discrimination can be found in all parts of the South African society. Interviews made by the HRW describes a rigid system of cultural and sexual norms with fixed positions for how feminine and masculine norms are constructed and perceived and how you as an individual have to live within those norms not to put your self in danger of discrimination or abuse. The report also concludes that there is a difference between lesbians with modest economic resources and lesbians in the middleclass, since the report shows that economic resources can buy you a certain amount of safety (Human Right Watch, 2011).

**Hate Crime**

A definition of hate-crime: A crime motivated by racial, sexual, or other prejudice, typically one involving violence. (Oxford dictionary). The definition of hate-crime seems distinct and easy to use when explaining violence towards the exposed groups. However, the definition demands knowledge of the perpetrator’s intention of the crime, which can be difficult to be certain of. Mason (2006) argues that the violence doesn’t have to be interpreted as motivated by hate. She mentions the fact that there is a common explanation of the violence that target lesbians and gay men that says that the crime is driven by fear. Fear of homosexuality and in some cases fear of the own homosexuality can be the motivation for committing violent acts towards homosexuals. Even though Mason does not dispute this possible explanation she means that the phenomena need to be viewed at from different angles. Mason points out that hate is the dichotomy to love and that when you use the term “hate-crime”, you should also be able to use the term “love-crime”.

In a general sense, we experience love for the thing that we value and to which we are attached; this may be a group of people, an individual or a way of life. These affiliations are not necessarily a problem. They are only experienced as love-prejudice when we “overgeneralize our categories of attachment and affection”; that is, when we care about something more than we can really afford to. In such instances we will hate (love-prejudice) those who we believe are responsible for threatening, violating or thwarting the attachments that we value. […] Indeed hate cannot exist “unless something one values has been violated” (Mason, 2006 p. 273-274).

Through her research Mason has come into contact with the heterosexual perpetrators, which led her to believe that there are more ways of explaining the crimes towards homosexuals. For
example Mason says that the crime committed towards a lesbian can be derived from the man feeling otiose as she as the homosexual woman does not desire him as a heterosexual man. Mason does not say that the crime does not derive from hate or fear, but that love can also be a motivational ground and claims that using the term hate or fear as the only explanatory motives for the crimes committed against lesbians and gay men, limits our understanding of the phenomena.

The HRW report portrays the different forms of hate crime that are directed towards lesbians in South Africa. One of the hate-crimes is the phenomena of “corrective rape” as an act where men or groups of men rape known lesbians or women they believe to be lesbians in order to “correct” them and transform them into heterosexuals (Human Right Watch, 2011). In the mid-2000s there was a series of extremely severe hate-crimes including rape and murder that was directed against known lesbians. These attacks, which occurred in a short period of time, led to a strong reaction from the LGBTI community and placed the targeting of lesbians on the map. In one of these extreme cases the court motivated the crime as based on prejudice or as a hate-crime. This was the case of Zoliswa Nkonyana that was beaten and killed by a gang of about 20 young men in 2006. In the other cases the survivors defined the reason for the attack to be linked with their sexuality that was however not defined by the court (HRW, 2011). Drawing a clear line between what is crime and what is hate-crime based on sexual orientation is extremely difficult. To be a 100% certain one has to interview the perpetrator of his motives. The knowledge of how many women that are raped in South Africa because of their sexual orientation is difficult to achieve since the South African police do not make any distinctions of the motive behind the rape when it is reported. There are “Gay advocacy groups” that claim that there are 10 cases of corrective rape per week just in Cape Town (Reproductive health matters, 2011), but these figures have not been confirmed. In March 2011 the South African government agreed to address the issue of “corrective rape” due to a petition made by a lesbian activist group (ibid).

In this study the crimes against the participants have been defined as hate-crimes since they themselves define them as crimes based on their sexual orientation.

**Methodological approach**
The research questions are not measurable in numbers; the aim is rather to describe the situation and life experiences of the women’s trauma and recovery process up until today. Therefore an inductive and qualitative approach has been chosen for the present research project in order to get the respondent’s ideas and feelings and to gain a greater understanding
of how the participants perceive their situation (Bryman, 2008). The ontological and epistemology stance for the study is based on social constructionism and the idea that society is based on social constructions that we continuously create and recreate in relation to our self and in relationship with others (Bryman, 2008). This view on society means that the roles that we are given or choose to take can be changed depending on society and other person’s relation and view of us. When comparing social constructionism to more traditional ontological views like essentialism and realism there are assumptions that greatly separate social constructionism from the traditional ontology. Burr states that social constructionism is critical and creates a distance to essentialism and realism (Angelöw and Johnsson, 2007). One of the cornerstones of social constructionism is knowledge is historically and culturally unique. It sees the language as a condition for thoughts and as a form of social interaction. It also focuses on social practices, social processes and interactions between humans and structures. The social constructionists points out that there is no essential or pre-determined human nature, there is no essence or inner core in humans or things that make them what they are. Instead humans are the result of the social world that surrounds them and its processes. The social constructionists stress that our nature as human beings are a result of our environment and the social interactions we take part in and those that takes place around us rather than being based on biological factors. With this background the social constructionists argue that it is useless to look for objective facts in social sciences since there are none. Everything depends on what perspective or interest the researcher emanates from or how the researcher positions him or herself. Social constructionists maintain that knowledge is historically and culturally unique, including social sciences. This means that the traditional theories that have claimed to present objective facts of human or social nature is tied to its historical and cultural context. Constructionists maintain that our understanding of the world is not based on a objective reality but instead on the realities that are presented to us from others, both living and dead. We are born into a pre-set world where truths exist from the first day that we open our eyes; social structures and frames of references exist before we do and they are internalised in our persona, as we grow older through the use of our language and through our intellect. With this view a social constructionist always have to be critical since there are no pure and clean facts. Facts always have to be interpreted depending on surrounding circumstances and situations and focus of research should emphasise on processes between humans and processes within the social practice that they take part in (Ibid).
To conduct this research, qualitative interviews have been chosen combined with literature studies and observations. When the authors travelled to South Africa the understanding of the South African context was very limited, even though research and literature, connected to the research field and to the country in general had been consulted. Even though no strict ethnological observations have been performed, the authors have been in South Africa over a period of time. Participants were included from Cape Town and Johannesburg and this yielded the opportunity to explore the situation for the women in two major cities in South Africa. Both society’s up and downsides and how the people living there interact and position themselves have been observed. Even though these observations are not ethnologically strict they provide the research with depth and broaden the understanding of the South African society and the context where the participants live.

**Interviews as a method**
Since the interest of the study were in the women’s subjective experiences of their trauma and their healing processes the interviews that were conducted was qualitative semi-structured interviews. The reason for using semi structured interviews are that the interviews where centred on a subject that the women, even though taking part voluntarily, have strong feelings connected with. The semi structured interviews questions are more flexible and provides the respondent with a greater degree of freedom to phrase an answer in a way that he/she feels comfortable with. There is also an opportunity for the researchers to ask questions that is not part of the interview guide but touches on subjects that the respondent have put forth (Bryman. 2008). The authors have both been participating in the interviews except in one case where the respondent did not want the man to participate. The interviews have been recorder on a Zoom 3000 voice recorder and then saved to the author’s hard drives on their computers. One of the interviews was conducted with help of an interpreter since the respondent didn’t feel comfortable speaking in English.

**Selection of interview respondents**
The focus of the research was the healing process of black lesbian women that claim they had been raped because of their sexual orientation. In order to find women that filled those criteria NGOs that work with this particular group of women were contacted. The interviews with women in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa are the result of cooperation with NGOs in the two different cities. The NGOs that have helped us with respondents are FEW located in Johannesburg, Free Gender and IAM the two latter from Cape Town. Altogether five women were interviewed, two women from FEW, two women from IAM and one
woman from Free Gender. Both the women and the NGOs have been given a letter of consent of voluntary participation in the study. The authors have met with four of the respondents on the NGOs premises and one in her home and have used an interview guide as a backbone for the interviews.

This way of selecting samples is purposive as it targets a specific group that is believed to be able to provide us with information regarding the research questions. The nonprobability sampling will not give us informants that represent the larger population (Neuman, 2006), but this was never of any interest of this study. The reason for focusing on this particular group is that the literature that the authors have taken part of and the organizations that they met during the trip underlined the marginalization of the group.

Problems in finding interview respondents
The search for respondents began even before arriving in South Africa with little success, but the authors believed that this problem would be solved when they were physically in the country. Well in the country the authors started to reach out to different organizations in Cape Town that was working with the group of interest and found out that it was not any easier. The need for getting in touch with gatekeepers became clear, but it was difficult to find out who those were. Over the months the authors spent in South Africa they have been in contact with approximately 15 organizations but only the three presented above where able to get them in contact with women that filled the specific criteria. In trying to find respondents the choice was taken to include organizations in Johannesburg. In Johannesburg one organization said that they could help with respondents, which led to a 5 day trip there to conduct interviews. Johannesburg and the organization there opened up new doors and if there would have been more time left in the project it would have been spent there to further deepen the understanding of the situation for these women. The problem in finding respondents for the project could be due to the fact that the focus was fairly narrow. One other reason can be the fact that the choice of topic is difficult to talk about and it is hard to find women who are willing to openly speak to strangers about their trauma. Women and organizations also explained that journalist making sensational scoops about “corrective rape” might have influenced the women’s attitudes towards strangers wanting to interview them. One of the women working for one of the organizations asked if it would be interesting to interview the women on the site where they had been raped. This points towards the unprofessionalism and inhumanity that some journalists treat these women with, and also what the women expect “interviewers” to want. When talking to the organizations two of the representatives of the
organizations said that they got little feedback when helping foreign researchers, sometimes they never get a copy of the research and sometimes when they do it’s written in a language that they can’t read. The last factor that might seem insignificant but was evident is that Dahlström is a man and many of the organizations look with scepticism on male researcher on a subject of this matter. On a few occasions when having phone contacts with organizations both Dahlström and Malmberg could speak with the same person but when Dahlström got a negative answer Malmberg got a positive. This highlights how delicate the subject of the research is and how deeply rooted the scepticism against men are.

**Construction, consideration and preparation of the interview guide**
Since the original goal of the research was to include interviews from both counsellors and rape survivors there were two different interview guides. One that was directed towards the women and one directed towards the counsellors. The interview guide for the women consisted of four different topics. The first topic was background questions that worked as an icebreaker with basic questions like their age and social status. Here it was also underlined that the interview could be aborted paused at any time if the respondent did not feel comfortable in the situation. The second topic was called questions regarding the incident. The choice was made to define the traumatic experience as *incident*. The reasons for this is to avoid putting a nametag to the trauma and instead let the respondent use whatever words she felt comfortable with. The questions in this section are very open and are so for a reason. When talking about traumatic experiences like rape in this case, it is of crucial importance to make the respondent feel that she is the one that decides what to disclose and what not to. This section consists mainly of questions directly connected with the trauma and what the women felt, thought and did.

The third topic is focused on the healing process and trauma treatment. The intentions of this section were to explore what support and treatment the women have had if any. Many of the questions are connected with the women’s contact with professional help and counsellors. The forth topic contained questions about the future and what hopes and dreams the women had for their future. This section also includes questions about how the women felt about the interview situation and the questions that we had asked them. When making the interview guide the authors received a lot of help from Pernilla Pergert, doctor of medicine at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. The authors sent her the first rough draft of the interview guide, which was revised the interview guide three times resulting in the guide that used.
Methodological procedure
The journey to South Africa began in the fall of 2011 when the authors applied and where granted the Sida scholarship for Minor Field Studies, MFS. The main focus for the authors when they were awarded the scholarship was to go to the Democratic Republic of Congo to study the work that the Panzi hospital in the eastern parts of the country was doing for women that had been raped. Throughout fall and winter a lot of effort was put securing a place at the hospital, but just before Christmas the organization said that they could not accommodate.
The focus of the research that the authors wanted to conduct in the Democratic Republic of Congo was centred on the sexual violence that is used as a weapon by the guerrilla directed towards the women living in the eastern part of the country. As the plan fell through the focus shifted to South Africa and Cape Town. The authors had read that there was a phenomena called “corrective rape” in South Africa where lesbian women were being raped and sometimes murdered because of their sexual orientation. This phenomenon had first been observed in South Africa and seemed to be something unique for the country and there seemed to a lack of knowledge surrounding these women. The decision was made to go to Cape Town because there were many organizations in the city that worked with LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersexual) questions. They were thought to become the channel to reach persons that could describe the situation for the LGBTI community and the challenges that they faced. Since the authors knew that it might be difficult to get in contact with the rape survivors they also had research questions that were focused on the counsellors that worked with treatment for women that had been raped. By interviewing the counsellors the hope was to understand the phenomena of “corrective rape” and how and if the counsellors worked differently with lesbian women and if they addressed “corrective rape” in their treatment. It was also a goal to problematize the term “corrective rape” and find out about the counsellors knowledge and experience of the “phenomena”.
These are the research questions that we started with:

- How can a counsellor help the rape survivors who have been raped discriminatory (known as “corrective rape”) to begin a healing process?
- What does the healing process look like, in the trauma treatment of rape survivors (discriminatory rape)?
- Are there any specific factors that need to be addressed if the victim is raped discriminatory since they are targeted because of their sexual orientation?
- If discriminatory rape is not addressed, we would like to understand the underlying reasons why?
If discriminatory rape is addressed, we would like to know how?
The focus of this research report has since then shifted to focus to the women and their experiences of hate crime and rape, together with their process of healing after the trauma. The reason for changing the focus of the report was that it was difficult to get in contact with any counsellors. When the research focus first was formalized the thought was that it would be easier to get interviews with professionals, but it turned out that the organizations did not have counsellors working in the house. They only had contact with counsellors that they could engage if needed and they were all very busy. In the beginning the authors tried to get hold of counsellors, but it was only in Johannesburg, the last week of the trip that they got in contact with two.

The method used can be connected to the ethnographical research method described in Bryman (2008). Limitations to the ethnographical approach are in a large extent due to the difficulties in getting hold of respondents and that the areas where these women lives are dangerous and difficult for researcher to access. With the scarcity of respondents and difficulties to get in contact with NGOs that could actually help led to many weeks of just reading previous research and literature on the research subject.

**Analysis of the interviews**
The interviews have been transcribed verbatim with Dahlström transcribing two interviews and Malmberg transcribing three. The interviews have been transcribed using a computer program called F5 that is a transcription program for Mac.

Neuman (2011) describes the process of analysing qualitative data in order to gain a greater knowledge about the gathered material. In order to organize the transcribed material we used the three steps of coding – open coding, axial coding and selective coding – defined by Strauss in Neuman (ibid).

The first step according to Strauss is the open coding where the goal is to form themes in the material. These themes are not set, but are changeable later on in the process (ibid). The authors separately read through the interview transcripts and marked meaning bearing sentences and made a comment about the theme of the passage. After that this work was compared and in the occasions that the authors had marked the same sentence it was copied into a Excel document mapping similar themes together under an initial code. In order to get an overview of the material the excel sheet was printed and the different themes were cut out in each interview and piled together. The second step in Strauss’s coding process is “axial coding” where the codes formed during the “open coding” is reviewed and reformed (ibid).
be able to change and rearrange the themes and codes more easily all the interviews were imported to NVivo. Going through the interviews and the themes created nodes were made in the program and when writing about what the nodes represented in analytic memos it became clear that some of the nodes were connected and some could be merged under a new name. Neuman (2011) points out that the analytic memos are of great importance in the qualitative research and help to form new hypothesis and themes. The last step is to go through the data again to identify the cases that support the generated themes in the data.

**Ethical considerations**

As students at Ersta Sköndals Högskola the authors have taken part of Vetenskapligarådets publikation *God forskningssed* by Gustafsson, Herméren and Pettersson (2011) on how to conduct research based on ethical values and respect for the respondents that participated in the study. The authors have also read and observed the Swedish law 2003:460 concerning ethical considerations when researching on human beings and have had them as guidelines for the research. The ethical considerations put forth in the law 2003:460 and vetenskapliga rådets publikation god forskningssed outlines the principles of ethical research that have been followed. The four paragraphs are centred on information and approval, consent and utilization of the research (Gustavsson et al. 2011). When contacting the NGOs that helped with getting in contact with respondents they were e-mailed with a copy of the letter of consent (see appendix) and the research project was explained over telephone or in e-mail. At one occasion it was possible to meet with one of the organization face to face to describe the research plan and the research goals. The NGOs were also informed that the authors were students on a bachelor level and received information of the responsible authority of their university, and how they could get in contact with the university if they had any questions about the research. Before the interviews the NGOs were asked to inform the women about the research project so they would be well informed at the time of the interview. When meeting with the women they were provided with a letter of consent, which they were asked to read through carefully. After they had read the document they were asked if they had any questions or if there was any part of the letter that they did not fully understand. Since not all of the women that were interviewed had English as their first language the authors also talked with the women before the interview was begun to make sure that they had understood what they were taking part in. The risks connected to participating in this study was formalised in the letter of consent. It was also underlined that their participation was voluntary and that they at any time could stop or abort the interview. In the letter of consent and talking to the women...
it was also explained that if they did not want to take part of the study the information that they have provided would be deleted. In four out of five interviews the informants signed the letter of consent. In one occasion the informant gave her approval of taking part in the study verbally, and her approval was recorded on the voice recorder. All of the interviews where in English since neither of us spoke any South African language beside English (South Africa has 11 official languages). At one occasion the interview had to be conducted with help of a translator. The translator was the person that worked for the NGO and who had helped us get in contact with the woman. The respondent herself asked to use the NGO person as a translator, and since the translator knew the respondent and her personal history it was thought of as not presenting any ethical problems. If a translator from outside the NGO had been contacted it was likely that the woman would have chosen not to tell her story and from what the authors could tell the woman did not have any difficulties in using the translator. Throughout this research fictive names instead of the women’s real name are used. This is due to the dangers connected to being openly lesbian in South Africa. The areas or locations that the respondents talk about in the interviews are not disclosed in order to keep their identities anonymous.

**Reliability and validity**

In terms of reliability and validity there are always challenges for a researcher with a qualitative approach. Bryman (2008) describes that many of the qualitative researchers today have questioned the relevance of reliability and validity in qualitative research. Reliability and validity are terms that as definitions lead one to think of measurement and numbers. The emphasis of reliability and validity that Lecompte and Goetz put forth in Bryman (2008) are divided into four different categories. The first category is *external reliability* that relates to in what degree the study is replicable for other researchers. Since it is impossible to fixate a social environment and social activity the chance for other researchers getting the same answers from the women interviewed in this study is highly unlikely. But with the same interview guide and same connection with gatekeepers it is not unlikely that the women will answer similarly. The fact that the authors found that they got different answers and were approached differently would suggest the difficulties in reproducing this study. The differences could be interpreted as being related gender issues, which comes with expectations, especially when approaching this kind of research.

LeCompte and Goetz say that to be able to replicate an ethnographic study the researcher needs to take a similar social role as the researchers before him. Otherwise what the
researchers hear and see will not be comparable with the results that the researcher before him came up with. The second category is internal reliability and has to do with the members of the research team having the same opinion when interpreting what they are experiencing. Throughout this study the authors have continuously discussed how to interpret the research finding, this to strengthen the internal reliability of the study. The third category is the internal validity that is described by LeCompte and Goetz. This means that there should exist a good coherence between the phenomena that a researcher observes and the theories that he/she develops. LeCompte and Goetz highlights that the internal validity tend to be a strength when it comes to qualitative research since the researchers have spent longer periods of time within the context that they are portraying. This gives the researcher a greater possibility to ensure a greater deal of consistency between concepts and observation. In this study it would have been extremely hard to fully understand the respondent’s conceptual world without spending time in Cape Town and in Johannesburg and without meeting the people living there. It is presumable that the time spent in South Africa together with the extensive amount of literature on the subject of trauma and trauma recovery that has guided this research has worked to further strengthen the internal validity of the study. The last categories that LeCompte and Goetz have is the external validity, this category is concerned with to what extent the results of the research report can be generalized over a bigger population and to other social environments and circumstances. This category is one that presents problems to qualitative researchers, because qualitative research often is based on case studies and interviews with a smaller number of informants. This is something that becomes evident in this study since it consists of a small number of informants and it will not be possible to draw conclusions over a bigger population. It is also a fact that the women in this study all lived in large cities and that their experiences can differ from women that lived in the rural parts of the country.

**Methodological discussion**
As described earlier there have been large difficulties in getting respondents that wanted to participate in the research. The focus of the research was black lesbian women that claim that they have been raped because of their sexual orientation. In South Africa there are tens of thousands of rapes every year so there are a lot of women that you presumable could talk to, but there are few who are willing to talk about their experiences. Rape is something that is highly stigmatizing within the South African society, so the fact that the study focused on interviewing women that had been raped sets one limitation. The fact that the focus was on
black lesbian women who claimed that they had been rape due to their sexual orientation further limits the number of women that are willing to talk to researchers. This outlines very clear limitations of who to include in the study and who not to. All the women interviewed in this study are survivors of rape and they are all black South Africans. The women have been of various ages and from different parts of Cape Town and Johannesburg. Due to limitations in time it was not possible to travel and contact organizations in other parts of the country. The two cities are the biggest cities in South Africa with the highest numbers of NGOs working with treatment and awareness regarding the group of interest for the study. There might have been a thicker result if the women had been interviewed twice but with the complexity of the women’s situation it was decided that the women should not be put through a second interview. It is also unlikely that they would have agreed to participate in a second interview.

Our role as interviewers
When travelling to another country to do research the situation is very different from the one back home, this is something that became painfully evident for us. First of all it was a new environment and as a newcomer to a country it takes time to adapt to society, the people who live there and to get to know the customs that are in place. One thing that we early had to be aware of was that our white skin colour carried with it many expectations on how you behave and what you do. The women that we interview where black and most of the people working for the NGOs where black and in South Africa there is still a great division between white and black/coloured. There is still a lot of animosity between the groups and skin colour determines to a large extent where you work, live and how you are supposed to act/interact. Class and education were also aspects that came in to play and were connected with our skin colour. We were perceived as rich, well-educated Europeans and this carries with it many ideas of how to interact and behave towards us. This became evident in interview situations when we felt that there was an uneven power balance between the women and us. We tried to balance this out in any way we could for example by positioning ourselves lower than the women, or to find ways to make the respondent feel as comfortable and in control of the situation as possible. Another problem with the interviews was that we before our trip to South Africa had done very few interviews and no one on a subject as difficult as interviewing rape survivors. This in combination with the scarcity of respondents made us very precautious during the interviews. The most important thing for us as researchers was to treat their stories with respect and not make these women feel that we exploited them. We did
not in any way want to find ourselves in a situation where we could be close to a secondary traumatization of our respondents, which was a very difficult task. Looking back at the interviews we are very proud over our achievement. To reconnect with the fact that Dahlström is a man and how that presented a problem, many of the women that we met had extremely traumatic experiences of men and they did not trust them. As mentioned before in one of the interviews Dahlström was not allowed to take part. The fact that Dahlström wanted to conduct research on a topic that focused on black lesbian women and their experiences made some of the women to think that he was gay. We later found out that on one occasion the NGO that we worked together with told the woman that we were going to interview that Dahlström was gay. We believe that this was one of the reasons why this woman let him be part of the interview.

Reflecteds of race and gender
Living in South Africa for ten weeks gave us insight in how life and in particular how people relates to gender and gender equality. It was clear to us that there are certain traits connected to being male and female. For example we got many reactions on the fact that Malmberg as a woman was driving the car and motorcycle instead of Dahlström. This can be seen as a trivial example, but it shows how deeply rooted the norms of gender are. We believe that the fact that we were two white students from Europe provided us with a greater degree of freedom in breaking the norms connected to our gender, but we still felt that there was a distinct line that we could not cross. The fact that we were white affected all parts of social interaction and throughout our stay in South Africa we became more and more sceptical to white people. In every longer conversation that we entered with a white person we anticipated a comment that in some way connected a trait to a specific race. Unfortunately we were proven right most of the time. It is not only the whites in South Africa that are racists. The race issue impregnates the whole society even with apartheid abolished, and there are invisible lines dividing the society into black, white, coloured and Indian territories. When we were in the townships we crossed that invisible line and were met with both wonder and hate. The white people that we were in contact with told us to be extremely careful when entering the townships. We even got the suggestion to bring some strong young men to defend us if necessary. Fear and prejudice about the other races influence life for many in South Africa and it seems like a long way to reconciliation. The fear also limits the area for life and we noticed that there were few social places where people of different skin colour could interact. We believe that this affects society in general. We would like to add that our experience of our week in
Johannesburg in some way altered this notion of South Africa. Before we went there we had heard so many horrific stories, both in Sweden and in Cape Town, about the city and were surprised by the openness and mixture of people. We are well aware, though that week does not give us the full picture of the place, but it widened our view of South Africa at a whole.

**Theoretical frame of reference**

In the section that follows the theories that have been used to gain a deeper understanding of the categories and the data will be presented. The outcome of tying the theories with the data is presented under *Analysis*.

**Trauma and recovery by Judith Lewis Herman**

The first theory that is used in the analysis is Judith Lewis Herman (1992) theory about trauma and recovery to gain a deeper understanding of the process of healing. Even though she is a white feminist with roots in the westernized world, her theories are very relevant to the findings of this study as her focus is on traumatic areas like war, torture and rape and the victim’s recovery process. The book is from 1992 but it is still very relevant today and the institute of psychotherapy in Gothenburg therefore decided to make a reprint in 2007. Judith Lewis Herman is a clinical professor in psychology at Harvard medical school and educational director at the Victims of Violence Program at Cambridge Hospital, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her model is based on different theories within the field of trauma and recovery and on interviews with trauma patients.

Herman (1992) divides the process of recovery after a trauma in three different stages; *Safety, Remembrance* and mourning and *Reconnection*. Herman describes the trauma as something that shatters the self and the relationship to significant others and society. The meaning in life is robbed from the person and the trauma deprives people from their identity in relationship to others. The isolation and helplessness that the trauma causes can be countered by empowerment and reconnection. Herman argues that the notion of the self is created in relationship with others during the early years and when that is shattered by the trauma you need to go through this process all over again. Herman’s theory is applicable in every trauma, but she specifically mentions rape and war throughout her book. She means that the rape more often than other types of violent crime causes posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and that the rape itself is in fact designed to cause psychological trauma. It is carried out in contempt for the victim’s self-sufficiency and dignity. Herman points out the importance of support from the community surrounding the woman and the role that the society plays in the healing process. The relationships that the woman has become crucial and
can be mitigatory, but they can also be the source of complication, enhancing the trauma. The opinions of the woman as a temptress and that she in some way can be blamed for the man’s behaviour damages the self-sense and makes healing difficult. In the same way the society plays a big role in making clear that rape is unacceptable by addressing the case in court and penalizing the perpetrator. Herman means that the legal system foremost is created to protect men and that even though rape is regulated, it is not forbidden. Furthermore she argues that women often are invisible in the legal system and points out that the fact that there are so few rape cases that results in conviction supports this thesis. This deficit impedes the healing process, but it doesn’t make it impossible (Herman 1992).

Three stages of recovery
As mentioned Herman divides the healing process in three stages. The process is not linear and she prefers referring to the process to a spiral of healing since the traumatized person can go back and forth in the stages. She admits that the stages are a simplified way of describing the recovery process and that every process is unique (Herman, 1992).

Safety
The first step in the recovery process is safety. Herman means that no other steps in the therapeutic work can be begun if this is not achieved. Since the victim of rape is robbed of control this stage involves regaining control. The safety is gained through control and Herman for example mentions financial security, food, sleep and exercise as first steps in controlling the own body. The next step is to gain control over the surroundings. The traumatized victim needs a safe haven where she can feel sure of not being the target of attack. This step involves assessing the actual dangers in the surrounding and taking precautions in order to avoid them. If the traumatized person has a functioning social network this can be involved in the process of creating a safe surrounding (Herman, 1992).

Remembrance and mourning
In this stage Herman presses the importance of recreating the traumatic event. During the previous stage the trauma is often described without feelings and Herman means that if this way of telling the story remains there is no way of recovery. The traumatized person needs to include the trauma in her life story and recognize that there is a before and after the trauma. In order to let go of the trauma and find what the perpetrator didn’t destroy the woman has to be able to mourn what was lost. As the story of the trauma is revealed with details and feelings, the woman gains control over her life story. Since mourning is feared and forces the woman
to return to the trauma Herman means that it is common that the therapeutic work stagnates in this stage. Besides being a difficult task the woman can fear that once she starts to mourn she will not be able to stop. Another reason not to mourn is the feeling of not being willing to give also that to the perpetrator. Even though Herman means that the work of reconstructing the trauma and dealing with its effects never is completed the major goal in this stage is achieved when the patient manages to include the trauma as a part of her life but it is in the past with the rest of her memories (Herman, 1992).

**Reconnection**
The focus of the third stage is the present and the future. As the woman has mourned what she lost due to the trauma she needs to find out who she is now. She needs to create a new future from a safe position. Herman divides this stage in four different tasks. Learning how to fight is the first task, which includes facing you fears. She points out that the goal is not to extinguish the fear but rather to learn how to live with it and turn it into something positive. The fear that Herman means is the pathological fear caused by the trauma that limits the life of the victim. When it is clear for the victim that the perpetrator bears all the blame for the event that caused the trauma it is possible to address behavioural changes in order to be safer. The second task is to reconcile with oneself. In this stage the person is in control over herself and is not obsessed by the trauma anymore. The focus is not on the past but on the present and foremost on the future where there is room for both the victim and the survivor. In this stage it is also time to reconnect with the society and people in the surrounding. A reasonable trust has been established and it is possible to have relationships that do not alternate between fear and desperate need. This is also the stage when the person who lived through a trauma can start to focus on others. She claims that a significant minority sees political and/or religious connections to what happened to them and engage in trying to change these circumstances. Through helping others the survivor joins others in the same position as herself and find strength and power in sharing the same goal. There is also a sense of making the trauma stand for something else that destruction. The story of the trauma can be used to help others and thereby gain a new meaning for the woman (Herman, 1992).

**Commonality**
The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the group bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores her humanity (Herman, 1992, p.313).
Herman (1992) identifies the group as an important ingredient in the recovery from a trauma. The reconnection of the social attachments that was broken due to the trauma can be reconnected through meeting others in the same situation. When it becomes clear to the individual that he/she is not alone in the process, but can find strength in the group. Herman also means that the group can be destructive and presses that it is of importance to be aware of the group characteristics so that it can be matched to the stage in the recovery process the individual is. She outlines three different group models connected to the three stages of recovery:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Therapeutic goal</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Boundaries</th>
<th>Cohesiveness</th>
<th>Tolerance of conflict</th>
<th>Time limit</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Now</td>
<td>Taking care of oneself</td>
<td>Homogeneous</td>
<td>Flexible, wide</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Open or co-occurrence</td>
<td>Pedagogic</td>
<td>Twelve-step program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Remembrance and mourning</td>
<td>The past</td>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>Homogeneous</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Defined limit</td>
<td>Goal oriented</td>
<td>Survivor group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Reconnection</td>
<td>Now, future</td>
<td>Interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>Heterogeneous</td>
<td>Stabile, slowly regrouping</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Not structured</td>
<td>Group psychotherapy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**An ecological view of psychological trauma and trauma recovery by Mary R. Harvey**

The ecological view is inspired by natural science, which is concerned with how plants and organisms adopt to their surrounding environment (Giddens, 2007). Harvey means that trauma treatment generally has overlooked the importance of the ecological view and presents a multidimensional alternative of understanding trauma recovery. She puts the individual trauma in a wider context and points out that where the trauma is possible the community in some way are failing to provide safety for its inhabitants. “Racism, sexism and poverty can be thought of as environmental pollutants – i.e., ecological anomalies that foster violence and threaten to overwhelm the health-promoting resources of human communities (Harvey, 1996,
Harvey says that there are three different areas that combined influence how the individual can deal with a traumatic event: Person, event and environment.

Harvey mentions different variables in the Person category as age, personality, affects, coping skills and developmental stage. She points out that these characteristics often are taken into consideration in the therapeutic work, but claims that the ecological way of viewing the individual is overlooked. This includes how the cultural influence on viewing the victimization place a big role in individual’s way of responding to the trauma. The event category is regarding the trauma itself. Severity of the trauma, physiological damage, violence used and degree of humiliation are factors that Harvey exemplifies with and that are commonly apart of treatment. Harvey adds the ecological view by pressing the importance of understanding the details surrounding the trauma that can be of significance to the victim or the close community. The environment is third part in Harvey’s model and it consists of factors like the support system and how it is able to strengthen the individual in coping with the trauma. When it comes to the ecological view that Harvey strives for she means that to understand the trauma victim and the individual reaction to the trauma it is essential to look at society at large with both economic factors and its view on gender, race, politics etc. The model presents four different possible outcomes of trauma. Harvey means that by further research focusing on all these groups and their ecological system we will broaden and deepen our understanding of trauma recovery thus giving us additional ways of helping the victims. She lines up seven outcome criteria for recovering from a trauma:

1. Authority over the remembering process, which means that the victim can control when to remember the trauma and it is no longer only a recipient of images and feelings.
2. **Integration of memory and affect**, which means that the memory of the trauma is connected with feelings. The trauma causes a separation of memory and affect which needs to be reconnected in order to recover.

3. **Affect tolerance**, which means that the individual no longer is the target of overwhelming feelings connected to the trauma. The individual also has clearer understanding of the feelings and a wider pallet of feelings with different intensity.

4. **Symptom mastery**, which means that the survivor is able to cope with the symptoms of the trauma in a healthful way.

5. **Self-esteem and self-cohesion**, which means that the survivor no longer act out in self destructive behaviour, but is taking care of the self in a healthy way. Instead of self-blaming and feeling shame connected to the trauma, the survivor can recognize the worth of the self.

6. **Safe attachment**, which means that the survivor is able to put trust in relationships again. The isolation that the trauma caused is broken through the survivor’s reconnected attachment to significant others.

7. **Meaning-making**, which means survivor builds a new meaning to the trauma. This includes answering questions like: Why me? How can this kind of evil exist in the world? Why did it happen? and Do I have a mission being a trauma survivor?

Harvey means that this is a framework that can be used in the trauma treatment to establish resilience and progress in recovery. She points out that if there are domains that have not been affected by the trauma these can work as a source of strength in coping with deficiencies in other (ibid).

**Sense of coherence**
The concept of Sense of coherence is a term put forth by the Israeli professor Anton Antonovsky who investigates why certain people who have been trough traumatic events becomes ill while others stay healthy. A person with a good sense of coherence feels that she is understood by the people that surrounds her and that she understands them, she also have an optimistic view of the future and her situation. Antonovsky have got three key components for a person’s sense of coherence: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. The first component is cognitive and comprehensibility are connected to a person’s experiences of events that takes place around him or her and how the events are perceived as making sense, the opposite is chaos and randomization. The second of Antonovsky’s components is manageability and with manageability Antonovsky refers to the subjective experience of
being able to cope with situations that occur in life both dramatic and ordinary. Manageability and resources to cope with events can be both personal resources and recourses in a person’s social network for example. A strong feeling of manageability stands in contrast to a deterministic life view where things seems to be decides in advance without any chance of influence the outcome. The third component is meaningfulness and has to do with how much one’s life seems meaningful and that you feel that you can engage and effect situations in your everyday life (Larsson, 2007, p. 359-360).

**Results**

Through the interviews it has become evident that there are certain themes or categories that are more prominent then others. The three main categories that emerged as the most reoccurring throughout the material are: *Being a black lesbian woman in South Africa, Effects of the rape* and *Healing and coping with the trauma*. The ambition was to gain a greater understanding of the healing process for these women, but many of the answers where strongly connected to their life as black lesbian women. This is presented under the first main category *Being a black lesbian in South Africa* and describes how the women perceive their position and has one subcategory: *Exposure to hate-crime and discrimination*. Under the main category *Effects of the rape* the negative effects of the rape is presented including the subcategories *Fear and alienation* and *Lack of trust*. In the last main category the focus is on *Healing and coping with the trauma*. This includes beneficiary and non-beneficiary factors. The subcategories are: *Healing in finding a meaning with the trauma, Helping others* and *Healing a never-ending process*.

To start with the participants in the study and their position in society will be introduced followed by a presentation of the categories, one by one. Quotes are used to exemplify the categories and may include grammatical errors since they are verbatim transcripts from the interviews.

**Introduction of the participants of the study**

**Jewel**

The interviewers meet Jewel at a non-governmental organization in one of the townships. She is 26 years old and lived in a Wendy house (simple house built by the government) together with the child that she conceived after the rape. She said she was HIV positive, which was transferred from the perpetrator. She did not have a job. Jewel was raped at gunpoint by an unknown perpetrator that she believed raped her because she was open with the fact that she was a lesbian. This is a part of her story:
I went to visit a friend. I was with my other friend called [name]. It was late at night, past nine. I wanted to buy a cigarette. When I went to the shop the shop was closed and then I saw a young boy standing in front of the house that we were going to and then I asked him: Where can I find a cigarette? He said I'm gonna show you where you gonna get a cigarette. We went to buy the cigarette. On our own way back he changed the way that we come from, the road. And he took us to a dark road. When I ask him why we're going, why we're taking this road, he said it is a short cut. On our way to, to buy the cigarette we were just chatting and then he asked me if I am a lesbian and then I said yes. And then he said yes I can see because you're coming to see [name], [Name] is a lesbian too. While we were still walking along we took a, there was a small passage that he took us, he took me in, and there where houses on the other side at the back of these houses there were toilets. I could see that the [… talk is changing, the face is changing. Now he's showing how violent he is. He asked if I don't have money. I said I don't have money. He asked for a phone. I said I don't have phone and then he started to search me. While we were walking next to this toilette, as we're reaching another toilette that's when he started to force me and push me against this toilette and then took off my pants. He had a gun and while he was busy with me because he took off my pants there was another lady coming out. I don't know if that lady had water to throw it outside, but when he sees that there was someone else, a lady that was coming out that's when he stopped doing what he was doing and then he ran away.

Kagiso
The interviewers met Kagiso at the non-governmental organization that she started in one of the townships. She was 50 years old and lived in the township in a house. She told that she has been the target of two violent attacks because of her sexual orientation and was living under constant threat of being the target of hate-crime. She as an LGBTI activist was an easy target and knew the consequences of being openly lesbian. She did not tell the story of her being raped but she connects the rape to another hate-crime committed against her because of her sexuality: “Because I was stabbed before by a group of men but I think it didn't, it didn't it did hurt me but not too much. I think that the one thing that hurts me that hurt me too much was the rape thing. I think it really messes up my world.”

Limpho
The interviewers met Limpho at a non-governmental organization located in a township. She was 29 years old and lived together with her aunt in one of the townships. Limpho did not have a job and dreamt of owning her own house. She was a mother to a child that she conceived after being raped and she used the word children, which implies that she had more than one child. Her family has taken the child that was a result of the rape from her. Limpho knew the perpetrator, who is a relative, and has been told that the reason for the rape was that she was a lesbian. This is part of her story:

Ah, what happened is that like my mother was struggling, not working. So, I usually go help my aunt. […] then one day my aunt asked me to clean his son’s bedroom so I go at the back, it was a flat, I go the back, I go clean the bedroom. So, because they never allow me to be a lesbian so my mother ask me like for wearing dresses and all that stuff. So I was wearing like a skirt, a short skirt. It was a jeans skirt, I still remember. […] Then he came in. I still was looking under the bed. He came in. I never heard him
coming in. He closed the door nicely, without showing that he's closing the door and then he locked and take the keys. So we're like, when I stand up […] I could feel that there was someone behind me so when I looked up, when I looked he pushed me on the bed. So he started to pull my skirt with […] my underwear and then he raped me. […] The child start to know me when […] she was 10 year I think. So, she was 10 years when she knew me again. So, […] towards my family they hided all that stuff and she doesn't know that she's my cousin also. She know that I'm her mother and all that stuff. So when I ask […] my cousin why, […] why did he raped me […] he said to me:

Because there's no woman that can sleep with another woman. A woman sleep with a man, not with a woman, you see.

Mandisa

The interviewers met Mandisa in her one room apartment where she had moved the day before the day of the interview. She lived with her girlfriend and her child that was a consequence of the rape. She was 23 years old, had a job and wanted to go back to school to become a lawyer. Mandisa did not want to talk about the rape since she felt that it brought back to many traumatic memories, but she mentioned the rape being a hate-crime. This is part of her statement:

Sometimes being a lesbian I enjoy it, but sometimes things like that get to me 'cause I was once a victim of hate crime. […] And telling my story all over again it hurts me 'cause […] I told myself I'd rather shut it in my system. Don't talk then maybe I'll be ok, but talking about it […] helped 'cause I learnt that I can stand up for myself. I've got rights. I can do anything a man can do.

Nombeko

The interviewers met Nombeko at a non-governmental organization. She was 31 years old and was an activist fighting for women’s rights. She lived in one of the townships with her partner and a child. Football was a big part of her life. Nombeko was raped by an unknown perpetrator who said he was raping her to turn her into a heterosexual. This is part of her story:

Ok I will say I was raped […] because of I'm a lesbian. The man wanted to prove that I'm a woman not a man. I'm a soccer player, anyway, but the way the guy said to me he just wanted to enjoy and have that time with me because always see with girls or I just say no to guys. And then it happened I was coming from church it was around 8 pm and then this guy knows me by my name and then he called me […] I just say to the man ok I will stop, but just hurry up. [Un]fortunately when he's closer he just pull the gun on my back and then I started to get surprised with why. I just asked why, what's happening? He said: no I know you. I know where you stay. I know everything about you. And then I said: Why, he wants something? He just said: No, I just want you. And then I said: You can't have me because […] if you know me, you know me. And then he […] just said to me: let's go this way. I said: No, my home is that way. Because he was carrying a gun he said: Ok if you don't do what I want […] then I will shoot you and I said: ok I will do everything you want me to do. […] When we arrived there he said I want to prove you that you are a woman and then I want to show you what you're missing about the man. And then I was like why, because I don't miss anything, because I don't have feelings for a man. I'm like this and why you want to do that. He said: No, I like you a lot and I can prove that you are a woman and then enjoying and I know after doing this you will be enjoying yourself after and maybe we'll meet or not you'll meet
The women's position
To understand the situation for the women in this study the passage below gives an insight in the context surrounding the women.

All of the women lived in areas called townships; three lived in Cape Town and two in Johannesburg. Townships are areas in South Africa are where the poorest people live, where the communal services are dysfunctional and where the level of crime is high. The inhabitants of the townships are either black or coloured depending on the area. Townships are cities or suburbs where many of the houses are built out of scrap metal and/or wood, many of the houses or shacks are one-room buildings with no running water, sanitation facilities or electricity. Since there are little communal services in place within the townships, there are hardly any streetlights so when the sun goes down one has to rely on torches or the few streetlights that exists. Most of the crimes that take place in the townships take place after nightfall, which makes evenings and night time dangerous. One other factor is that many of the houses do not have a toilet inside the house, which may seem trivial, but it presents a danger to women that have to use communal toilets outside after the fall of darkness. When it comes to the economic situation for the women three out of the five women had no job at the time of the interviews. Unemployment and poverty is a reality for many living within the townships and one aspect of poverty for these women was that they could not travel by communal transport; instead they had to rely on friends to drive them if they wanted to go somewhere. This became evident when setting up for interviews and they needed to be picked up and also taken home after the interviews.

Category 1 - Being a black lesbian woman in South Africa
It is clear that the respondents all have experienced expectations connected to being a woman. As a woman you should have a man and that relationship should result in a child. The women revealed that members of their families expressed joy over the fact that they were pregnant even though the child was a product of a rape. This underlines the importance of the child for the family as they neglect the rape but rejoice the pregnancy. Mandisa: "My mom, she was pleased that I was having a baby. That's all she could be happy about."

For one respondent the child was a way to reunite with her family, which accepts her as a lesbian through the child. The woman got pregnant through the rape but she lost that baby and the doctors told her that she would never be able to bear a child due to the injuries that the
rape caused. Despite of this she endured intercourse with a man to get a child even though it was like reliving the rape

Nombeko: He started. It was so hard then. The memories come back and then I see this guy like the one who rapes me and then he said: let's stop. If you don't want to do anything, I don't want to force you, because it's you who came to me, not me. I said: ok I can do it. And then I just said ok it's fine, but I was also feeling the same pain when the guy was raping me. […] And then he was enjoying and then I didn't enjoy […] just because I wanted a baby.

One more reason for the family to oppose to the women being lesbians was that the women were seen as an asset to the family. Mandisa mentioned that she had experienced expectations of getting the family a dowry through marriage.

Mandisa: It's not easy as a mother knowing that you supposed to be getting cows and your daughter getting married then your daughter all of a sudden she tells you that: […] mom, I'm dating other girls. It's not easy. She had like expectations of me, now I tell her that I'm dating girls. It's not easy

Category 1.1 - Exposure to hate crime and discrimination

Mandisa: But whenever they see us they like see animals or something 'cause you might find boys sitting in a corner smoking. When you pass they greet you. If you don't greet you they give you insults. They swear at you, tell you that they're gonna get you. Sometimes being a lesbian I enjoy it, but sometimes things like that get to me 'cause I was once a victim of hate crime.

All the women had experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation and the rape was just a part of being a target for a whole life. Jewel: "I only know this place that I'm staying at. It's only safe for me. If you go to other places and then you know yourself that you are a lesbian you must open up your eyes wider because you know what is going to happen."

The risk of being exposed to hate crime is always present and because of the fact that it could happen anywhere made them feel that they had to be vigilant and act accordingly. Some respondents could not hide their sexual orientation due to their appearance, which made them easy to spot as breaking the norm of womanhood and therefore threatening the men. Kagiso talked about how the lesbians are targets of hate-crime at any time and that the perpetrator can be anyone:

Kagiso: Most are the people that they socialize with them and sometimes it's people that you are with them at school. Maybe this person is a neighbour who's been watching you all the time […] and I think also the […] men who are having […] this mentality of […] honouring power, because if you look at the, it's only masculine lesbian that are sole victim of this whole thing. So […] I think […] the men […] they see […] masculine women. They wear what's supposed to be weared by men, the same clothes that the men are having. […] They are driving the same cars that […] men are driving, and they have the same woman that the men are having. […] and I think that's an anger now from[…] men is if now they are losing power.
Four of the women said that the reason for them being raped was that they were lesbians. They did not use the term “corrective rape”, but one of the women said that the man during the rape said that he was going to turn her into a heterosexual woman through raping her.

Nombeko: When we arrived there he said I want to prove you that you are a woman and then I want to show you what you're missing about the man. And then I was like why, because I don't miss anything because I don't have feelings for a man I'm like this and why you want to do that. He said: No, I like you a lot and I can prove that you are a woman and then enjoying and I know after doing this you will be enjoying yourself after and maybe we'll meet or not you'll meet someone.

**Category 2 - Effects of the rape**

There are many consequences of rape, both physical and psychological. Four women got pregnant from the rape and one was open with the fact that she got HIV because of the rape. Nombeko told about how her injuries that still were reminding her about the trauma “… my womb was damaged and then my vagina was having some cracks and then even now if I'm like, if it's cold I can feel the coldness and then I don't feel like going anywhere because I still feel that pain”.

Since the women said that they had been raped because of their sexual orientation they lived in a fear of once again being a target of a hate crime. The women expressed that the rape had changed how they lived their lives and how they had to be aware of people they meet and their surroundings.

Kagiso: Like it or not. I don't go to parties, I don't go […] Little bit my freedom is, have to be, a little bit smaller. Hahahaha. And I don't go within some areas walking unless I'm driving with someone. So yeah I need to […] I learned to be too much disciplined […] that's the only way of looking after myself I think yes.

Even though they all defined the rape as a hate-crime the use of “corrective rape” was not evident in the interviews. One participant talked about the definition of corrective rape and what it meant to her:

Kagiso: You see that for us it's homophobic, that's homophobic violence. That's it. […] because we use the term corrective rape when […] our government become to be in denial that there's something like this that's happening. So au, we push in a way that they have to […] be aware this is what's happening […]. Rape for us is rape

The trauma also caused the women to doubt their own value and the women expressed that they needed to work with trying to love themselves again. Limpho, who got pregnant in the rape and then, after conceiving, had that child taken away from her by her family expressed her feelings toward herself and that child:

Limpho: I sitted and […] wait and tell myself that: Is it like good for me to kill myself for someone who hate me himself? […] it’s him not me. And like: is it good to punish
my child? Because I don't want to lie to you, I hated her. I didn't like her, even just like just to look at her. But still got that thing when I look at her and then I see a flash of her father so, for me I just tell myself like this is a child. She doesn't know nothing. Why I must hate her? You see? […] I'm trying. I'm not yet 100% I know it has been long but I'm trying. I'm trying my best.

Category 2.1 - Fear and alienation

Nombeko: "And then I was feeling alone, because I didn't have someone to trust, someone I could talk to how I'm feeling. Each every day it was eating me every day like a pain in my heart, in my life that won’t stop. And then I tried to kill myself twice"

Loneliness and alienation was something that was highly prevalent in all the interviews. The loneliness was connected to being a lesbian and was further reinforced due to the fear they lived in after being raped. The women explained how the rape had affected them in terms of isolation, loneliness and alienation and this was articulated by all of them. The women expressed how the rape and the fear it caused led them to further isolate themselves from society. Nombeko talked about how she felt after being raped: “I didn't want to around of people. I was, everything I'm doing is like alone. Staying alone, crying a lot […]”

One of the women told a story about when she felt that she had lost a close friend due to a quarrel. She told about the strong reaction including a suicidal attempt that probably was related to the unprocessed trauma of rape, but also underlines how much that one friend means to the woman.

Jewel: The reason that I got burned, I got into an argument with my friend […] So that's when I decided to kill myself because [...] I was not going to be able to just look her face to face. I took paraffin, I poor it on me, I took the lighter and then I just light […] myself. And then there was fire. Because I was wearing a t-shirt I just took the t-shirt off. Underneath the t-shirt there was a j-t that's vest underneath that I couldn't take that off and because of the fumes and then I collapsed.

The women said that fear was something that was part of their everyday life. Since they were openly lesbian the women described how they with different strategies tried to minimize the risk of once again being a target of hate-crime. Three of the women described that they could not walk the in the streets of their community when it got dark. One of the women talked about how the rape had affected her and how it minimized her way of living.

Mandisa: I'm fine now. I'm coping. I'm fine, but I'm scared going out at night yeah even if I want to go buy some drinks I have to sit in the house 'cause [...] where I come from some people they know about my status and they don't like it so I was afraid that they try hurting my game or something.

The women described how the lack of daylight acts as a marker for when it was safe or not to walk outside their houses. Jewel: "Even the time I was here in [name of township] if I was
sent to the shop around 7 o’clock, but it if it's dark I will run to the shop and then come back running. Usually that was not me doing that."

The respondents talked about the difficulties of being an openly black lesbian woman and how that had an impact on how society, family and community perceive you. As mentioned before these women’s disclosure of their sexuality has alienated them from parts of society, community and family. Nombeko talked about the importance of the family, which further underlines the exposed position these women have:

Nombeko: Because if your family doesn't accept you […] it's very hard because sometimes you think of going away and stay somewhere else. Maybe sometimes you think […] it's much better I kill myself. Because if your family doesn't accept you, it's not easy.

Three respondents mentioned that they have attempted suicide, two have tried several times and one has thought about death as a way out. All of them are talking about the feeling of being alone when they mention suicide and one of them says that it was the first reaction to the trauma.

Interviewer: After you were raped, after the trauma, what did you do?
Limpho: Oh me? I try many time to kill myself.

Interviewer: To kill yourself?
Limpho: Many times I be putting like those [incomprehensible] fluids with the [incomprehensible] I mix it. But every time, like since someone is feeling something is [incomprehensible] like doing then they come like before like anything, like maybe I drink already […] before anything work and yet I tried drink some tablets, nothing happened it just pumped the tablets out of me.

Category 2.2 - Lack of trust
The women also described that the fact that they were meeting scepticism and doubt about the seriousness of the crimes that had been committed against them from representatives of the state such as police further strengthened the isolation and lead to a secondary victimization. They all expressed a strong mistrust for the legal system and shared experiences of being oppressed by representatives of the legal system. One of the women told about the time when she was secondarily victimized when reporting her case to the police.

Mandisa: Yeah I did go to the police. First they just laughed. Said that I wanted it. So eventually they opened this docket then the person arrested him. Not for long 'cause he got out and told me that the docket had gone lost or something. Then he's walking around free so that's why I had to come back here to [name of place] and stay here 'cause I wanted the distance. 'Cause I knew if I saw him I knew I'd do something stupid.
One of the women said that when you are a lesbian you have to have strategies in order to be successful when reporting a case of hate-crime to the police. This included knowing somebody at the station, taking the person’s name and going to the highest official. Limpho said that “Because they don’t listen to you. They always like judge you. It hurts. When you’re a lesbian they judge, when you’re gay they judge"

Two of the women comments on the legal practice of the courts and the police and that some judges are not perceived as taking hate-crime seriously. The rape cases get stuck in the legal process without making any progress towards a finalization of the case. Mandisa: "Yeah, 'cause some lawyers out there, especially when it comes to hate crimes towards lesbians they just don't care."

The women expressed feelings of hate towards men and that they could not trust any man because all of them were potential perpetrators. They all had different ways of dealing with these feelings. Kagiso met a group of rape survivors and in their frustration they contemplated to buy handguns to avenge the crimes that had been committed against them and Nombeko who prior to the rape had socialized mostly with men said that she alienated herself after the rape because she did not know who the perpetrator was. "Most of my friends when I was growing up was boys and then I didn't want to be close to boys anymore. Because I didn't know who was the one. Between my soccer teams team mates or the boys I used to play with around the street."

**Category 3 – Healing and coping with the trauma**

**Category 3.1 - Healing in support and treatment**

The healing process after rape was the focus of our study, but time and again the answers had something to do with the fact that the women identified themselves as lesbians. In their search for support after the rape they all came in contact with other lesbians. They all expressed that meeting other women in the same situation helped in the process of accepting oneself and dealing with the trauma.

Nombeko: I joined the team and then found out that there are the same like me and then sharing the stories, different stories and that is where I started to share my story. That is where I get help and get healed because when I'm at [NGO], [NGO] staff it's where I become open and share my story. Because the more I talk about it […], the more I get healed. I will say [NGO] helped me a lot to be me now, because I will say I was lost and didn't want anything about men and to be around of people. It’s where I started then to feel free and then to be and be strong.

As mentioned the women expressed a difficulty in loving themselves and in the case of them having a child because of the rape they also had difficulties loving that child.
Group therapy, counselling and workshops were mentioned as tools in trying to love and accept themselves and in that process even learn to love their child. Mandisa talked about meeting the counsellor/social worker and how it affected her life: “At first I couldn't even look at her, couldn't even breastfeed her, I couldn't even touch her, Whenever I saw her I like remembered what had happened, but going to [NGO] it helped me 'cause I started loving myself, loving my child.”

A main focus in the healing process differs from the heterosexual woman as the respondents in this study face the issue of accepting themselves as norm breaking as well.

Mandisa: The workshops were about what is being a lesbian. How do people treat you in the community if you're a lesbian,? […] We learnt words such as patriarchy. So many things. Are we born being lesbians? Some of us we're not sure, some of us are sure. We […] did like short stories how our families, our neighbours react to us. Yeah, we did many things. We even sang. Yeah, and I enjoyed every moment of those workshops 'cause I felt like me again. I felt whole. I felt like things in my life were getting back together. 'Cause I even thought of killing myself at a point 'cause I thought that my life was over. Being a lesbian is not a sickness. We are human like the rest of them.

Four of the women had received some kind of counselling and all of them said that it helped in the healing process. The women described the relationship between them and the counsellor/social worker as a friendship and they all pointed out that that kind of relationship was what they needed.

Mandisa: 'Cause meeting her it brought joy, I can say it brought joy in my life 'cause I got new friends, I went to workshops with her. She took me and she went with me to the workshops. Did some activities […] which […] open my eyes what being a women who loves other woman is all about. […] My life it was a mess before I met [social worker]. But I'm like getting it back together now.

The good thing in counselling that was underlined by the women was that the other person just listened. The counsellor filled more than a role to treat the trauma and maybe foremost embodied the role of a significant other. The counsellor was a bridge out of the alienation and isolation and three of the women said that they could call the person they talked to whenever they needed. The lifeline that the counsellor represented made them feel less alone. Mandisa: “Then it really did help for me. And I think I become like, become close as friend my counsellor. Sometimes when, when I'm down, I'm feeling down and whatever I just call her and then we talk”

The women also point out that there was a lack of support and two of the women speak about the loss of a good counsellor. There did not seem to be a practice in place to forward the clients if needed which left the women feeling abandoned.
Nombeko: Then I would say the counsellor was the closest person, sharing everything with her. Then the moment she dropped me down and then in some way I started again because I was gaining a lot of confidence about myself [...] what the accident and then when she went and then I started to drop down. It's where I tried to kill myself twice.

The women had to seek support themselves and at their own expense which enhanced the lack of support since the women often did not have money enough to pay for the counselling. Limpopo said: “I hated that she was good, […] because the one they sent me to in [name of place] she is very good but […] the fees are so much. So, since I’m not working at the moment I couldn’t […] so that was that.”

Two of the women talk about the need for professionals and that that kind of support is much better than the pro bono support like volunteers provide. One woman also talked about the need of different strategies of healing.

Kagiso: I mean we it's only 16 or 18 years that we get democracy, I mean those men were messed up by white people […]. The TRC [The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up by the Government of National Unity to help deal with what happened under apartheid], I don't think did so much in terms of giving a space for them that they have to deal with their own issues because I mean black people don't believe in therapy […] and they are aware of that […] and I think they didn’t look at the […] alternatives. If they don't like therapy […] what’s another option to gain a space for men that they have to heal.

Kagiso also talked about the need to provide help for the perpetrators in order to achieve change for the women and South Africa at a whole.

Kagiso: So it's just really how do we get that space for men. The men that were raped by, or forced that they have to rape each other […] during the apartheid time just to kill people's spirit. Different things that were done to those boys, to those guys. […] People they never told, they never talk about those things since then. How do really get the space where they can talk about these things? […] I mean those guys they take arms and leave hoping that when they come back they will be having proper houses to stay in but they are still staying in shacks. They are unemployed. […] How do you deal with these things? […] South Africa is the last country to get democracy so I was thinking maybe they will see what has happened to other African countries and then we don't have to repeat the same thing, you see. But, unfortunately seems that they don't like because we have lot of rape and people eating other people all around. They were freedom fighters then, but I mean when their countries get power and then they were left out and then they became like criminals.

Category 3.2 - Healing in finding a meaning with the trauma
The women expressed that they were trying to give what happened to them a positive meaning and they all said that they had purpose in life, which in four of the cases involved helping others. The child was also mentioned as a reason for living: "Although I do have these times that I do remember, but it's Joyce [the child] that is giving me hope to live."

Three of the women expressed that God was a part of their lives and was a represented a way of handling the incomprehensible and giving meaning to the trauma. Nombeko: "Maybe God
wanted me to go through of those challenges and then maybe he wanted me to be saving other lesbians about my story." Limpho: “[…] that’s why I’m still here and God still providing for me and maybe he still has a purpose why he’s still keeping me. […] I try a lot a lot of times to kill myself but never also let me to die.”

Category 3.3 - Healing in helping others
Four women said that they wanted to help other women in the same situation. They recognized different areas that they felt needed to be addressed. Legal system, police force, support groups and safe havens. There is a great power in these actions and it helps and motivates the women in their own process of recovery. Some are living it and some has it as something yet to achieve, but it is still present as a source of hope and meaning in life.

Limpho: […] I would love to protect like young girls who come, who grow up. Young girls like who doesn't know of what the raping all that stuff like to try to put them in a place and say when something like this happen try to tell one of your family. If that doesn't listen try to find someone outside who go with you to the clinic and go with you to the police station.

Category 3.4 - Healing as a never ending process
The wounds of the rape is something that the women have to live with their whole life and they expressed that they constantly were reminded of the trauma through other peoples experiences of rape. Kagiso talked about difficulties in finding a way of living with the trauma when others constantly remind you:

Kagiso: […] it's going to be with you for the whole of your life. You never heal […] when you are sexually violated. You never heal. […] it's just like, how do you look after it, that it doesn't destroy your life? Yeah especially in South Africa it remind you all the time […] I'm staying in my house. That’s the only space that lesbian, they have [She has opened up her home for lesbians in need of support], […] they come in the evening, they cry, they've been hurt, they don't want to go to the police station […] and the more those things happen it always remind me. It always remind me.

Some of the participants said that the horrific feelings connected to the rape were sometimes overwhelming and that they were unable to take control over the intrusion of memories. The women had different ways of coping with these intrusions and their main strategies were to find a safe place to retreat to. Mandisa told about her strategies when being unable to cope with the intrusions:

Mandisa: I, just pray when that feeling comes like yesterday when I had that thing, I just go to the toilet […] I feel better when I cry. I don't want to lie to you, when I cry I feel better because […] if I just say: Ok, it’s fine no, it doesn't, it keep on eating me. So I have to cry then I be better, I cry, you see. I cry and then I feel better. Then I cried.
The participants answered our question about their hopes for the future in a positive way. They had hopes and dreams and they ranged from getting a job and their own place to being accepted by their family.

Mandisa: I see myself having a family. A family who understands, a family who cares. A family who loves one another. Spending time with my loved ones. See myself having my own company.

Limpho: Oh I'm hoping to have my own house. I would love to […] watch my children grow up and […] to finish their school and I just want them to live, to say like they got their mothers house then, than to stay like we're staying to my aunt we're staying to. I don't want to die not having a house.

Nombeko: I have so many hopes […] For one I will say my hope to see changes for lesbians and then maybe people they accept us like human beings, not like animals. Because at past they call us animals others they call us satanism […] all those names, but my hope is that I know one day even if I'm not around, I'm not alive anymore but my story will change and give people a knowledge about lesbian and how we went through of hate crimes and all those other things.

Jewel: The only wish is to see myself working. It's only God who knows where I'll be. Only to get work and support my child.

**Analysis and discussion**

Before starting with this part of the study we would like to return to the research questions:

- What consequences does the rape as a hate-crime have on black lesbian women’s lives?
- Is there a healing process for black lesbian women that have been the target of rape as a hate-crime and if so what does it look like?

As mentioned there were three main categories that became evident when analysing the interviews. These main categories including the subcategories will now be connected to the theoretical frame of reference to answer the research questions.

Healing and recovery – In the present study “healing process” is used even though Herman and Harvey (1996) talk about the process of recovery. The definition of healing used in this study is equivalent to their definition of recovery (Herman, 1992 & Harvey, 1996).

**Being a black lesbian in South Africa.**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the healing process of black lesbian women who claimed that they had been raped because of their sexual orientation. When asking question about this process the answers were repeatedly concerning their identity as lesbians. It became clear that their sexual orientation was a factor for these women in the healing process.

Both Harvey and Herman points out that the victims of rape very often blame themselves for provoking the crime. Harvey gives an example of a woman who flirted with a man and
agreed to go with him in his car and therefore had thoughts of her own guilt in the rape (Harvey, 1996). This stands in stark contrast to the participants in this study, as their understanding of the rape is that the perpetrator carries the full responsibility of the crime and the women are victims of hate-crime. This could be seen as resilience in Harvey’s recovery criteria *Self-esteem and self-cohesion* (ibid) and the fact that they no longer said they acted out in a self-destructive behaviour further strengthen this theory. However the resilience can be connected to the nature of the crime rather than their own capacities, since the women are lesbian and have no interest in men their behaviour can in their minds in no way be linked to the rape. With this said we believe that the women can use this resilience to cope with their lack of strength in other recovery domains.

**Effects of the trauma**

All the women testified that they were the target of hate-crime and discrimination due to their sexual orientation. Herman (1992) describes what the trauma of rape can cause in an individual’s life. The trauma shatters the connections with the self and society and makes the victim alienate from the world. The participants all testify about the effects of the rape as life altering, with fear, alienation, depression and anxiety as results. The data collected in this study strengthens Herman’s statement that rape is one of the most destructive of violent crime since it is designed to cause psychological damage and deprives the victim of all assumptions of life. The fact that the rape is called “corrective” by media and researchers is not correlating to the women’s notion of the rape, but is instead connected to the perpetrators view and motivation for the crime. For the women being raped it makes no difference what you call it – rape is rape.

Herman (1992) points out that *Safety* is the first step in the recovery process and that no other therapeutic work can be initiated if this is not achieved. The women interviewed in this study described a very unsafe environment and their everyday life was in some way affected by fear. All the participants have different strategies for coping with the unsafe environment and even though fear in some way limits them, the survivor mentality is interpreted as a sign of a healthy way of taking care of the self and taking control of their life situation.

Harvey (1996) has *Safe attachment* as a criterion for recovery, which is achieved in Herman’s last step *Reconnection*. The participants of this study feels alienation from society and in some cases family due to their sexual orientation and the discrimination they meet makes it hard, or even impossible, to attach to their surroundings completely. The lack of trust for men and society at large is not pathological, but based on their own and others
experiences. This is a hinder in the recovery process, but as all the participants had found networks, mostly LGBTI groups that they had attached to this criterion must be seen in broader way.

**Healing and coping with the trauma**

Harvey’s (1996) *Self-esteem and self-cohesion* is a criterion that is connected with rebuilding the self after it has been shattered by the trauma. The participants speak about the journey of accepting themselves as lesbians in connection with speaking about healing. This could be seen as a sign of an on-going process within the women of loving themselves. There is strength in the associating the self with a group instead of just an individual. In the case of the participants the strength is deterred from them being part of the LGBTI community. Even though they cannot act as lesbians in society without the risk of reprisal, they take pride in their identity, which makes the crime committed against them not just a crime against their self, but also the entire LGBTI group. The result of this is that they do not stand alone in the struggle for survival and accomplish change for the entire group. Herman (1992) points out the importance of groups in the recovery process, but it is not connected to the victim’s identity, which it is the case with our participants. Antonovsky (Larsson, 2007) speaks about the importance for the individual to be understood by and to understand the people in the surrounding. This connection with people when the individual is able to mirror the self in others is strongly connected to the *Sense of coherence*.

Harvey’s (1996) criterion *Meaning-making* and Antonovsky’s (Larsson, 2007) *Meaningfulness* are coherent with Herman’s (1992) description of how individuals can give the trauma a positive meaning as a step in the recovery process. The participants in this study all except for one have found meaning to what happened to them. The explanation is often connected to God and foremost to helping others through their story of trauma. Religion can in this sense be a source of strength and their religious belief can create meaning and purpose in their existence despite the trauma. Herman (1992) points out the benefits of using the trauma as a tool to reach women in the same situation and to change society so that what happened to them will not happen to others. The participants described how they were engaged in organizations and communities in a fight greater than the self. This commitment is perceived as a sign of the women’s recovery within this domain.

All the criteria that Harvey (1996) puts forth for a recovery is not in place for the participants, but they show resilience in some domains that can help with coping with deficiencies in others. A major strength for the women was their identity as homosexuals and
that they thereby belonged to a group. The women had all reached different levels of recovery; when one was able to talk about the trauma as described in Harvey’s (1996) *Integration of memory and affect* another one shows sign of being in Herman’s (1992) first stage where memory and affect are divided. It was also possible to see strength in their proclaimed hopes for the future. Both Herman (1992) and Harvey (1996) stress the importance of building a new future after a traumatic experience. In Antonovsky’s (Larsson 2007) theory hopes for the future is of great importance for the individual in order to gain *sense of coherence*. It is clear that the participants have come so far in the recovery that they were able to look to the future with anticipation.

**The process of healing**

The participants expressed feelings of not being accepted in society. Even before the trauma their position in society was vulnerable and then the rape reinforced it. The women did not feel accepted by their families and communities because of their lesbian identity. The women speak about their counsellor as a friend that they could contact when in need, which suggests that the method in use is *supportive counselling*. The counsellor carries the role of a significant other to the women and poses as a safety line when the memories of the trauma were unbearable. This plays an important role in the women’s healing process, as they do not have a safe space in the community. Even if their identity in some way can be perceived as a non-beneficial factor due to the alienation that the women experienced, it is obvious that it also serves as resilience in the healing process. Through their identity they come in contact with the lesbian community and find support and fellowship in the similar life situations of others. The connection with the lesbian community serves as a platform for the women’s healing process. It was clear in the interviews that the family and community are of great importance for the individuals in the South African society, which in a way stands in contrast to the individualized society of the western world. This suggests that the group as a form of therapy would be natural and therefore beneficial given the context, since the individual is secondary to the community. The women support this by speaking of the group as a place where they could share their stories and be helped by hearing the stories of others. In this interaction the self is rebuilt and the women claim that they find themselves in the presence of the group. The group can serve as the place where these women, that are alienated from society at large, can reconnect and form their identity in trustful relationship with significant others. This might be to stretch Herman’s (1992) step of *reconnection*, but for the participants
in this study the lack of reconnection with society is not the women’s choice, but instead a product of society’s attitudes towards them.

The women told that being listened to was one of the major contributories in their process of healing. By sharing the stories they also gain self-esteem as the group also provides new meaning to their traumatic experiences helping others in the same situation.

Herman (1992) mentions that safety is achieved through taking care of the self and securing the environment. Taking control over the own body includes financial security, eating, exercising etc., which suggests that the theory is mainly based on healing within the western context. The other part of safety that Herman points out is to be in control over the surroundings. In order to use this theory there is a need to adapt it to the reality of the participants of this study as very few of the factors that Herman points out are in place for these women. We agree with Harvey’s (1996) ecological view that a trauma and the recovery process needs to include environmental factors as well. We feel that the step of safety needs to be revised, since it makes it impossible for a recovery to occur in many parts of the world where Herman’s definition of safety is scarce. We would like to suggest a Reasonable safety, which would be linked to the context and to the situation that the traumatized person lived in before and after the trauma.

**Authors remarks and future research**

When we travelled to South Africa our understanding of the South African context was very limited. We read research reports and literature connected to our research field and to the country in general. This was necessary for us to be able to first and for most understand the country that we lived in, but also to understand the context that the participants in study lived in. It became clear that the group of our interest had an extremely exposed position in the society and in the interviews we had a hard time getting answers about the healing process. It was only after analysing the data that we came to understand that there in fact is a healing process. It is just that it did not have the form or shape that we expected.

A reality that became clear in the interviews was that the child was of great importance, even if it is a product of rape. A common notion might be that children conceived after rape would become outcasts and stigmatized. The interviews gave proof of the opposite - The rape was neglected and the child was praised. It enlightens the woman’s position in society as foremost a mother and caregiver. The child was also important to the women and even if some expressed difficulties in loving a child conceived after rape, it gave meaning to life and reason to live.
The women in this study are not alone with their experience and as mentioned many times before rape is highly prevalent in the South African society. Staying in the country led to many encounters with women of all races, social status and sexual orientation that had the experience of rape. The vast numbers of rape survivors could lead to a normalization and trivialization of the crime leaving the women without the support that they need.

One thing that struck us as habitants of a welfare society was that the main support that was in place for these women were given by the NGOs not the government. There were few outreach programs so the women themselves had to initiate a contact to get any help. This makes us believe that there is a mass of victims not receiving the support that they need. When we spoke with the NGOs it also became evident that one of the major problems they struggled with was that they could not find funding for their cause. One of the reasons for the lack of money was said to be the progressive constitution that made donors assume that there was no need for further support of the NGOs. A reduction in the funds to NGOs in South Africa will unavoidably result in fewer women getting the help they need.

There are many research gaps that need to be filled in order to provide the knowledge to tackle the obstacles the South African society meets. Our main focus was the black lesbian women in South Africa claiming to have been raped due to their sexual orientation. To be able to help this particular group we need to have more information about what they actually need in order to recover. There also needs to be research focusing on the healing process in a violent society like South Africa, where the beneficial factors as well as the non-beneficial are revealed.

To be able to change and prevent the crimes of rape research also has to be done on the perpetrators and their motives.
References

INTERNETKÄLLOR
Activism makes inroads on “corrective rape”. Downloaded July 2012 from: http://www.irinnews.org/Report/92198/SOUTH-AFRICA-Activism-makes-inroads-on-corrective-rape
Information to the research respondent

We are two students (Dahlström, C., Malmberg, S.) from Sweden, at the moment in South Africa to conduct our minor field study. With this letter of information we would like to ask if you would be interested in participating in this study.

Background
Most of the previous research about sexual violence, that target lesbian women, has focused on bringing the women’s stories to light and pointing out the severity of the problem. The purpose of this study is not to focus on the actual violence, but to gain a greater understanding of the healing process. We want to understand what methods and strategies in dealing with the trauma that are beneficial and what are not, in dealing with the trauma. We will interview both women that have been exposed to sexual violence due to their sexual orientation and counsellors who work with these women.

Your participation
If you choose to participate in the study you will meet with one both of us for an interview. The interview will, after your consent, be audio recorded and take 40-60 minutes.

Risks
Taking part in this research might bring back memories and feelings that are unpleasant. You have the right to abort your participation at any time without giving any explanation. There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

Gathering, keeping and handling the data
With this letter we ensure, that the information you give us in your participation, as a respondent will be treated with respect. We will maintain confidentiality and it will not be possible to identify you as a person in the completed study. We will not use any information that you don’t want to reveal. The audio recordings will be erased after they are written down and your name will be changed to ensure anonymity.

Voluntary Participation
The participation of the study is completely voluntarily. If you at any time during the interview feel that you no longer want to participate, you have the right to say so and your statements will not be part of our study.
Taking part of the result
As a respondent you will be able to take part of the result of the study by contacting us. You are also welcome to contact us if you have any questions in regard to the study.

Sara Malmberg, student of social work
E-mail: sara.malmis@gmail.com

Calle Dahlström, student of social work
E-mail: calle.dahlstrom@gmail.com.

Johan Gärde, supervisor
E-mail: johan.garde@esh.se

Consent
I have read and understood the information given above and hear by consent, by my own free will, to participate in this study.

Date __________________________ Place: ________________________________

__________________________________________ __________________________
Signature                                      Print name

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.
Interview guide
Viktiga saker att komma ihåg genom hela intervjun.
Använd informantens ord och benämning av saker/händelser.

Background questions.
• Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?
• Age, family, partner, living conditions, employment?
• As you have read we are writing a study about the healing process and you are included in this study because of your experiences.
• Is it ok with you if I ask you some questions about these experiences?
• No: ok. Is there something else you would rather share or talk about?
• Yes: Before I do I just want to make it clear that you can ask us to pause or you can end the interview at any time.

Questions regarding the incident
• Could you tell me about what has happened to you, Could you please tell us/me your story?
• Did you speak to anyone about what had happened?
• If so, what was their reaction? What did you do then? Could you give me/us an example?
• What happened after the trauma? What did you do, could you give us an example?
Could you describe the journey from the incident to today? What were the important stepping stones in the healing process? Have you experienced anything that has made the process more difficult?
• What happened then? Did you go to the hospital, police or other organization?
• Could you give example of help you received that has been beneficial/non beneficial?
What feelings did you experience in connection with the incident?
• How did the incident change the way you live your life?
• Did you come up with any strategies to make you feel safer after the incident?

Questions regarding the treatment/healing process
• Could you describe how your social network looks like today?
• Is there any difference in it compared to before the incident?
• What role did your Has family or/and friends had play an important role in your healing process?
• Has your community had an important role in your healing process?
• What was your opinion about counselling before the incident?
• How do you feel about counselling today?
• In what way has counselling helped you?
• What do you feel is the most important thing a counsellor can do?
• Could you describe the journey from the incident to today? What were the important stepping stones in the healing process? Have you experienced anything that has made the process more difficult?
• If you think about what has been beneficial in your process do you have any ideas about why they helped you?
• When you think about your process from the incident to today is there anything that you wish would have been different?
• If so how would you have liked it to have been?
• How do you feel today?

Questions regarding the future
• When you think about your future what do you see?
• Do you have anything in particular that you want to achieve?
• When it comes to your healing process is there anything in particular that you are working towards?
• How would you like your life to be 5 years from now?
• Is there anything else that you would like to add?
• How did you feel about this interview? Is there anything that you would have liked us to do differently? Do you feel that you need to talk to anyone after our session?