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Understanding Experiences of the Bermuda Government's Youth-Serving Professionals in Transformational Coaching

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MSc, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2010

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Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract

Public administrators and civil servants working with vulnerable youth have the challenging yet critical job of supporting their young clients in overcoming adversity and achieving optimal life outcomes. Public administrators and civil servants work with vulnerable youth to help shift their trajectories toward positive life outcomes; however, if these professionals are not thriving in the workplace, they may not have the best possible positive influence on youth. Little was known about how to support the ability of professionals to experience professional thriving, defined as the experience of feeling energized at work and motivated toward professional growth and success. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the experiences that youth-serving professionals, employed by the Bermuda Government, have in transformational coaching as a first step in understanding its potential to enhance individuals' experiences of thriving at work. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 8 individuals working in public education, a subset of youth-serving public sector employees. Data were subjected to Thomas's 5-step data analysis procedure, including inductive coding and categorization of codes into themes. Findings indicated 5 common themes experienced by participants: perspective taking, responsibility and commitment, better relationships and results, personal well-being, and risk taking and growth. These themes have all previously been linked to thriving, indicating the potential for transformational coaching to positively affect workplace thriving. The positive social change implication is to provide public administration leadership with an effective professional development strategy to boost employees' potential to thrive and maximize their influence on youth.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, Marilyn and Jon Feldman, for being a constant source of support and providing me with the opportunities in my life that have led to my doctoral journey.

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I would like to acknowledge several people for their assistance with this project. First, I would like to thank my husband, Jim Paugh, for all his support and encouragement throughout my dissertation process. I would also like to thank my committee, and in particular Dr. Cassandra Caldwell, as my Chair, for her support and guidance in my doctoral journey. I am also deeply grateful to my Community Partner, the organization that inspired this research as well as the mentorship of the Department Coordinator and her team. I am deeply appreciative.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Professionals working with youth in public administration and civil service face challenges in supporting young people in achieving positive life outcomes. Despite the existence of these professionals, many young people continue to experience negative, unproductive, and antisocial trajectories. Serious social issues result, as well as increased costs for governments that must fund the costs associated with these detrimental outcomes. It is in the social, moral, and economic interests of governments to help young people through the public provision of supportive and transformative human services that assist in shifting the trajectories of vulnerable youth toward positive life outcomes.

Public administrators and civil servants working with vulnerable youth have considerable influence over the young people they serve, and they can positively or negatively influence youths' trajectories, depending on their performance at work and how they engage with their young clients (Ahnert, Harwardt-Heinecke, Kappler, Eckstein-Madry, & Milatz, 2012; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011; O'Connor, Collins, & Supplee, 2012; Sabol & Pianta, 2012; Ungar, 2013a). Therefore, ensuring the optimal performance of public sector employees at work is a critical public-policy matter, socially and economically. Yet the emotionally exhaustive nature of human services, a field typified by high levels of burnout and attrition (Brunstring, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014; Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014; Pas, Bradshaw, & Hershfeldt, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Thomas, Kohl, & Choi, 2014), can negatively affect the ability of professionals to provide quality services (Ali, Ishtiaq, & Ahmad, 2013; Kim, Ji, & Kao, 2011; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Montero-Marin, Prado-Abril, Demarzo, Gascon, & Garcia-Campayo, 2014). The burnout

phenomenon in human services has resulted in a myopic focus on burnout prevention while neglecting attention to performance maximization and workplace thriving (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price 2011; Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013; Prosser, Tuckey, & Wendt, 2013; Wendt, Tuckey, & Prosser, 2011).

Public administrators are failing to consider how to support professionals in not only surviving, but also thriving at work. Individuals who are thriving are satisfied, motivated, committed to growth and excellence, and bring a sense of vitality and energy to their job (Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson, & Garnett, 2012; Prosser et al., 2013; Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2012; Spreizter et al., 2005; Wendt et al., 2011). Public administrators and civil servants who are thriving at work are more capable of providing high-quality service to distressed young people who need their support.

Neglecting to focus on thriving in public administration literature results in a lack of knowledge about proactive ways to promote thriving. In my research, I initiated exploration into transformational coaching, a previously unexplored area that has potential to promote thriving and performance of public sector employees working with youth. In this chapter, I provide an in-depth overview of this research problem, the conceptual framework that I used, and the methodology that I used to explore the phenomenon under study.

Background of the Study

Young people who are born into vulnerable lifestyles, disadvantaged homes, and impoverished communities face significant setbacks and are more likely than their more privileged peers to experience hardship. These experiences set children on unproductive, antisocial, and even criminal paths. Children's likelihood of succeeding in life is already

skewed by their life circumstances by the time they begin school (Seigel & Welsh, 2014). Children who grow up in environments characterized by risk factors such as broken homes, poverty, poor parenting, and chaotic neighborhoods will be less likely to finish school and find a job, and they will be more likely to rely on welfare and be engaged in criminal activity (Farrington, Loeber, Stallings, & Homish, 2012; Seigel & Welsh, 2014). When vulnerable youth follow these negative trajectories, serious social and economic repercussions accrue, with public policy and administration implications.

From a moral standpoint, public administrators have an ethical duty to find ways to support vulnerable youth and provide them with services, resources, and opportunities that can help to mitigate those negative influences. This obligation of government is a fundamental belief on which I based my research. For economic buoyancy, public administrators must prevent negative trajectories among young people.

Governments spend public funds on citizens who are unproductive and engage in criminal behavior. These costs vary widely. One major source of financial burden comes from young people who do not complete high school, earn lower wages, and are at higher risk of unemployment and welfare dependency. Education is a fundamental requirement for later life success. In a 2010 report by the National Center for Education Statistics describing trends in high school dropout rates, the lifetime cost associated with dropping out of school was estimated at $630,000 in lost income potential (Chapman, Laird, & Ramani; 2010, p. 1). In addition, the 2010 report estimated an additional $240,000 in costs related to lower tax contributions, higher reliance on government welfare, and a higher likelihood of being involved in crime, based on data from two previous studies (Pleis, Lucas, & Ward, 2009; Rouse, 2007), which the authors adjusted for inflation

(Chapman et al., 2010, p. 1). According to Bermuda's 2010 Government census, 12% of the population has never completed high school (Government of Bermuda, 2010), and additional reporting on high school dropouts in in Bermuda showed that 50% of Black males leave the public school system before completing high school (Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011). An increasing social welfare budget accompanies these statistics, which, in Bermuda in 2014, reached a historic high of $50 million for a population of approximately 60,000 people, where 50% of those receiving government financial assistance were able-bodied individuals capable of work (Scott, 2014). When young people do not finish school, they are likely to cost the public more.

Exacerbating these costs is the reality that undereducated and unemployed individuals are more likely to be involved in crime and to be incarcerated, causing additional social and economic costs to society and governments. Data from the Department of Justice reported by the National Center for Education Statistics showed that in 2004, high school dropouts counted for a disproportionate number of prison inmates (Chapman et al., 2010, p. 1). According to the U.S. Bureau of Statistics' 2014 data estimates, more than three of every 100 people younger than 18 years were arrested (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2015). Based on 2013 statistics, approximately 35% of the 850,000 gang members in the United States are younger than 18 years (National Gang Center, n.d.). In Bermuda, the national police department does not publish youth crime rates; however, a recent social report provided qualitative evidence that the number and severity of crimes being committed by youth offenders are rising, as is youth gang membership (Inter-Agency for Children and Families, 2014). These figures reflect a significant number of young people involved with crime.

The costs associated with crime are extensive. Findings from the 2013 Cambridge study of delinquent development reported costs ranging from $900,000 to $1.14 million per serious criminal offender (Piquero, Jennings, & Farrington, 2013). Kuklinski, Briney, Hawkins, and Catalano (2012) found that for individuals who commit crimes, in addition to the costs resulting from reduced wages and increased welfare dependency, are expenses for the police system, the judicial system, incarceration, case management and supervision, and health care costs. The U.S. Government spends approximately $30 billion to monitor and incarcerate criminals (Zagar, Grove, & Busch, 2013). In Bermuda, the government spends more than $80,000 to incarcerate one individual, based on data from 2010 government expenditures relative to the number of individuals incarcerated for that same year (Coalition for the Protection of Children, 2011). Governments spend significant resources on individuals who are not productively engaged in society. Helping young people avoid delinquent paths and become taxpaying workers provides a dual benefit: It helps reduce government spending and safeguards the community (Zagar et al., 2013).

Therefore, it is vital that governments do as much as they can to prevent youth from following unproductive trajectories. One way that governments can work toward this goal is by ensuring that government-employed human service professionals who work with youth have maximum effectiveness. Public sector employees who work with vulnerable youth can significantly influence young clients, positively and negatively. One engaging and caring relationship between an adult and child, even if this person is not a parent, can be positively transformative for a young person (Sabol & Pianta, 2012; Ungar, 2013b). Teachers and social workers are two examples of professionals who have

scope to influence vulnerable youth. Where the relationship is positive, caring, and engaging, the relationship can enhance the resiliency of a young person (Ahnert et al., 2012; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011; Sabol & Pianta, 2012); however, when the relationship lacks these qualities, the risk experience of a young person can be exacerbated (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011; O'Connor et al., 2012; Sabol & Pianta, 2012).

A factor that works against the ability of these professionals to create positive, engaging, and high-quality relationships with their young clients is the prevalence and effects of stress and burnout. Although burnout occurs in all professions, for a variety of reasons, its incidence is especially high in human services departments, based on the emotional labor involved in the work (Brunstring et al., 2014; Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Thomas et al., 2014). Because the nature of human services rests on relationships, emotional exhaustion affects the ability of human services to provide quality services to clients (Ali et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2011; Maslach et al., 2001; Montero-Marin et al., 2014). Direct service provision implications result, accompanied by negative repercussions for youth in need of effective services.

In addition, repercussions ensue that result from the field being affected extensively by burnout and emotional exhaustion, resulting in a lack of attention around how to maximize performance and enhance a sense of workplace thriving (Beltman et al., 2011; Liu & Berg-Klug, 2013; Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). These concepts are increasingly common in corporate settings, but not in public administration discourse. Shifting toward a focus on thriving implies a more strengths-based, positive approach to

enhancing well-being, motivation, and commitment at work, thereby supporting more positive and efficacious client relationships and services.

To ensure that public administrators and civil servants have the greatest possible influence on the young people with whom they work, it is critical that their workplace performance is maximized and sustained by facilitating their sense of thriving at work. Although this concept of professional thriving is largely unexplored in the public administration discourse, research does exist in the fields of positive psychology, organizational behavior, and management research on performance maximization. One area in particular that has grown as a result of this positive focus is the field of coaching: a common performance enhancement and leadership training tool used in many corporate institutions, as well as human service settings. This growing field shows promising outcomes in promoting resiliency, well-being, and performance, but it is frequently criticized for its lack of lack of theoretical and conceptual development, construct fidelity, and process clarity (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014; Egan & Hamlin, 2014; Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Grover & Furnham, 2016; Maltibia, Marsick, & Ghosh, 2014; Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014). Evidence-based coaching is growing, but the range of coaching styles and methodologies results in many approaches that are currently unexamined. Of particular interest here is the area of transformational coaching, one of the currently unexplored areas in the coaching literature. Transformational coaching provides a possible tool to enhance the experience of professional thriving, and therefore the potential to enhance the human service provision in public administration and civil service.

Problem Statement

Public administrators and civil servants working with vulnerable youth have the challenging yet critical job of supporting their young clients in overcoming adversity and achieving optimal life outcomes. Despite the existence of these professionals, many young people continue to lack the quality of services they require. This problem can result in negative, unproductive, and antisocial trajectories for young people, which results in increased costs for governments. One possible cause contributing to this problem is the influence human service professionals working in the public sector with young people have on their clients' trajectories. When professionals are not thriving in the workplace, they may not be having the best positive influence on their young clients, and they fail to make the most of their opportunity to change negative trajectories. Transformational coaching is an intervention that holds possibility to enhance an individual's experience of thriving at work, yet this concept is unexplored in the literature. In my study, in which I explored the experiences of youth-serving public sector employees participating in transformational coaching, I illuminate effective professional development strategies that can enhance the public provision of youth-related human services.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to understand comprehensively the experiences that youth-serving professionals employed by the Bermuda Government have in transformational coaching. This research will help public administration managers and leaders better understand the potential value of transformational coaching

to public administration and civil service, and the government's provision of youth-related human services.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question: What are the experiences of youth-serving professionals working for the Bermuda Government using transformational coaching. Three subquestions supported my work:

1. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' experiences of feeling vitality, energy and motivation toward professional growth and success?
2. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence?
3. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' meaning-making or ways of thinking?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of a study is a conceptual map of the "territory" being investigated in a research study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 20). The conceptual framework introduces and describes the concepts and existing knowledge that weave together to orient the study. The guiding concept for this research is professional thriving. I also used additional concepts in an exploratory design where they interconnect to create the basis for the research. These concepts include the personal domain, emotional intelligence, and transformative learning. I describe these concepts in greater detail throughout the literature review in Chapter 2, but I introduce them here briefly.

Professional Thriving

The need to support the experience of professionals thriving among public sector employees who work with youth is the basis for this research. Professional thriving means professionals are sustaining themselves and flourishing in their careers; feeling a sense of vitality at work; and being motivated toward growth, progress, and ultimate success in the workplace (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). Porath et al. (2012) identified two key aspects of thriving: vitality and growth through learning. Individuals who were thriving at work typically went beyond basic job requirements, bringing a sense of passion to their work, identifying with the mission of their job, and committing to continual improvement (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Employees who were thriving were more satisfied with their jobs, had better work performance, and experienced lower levels of burnout (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2012). For public sector employees working with youth, creating a sense of thriving at work would have positive implications for the young clients these professionals serve. Thus, promoting professional thriving is the critical concept guiding this research. The first research subquestion is designed to elicit information regarding the experience of thriving by exploring feelings of vitality, energy, and motivation toward growth, learning, and success in the workplace.

The Personal Domain

Two aspects determine the ability of an individual to experience thriving: the job's structure, leadership, requirements, culture, and environment and the individual. I focused on individuals' personal characteristics that enable them to thrive. In particular, the concept of the personal domain is of interest to this research. Prosser et al. (2013) and Wendt et al. (2011) advocated the use of this concept when trying to understand what

supported the ability of human service professionals to thrive, formulated from the definition offered by Cheers, Darracott, and Lonne (2005). Cheers et al. created a framework to understand the range of domains that influence work performance in human services, including society, organization, community, personal, professional, and geographic. In their research on thriving in human services, Prosser et al. (2013) and Wendt et al. (2011) found that, of the domains listed by Cheers et al., the personal domain had the most influence on professionals' abilities to experience thriving at work. Both sets of researchers found that thriving in human services connected to individuals' experiences, beliefs, values, and socioemotional skills. Thriving was not about what professionals know or their academic intellect but who they are as individuals. The concept of a professional's personal domain captures the essence of these factors (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011) and is the focus of the second research subquestion.

Emotional Intelligence

Based on the centrality of the personal domain to the experience of thriving at work, the concept of emotional intelligence also intimately relates to this research. Goleman (1995) defined *emotional intelligence* as the capacity to understand emotions and manage them effectively in oneself and others, and to self-motivate. Emotional intelligence is "the set of abilities (verbal and nonverbal) that enable a person to generate, recognize, express, understand, and evaluate their own, and others' emotions, in order to guide thinking and action to successfully cope with environment demands and pressures" (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004, p. 72). Emotional intelligence is the ability of individuals to be aware of their own mindsets, beliefs, and values and how these drive emotions and, therefore, reactions, and to self-manage effectively, appropriately, and

compassionately, intrapersonally and interpersonally. The concept covers the same elements as the personal domain, but with more explicit focus on the role of emotions. A plethora of research exists linking higher levels of emotional intelligence with enhanced work performance, as is clearly reflected in meta-analyses by O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, and Story (2011) and Joseph and Newman (2010), supporting the same relationship in human services.

When considering thriving as an individual's sense of vitality and motivation toward growth and excellence, the importance of emotions is clear. Feeling energized and motivated are emotional states, reflecting the important role emotions play in driving maximized workplace performance. Joshith (2012) provided a helpful clarification of emotions and cognitive knowledge, explaining that whereas cognition uses reasoning and analysis, emotions influence behavior by their influence on feelings and resulting choices. Joshith explained that building emotional intelligence helps individuals understand how their emotions influence their choices and how perceptions, personal history, feelings, and rational thinking, based on cognition, shape everyday experiences. Furthermore, because human service professions are emotionally laden jobs that require the display of empathy and care for clients, the area of emotions, emotional awareness, and emotional regulation are even more important than in other organizational settings. Research on the importance of emotional intelligence for work performance is therefore relevant to my research, because it links directly to the skills an individual can develop to increase their ability to thrive, personally and professionally, in fields that are emotionally demanding. The second research subquestion is designed to elicit

information that would reflect growth in the personal domain by revealing shifts in participants' beliefs, values, or emotional intelligence.

Transformative Learning

The broad range of adult learning theories includes transformative learning, first asserted by Mezirow (1991). Transformative learning is a process of effecting change in a person's frame of reference: the way people define, view, and make assumptions about their world based on their associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses. These are the same components as the personal domain. According to Mezirow, these frames of reference are the paradigms through which one experiences the world, determining their beliefs, expectations, perceptions, cognitions, feelings, and actions. Transformative learning requires a paradigm shift, where individuals move toward a more inclusive, reflective, and integrative frame of reference that considers alternative possibilities and ways of seeing things. When transformative learning occurs, it can lead to changes in meaning-making schemes, beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions. This change is considered personal transformation.

Personal transformation can be defined as "a dynamic, uniquely individualized process of expanding consciousness whereby an individual becomes critically aware of old and new self-views and chooses to integrate these views into a new self-definition" (Wade, 1998, p. 716). Personal transformation that occurs as a result of transformative learning allows individuals to become critically aware of how their assumptions about the world are limited, and when they become more open, they experience new possibilities. This raised level of consciousness enhances thinking, often accompanied by energy, excitement, motivation, self-belief, creativity, and resilience, as well as an empowered

sense of greater life vision and service orientation (Wade, 1998). The experience of energy, motivation and commitment are factors that indicate thriving. Liska (2014) described personal transformation as a "vertical" form of development, differentiated from "horizontal" development that is based on learning more content-based knowledge such as academic or skill-specific learning. Personal transformation has significant potential for promoting thriving and is the objective of transformational coaching. The third research subquestion is designed to elicit information regarding experiences of transformative learning by exploring shifts in meaning-making that occurred for participants.

Nature of the Study

This research was a qualitative study using a transcendental phenomenological approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of public sector employees working with youth using transformational coaching. In my research, I provide a first step in understanding the potential of transformational coaching as a professional development tool that may affect change in the personal domain of professionals to support their sense of thriving at work. Because the area was currently unexplored, taking a phenomenological approach to exploring experiences helped provide an unbiased account of what shifts occur for individuals, including any instances of transformative learning or growth in the personal domain. The desire to understand experiences and the meaning-making that takes place during transformational coaching is suited to qualitative methods seeking to reveal the richness of subjective experiences. Follow-up studies are needed to confirm and measure specific outcomes. I focused specifically on experiences of public sector employees in Bermuda who participated in a

3-day Professional Development Training (PDT), which is a transformational coaching intervention designed by a United Kingdom youth development organization. Data collection included in-depth interviews with eight past participants who currently work with youth in the Bermuda Public School system. I analyzed and coded the data collected from interviews to reveal patterns and commonalities across experiences. I analyzed data to identify themes and rich descriptions to capture the essence of shared experiences in the PDT.

Definitions

Emotional intelligence: Emotional intelligence is the capacity of an individual to understand how their frame of reference drives their emotions and reactions; and to be self-aware, to self-manage and to self-motivate effectively, appropriately, and compassionately.

Frame of reference: Frame of reference is the way people define, view, and make assumptions about their world, based on their associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses (Mezirow, 1991). They are paradigms through which one experiences the world that determines their beliefs, expectations, perceptions, cognitions, feelings, and actions. They help to define one's personal domain.

Horizontal development: Horizontal development means knowledge acquisition or the learning of content-based knowledge such as academic or skill-specific learning (Liska, 2014).

Personal domain: For this study, the personal domain is the resources an individual derives from their attitudes, beliefs, values, and life experiences that drive their

emotions and motivations, and therefore their choices and behaviors. A person's emotional intelligence is part of their personal domain.

Professional thriving: Professional thriving is the experience of feeling energized at work and motivated toward professional growth and success.

Transformational coaching: Transformational coaching is an approach to coaching that seeks to create personal transformation by fundamentally shifting the way individuals make meaning. It involves facilitating vertical development.

Transformative learning: Transformative learning is learning that occurs when individuals question and alter their frame of reference, their basic assumptions, self-understanding, ways of thinking, and making meaning, also called vertical development (Liska, 2014).

Assumptions

I designed my study to explore the experience that public sector employees who work with youth have in transformational coaching to understand its potential value for public administration and civil service. I made the following assumptions about this study: (a) Public administrative leadership has an interest and stake in supporting government employees' experiences of professional thriving; (b) the essence of shared experiences of public administrators and civil servants in transformational coaching is of value to public policy and administration, although this was not an outcomes study; and (c) I designed the interview protocol objectively and therefore did not lead respondents to answer in a way that presupposed the nature of the experiences they had in transformational coaching.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this qualitative study was defined as follows: (a) one transformational coaching intervention provided by a Bermuda Government program in conjunction with their transformational coaching partner (name withheld for confidentiality purposes), and eight past participants from the training who were working in public schools with youth; and (b) this research was delimited to a focus on individual agency to affect thriving, rather than organizational structures that can influence thriving. This limitation was not based on any belief about the lack of important organizational structures, nor about the role of public administrators in creating structures that support thriving: significant knowledge already exists in the literature regarding these aspects. Therefore, I focused on the gap in understanding that exists in how to support individuals' own growth and development such that transformative learning and personal growth can occur to support their ability to experience thriving at work.

Study Limitations

This research had two main limitations. First, in focusing the research on individual agency, the potential exists for public administration leaders to neglect their responsibility to consider what structures need to be in place to support experiences of thriving. Organizational aspects must be considered, "from an ethical standpoint, while individuals may be able to develop aspects of resilience this does not obviate employers from their responsibility to improve the conditions of teachers' work and day to day working practices" (Beltman et al., 2011, p. 196). If participants use this research in any way to avoid making organizational efforts to support employee well-being, growth, and performance, then this could limit the study. However, the purpose of this study was to

fill a gap in knowledge and therefore expand on what managers and leaders already know that can support employees.

The study also had methodological limitations, based on the phenomenological nature of the research. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that relies on subjective experiences of individuals; therefore, it is difficult to triangulate data or implement random sampling, impeding the ability to generalize the results. However, by using referential adequacy, negative case analysis, and rich description, I established transferability, credibility, and dependability. Furthermore, as transformational coaching was previously unexplored, in this study I merely have offered a starting point from which follow-up studies can be conducted to establish outcomes measurements that may be more generalizable.

Significance of the Study

By providing a comprehensive understanding of transformational coaching, I have provided a starting point into an investigation of the potential for transformational coaching to support experiences of professional thriving. The significance of this research could apply to individuals, communities, and society at large. My research also has benefits across a range of fields: coaching and human resource management, human services and youth intervention, and, most important, public policy and administration.

At the individual level, this study has relevance for managers and human resource professionals in any field, seeking to enhance workplace performance and support employee well-being. The research also has relevance for employees themselves, who can benefit from a greater sense of well-being and motivation at work. If individuals are flourishing in the workplace and are happier as a result, families and communities will

benefit. This research also has specific applicability to the coaching field by providing more breadth and depth to the coaching knowledge base. This study broadens the research on coaching by exploring the unexplored area of transformational coaching. This study deepens the research on coaching, given the in-depth nature of the phenomenological inquiry. In contributing knowledge to the coaching field, this research supports individual coaches in providing effective and influential services to clients.

In the community, this study also has positive social change implications. Finding ways to help public service professionals experience thriving will benefit not only individual employees, but also public administration and civil service as a whole in its potential to increase performance and efficiency. Having evidence-based training approaches for all areas of public administration professional development is important, given the limited budgets and fiduciary responsibilities of government and the desire for efficiency and effectiveness. If government employees work with greater levels of motivation and productivity, then government services will be more efficient. This implication benefits communities that are the taxpaying funders and recipients of these services.

I am particularly interested in ways to build the capacity and support the role of public administrators and civil servants working with youth, given the level of influence these professionals have over the lives of young people. Working toward proactive strategies to support the work professionals can do with young people is critical. Establishing training approaches that have the potential to enhance the public provision of youth services and possibly youth outcomes provides further societal implications. Although this research is not a study of the influence of transformational coaching on

youth outcomes, it provides a starting point for exploring the positive social change possibility of transformational coaching by providing insight into its potential as an effective performance enhancement strategy for public sector employees who work with young people.

Summary and Transition

Public administrators and civil servants working with vulnerable youth have the challenging yet critical job of supporting their young clients in overcoming adversity and achieving optimal life outcomes. Despite the existence of these professionals, many young people continue to lack the services they require. This problem can result in negative, unproductive, and antisocial trajectories for young people, which results in increased costs for governments. It is in the social, moral, and economic interests of governments to ensure young people are supported through public provision of supportive and transformative human services that can help shift the trajectories of vulnerable youth toward positive life outcomes. Public sector employees working with vulnerable youth have considerable influence on the young people they serve and can have positive and negative influences on youths' trajectories, depending on their performance at work and how they engage with their young clients.

When professionals are not thriving in the workplace, they may not be having the best possible influence on their young clients, and thus they are not optimizing their opportunity to change negative trajectories. Yet little was known about how to support the ability of professionals to experience professional thriving. To better understand the concept of thriving and how it might be enhanced, the concepts of the personal domain, emotional intelligence, and transformative learning provided a foundation for

understanding how an individual can bolster their own resources to experience a sense of professional thriving. Based on this foundation, transformational coaching is an intervention that shows possibilities for enhancing individuals' experiences of thriving at work, yet it was unexplored in the literature.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to establish a comprehensive understanding of the experiences that youth-serving professionals employed by the Bermuda Government have in transformational coaching. This research will help public administrative managers and leaders better understand the value of transformational coaching to public administration, civil service, and the government's provision of human services.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Professionals working with youth in public administration and civil service face challenges in supporting young people in achieving positive life outcomes. Despite the existence of these professionals, many young people continue to lack the services they require. This problem can result in negative, unproductive, and antisocial trajectories for young people, resulting in serious social issues and increased costs for governments that must fund the costs associated with these detrimental outcomes. In this study, I explored the potential for transformational coaching as a professional development strategy. To provide background for this research, I provide a concise synopsis of relevant literature to bring together the conceptual framework with current knowledge in relevant areas. First, I present the influence that public administrators and civil servants working with youth can have on levels of risk and resiliency, including a discussion of burnout and an introduction to the need to support professional thriving. I then discuss the research related to the conceptual framework, including a review of literature related to professional thriving and its connections to the personal domain and emotional intelligence as well as transformative learning. I will then provide a discussion of the gaps in the current knowledge base and how the field of coaching, and in particular transformational coaching, offers insight into the promotion of workplace thriving in public administration and civil service. The chapter concludes with a review of past studies that support the research methods used for this study. Before providing this review of the literature, I discuss the literature search strategy and state full disclosure of my potential bias.

Literature Search Strategy

I partitioned the research approach to the literature review into distinct categories of investigation. The first step was to conduct a basic review of the literature around risk and resiliency with regard to the influence that human services professionals, in particular teachers and social workers, have on at-risk youth. This review was important to establish that these professionals can and do influence the trajectories of at-risk youth. The second section described in the literature review is a basic review of burnout in the field of human service provision, to understand better one of the most fundamental challenges to the field. I then contrast the concept of burnout with the concept of professional thriving, a concept central to maximizing and sustaining the performance of human service professionals. Finally, I delve into the field of coaching, as a strategy to promote professional thriving. I provide literature about the efficacy of coaching, including specific focus on coaching in the human services context, as well as criticisms of coaching. In the final section of the literature review, I introduce the unexplored area of transformational coaching, and the transformational-coaching intervention this research explored.

For each category, I used two main search procedures to identify articles to review: a database search process followed by an ancestral search. For the database search process, I conducted a broad review of the different categories using Google Scholar to locate pertinent journal articles. I considered only peer-reviewed journal articles. I made a small number of exceptions for articles that were not peer reviewed but seemed particularly relevant to the topic. I also focused the research on articles published in the last four years; however, I did include older works that were pertinent to

understanding the topic. Google Scholar was a useful starting point as it provided an easy method of searching a range of databases. For the topics of coaching and transformation, I conducted additional searches using two multidisciplinary databases, Academic Search Complete and ProQuest Central, to ensure I covered the literature adequately. I selected multidisciplinary databases due to the nature of coaching and because transformation spans different academic fields and theoretical backgrounds. From the database search results and review of the research, I identified additional articles that seemed pertinent to the background of this research using article citations and reference lists. This stage often resulted in the inclusion of older articles that seemed highly relevant. This chapter provides the findings from this review of the literature.

Disclosure of Researcher Bias

To maximize neutrality and objectively in the review of the literature and throughout the remainder of the research process, researchers must provide full disclosure of their relationship to the research topic. The inspiration for this research was my involvement as a human service professional and my first-hand experience of how personal challenges influence the ability to serve and engage with clients. I am passionate about the need to serve clients effectively, despite all the challenges that exist when working in such an emotionally draining field. I was also personally involved in the transformational-coaching intervention that is the focus of this research, and therefore have first-hand experience of the type of personal transformation that is possible and the influence this can have on the ability to serve clients, especially young people. I had a positive experience with transformational coaching such that it inspired this research as well as my completion of a coaching certification. Therefore, the potential exists for bias

in favor of the need for and benefit of transformational coaching. However, in being aware of this potential bias, I have made effort to bracket this awareness, allowing me to complete a more objective review of the literature, as well as the subsequent data collection and analysis.

Literature Review

Risk, Resiliency, and Human Services

Youth, particularly vulnerable youth, can face significant challenges in achieving positive life outcomes in which they are productive, contributing, and law-abiding citizens. Ample research shows that certain experiences and events in young peoples' lives can either exacerbate risk and increase delinquency or enhance resiliency (Nagin & Paternoster, 2000; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Seigel & Welsh, 2014). By as young as 8 years of age, some children will already be more likely to engage in antisocial behavior than other youth, based on a range of risk factors (Seigel & Welsh, 2014). Some of these include psychological and biological factors (Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, & Silva, 1994; Farrington & Loeber, 1999; Moffitt, Lynam, & Silva, 1994; J. Q. Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985), family characteristics and parenting (Farrington, 1978; Farrington & Loeber, 1999; Gold, 1963; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Langner, 1979; McCord, 1979; H. Wilson, 1980), and socioeconomic status (Farrington & Loeber, 1999). As the exposure to risk factors increases, so do the chances for delinquency (Farrington, 2005; Laan, Blom, & Kleemans, 2009; Loeber, Slot, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2006; Seigel & Welsh, 2014).

Seigel and Welsh (2014) defined a *risk factor* as a negative factor in an individual's life that increases the risk of future delinquency. They categorized risk

factors into individual, family, and community factors. Individual factors include early antisocial behavior, emotional factors, poor cognitive development, low intelligence, and hyperactivity. Family factors include inconsistent parenting, maltreatment, family violence, divorce, parent psychopathology, family antisocial behaviors, teenage parenthood, and large family size. School and community factors include failure to bond to school or poor school attachment, poor academic performance, low academic aspirations, living in a poor family, neighborhood disadvantage, disorganized neighborhood, concentration of delinquent peer groups, access to weapons, association with deviant peers, and peer rejection (Seigel & Welsh, 2014). The risks facing children range widely and add up cumulatively to exacerbate risk.

However, the research also shows that the majority of individuals in high-risk environments never engage in serious delinquency or crime because they are also exposed to a range of protective factors that boost their resiliency (Hartman, Turner, Daigle, Exum, & Cullen, 2009; Seigel & Welsh, 2014). Seigel and Welsh (2014) defined a *protective factor* as a positive factor in an individual life that decreases the future risk of delinquency. Masten (2014) defined *resilience* as the capacity to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten a system or child's development. Khanlou and Wray (2014) defined *resiliency* as positive adaptation despite exposure to adversity. The more protective factors young people experience, the more likely they are to be resilient and resist antisocial tendencies, despite any levels of risk that may exist (Donnon, 2010; Farrington & Loeber, 1999; Hartman et al., 2009; Seigel & Welsh, 2014). Resiliency is key when combating risk and promoting positive outcomes for youth. Consequently, assessing and building the resiliency of young people through protective factors has

become a common lens through which to ensure greater outcomes for young people. The challenges facing youth in modern society have resulted in a focused interest in how to build resiliency in youth to mitigate risk (Masten, 2014).

As with risk factors, protective factors also range widely. One resiliency framework that provides a detailed breakdown of protective factors is the 40 Developmental Assets promoted by The Search Institute (2015, para 1–8):

- Support: family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, caring neighborhood, caring school climate, and parent involvement in schooling.
- Empowerment: community valuing youth, youth considered as resources, engaging in service to others, and safety.
- Boundaries and expectations: family boundaries, school boundaries, neighborhood boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence, and high expectations.
- Constructive use of time: creative activities, youth programs, religious community involvement, and structured time at home.
- Commitment to learning: achievement motivation, school engagement, homework, bonding to school, and reading for pleasure.
- Positive values: caring, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and restraint.
- Social competencies: planning and decision-making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, and peaceful conflict resolution.

- Positive identity: personal power, self-esteem, a sense of purpose, and positive view of personal future.

These factors also act cumulatively, in that the more factors that are present, the greater the level of resilience where "no single factor or attribute helps explain why some children and youth are able to overcome adversity" (Khanlou & Wray, 2014, p. 74). Thus, public policy and administration must consider a broad range of strategies to reduce risk and enhance resiliency to reduce long-term social problems with financial repercussions.

One area that is under direct responsibility of public-service leadership is the work performance of public sector employees in youth-serving human services. These employees can influence the young people with whom they work. Their performance at work and the relationships they create with their clients can have either a positive or a negative influence on the youth, depending on how the youth experience the relationship. The influence of these human service professionals on experiences of risk and resiliency, and therefore trajectories of vulnerable youth, is supported in the literature. Researchers showed that having an engaging and empowering relationship with just one caring adult is one of the strongest protective factors in building resiliency (Ungar, 2013a; Sabol & Pianta, 2012). When this relationship does not exist in the home with a parent, caring relationships with other adult figures can provide a similar source of support. Even nonparent adult–child relationships can be critical in mitigating negative outcomes and can even help counteract the negative effects of a toxic home, school, or community environment (Ungar, 2013a). Under conditions of significant adversity, a positive environment that provides a nurturing and engaging relationship with an adult can make a

difference in the life of a child and can be a turning point away from a negative life trajectory (Ungar, 2013a). Where an empowering and encouraging adult-child relationship does not exist in the home, other adults who work or engage with youth can play the same role (Sabol & Pianta, 2012). Where this relationship does not exist in the home, another valuable source for this relationship is public administrators and civil servants working in human services with at-risk youth.

The field of human services is broad, defined by a common underlying objective of seeking to meet human needs, preventing and remediating the factors that challenge human needs, and assisting individuals and communities to function effectively (U.S. National Association of Human Services, n.d.). Human services include critical fields to the development of youth such as education and social work, where professionals are often employed by governments and provide services that have them engage directly with youth. Teachers and social workers are two examples of human service professions who work closely with at-risk youth, and who are well positioned to influence, positively or negatively, the young people with whom they work through the relationships they create with them.

Influence of Teachers

Given the amount of time students spend in the classroom, the influence of teachers on students is significant. Researchers showed that school climate and school connectedness are strong protective factors for youth (Sabol & Pianta, 2012; Ungar, 2013a). Most experts agree that education systems also play a role in the high rate of delinquency (Seigel & Welsh, 2014). Extensive research described the role of the teacher and of classroom climate and its influence on youth, clearly establishing a link between

the classroom environment created by teachers and later student academic achievement and socioemotional functioning (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Sabol & Pianta, 2012; U.S. National Institute of Child Health, 2003).

Sabol and Pianta (2012) reviewed recent trends in teacher-child research to clarify the influence of those relationships in the development of risk for children. The authors found evidence across the literature that teacher-child relationships can compensate for the negative effects of earlier adverse experiences. Close relationships with teachers aligned with improved academic and socioemotional functioning for at-risk children. The findings from the Sabol and Pianta review supported the earlier work of Hamre and Pianta (2005), who conducted a study of classrooms characterized by either high instructional and emotional support or low support environments, and whether this influenced students' levels of achievement and development. Their goal was to demonstrate whether experiences in certain classroom climates could close the gap between academic performance for at-risk versus low-risk students. At-risk children whose classrooms were rated as having high instructional and emotional support showed gains in achievement such that student scores were similar to those of their low-risk peers. At-risk students in classrooms with lower levels of support performed significantly worse than their low-risk peers. Past research similarly linked positive classroom climate with a range of protective factors and positive behaviors, including more self-esteem, perceived cognitive competence, motivation (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986), school satisfaction (Baker, 1999), academic performance, and less acting-out behavior (Toro et al., 1985). More recent research connected positive classroom experience with students' ability to

self-regulate and manage stress (Ahnert et al., 2012). This evidence supports the positive influence that teachers can have on students.

Hamre and Pianta's (2005) study also highlighted that teachers could exacerbate the risk experienced by children. Conflictual relationships with teachers aligned with exacerbated negative outcomes for at-risk children (Sabol & Pianta, 2012). In research by O'Connor et al. (2012) on the impact of poor teacher relationships, characterized by either low levels of closeness or high levels of conflict between teacher and student, the authors found high levels of teacher-child conflict aligned with students' negative externalizing behaviors, including impulsivity and aggression. Low levels of teacher-child closeness aligned with students' negative internalizing behaviors, including social withdrawal and depression. Findings also indicated that conflict between teachers and students was especially detrimental to children's behavioral adjustment (O'Connor et al., 2012). Seigel and Welsh (2014) added that when students do not feel school attachment or are alienated from school, it increases their risk for dropout and delinquency. Verschueren and Koomen (2012) concluded that the past two decades of research had provided the empirical support to know that teacher-student relationships impact behavioral adjustment and academic achievement and proposed a shift in focus toward better understanding the nature of the relationships.

Researchers explored the nature of teacher-student relationships in Bermuda to understand the phenomenon of increased high school dropouts and gang-related crime in the Black male population (Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011; Mincy, Jethwani-Keyser, & Haldane, 2009). Findings provided further support for the influential role, both positive and negative, that teachers can have on the trajectories of youth (Jethwani-Keyser &

Mincy, 2011). In interviews, high school dropouts described school as a place where they did not feel like valued members of the community. They described school as punitive and school discipline as unjust, out of proportion to their offenses, and not considering the underlying causes of their problem behaviors. The young men described how they believed they had been labeled and treated as "thugs" by their teachers (Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011).

The punitive and harsh nature of teacher-student relationships that failed to provide support or nurturing was a factor that led to the young men being expelled from school (Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011). These men typically faced high levels of family conflict in the home, where 74% of men interviewed had experienced death, divorce, abuse, or violence in the home. The need for a nurturing and supportive environment in school was particularly critical, yet largely lacking, based on the accounts given by the men (Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011). Educational system fails to meet some students' psychosocial and emotional needs. These students see school "as an inhospitable environment with unfair practices and which subjects them to a fair degree of indignity" (Inter-Agency for Children and Families, 2014, p. 12).

In contrast to the accounts given by the young men who had left school, Jethwani-Keyser and Mincy (2011) also interviewed Black men who had remained in school through graduation. These interviewees described positive student-teacher relationships that in some cases facilitated the experience of a positive "turning point" for the graduates, who were able to become more educationally focused, highlighting the opportunity for supportive teacher-student relationships to make a significant difference for Black men (Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011, p. 69). This qualitative exploration of

these young men's experiences in Bermuda's public schools demonstrates the critical role that government employees working with young people can have on the trajectories of those youth. For schools to address delinquency, one recommendation is for more personalized support in student-teacher relationships where young people are provided with caring, accepting teachers (Seigel & Welsh, 2014). Policy should focus more strongly on supporting teacher-student relationships (Sabol & Pianta, 2012). The role of teachers employed by governments is critical and thus so is their performance.

Influence of Social Workers

The influence of social workers on child resilience is surprisingly much less researched than that of teachers. Researchers rarely study the influence of child-welfare interventions and the quality of the services provided (Ungar, 2013b). However, based on the nature of their services, the level of influence is unavoidable. Where serious risk exists or where harm to a child has occurred, social workers provide a range of services to help boost the resiliency of the entire family unit through interventions such as counseling, coaching, and parenting education. The intention of social work is to nurture families and support the creation of permanent connections that are critical to child well-being (U.S. National Association of Social Workers, n.d.). The profession exists not only to protect children from harm in the case of child-protective services, but also to support the ability of the individual child and the family environment to be resilient in the face of any adverse circumstances.

The need for social work services is critical. Adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction are widespread, although often unrecognized (Larkin, Felitti, & Anda, 2014). A 2014 report on child maltreatment

statistics reported that 9.4 children per 1,000 were victims of child abuse (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). These hardships can lead to a range of mental and social problems including delinquency and criminality. A 2012 report by the National Institute of Justice stated that just one incident of child abuse could increase the likelihood of juvenile arrest by 59% (Seigel & Welsh, 2014). Given the gravity of the risk associated with child-protection issues, the role of the social workers in intervening and reversing the damage created is critical. Therefore so are the relationships formed between social worker and child. For example, in a study of 497 service-using adolescents experiencing significant adversity and requiring multiple interventions, the quality of the one-on-one relationship provided by the social worker mattered more than the quantity of services received in predicting positive outcomes (Ungar, Liebenberg, Armstrong, Dudding, & van de Vijer, 2013). This provides clear evidence that the relationships formed and services provided by social workers have a significant influence on the youth who encounter child-protective systems. Whether the teacher who has at-risk youth in the classroom or the social worker working with youth in the context of abuse and neglect, these government-employed human service professionals play a significant role in influencing the trajectories of young people.

Burnout

Given the level of influence these government-employed professionals can have, the need to support their maximum level of performance is a critical public-policy issue. The provision of effective human services is challenging as a profession marked by high levels of stress and burnout (Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), in particular for social workers (M. Thomas et al., 2014) and teachers (Brunstring

et al., 2014). According to the Maslach Burnout Inventory, burnout occurs when stress that individuals encounter overcomes the resources and ability the individual has to cope adequately (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Burnout is a four-stage stress reaction progression where professionals move from having enthusiasm and empathy toward experiencing stagnation, and then frustration, before finally experiencing apathy (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980). Maslach et al. (1996) described three distinct aspects of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy. Emotional exhaustion reduces an employee's capacity to provide effective service and meet the needs of their clients (or students). Depersonalization refers to the development of cynicism in employees that results in their distancing and disengagement from clients (or students). Inefficacy results in employees' reduced sense of personal accomplishment and an increased sense of uselessness (Maslach et al., 1996). Burnout also aligns with job withdrawal, including absenteeism and turnover, as well as lower productivity and effectiveness (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout has serious consequences.

In their seminal work on burnout, Maslach and Leiter (1997) found that the single largest factor in the development of professional burnout was the nature of human service work in general. More recently, Leiter, Bakker, and Maslach (2014) described burnout as a "major career crisis in the twenty-first century" where workplace frustrations lead to exhaustion, cynicism and reduced efficacy. Newell and Nelson-Gardell (2014) argued that burnout is an "under-estimated occupational hazard" for those in human service work. M. Thomas et al. (2014) found that social service workers had higher levels of stress than all other fields typically associated with burnout, whereas Pas et al. (2012)

noted the similar problem in teaching, where approximately half of all teachers leave the field within their first five years.

Clear reasons exist as to why the field of human services links to higher levels of burnout. Bowie (2008), in work on youth-worker stress, provided a solid account of the sources of burnout, describing the "five-way squeeze" of competing pressures facing youth workers. These included workers' need for success, self-worth and significance, clients' needs and demands, organizational pressures, personal relationships, and political pressures. These pressures build to cause an experience of stress that can go unaddressed because of denial, shame, lack of awareness, or lack of coping resources (Bowie, 2008). The high risk of burnout may be due to a combination of the high demand for services, high caseloads, high turnover, and diminishing resources (Kim et al., 2011). The nature of the emotional labor involved in human service work also contributes to the high incidence of burnout in the field (Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Prosser et al., 2013). The stress caused by the emotional nature of social-caring professions is exacerbated by more disadvantaged and at-risk populations where the workers' exposure to conflict, poverty, trauma, and tragedy in their interactions with youth add to the stress of the emotional burden (Prosser et al., 2013).

With regard to teachers, Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, and Vanroelen (2014) explored the relationship between burnout and both workload and interpersonal workplace relationships with students, colleagues, supervisors, and parents and found that both factors impacted burnout. Teachers' relationships with students were the type of interpersonal relationship that had the strongest link to burnout, demonstrating the role that teacher-student relationships have in producing experiences of burnout. These

experiences link to the nature of teachers' motivations, which are often driven by the desire to help children, again highlighting the stress caused by the emotional nature of the job (Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). Human services are relationship-based services that require emotional energy by professionals, putting them at higher risk for experiencing the emotional exhaustion that is the hallmark trait of burnout.

The challenge of human service burnout also seems to be exacerbated in public sector work. Workers in public agencies funded by governments were more emotionally exhausted than employees of private or nonprofit organizations (Acker, 2011). Possible reasons were the larger size of public agencies as well as public sector job demands and heavy caseloads where clients have more difficult conditions (Acker, 2011). Thus, workplace stress and burnout is an important issue for public policy and public administration when it comes to ensuring the best possible human services are being provided, especially because of the consequences burnout has on client outcomes.

Burnout impedes service provision and therefore the clients (and students) being served. Once at the stage of burnout, introverted workers do the minimum, avoid challenges, take excessive sick leave, and show signs of depression, whereas extroverted workers take on more work until they physically or mentally collapse (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980). Over time, the build-up of stress in youth workers leads to lower energy, chronic tiredness, decreased health, lower productivity, decreased ability to make decisions, increased chemical abuse, increased distancing from clients, increased cynicism and rigidity in thinking, and withdrawal (Bowie, 2008). Burnout has been significantly and positively linked to decreasing levels of engagement with clients (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 7). Burnout adversely affected the physical health of

workers, resulting in headaches, gastrointestinal problems, and respiratory infection, which in turn hindered their ability to create "nurturing alliances" with clients (Kim et al., 2011).

In a comprehensive synthesis of research on teacher burnout, outcomes associated with burnout included attrition, health issues, and negative student outcomes (Brunstring et al., 2014). Students of disengaged or emotionally exhausted teachers were frequently disruptive and struggled socially and emotionally, which in turn influenced their academic development (Ruble & McGrew, 2013). Of the variance in goal attainment for students in special-education settings, 9.3% was attributed solely to teachers' emotional exhaustion (Ruble & McGrew, 2013). In Pakistan, teachers typically believed their job was stressful and that this reduced their job performance (Ali et al., 2013). Burnout in human services is widespread and has clear implications for the quality of human service provision and therefore on youth outcomes.

Extensive literature exists reviewing different strategies and interventions aimed at reducing burnout, which some authors have claimed has prevented a more strengths-based approach, considering how to maximize performance (Beltman et al., 2011; Liu & Berg-Klug, 2013; Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). This over-focus on burnout has limited the field of human services and prevented the important task of exploring how to promote professional thriving (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). The limited discourse on thriving has resulted in a lack of practical focus on performance enhancement and has prevented a better understanding of what sustains and maximizes performance in human services (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). This practical

focus represents a lost opportunity in public administration in supporting positive outcomes for young people serviced by the public sector.

Review Related to Conceptual Framework

Professional Thriving

Professional thriving is about sustaining oneself and flourishing in one's career. Professional thriving means feeling energized at work and motivated toward growth, progress, and ultimate success in the workplace (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). It is defined as

> A psychological state composed of the joint experience of vitality and learning where people experience growth and momentum marked by both a sense of feeling energized and alive and a sense that they are continually improving and getting better at what they do. (Porath et al., 2012, p. 250)

In a corporate context, the concepts of vitality and learning were crucial components of thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Vitality was characterized by individuals feeling energized about work, while study participants experiencing learning described instances of growth, development, and self-improvement. Both aspects were key to thriving, and one without the other would not result in the experience of thriving. Porath and colleagues (2012) provided a full account of the construct validation of their definition of thriving; their statistical analysis provided evidence that thriving is distinct from other aspects such as job commitment and job satisfaction and has its own unique contribution when defined by vitality and commitment to learning.

In their original model of workplace thriving, Spreitzer et al. (2005) emphasized the social embeddedness of thriving and how individual and organizational factors

produce certain “agentic work behaviors” that enable the psychological experience of thriving. Thriving is not about decreasing stressors but increasing “the presence of specific psychological states, behaviors, resources, and unit contextual features” such that individuals are more likely to be driven, active, and purposeful at work (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 539). Bandura (2001) classified this type of behavior as acting agentically. Spreitzer et al. (2005) defined three types of agentic work behaviors: task focus, exploration, and heedful relating. Each of these behaviors facilitates the joint experiences of vitality and learning that together signify thriving. Task focus is the ability to maintain attention to actions required to complete work demands. When individuals remain task focused, they are more likely to be absorbed in what they are doing and feel energized by their effort (Boyd, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2000), in particular when the task has been completed (Spreitzer et al., 2005, p. 541). When individuals have task focus, they are more likely to create patterns to work efficiently and effectively, enabling them to learn as they go. Exploration is the seeking and trying of new ideas and behaviors. When individuals can experiment and explore at work, this can spark feelings of curiosity and energy and can produce an instance of learning (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Heedful relating refers to the ability to work well in teams, to collaborate with colleagues, and to fit in with others in the workplace. When individuals experience high-quality work relationships and work well with others, this produces conditions where energy and vitality flourish (Heaphy & Dutton, 2006) and where individuals can learn from one another (Bandura, 1977). Paterson (2014) found these agentic work behaviors to have a positive relationship to thriving at work.

Spreitzer et al. (2005) mapped out the antecedents to these agentic work behaviors in individual and organizational contexts. In the organizational context, decision-making discretion, broad information sharing, a climate of trust and respect, as well as supervisor support facilitate agentic work behavior and therefore the experience of thriving at work. Decision-making discretion provides individuals with freedom and autonomy at work, which encourages task focus (Bandura, 1988), risk taking, exploration (Spreitzer, 1996), and heedful relating (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Broad information sharing provides individuals with knowledge that enables successful task focus and completion, which can develop an individual's competence and in turn stimulates further exploration (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002). A climate that supports information sharing also encourages interpersonal collaborating and heedful relating. Trust, respect, and supervisor support prevent political and emotional distractions in the workplace, facilitating task focus. These characteristics also create an emotionally safe environment that encourages exploration and heedful relating (Body, 2015).

From an individual perspective, when an employee has knowledge, positive meaning, positive affective resources, relationship resources, and psychological capital, this also facilitates agentic work behaviors, the experience of vitality and learning, and ultimately, thriving. Knowledge enables individuals to have the information they need to do their job and remain task focused. Knowledge also promotes exploration because as individuals gain new knowledge, they seek to integrate that new knowledge with existing information to build a more integrated understanding of their work task. As individuals gain a more expansive picture, they can engage in a deeper level of information exchange with others and relate more heedfully with them (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Positive meaning, when individuals feel they have a purpose and importance in their work, supports task focus because when individuals believe their work is important, they are more likely to focus on it and stay focused, despite disruptions (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Niessen et al., 2012, Spreitzer et al., 2005). Positive meaning also facilitates exploration because it enables a more positive, proactive mindset toward challenges and setbacks and people are more likely to seek solutions by exploring various options and ideas (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Positive meaning also facilitates heedful relating because meaning is often created in relationship with others, and individuals tend to share a sense of meaning. Sharing creates bonds between individuals and builds support that enables them to relate more heedfully with on another (Sherif et al., 2961; Hackman, 2002).

Positive affective resources are the experiences of positive emotions, facilitating task focus and exploration because positive emotional states help individuals to be open and energized toward engaging and experimenting with their environments and colleagues (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Relational resources are high-quality relationships between colleagues. These workplace connections support task focus by creating conditions in which individuals feel supported by one another and therefore feel safe to perform with focus (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson, Kramer, & Cook, 2004; Kahn, 1990; Losada & Heaphy, 2004). A safe and supportive environment also promotes risk taking and experimentation, as individuals have less reason to fear retribution for their exploration of ideas. Strong workplace relationships stimulate heedful relating, as colleagues are more likely to engage with and respond to one another when they have sound interpersonal connections (Cialdini, 2001; Kahn, 1990).

Psychological capital was a personal factor not originally included in the Spreitzer et al. (2005) model, but was identified and empirically linked to agentic work behaviors and thriving by Paterson et al. (2014). Psychological capital is the "positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance" and consists of hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism (Paterson, 2014, p. 437). Psychological capital facilitates task focus because a person's self-belief enhances the ability to complete a task successfully and influences the ability to focus on that task. The more individuals believe they will be successful, or the higher their level of self-efficacy and hope pertaining to the task, the more they will focus on the task and persist in completing the task in the face of obstacles, including through the exploration of alternative possibilities, which is a deciding factor in one's ability to focus. A higher level of psychological capital also promotes prosocial behaviors that facilitate heedful relating, including cooperativeness, helpfulness, and a desire to meet the needs of others (Bandura, 2001).). In the Spreitzer et al. (2005) socially embedded model of thriving, agentic work behaviors of task focus, exploration, and heedful relating are the direct antecedents of thriving; personal and organizational factors facilitate these behaviors. When these factors are present and an individual thrives, the individual and the organization benefit. Travis, Lee, Faulkner, Gerstenblatt and Boston (2013) provided qualitative support for Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) model. The authors explored organizational and personal factors within a childcare setting, and revealed that positive work conditions, personal resources and agentic work behaviors supported thriving for childcare professionals.

The experience of thriving influences the employee and the workplace. Characteristics that reflected an individual thriving in the workplace include going

beyond normal job requirements, acting with passion, continually trying to improve, and connecting to the organizational mission, all of which add to better workplace performance. Employees who were one standard deviation above the mean on a thriving scale performed 16% better, were 32% more committed to the organization, were 46% more satisfied with their job, had 125% less burnout, and missed 74% fewer days of work. Although these results did not achieve statistical significance based on the sample size, the results clarify the importance of encouraging professional thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Thriving positively linked to employee career-development initiatives, health, and job performance, and negatively linked to burnout (Porath et al., 2012). A focus on thriving at work is critical, as thriving has the potential to benefit the individual and the organization (Porath et al., 2012). Thriving in the workplace matters. It is this focus that is lacking in public administration discourse.

Currently, the concept of thriving is largely limited to the fields of positive psychology, organizational psychology, and management science, where academics and practitioners have become increasingly interested in maximizing employee functioning and increasing organizational effectiveness (Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Spreitzer et al., 2012; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). The need persists to expand this focus on thriving to human services to support professionals in providing the best possible quality of service to those in need (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). Researchers have called for a greater focus on workplace thriving in social work research, policy, and practice (Liu & Bern Klug, 2013). No literature before the Liu and Bern Klug (2013) study considered thriving in the context of social work; the closest studies assessed job satisfaction, a related but distinct

aspect from thriving. More research must be conducted on thriving at work (Porath et al., 2012). Harkness et al. (2005) noted the lack of discourse with a positive focus on human services 10 years ago; yet the Prosser et al. (2013) and Liu and Bern-Klug perspectives indicated how little has changed, despite the rise in positive psychology and strengths-based approaches in other fields.

In the following section, I explore the concept of professional thriving in the context of human services. The section includes a review of the extant literature, an in-depth look at thriving in the context of the personal domain, and related research in the area of emotional intelligence. Studies on emotional intelligence add support for the importance of the personal domain.

Thriving in Human Services

The research that exists on thriving in human services is limited; however, a foundation of literature exists. Kern, Waters, Adler, and White (2014) studied the professional thriving of teachers but defined thriving as a combination of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which, as argued by Porath et al. (2012), is a distinct concept from how thriving is conceptualized for this research. In the Kern et al. (2014) study, researchers assessed the relationship between well-being, health, life satisfaction, and their definition of thriving, finding positive links between the factors.

A study by Liu and Bern-Klug (2013) on nursing home social workers examined the characteristics of the work environment that explained job thriving. The authors found that job autonomy and discretionary decision making, being treated as a part of a team, having time to identify with the psychosocial needs of clients, not having to do work others could do, and being clear on the job role all contributed to variations in job

thriving. The variable with the largest unique contribution toward explaining variation in job thriving was having time to identify and meet the social and emotional needs of residents. Findings also revealed that when workers reported thriving, they were more likely to stay in the work place and help create a positive workplace culture by enhancing the environment with their energy.

The Liu and Bern-Klug (2013) research shed light on organizational factors that contribute to professional thriving but did not consider professionals' personal factors that influenced thriving. Neither the Kern et al. (2014) study nor Liu and Bern-Klug provided insight into how to promote thriving from the perspective of an individual's agency. This same limitation was noted in a review of studies on teacher resilience.

Although resilience is distinct from thriving, they relate in their focus on a positive approach to addressing stress and burnout. Beltman et al. (2011) conducted a review of the literature on teacher resilience, examining 50 studies that queried what sustains teachers in the workplace. Their definition of resilience was clearly distinct from the concept of thriving, as they described a range of definitions from the studies they examined, with a clear focus on recovering and adapting from stress and workplace challenges, but no focus on growth and vitality. However even in the context of resilience, intervention studies with a focus on an individuals' own agency to address their workplace experiences were missing. Studies on teacher resilience typically examined the phenomenon of resilience, the attributes that support resilience, and what organizations can do to create a supportive climate, but no studies considered what teachers themselves could do, although resilience can be a learned skill. More research needs to be conducted to understand the role of teachers in developing their resilience, as

well as interventions that can build resilience (Beltman et al., 2011). The same argument can be made for thriving.

Prosser et al. (2013) and Wendt et al. (2011) explored thriving from the perspective of an individual's agency. Wendt et al. conducted research to understand more deeply the phenomenon of thriving in social-care fields, interviewing social workers and teachers to understand what supported their ability to thrive. Thriving in human services connected to individuals' life experiences, ideologies, beliefs, values, and other life resources that informed work experiences in supportive ways. Three major themes aligned with professional thriving. First was self-confidence and self-belief in an individual's ability to do their job and make a difference. Second was the desire to be challenged at work and having a positive attitude toward the challenge. The third theme was believing in the importance of being a positive role model and making a difference. Across all themes, the experience of enjoyment, growth, and development were key to thriving. Wendt et al. concluded that their findings supported the critical role of personal factors and individual agency, captured by the term personal domain (Cheers et al., 2005) when seeking to promote thriving for human service professionals. A study by Travis, Lee, Faulkner, Gerstenblatt, and Boston (2014) also qualitatively explored the factors that enabled thriving for seven focus groups of childcare professionals, using the Spreizter et al. (2005) model of thriving. Findings specifically highlighted the important role that positive meaning plays in enabling workplace thriving. Personal-domain resources play a role in thriving for human services professionals.

Thriving and the Personal Domain

In referring to the personal domain, Wendt et al. (2011) used a concept first defined by Cheers et al. (2005) that references an individual's background of life experiences, along with their ideologies, beliefs, values, and ethics. The concept of the personal domain is part of the Cheers et al. larger framework to conceptualize eight different domains in which social-care professionals operate: society, organizational structure, community, personal, professional, and geographic. The authors devised a framework to help practitioners differentiate between distinct influences of each domain that could help practitioners better understand their workplace experiences and make more informed and effective decisions.

Wendt et al. (2011) added to the Cheers et al. (2005) definition of the personal domain, saying that it is who one is and what one holds dear as an individual, as a result of one's history, personal narratives, and life experiences. Prosser et al. (2013) also included the importance of an individual's capacity to manage emotions, self-regulate, self-motivate, and demonstrate empathy. A focus on passion, emotion, and energy is critical in establishing thriving in the social-care setting, with the belief that "sincere relationships, empathy, and emotional investment are vital foundations to quality service" (Prosser et al., 2013, pp. 319–320). The personal domain is much more akin to what is referenced in management science as *soft skills,* skills that are not academic or intellectual in nature; what Cheers et al. termed the professional domain. Cheers et al. contended that an individual's awareness of the personal domain can aid in the process of adjustment in the workplace, helping practitioners sustain themselves in their profession.

The personal domain is key to the experience of thriving (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011).

The centrality of the personal domain is supported by the Spreitzer et al. (2005) original model of thriving. Four of the five personal factors described by Spreitzer and colleagues as antecedents to thriving fall within a person's personal domain. Positive meaning, positive affective resources, relational resources, and psychological capital each pertain to how a person thinks and feels. Wendt et al. (2011) also reinforced the importance of the personal domain; their research on professional thriving indicated that major themes aligned with thriving were having self-confidence and self-belief in one's ability to do their job and make a difference, having the desire to be challenged at work and have a positive attitude toward the challenge, and believing in the importance of being a positive role model and making a difference. These are attitudes, affective states, and beliefs associated with a person's personal domain. Travis et al.'s (2013) research contributed to the importance of the personal domain, particularly positive meaning. In their research on thriving for childcare professionals, findings revealed that positive meaning enhanced the ability for childcare professionals to behave agentically and thrive at work. Resources from the personal domain are drivers of thriving.

Support for the Personal Domain in Emotional Intelligence

Support for the utility of the personal domain, as defined by Cheers et al. (2005) and expanded by Prosser et al. (2013) and Wendt et al. (2011) when understanding how to promote thriving and enhance performance, can be drawn from the distinct but related field of research on the role of emotions and emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence movement began in the 1990s, first conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer

(1990), and shortly thereafter popularized by Goleman's (1995) best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence*, which highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in enhancing workplace performance. The emotional intelligence research began with the distinction between traditional perspectives of intelligence focused on cognition and cognitive problem solving from the softer skills comprising social and emotional competencies. Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) defined emotional intelligence as "the set of abilities (verbal and nonverbal) that enable a person to generate, recognize, express, understand, and evaluate their own and others' emotions, in order to guide thinking and action to successfully cope with environment demands and pressures" (p. 72). Goleman defined it as the capacity to have self-awareness, to understand and manage emotions in oneself and others, to display empathy, and to self-motivate. These definitions reflect a similar focus to the personal domain, with more emphasis on the role of emotions. This rise of focus in management science and organizational behavior around noncognitive resources a professional brings to the workplace reflect the importance of the personal domain.

Chang's (2009) review of the literature on teacher emotionality (in the context of burnout) provided similar support for the utility of the personal domain in understanding how to support professional thriving in human services. Although dated now, Chang's analysis provided such an insightful perspective on the importance of emotions experienced by teachers and their ability to influence experiences of stress and burnout, that it warrants capturing. Chang argued that teachers' judgments and assumptions about students and other teaching tasks determined the emotions felt by teachers in the course of their workday, which in turn influenced whether they experienced stress in the

workplace. Chang used appraisal theory to suggest that emotions are elicited as a result of judgments and interpretations made about situations or events, rather than the situation or event itself, which determined whether teachers experienced stress and burnout. For example, Chang noted earlier research by Bibou-nakou, Stogiannidou and Kiosseoglou (1999) showing that teachers who did not take students' disruptive behaviors personally, and attributed them to internal student-related factors, reported less feelings of burnout. By emphasizing that the situation does not cause stress but the way teachers think about, feel about, and interpret a situation that causes stress, Chang was suggesting that public administrators can help teachers become more emotionally self-aware, which may allow them to self-manage more effectively and experience less stress. This same logic can be used in promoting emotions, mind-sets, beliefs, and meaning-making that supports professional thriving. Chang's perspective provides a clear account of how emotional intelligence influences teacher performance in the classroom and provides further support for the importance of the personal domain when considering how to support professional thriving.

Extensive research supports the links among emotions, emotional intelligence, and aspects related to professional thriving, such as job performance and job satisfaction. For example, higher levels of emotional intelligence link to increased job performance, over intellectual/cognitive ability (O'Boyle et al., 2011) as well as lower levels of stress (Bidlan & Sihag, 2014), and better abilities to cope with stress (Oginska-Bulik, 2005). In a meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and job performance, across the measures of emotional intelligence tested, all demonstrated "substantial relative importance" in predicting job performance, over personality and cognitive ability (O'Boyle et al., 2011,

para 1). Many researchers specifically linked teachers' higher emotional intelligence with enhanced job performance and effectiveness (Brown, Jones, LaRusso, & Aber, 2010; Joshith, 2012; Jude, 2011; Karimzadeh, Salehi, Embi, Nasiri, & Shojaee, 2014; Singh & Jha, 2012). Researchers also found links between higher teacher emotional intelligence (or aspects of emotional intelligence) and lower rates of burnout (Amudhadevi, 2012; Augusto-Landa, López-Zafra, Berrios-Martos, & Pulido-Martos, 2012; Geng, Li, & Zhou, 2011; Jude, 2011). Based on conceptual similarities between emotional intelligence and the personal domain, this plethora of research provides further support for the relevance of the personal domain in influencing the ability of human service professionals to manage stress, perform effectively, and ultimately thrive.

Transformative Learning

Based on the account provided for the personal domain, supporting its growth such that individuals have an opportunity to experience a greater sense of thriving appears to require critical assessment of one's own values and beliefs, attitudes, emotional responses, and ways of making meaning. In the process, one creates new possibilities that allow for a different and more positive way of engaging with and experiencing the world, including the workplace. In the field of adult learning, this is known as transformative learning. Transformative learning theory, first asserted by Mezirow (1991), is a process of effecting change in a person's "frame of reference" (p. 4). Mezirow defined frame of reference as the way people define, view, and make assumptions about their world based on their associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses. Frames of references are paradigms through which one experiences the world that determine one's beliefs, expectations, perceptions, cognitions,

feelings, and actions. One's frame of reference is self-limiting because it creates an autopilot way of acting and reacting, where people typically seek to interpret everything they encounter in ways that fit what they already believe to be true, shutting them off from alternative ways of seeing or interpreting things. Transformative learning requires a paradigm shift, where individuals move toward a more inclusive, reflective, and integrative frame of reference that considers alternative possibilities and ways of seeing things. This new way of seeing can lead to changes in meaning-making schemes, beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions. Key to the process is supporting individuals in becoming self-aware and self-reflective of their frames of reference and the assumptions, expectations, interpretations they create (Mezirow, 1997). Once a paradigm shift occurs, three different dimensions are affected: self-understanding; belief system; and behaviors, habits, and lifestyle, or the areas of the personal domain.

Transformative learning facilitates insights that ultimately result in personal transformation. Personal transformation is "a dynamic, uniquely individualized process of expanding consciousness whereby an individual becomes critically aware of old and new self-views and chooses to integrate these views into a new self-definition" (Wade, 1998, p. 716). The process requires a conscious choice by an individual to challenge the way they view reality as well as a willingness to be open to change. Once transformation occurs, the individual cannot return to previous ways of seeing things because the changes are so profound. Personal transformation allows individuals to become critically aware of how their assumptions about the world are limited, and when they become more open, they experience new possibilities. This raised level of consciousness enhances thinking, often accompanied by energy, excitement, motivation, self-belief, creativity,

and resilience (Wade, 1998). Similarly, personal transformation is a shift in one's level of consciousness that results from individuals questioning and altering their basic assumptions, self-understanding, ways of thinking, and meaning-making (Liska, 2014). Liska (2014) called this a vertical form of development, differentiated from horizontal development that is based on learning more content-based knowledge, such as academic or skill-specific learning. Self-observation and critical assessment of mental models are central to personal transformation (Burnell, 2013; Liska, 2014). Clearly, personal transformation that occurs as a result of transformative learning is a phenomenon that occurs in the personal domain, and provides a framework for understanding how public sector employees' experiences of thriving might be enhanced.

Gap in the Literature

Given that supporting professional thriving by creating transformative shifts in the personal domain could have a positive influence on public administrators and civil servants working with youth, this study addressed how to proactively promote thriving and support transformative learning and development in the personal domain of these professionals. The fundamental gap in the research provided justification for the need for the present study. Extensive research exists on stress management and self-care interventions for human service professionals; however, a paucity of literature exists on thriving from the perspective of what an individual can do (Beltman et al., 2011; Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). Suggestions for individuals include taking breaks during work, eating healthily, drinking enough water, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, as well as finding ways to make work more meaningful (Spreitzer et al., 2012). These recommendations are similar to those suggested for preventing burnout, and fail to offer

anything new toward facilitating self-development and vitality that are so central to thriving. Furthermore, little research exists on personal transformation outside of literature that focuses on experiences of trauma, near-death or spiritual experiences, meditation, or psychotherapy (Kenney, 2007). This makes sense based on Mezirow's (1991) notion of transformation, which usually occurs as a result of a "disorienting dilemma" typically triggered by a life crisis or major life transition (p. 168). Thus, literature is lacking in offering any unique and innovative approaches or interventions that can bolster the ability of an individual to change their own relationship to their workplace experience to one that is more energized, positive, and impactful.

However, when considering that the phenomenon of professional thriving centers on growth, vitality, and sustained success in the workplace, the field of coaching has much to offer as an intervention purposefully directed at creating personal and professional growth, and enhancing performance. However, the field is still underdeveloped and lacks theoretical and conceptual development (Cox et al., 2014; Egan & Hamlin, 2014; Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Maltibia et al., 2014; Theeboom et al., 2014), as well as process clarity and construct fidelity (Bozer & Sarros, 2012; Stormont, Reinke, Newcomer, Marchese, & Lewis, 2015).

In the following section, I explore the coaching evidence base that currently exists, including a focus on coaching as a human services professional development strategy. I review the major criticisms of coaching and gaps in the coaching literature. The section concludes with an introduction of the previously unexplored area of transformational coaching; an area that has unique potential to support thriving by

working at the level of the personal domain, transformative learning, and personal transformation.

Coaching

A growing body of evidence describes the effectiveness of coaching as a professional and personal-development tool that can positively influence the personal domain and result in enhanced workplace performance. Coaching means "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (International Coaching Federation, n.d., para. 1). The field of coaching grew during the late 1980s and early 1990s in the corporate setting as a leadership-development tool (Maltibia et al., 2014). It has since grown to include personal life coaching as well as in other specialty areas such as youth coaching, team coaching, and conflict coaching. Researchers conducted the first controlled study of coaching in 2006 (Green, Oades, & Grant, 2006), followed by a plethora of follow-up studies. For example, a randomized controlled study on the impact of developmental coaching on goal attainment and mental health in an educational setting found that coaching reduced stress and increased goal attainment, constructive leadership and communication styles, resiliency, and well-being measures for participating high school teachers (Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010). A similar coaching program in an Australian public health organization also revealed positive effects of coaching on resilience, workplace well-being, and goal attainment for executives and senior managers (Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009). Previous studies also found positive associations between goal striving, goal attainment, and well-being with professional life coaching for adult coaching clients (Spence & Grant, 2007), professional life coaching for high school-

student coaching clients (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007), and peer life coaching for adult–coach pairs (Green et al., 2006).

More recent research continues to show positive results. In a qualitative and quantitative study of executive coaching during a time of organizational change, researchers found that participation in coaching aligned with increased self-awareness and clarity of thought, individual and organizational goal attainment, solution-focused thinking, adaptability to change, leadership skills, self-efficacy, resilience, and work-life balance (Grant, 2014). Life coaching increases personal autonomy, relatedness, self-acceptance, confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline, self-determination, and internal motivation (Curtis & Kelly, 2013). A meta-analysis of well-validated studies on coaching effectiveness in an organizational context revealed that coaching shows a significant positive effect on performance skills, well-being and coping, work attitude, goal-directed self-regulation, capacity for self-reflection and self-insight, as well as solution-focused thinking (Theeboom et al., 2014). Although preliminary evidence is now 10 years old, researchers have continued to demonstrate the efficacy of coaching in producing positive outcomes.

Researchers have begun to look more deeply at the coaching process and bring consensus to the literature about what makes coaching effective, delineating the expected outcomes as a result of coaching. In a study on the relationship between executive coaching and leader role efficacy, the degree of facilitative behavior by the coach positively and significantly linked to client role efficacy (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). Findings supported coaching as an effective leadership-development tool and highlighted the importance of assessing the quality of the coaching relationship when assessing

outcomes (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). Similarly, individuals who participated in coaching imparted that the qualities most commonly cited as critical for coaching effectiveness were coaches' abilities to listen; to demonstrate empathy; to be challenging in a supportive way; and to help the coaching clients constructively look at difficult issues, identify blind spots, and take appropriate actions (Blackman, Carter, & Hay, 2014). The most commonly cited benefits were that coaching helped coaching clients to worry less about the future, focus more on the present, identify and challenge things that they usually took for granted, develop action plans and change habits, feel more in control, look at their lives from a different perspective, and increase their sense of self-awareness and confidence. Although the study sample size was too small to identify statistically significant differences between variables, the study initiated a consensus process across coaching interventions on aspects of coaching effectiveness and expected outcomes. Findings also highlighted the type of shifts in the personal domain that occur for coaching clients (Blackman et al., 2014).

Increasingly, academics and practitioners are providing meta-analyses and reviews of the coaching literature. Aspects of coaching effectiveness most commonly described in coaching studies were facilitating goal achievement, creating a quality relationship based on trust and support, and enhancing the vision and self-awareness of the client (Bartlett, Boylan, & Hale, 2014). Providing a structural analysis of coaching, researchers listed the coach, the relationship, the processes, and the client as all influencing the quality of the coaching engagement. This included the including the client's willingness to be coached (Cox et al., 2014). In an assessment of the International Coaching Federations' 11 core coaching competencies, only six were theoretically and

empirically supported: creating trust, establishing presence, active listening, powerful questioning, creating awareness, and direct communication (Maltibia et al., 2014). In interviews with coaching clients, researchers found that no specific behaviors were more important than others in helpfulness to clients, and all behaviors and approaches examined significantly predicted the helpfulness of coaching to clients (De Haan, Culpin, & Curd, 2011). Thus, it is not the specific behaviors used by coaches that matter as much as the motivation of the client, the quality of the relationships created between coach and client, and the coach's ability to employ a range of behaviors effectively (De Haan et al., 2011). The coach's competence and confidence are key in producing the effective outcomes associated with coaching (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). Increasingly, researchers are illuminating how and under what conditions coaching creates positive outcomes.

Coaching may serve as a method to address burnout among physicians, as it was effective at addressing burnout by targeting and enhancing individuals' internal locus of control. Specifically, physicians who believed their actions had as much, if not more, influence on patient outcomes as external forces experienced less burnout (Gazelle, Liebschutz, & Riess, 2015). Coaching was effective in building internal locus of control and reducing burnout because it supported physicians in examining fixed thoughts and patterns; increasing self-awareness and self-reflection; focusing on strengths, accomplishments, values, and purpose; questioning self-defeating inner dialogue, negative emotions, and automatic assumptions; and supporting new ways of seeing things by creating perspective shifts. The Gazelle et al. study provided a clear example of how coaching supported the personal domain, influencing human services providers.

Although no studies specifically focus on coaching as a social work professional development strategy, ample research focused on coaching for teachers. However, in many cases, studies were problematic, often incorporating a hybrid intervention of skills-based training and coaching. For example, Stormont et al. (2015) reviewed the literature around coaching aimed at improving teachers' abilities to implement effective social-behavior interventions. They assessed 25 peer-reviewed studies and found that 86% had positive findings, but many of the interventions included were training "with a coaching component" (p. 70), and only 31% of the studies measured the fidelity of the coaching portion of the intervention. Campbell and Malkus (2011) studied a coaching intervention for elementary mathematics teachers, also finding positive results; however, the researchers stated that coaches all had mathematics expertise, which the authors declared was critical to the intervention's effectiveness, again raising the question of whether the intervention was more about coaching or knowledge-based training. Further, in Blazar and Kraft's (2015) study of teacher coaching, researchers found no significant effect on teacher outcomes, again describing coaching as focusing on improving teacher practices and classroom-management skills through training, observation, and feedback. Blazar and Kraft also noted that no studies compared the difference between coaching for teachers geared toward content-specific knowledge and pedagogy, versus general teacher skills (p. 6), further reflecting the training-nature of these interventions assessed under the banner of coaching. The research on coaching in education highlights the need for the field to develop further and clarify what constitutes a coaching intervention.

Criticisms of Coaching

Researchers make clear criticisms of the coaching field centered on a lack of theoretical and conceptual development that has resulted in a lack of process clarity and, therefore, construct fidelity. Many researchers declared the lack of theoretical and conceptual development that has resulted from the wide range of theories informing the field (Cox et al., 2014; Egan & Hamlin, 2014; Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Grover & Furnham, 2016; Maltibia et al., 2014; Theeboom et al., 2014). For example, the range of theories linked to coaching creates uncertainty, confusion, and lack of focus on the theoretical foundation of coaching and has resulted in a lack of empirical development of the field (Cox et al., 2014). One consequence of this is a lack of fidelity in coaching interventions, which has been noted in the coaching literature (Bozer & Sarros, 2012; Stormont et al., 2015). Few peer-reviewed studies demonstrated coaching fidelity (Stormont et al., 2015). In a study in Israel, the evidence for the impact of coaching on work-based performance was weak and the authors admitted that little was known about the level of competence of the participating coaches who were recruited (Bozer & Sarros, 2012). One reason for the lack of impact on work performance may have resulted from lack of coaching efficacy, which was not measured in the Bozer and Sarros (2012) study. Grover and Furnham (2016) called for ongoing research into coaching efficacy.

Researchers have made repeated calls to focus on delineating the characteristics of effective coaching. More research must be conducted to understand how, rather than if, coaching works (De Haan, Bertie, Day, & Sills, 2010a, 2010b; De Haan et al., 2011; Segers, Vloeberghs, Henderickx, & Inceoglu 2011; Theeboom et al., 2014). Although researchers are focusing on the factors that create effective coaching, more statistically

significant empirical evidence would help create stronger measures of fidelity about what constitutes a coaching intervention.

Relatedly, little specification and diversity of approaches to coaching are the focus of studies. In some studies, researchers do not clearly identify their approach; when they do, they focus on particular approaches, leaving others unexamined. For example, the most commonly cited approaches to coaching assessed in the research were cognitive, goal oriented, and strengths-based approaches (Bartlett et al., 2014). Researchers used between 10 and 14 distinct approaches to coaching (Bartlett et al., 2014; Cox et al., 2014). Many approaches were never referenced in outcome studies, leaving it unclear what role the approach had in determining coaching effectiveness, and whether all approaches are effective from an outcomes perspective. In Grover and Furnham's (2016) synthesis of literature on coaching effectiveness, the authors did not mention the type of coaching approach used in any of the studies reviewed. This reflects a lack of attention to the importance of the coaching approach used. These criticisms have limited the field of coaching and reflect the need for the field to develop further, in particular to understand which approaches to coaching can be of value to public administration.

Transformational Coaching

Transformational coaching was one area in the coaching literature that lacked attention, but based on its definition, holds potential as a method to boost thriving. Transformational coaches seek to create transformational learning and a fundamental shift in the way individuals make meaning. Transformational coaching is the most developmentally oriented of coaching styles, distinguished by particular features not always present in other coaching styles: (a) working on physical, psychological,

emotional, and purposive elements of the client, (b) engaging the client's awareness around their behaviors, personal feelings, assumptions, and motivational roots, and (c) focusing on shifting the beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions of the client (Hawkins & Smith, 2007).

The focus on self-understanding, emotional awareness, and shifting mindsets, attitudes, and beliefs is fundamental to transformational coaching. Because of this intention, transformational coaching can be considered the same as ontological coaching. Sieler (2003) explained that ontology is about studying the nature of existence and the ways that individuals create structure around their reality, and how this structure influences the way they experience and participate in the world around them. Harvey (2006) described ontology as the science of a language and how language governs the way individuals understand and experience the world around them. A key concept in ontology is the relationship between language and meaning, where meaning and understanding are grounded in language. Chittenden (2015) described ontological coaching as helping clients change their interpretations and meaning-making of the world, which can open new possibilities for more effective action. Cox et al. (2014) described ontological coaching as an approach that focuses on working with language, emotions, and physiology to trigger a shift in clients' ways of being.

A clear overlap exists between the descriptions of ontological and transformational coaching, such that they can be considered the same type of approach. Whether described as ontological or transformational coaching, the intention is to create personal transformation by facilitating shifts in one's ways of thinking and making meaning of their emotions and experiences. Transformational coaching is, thus, an

approach that is of particular importance when considering how to support thriving through the personal domain.

Although researchers have defined the approach in the literature, no studies specifically focused on transformational or ontological coaching. Researchers have made little use of transformative-learning theory to guide or inform coaching practice, despite its relevance to the coaching agenda (Sammut, 2014). One study did not identify the particular coaching approach being assessed as being transformational, but from the description provided, reflected a transformational approach (Gazelle et al., 2015). The study assessed coaching as a strategy to address physician burnout, where coaching centered on supporting new ways of seeing things by facilitating perspective shifts in the physicians. Through the process of coaching "clients learn to question automatic thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions, thus discerning between facts, assumptions, and interpretations … increasing choice and control" (Gazelle et al., 2015, p. 509). The Gazelle et al. (2015) study demonstrated the effectiveness of a transformational approach.

The concept of a transformational approach to coaching was also highlighted from a theoretical perspective, proposing a "third generation" approach to coaching focused on values and collaborative practice (Stelter, 2014, p. 51). Stelter (2014) contrasted goal-setting and solution-generating coaching with coaching that works at a deeper level of meaning-making around individual identity, aspirations, passions, dreams, convictions, and values. The coaching process should be a journey of transformative learning for the client in which clients engage in critical self-reflection and revise their self-concepts and ways of seeing things in the world, and the role of the coach is to facilitate shifts in perspective and fixed ways of seeing things. Three distinct areas focus

third-generation coaching dialogue: (a) explicit use of values, using values as a guide rather than mere goal-achievement; (b) creating opportunities for meaning-making, gaining clarity around how one makes meaning based on past experiences and future expectations, and how this leads to patterns of action and habit; and (c) using a narrative approach where stories can be deconstructed to allow for new interpretations. Despite using the label third-generation approach, the proposition was a transformational approach to coaching. This view supports the potential of transformational coaching as well as the need to understand the approach in more depth (Stelter, 2014). However, beyond the works of Gazelle et al. (2015) and Stelter, no authors explored or studied transformational coaching, resulting in an approach that was unexamined.

The Present Study

This research study sought to fill the gap in the literature about transformational coaching to expand understanding of its potential to support the thriving of human service professionals working with youth. The focus of this research was on a particular model of transformational coaching designed by a nonprofit youth-development organization in the United Kingdom and their partner firm, a U.S. organization providing consulting services to the Bermuda Government's youth-development department. Both organizations operate the same 3-day transformational-coaching program.

The intervention is a 3-day transformational-coaching program designed to encourage professionals to question their perceptions of personal capability, attitudes, and beliefs of reality and choice to create a new level of thinking that opens potential and possibility (Youth At Risk, 2013a). The intervention is an "adaptation of personal development and coaching techniques focused primarily on working with mindsets and

attitudes" (Youth at Risk, 2013b, p. 1). The program is atypical in that it is not a one-to-one coaching relationship, but is delivered in a group-coaching format where one-on-one conversations occur in the group setting. In their review of the coaching field, although the dyadic one-on-one interchange is a fundamental component of coaching, one-on-one interactional richness in communication, defined as communication that results in a significantly new way of understanding, can still occur in a group setting (Egan & Hamlin, 2014).

The intervention is rooted in behavioral psychology, personal-construct theory, laws-of-form theory, and coaching, and uses techniques common in Gestalt therapy, Rogerian reflective therapy, and Socratic questioning (Youth at Risk, 2013a). Behavioral psychology and its related cognitive-behavioral therapy are based on the idea that how one thinks, feels, and acts are intertwined. Specifically, one's thoughts and emotions drive their behaviors. Cognitive-behavioral therapy aims to help people become aware of their ways of thinking and their patterns of behavior, where they are negative or unhelpful and assists people in developing alternative ways of thinking and behaving (Beck, 1967; McLeod, 2015).

Personal-construct theory suggests that people develop personal constructs about how the world works, which they use to make sense of their observations and experiences. These constructs are based on past experiences and observations and determine people's behaviors, feelings, and thoughts (Kelly, 1963). When people try to make sense of an event or situation, they pick and choose which construct they want to use (Kelly, 1963). Awareness of this construct can allow individuals to reflect on their experiences and choose to view them in different ways (Carver & Scheier, 2000).

Although laws-of-form theory (Spencer-Brown, 1969) as a whole is quite complicated, as it is applied in the transformational coaching intervention under study, it is simply about having and making distinctions that will be clarified in the proceeding section.

Gestalt therapy is rooted in a phenomenological method of awareness, in which individuals are encouraged to distinguish perceiving, feeling, and acting from interpreting; interventions seek to change preexisting attitudes (Yontef, 1993). Explanations and interpretations are less reliable than what is directly perceived and felt, and differences in perspectives become the focus of dialogue. The goal is for clients to become aware of what they are doing, how they are doing it, and how they can change themselves, and at the same time, to learn to accept and value themselves (Yontef, 1993). Rogerian reflective therapy is rooted in the assumption that individuals have sufficient capacity to address those aspects of their lives that can potentially come into conscious awareness (Rogers, 1951). The therapist aims to help an individual discover their capacity for growth and change by giving the space and opportunity for them to reflect on their attitudes, feelings, and behavior (Rogers, 1951). Finally, Socratic questioning, a key competency in effective coaching, involves asking powerful questions that evoke reflection and lead to insights and transformative learning. Although these theories and techniques are rooted in psychology, they overlap in ways that provide the basis of the methodology for the transformational-coaching intervention under study. Additionally, they support the intention of the transformational-coaching approach.

The intervention includes the following modules:

1. The coaching relationship as a method of relating to others and understanding limiting beliefs.

2. Commitment and the distinction between sincerity (where we are well-meaning) and integrity (where we are committed to keeping our word).
3. The distinction between reality (seeing individual perspectives as fact) versus perception (seeing perspectives as an interpretation of circumstances that lead people to draw conclusions based on their own experiences), and how their interpretations limit them and create barriers.
4. How the culture of a workplace influences a person and encourages a choice to act on commitment and vision, regardless of other influences to the contrary.
5. Understanding how one listens, and whether they are listening authentically (Youth at Risk, 2013a, p. 3).

In covering these topics using a wide range of techniques, the goal is to improve professionals' self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, and empathy (Youth at Risk, 2013a). The intention is to build self-awareness and self-regulation of professionals by helping them reflect on their workplace attitudes, behaviors, choices, and self-defeating patterns of thinking, and how to shift them to have a greater influence on youth. The hope is that this process will provide professionals with a new way of relating to youth that is based more on empowerment, accountability, and empathy rather than shame and punishment (Youth at Risk, 2013a). The training encourages professionals to question where they are blaming the problem instead of taking action, and therefore how they may prevent themselves from having the greatest effect on young people (Youth at Risk, 2013a). The training seeks to shift limiting paradigms and promote transformative insights that create a renewed basis for action and motivation for professionals when

working with youth (Youth at Risk, 2013a). These are the shifts in the personal domain that Prosser et al. (2013) and Wendt et al. (2011) claimed were central to thriving. The following section reviews researchers' past use of qualitative methods to explore concepts of thriving and transformation and to develop the knowledge-base of coaching.

Methodologies Found in the Literature

A core justification for the use of a qualitative line of inquiry is the unexplored nature of transformational coaching, discussed in Chapter 3. Additionally, I found further support for a qualitative approach in reviewing the literature related to this study's conceptual framework. This study seeks to reveal the experiences of youth-serving human service professionals in transformational coaching, and what influence these experiences have on thriving, the personal domain, and transformative learning. The core concept of this research study is professional thriving. In the Wendt et al. (2011) study on the phenomenon of thriving for professionals in the social-care field, the authors used a qualitative line of inquiry to "identify diverse themes from within their experiences that could underpin new perspectives on how social workers and teachers sustain their practice" (p. 319). The authors focused on the personal domain and extended knowledge of how personal resources supported individuals who were thriving at work. Their results deepened understanding of the phenomenon of thriving, a highly subjective experience. The qualitative study by Travis et al. (2013) also expanded understanding of workplace thriving through focus groups with childcare providers. The authors explored both organizational and personal aspects of Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) model and found support for the role each played in facilitating thriving. Their findings added to the knowledge of workplace thriving by suggesting that decision-making discretion and climate of trust and

respect are particularly salient work conditions that could support thriving. Their findings also revealed that positive meaning was an instrumental personal resource that built intrinsic motivation, fostered team-orientation and boosted the ability for childcare professionals to thrive. The Wendt et al. (2011) and Travis et al. (2013) studies demonstrated the role qualitative studies play in developing the knowledge base of topics that have not been extensively studied. This research similarly sought to discern in greater depth the concept of thriving, exploring how experiences in transformational coaching may facilitate thriving by strengthening the personal domain or creating transformative learning. The strength of qualitative methods is their ability to deepen understanding (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2002).

Past research on the concept of personal transformation provides further justification for the use of qualitative methods. Personal transformation is the outcome of transformative learning and the objective of transformational coaching. Wade (1998) and Carpenter (1994) used qualitative methods when studying personal transformation. Wade (1998) argued that to put a quantitative instrument around transformation would put limits on the data obtained. This is especially the case at such an early stage in the understanding of transformational coaching. For the concept of transformation to be more useful, qualitative research helped identify patterns connected to transformation (Wade, 1998). Past research on personal transformation has primarily been qualitative because the deductive logic of positivism is not applicable to understanding personal meaning-making. Depth of understanding obtained is the strength of qualitative methods, and therefore a qualitative approach was necessary (aligned with Carpenter, 1994), and allowed insights into the experiences of personal growth and transformative learning

experienced by participants. Past methods used to study the phenomenon of transformation provide additional support for the use of qualitative methods.

Qualitative methods have been widely used to study a range of coaching interventions. Coaching has been studied quantitatively and qualitatively, and ample evidence exists of the use of qualitative methods to help deepen understanding of coaching. In many instances, coaching-study researchers have used mixed methods; the qualitative methodology helped add meaning to the empirical links established, further justifying the role of qualitative research in deepening understanding. Studies by Grant et al. (2009), Curtis and Kelly (2013), and Grant (2014) exemplify coaching studies that empirically assessed outcomes of coaching; these authors used qualitative methods to deepen understanding of the process of coaching and associated outcomes, providing further justification for a qualitative research method.

In the DeHaan et al. (2010a, 2010b) studies on critical moments in coaching, the authors used qualitative methods to explore participants' experiences of learning, realization, and insight to develop knowledge of how coaching is effective. The authors justified their use of qualitative methods by arguing that in seeking to create a greater understanding of what makes coaching effective, a quantitative focus on outcomes would provide limited understanding and prevent deeper insights into what happens in the coaching relationship that makes coaching effective. The authors added that qualitative methods provide greater information that allows for pattern analysis (DeHaan et al., 2010a, p. 113). The present study, similarly, sought to create depth in understanding how transformational coaching may create shifts that enable thriving.

The weakness inherent in using qualitative methodologies is that these methods cannot establish empirical links and their conclusions cannot be generalized. However, as this research was meant to be a first step in establishing literature around transformational coaching, the intention of the study was not to provide empirical evidence or establish generalizability. Methodologies used in research studies focused on thriving, transformation, and coaching justify the use of qualitative methods when seeking to understand how experiences in transformational coaching may support the ability to thrive at work. The qualitative research design used in this study to explore experiences in a 3-day transformational coaching workshop is presented in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Summary

Public policy and administration leaders not only have a moral obligation but economic interest in ensuring that young people, particularly vulnerable youth, are supported in achieving optimal life outcomes. The public sector employees who work with youth influence the trajectories of young people, and can positively or negatively influence the levels of risk or resiliency experienced by their clients or students. These professionals must be supported in achieving their greatest professional potential where they experience thriving at work, a task particularly challenging in human services based on the emotional nature of the job and the high risk for burnout. A prime area to target to bolster an individual's experience of thriving is by facilitating transformative learning and enhancing their resources in the personal domain, so they have greater individual agency to maximize their performance.

Due to a gap in understanding how to promote professional thriving by targeting the personal domain, this research sought to explore the potential of transformational

coaching as a transformative professional development strategy that can empower public administrators and civil servants working with youth to achieve greater outcomes for the young people with whom they work. Transformational coaching is an unexplored area in the field of coaching, and this study was an initial exploration of the experiences youth-serving public administrators and civil servants have in transformational coaching. The intention of the study was to understand transformational coaching experiences to better gauge the possibility of transformational coaching as an effective professional development strategy for public administrators. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the qualitative research design used to address this gap in the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the importance of having public administrators and civil servants who are thriving in the workplace, working with at-risk youth, to ensure that they have maximum influence on the young people they serve. Based on the review of the literature, an absence of focus existed on thriving in this context; however, transformational coaching shows promise as an intervention that could enhance the capacity of these professionals to thrive at work. Transformational coaching was unexamined in the literature. In this chapter, I outline the qualitative investigation that provided the first exploration into experiences in transformational coaching to understand its potential for public administration.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question: What are the experiences of youth-serving professionals working for the Bermuda Government using transformational coaching. Three subquestions supported it:

a. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' experiences of feeling vitality, energy and motivation toward professional growth and success?
b. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence?
c. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' meaning-making or ways of thinking?

Qualitative Research Methodology

This study was qualitative in nature. My intention in the study was to provide an in-depth exploration of the experiences that youth-serving public administrators and civil servants had with transformational coaching understand the nature and essence of their experiences. This objective was to reveal the potential of transformational coaching to support the ability for professionals to enhance their service provision to youth by facilitating transformative learning, increasing resources in their personal domain, and enhancing their capacity to experience professional thriving. Previously an unexplored area, the topic of transformational coaching is appropriate for qualitative measures that are ideally suited for areas in need of exploration and understanding. Research scholars including Patton (2002), Creswell (2013), Miles et al. (2014), and Maxwell (2013) agreed that qualitative methods are more suited to studies that seek depth and detail, where the value of the study is in deepening understanding. Quantitative strategies of inquiry assess variables and variance whereas qualitative studies are more focused on processes and meaning-making (Maxwell, 2013). In this study, I sought to reveal the essence of shared experiences in transformational coaching as the first step in research about the previously unexplored intervention. I desired to understand the fullness and richness of the experiences individuals had in transformational coaching and the meaning individuals attached to those experiences in relationship to their workplace experiences; thus, a qualitative approach was necessary.

Transcendental Phenomenological Approach

In using the qualitative methodology, I used a transcendental phenomenological approach to the research study. In using this approach, I sought to describe the nature of a

phenomenon through the lived and conscious experiences of individuals (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenologists reveal the meaning of experiences through the patterns that may emerge from common experiences of a phenomenon. The process involves researcher and participant coconstructing the multiple realities of the phenomenon by exploring lived experiences together, where the researcher creates a comprehensive description of the participant's account (Moustakas, 1994). In phenomenology, researchers assume the shared experience has an "essence"; this essence is what the researcher is attempting to understand (Patton, 2002, p. 106). Transcendental phenomenology is a distinct form of phenomenology focusing on the meanings of individual experiences, differentiated from existential phenomenology that looks at the social construction of group reality, and hermeneutic phenomenology, which focuses specifically on language and the structure of communication. The phenomenon under study could be an idea, emotion, or program (Patton, 2002).

For this study, I explored the phenomenon of the experience of public administrators and civil servants with transformational coaching (Carpenter, 1994). Phenomenology was thus well suited, because it allowed for the depth of meanings that occurred in those individual experiences to be revealed, and for patterns across the shared experiences to emerge. A phenomenological approach, based on the belief that human beings are self-interpretive, was particularly appropriate for research regarding experiences with transformation (Carpenter, 1994). Although transformation is an individual process, qualitative research can reveal patterns and stages that are similar across experiences, allowing for a purer and unbiased investigation into transformational coaching, which was necessary at such an early stage in the research on the topic.

I considered other qualitative methods of inquiry but deemed them less effective for this research. Initially, I considered a case study; however, that approach was more appropriate for a program evaluation rather than providing a clear focus on understanding the depth and essence of the common experiences that individuals have in transformational coaching. Grounded theory was also an option; however, my intention was not to develop theory but to explore experiences. A narrative approach focused on storytelling could also have been used, but this approach also shifts the focus away from the specific examination of experiences solely in transformational coaching. Ethnography, an approach looking at the description or interpretation of a cultural group or system (Creswell, 2013), was inappropriate for this research, as the focus was not on cultural description but simply common experience. Of the range of qualitative designs, phenomenology was by far the best-suited approach to the research.

Interpretive Lens

Researchers have philosophical assumptions embedded in interpretive frameworks or paradigms that guide the methods used (Creswell, 2013). Because this was a phenomenological research study, I used a social-constructivist lens. Social constructivism seeks to discover the subjective and multiple meanings made of the world by individuals through their experiences. This paradigm focuses on complexity rather than reduction, where reality is coconstructed between researchers and researched, and is shaped by experiences (Creswell, 2013). A constructivist approach suited my research based on its phenomenological nature and focus on the way individuals make meaning in their experiences of transformational coaching, and how these experiences informed their perceptions of reality. The benefit of using an interpretive approach is its aim to uncover

the complexity of lived experiences from the point of view of those who live it (Jethwani-Keyser & Mincy, 2011).

Participant Selection and Research Site

Participants for this research were teachers working in the Bermuda Government's public schools who had participated in and completed a transformational coaching intervention provided by transformational coaching consultants. Teachers formed a subset of youth-serving public sector employees to allow me to focus the research on one group of professionals, and in particular, those who have frequent interaction with the youth they serve. Participants had two site options. The first site was a local government office in the central town of the island. This site allowed for a private, safe, and familiar space for participants. Individuals who preferred an alternative option could choose to participate in interviews from their own home through Skype, providing similar safety but also added convenience. All individuals opted for Skype interviews.

With the assistance of the government youth development department which coordinated the intervention, I contacted and invited all those who completed the training in the past two years who worked in Bermuda's public school system with students younger than 18 years to voluntarily participate in the research, in exchange for a $40 stipend. The government department partners ensured that only eligible individuals were extended the invitation. This invitation included the required informed consent necessary to conduct research with human subjects. The invitation and consent form included the purpose and objectives of the research, the procedures and data-collection processes to be used, the protection of confidentiality, a review of risks associated with participation, benefits accruing to participants, as well as the right of participants to voluntarily

withdraw from the study at any time. Although access issues can always be a problem in participant and site selection, I had an informal partnership agreement with the Bermuda Government's youth development department for full support in contacting past participants. Therefore, site access for the face-to-face interviews was not a problem. As the Skype interviews were an option for participants, lack of Internet or computer access was not a problem, because individuals without access could select a face-to-face interview.

I assumed participants would accrue little risk from the research. However, I also sought institutional review board (IRB) approval to ensure I had adequate procedures in place to ensure my research was in line with best practice. These procedures were incorporated in my informed-consent form and participant-communication procedures.

Sampling Strategy

Although I invited all past participants who taught in the Bermuda Government's public schools to volunteer as research participants, if more participants volunteered than could be accommodated, I would have used a nonprobability purposeful sampling to identify participants from those who volunteered. However, this was not necessary because only eight individuals who met the research criteria volunteered to participate.

Sample Size

I drew participants from a population pool of approximately 150 trained professionals (Kimberley Jackson, personal communication, March 5, 2014). However, not all of these individuals were employed by the public sector and, consequently, the actual population pool was less than 150. I sought up to 10 human service professionals currently working with youth in Bermuda's public schools to participate in the study. For

phenomenological studies, Creswell (1994) recommended long interviews with up to 10 people. However, as it was also critical that the data obtained reached saturation, this number guided the determination of the final number of participants to be included in the study. If saturation was not reached, or if participants dropped out, I would have sought additional participants. I deemed the data obtained from the eight participants to yield sufficient data saturation, as all themes were sufficiently supported, developed, and described such that closure was achieved.

Data Collection

The following procedures served as a sequential guide to participant recruitment and data collection.

1. Communicated, by e-mail, to the Bermuda Government's youth development department Coordinator to arrange information sharing in order to contact past participants. Followed up by telephone.
2. Sent, through the government youth development department Coordinator to maintain their confidentiality agreements, an informative e-mail detailing the nature of the study to all past participants. This e-mail detailed the purpose and objectives of the research, the stipend to be offered, the procedures and data-collection processes to be used, the protection of confidentiality, the review of risks associated with participation, as well as the right of participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time. It also included the informed-consent form with a request to return it by willing participants. Because all potential candidates were employed by public administration, they had access to a government e-mail.

3. Followed up with any interested participants with phone calls to address any questions and confirm responses. If still willing, participants discussed availability and preference for interviews (face-to-face or Skype) with me.
4. Ensured the informed-consent form was received and conducted and recorded interviews. Typed interview notes upon immediate conclusion of interviews, and shredded original notes.
5. Uploaded and transcribed recordings within 24 hours to ensure accuracy. Original recordings were deleted to ensure privacy.
6. Provided participants with transcripts for verification, through e-mail unless requested otherwise by the participant.
7. Conducted data analysis.
8. Completed member checking by sending research participants results of the themes, interpretations, and conclusions drawn from the data analysis, for verification. This occurred by e-mail.
9. Integrated verified feedback and drafted conclusions.

Interviews

In-depth interviews were the primary source of data collection for this study. Interviews allowed a comprehensive exploration of experiences in transformational coaching. When the objective is to make sense of experiences, it "requires methodically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience the phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others," which requires in-depth interviews with people who have direct experience (Patton, 2002, p. 104). I conducted Skype interviews with

participants using a standardized open-ended interview format. This format consisted of carefully worded and arranged questions with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequences of questions. This process required the use of a carefully and fully worded interview protocol, based on the interview questions (Patton, 2002). Although an interview protocol restricts flexibility, it is advised for beginner researchers and the IRB usually requires this process. I provided the interview protocol in advance to participants so they would have time to reflect on the questions before the interview.

Instrumentation

I produced and used an interview protocol to guide the interview (see Appendix A). The interview questions asked remained broad but were designed to generate information related to each of this study's research questions. Transcendental phenomenology is rooted in the premise of epoche, a term declaring that nothing is determined in advance and where disciplined efforts must be made to set aside all preconceived notions and judgments regarding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). For this research, epoche included assumptions about what exactly would occur as a result of individuals' experiences with transformational coaching. The focus was purely on the essence of the experiences and eliciting rich descriptions from participants. Therefore the data-collection approach was based on an informal but interactive process with an interview protocol based on open-ended questions that sought to draw out details of experiences and meaning-making (Moustakas, 1994). The interview protocol included questions designed to elicit information related to thriving, the personal domain and transformative learning. It also included clarification probes to ensure depth and accuracy of understanding. The probes used included the following:

- Tell me more about that.
- Why was that meaningful for you/why did that stand out for you?
- What was the impact of that for you?

Data Management

To be as prepared as possible, I used data-management techniques throughout the research process to help structure the data analysis. These techniques included the recording of all interviews with either an audio recorder that I tested before each interview to ensure it was in working order or through a Skype recording. I immediately uploaded these files to a password-protected laptop and backed up to Dropbox on a password-protected account so that all materials and sources were also stored virtually. After I backed up and double-checked files, I deleted the original recordings to ensure confidentiality. I transcribed all interview recordings within 24 hours to prevent any data loss and to ensure the data-collection experience was still fresh during transcription and remained confidential. I sent these transcripts to participants by e-mail for verification and revision suggestions. Participants' names were not recorded in the research records. I used a coding method to match the research records with participant contact information for verification and study-sharing purposes. I kept this coding confidential in a password-protected file and discarded the information after verification and final sharing of the study is complete.

I purchased a 1-year student license for NVivo, used to assist in data analysis. NVivo is one of the top-selling software programs (Janesick, 2011). Computer software is helpful in editing, coding, storage, retrieval, searching, data linking, memoing, analysis, data display, conclusion drawing, theory building, and visual mapping (Miles et

al., 2014). Therefore, use of NVivo was a key data-management and data-analysis tool in this research study. The first step was to upload interview transcripts so they were ready for analysis. The NVivo software was kept on a password-protected laptop, and files were backed up virtually to a password-protected Dropbox account. All files will be saved for 5 years.

The two final components of my data-management strategy were constant and immediate data analysis and continual reflection on the analysis through researcher journaling. One of the biggest problems in qualitative research is letting field notes pile up (Maxwell, 2013), and a researcher should never be in a position where they have hundreds of pages of data before they begin analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Researchers should develop a data-accounting log to track their data collection as well as a contact-summary form for each piece of data collected, which includes reflective thoughts about the data. One main issue in qualitative data management is documenting exactly what analyses have been carried out (Miles et al., 2014). Researchers should conduct ongoing reflection throughout data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). Reflecting on the data-collection log and contact-summary forms enhance a researcher's ability to gain insights about the data and assists in analysis and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Memoing should include tracking the procedural steps used, decision rules followed, and analytic operations applied (Miles et al., 2014). I ensured journaling was an important part of my data-management and -analysis process. I completed all journaling electronically on a password-protected laptop and backed up virtually to a password-protected account, to ensure confidentiality of personal notes.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis "seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experienced of a phenomenon" (Patton, 2002, p. 482). To achieve this end, I separated data analysis into two processes: data reduction and data interpretation. These processes reflect the distinction between categorizing strategies (data reduction) and connecting strategies (data interpretation; Maxwell, 2013).

Data Reduction

The first stage of data analysis is data reduction, when a researcher categorizes, segments, or conducts first-order coding to reveal themes (Maxwell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2002). I used content analysis to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2002) and I used inductive and deductive analysis. I established an initial list of codes using deductive logic, based on the conceptual framework as well as inductive logic, based on my memoing during interviews. I added codes inductively as they emerged from the analysis as a result of any insights gained. These two steps—deductive and inductive coding—reflect the distinctions between organization coding and theoretical coding that one develop based on prior ideas (a deductive approach) and substantive descriptive coding that results from open coding where insights from the data lead to the creation of new codes (an inductive approach; Maxwell, 2013). The first category tends to have etic coding, where the wording comes from the researcher; in the second category, coding is emic, or *in vivo,* based on the participants' own words (Patton, 2002). Although I used both approaches, because phenomenology employs epoche, I emphasized inductive logic as the analysis progressed. As I created codes, I reanalyzed

all previously coded data, and in some cases recoded, based on new codes and themes that emerged.

Data Interpretation

Data interpretation involves the connecting strategies referenced by Maxwell (2013) to establish themes and relationships in the data, and conclusions regarding the findings. In second-order coding (Miles et al., 2014), the focus moves to themes, explanations, and relationships. As the coding and analysis unfolded, I journaled insights around patterns and themes that emerged, employing additional techniques including clustering or subsuming codes as well as partitioning codes where sufficient differentiation existed (Miles et al., 2014). This process reflected the use of convergence and divergence strategies. Convergence means noticing patterns and what fits, whereas divergence is about "fleshing out" patterns or categories by building on items of information already known, bridging connections among different items, and producing new information that ought to fit, then verifying its existence (Patton, 2002, p. 465). Convergence includes bracketing data where the researcher inspects data for meanings about the phenomenon in question. Closure occurs when sources of information have been exhausted and categories saturated (Patton, 2002): my ultimate objective. Although it was difficult to know in advance the number of codes that would result, Creswell (2013) suggested a final range of 25–30 codes that group into five or six themes, as a guideline.

A key part of data analysis also included looking for discrepant or negative cases. The final stage of data interpretation is a confirmatory stage, where researchers use deductive logic and testing to check the appropriateness of the inductive content analysis

by exploring deviant cases or data that do not fit the categories developed (Patton, 2002). I also counted the number of times codes occurred, sought plausibility, made contrasts and comparisons, looked for relationships and intervening factors, built logic chains of evidence, and connected data to the theoretical framework (Miles et al., 2014). I drew conclusions from the patterns and broader themes that emerged, as well as consideration of discrepancies in the data.

Generating Descriptions

Once I analyzed the data through coding and reduction to themes, I generated rich descriptions to capture the essence of the shared experiences in transformational coaching. I combined two distinct processes to develop textural descriptions (what exactly was experienced) and structural descriptions (how the experience was experienced in conditions and context; Moustakas, 1994) to ensure the richness of the descriptions.

Ethical Issues

Ethical Protection of Participants

Addressing ethical issues was an important aspect of this research. I obtained informed consent before conducting any research. I provided all potential research participants with detailed information on the research and its purpose, and the extent to which I could protect anonymity. Participants' names remained confidential; therefore, I was unable to identify individuals in the research. Should individuals have found their participation in the interview troubling in any way, the support staff who work with the government youth development department were available to talk with participants. Furthermore, as mentioned, I provided the interview questions in advance, giving

participants time to prepare for the questions. I assumed that individuals who volunteered for the interview would be aware and ready for what they would be discussing; therefore, I did not anticipate that this would be a problem; however, I made participants aware that support services were available, should they feel the need to use them. However, no participants requested this support.

At the start of each interview, I reminded participants that they could withdraw from the research study at any time. I also advised participants that I would share my initial analysis and my conclusions with them, and invite any feedback. I explained to participants that after completing this verification process, their involvement with the research was complete and that original recordings would be deleted. I informed participants that I would share a copy of the completed dissertation with them.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary research instrument and plays a critical and influential role in the data-collection process. In particular with phenomenology, the researcher plays an interpretive role and therefore must seek to establish epoche. The first step in any phenomenological analysis is to be consciously aware of and put aside the researcher's perspectives, prejudices, assumptions, and attitudes toward the phenomenon in question, to maximize neutrality and objectivity (Patton, 2002). I employed full disclosure (see Chapter 2) as well as critical reflection and journaling throughout the data-analysis process to remain aware of my own experiences, values, beliefs, and assumptions, and the ways these could bias the research. I bracketed these throughout the data collection and data analysis. I also drew on my academic integrity and professional skills as a certified performance coach and mediator to

maintain presence, objectivity, and neutrality throughout the research process. I also completed the National Institute of Health's training course for protecting human research subjects (see Appendix B).

Research Quality

I prioritized ensuring research quality. To ensure the quality and trustworthiness of a qualitative research study, a qualitative researcher must demonstrate credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Creswell, 1994). These are the qualitative researcher's counterparts of a quantitative study's demonstration of validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalizability. Credibility requires a researcher to ensure that findings make sense (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Transferability requires a researcher to demonstrate the broader application of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994), in this case, specifically to the field of public administration. Dependability of the research means demonstrating stability and consistency in the research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, confirmability requires a researcher to demonstrate reasonable neutrality in their role and status as the researcher. To ensure research quality, I used seven tools: researcher self-reflection, thick description, an audit trail, negative-case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checking,

Self-Reflection on Researcher Bias and Reactivity

Two of the most important aspects of ensuring qualitative credibility are reducing researcher bias and trying to control reactivity: the researcher's influence on the individuals being studied (Maxwell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). Neither researcher bias nor reactivity can be eliminated, but researchers must try to understand it and use it productively (Maxwell, 2013). The first step is reflection and transparency about

possibilities where the researcher clearly thinks through and describes the possible instances of bias and reactivity and how they might address it.

Researchers can work to mitigate the negative consequences of bias and reactivity by avoiding creating elite status among participants, avoiding cooptation (spending time away from the site and spreading out visits, or finding participants who agree to provide background information off-site), using triangulation, and in cases of perceived deception by participants, trying to understand it (Miles et al. 2014). To prevent reactivity, researchers should stay at the research site as long as possible, spending time in the setting outside of formal research efforts to build a lower profile and unobtrusive presence while also making intentions and objective clear (Miles et al., 2014). Some of these strategies were not relevant for this research, as this research was based on one-time participant interviews, in contrast to strategies that employ prolonged observation. The main strategy I employed in this regard was to mitigate status differences by sharing that I also took part in the same transformational-coaching program, and my passion for youth, thereby trying to establish commonality. I reinforced the overall objective of the research aim to help support better outcomes for young people, again hoping to evoke mutual passion for the bigger social-change implications of the research, and reducing focus on any perceived status differences. Furthermore, journaling helped mitigate researcher bias, as previously discussed.

Thick Description

One primary method of ensuring credibility, dependability, and confirmability in qualitative studies is the use of thick description. Thick description provides the foundation of qualitative analysis and reporting (Patton, 2002, p. 437) and involves

presenting detail, context, emotion, as well as the meaning and significance of experiences (Denzin, 1989, p.83). I drew on interview probes to ensure that all questions elicited rich and deep responses from interviewees. This included the emotions evoked and meaning made in experiences described by participants. Where initial responses did not produce this thick description, I used my judgment to continue to probe to generate richness and depth. I focused on communicating this thickness when drafting the analysis and conclusions.

Audit Trail

As previously mentioned, I used journaling through the research process to provide a specific and detailed research audit trail. This included descriptions of self-reflection as well as information regarding steps taken, decisions made, and insights that occurred during data collection, data coding, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing. This process helped to authenticate data analysis and establish confirmability.

Negative Case Analysis

To assist in gaining research credibility, I gave explicit focus to outliers. I considered which data did not fit with the coding and themes that emerged. This process included reflection on and interpretation of these negative cases.

Referential Adequacy

As previously mentioned, I worked to ensure data saturation in the research process. I was satisfied that the codes and themes were sufficiently saturated with the data from completed interviews. This process ensured sufficient material to establish dependability and confirmability.

Member Checking

An additional verification step that helped establish dependability and confirmability was member checking. Member checking is a process through which respondents verify data and the resulting interpretations. Member checking occurred in two stages: transcription verification and analysis verification. For analysis verification, I shared the themes, interpretations, and conclusions I drew with research participants, seeking their feedback. I did not receive feedback from participants regarding the circulated themes. Based on this lack of response, I assumed participants did not have any objections to my interpretations.

Peer Review

I intended to seek a peer reviewer who was a PhD-status colleague. A colleague review is "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Creswell, 1994, p. 308). The purpose of this step was to have a separate scholarly perspective to validate the data analysis and interpretation. However, I was unable to identify a willing individual to take on the requested task. Consequently, peer review was not employed in this research.

Limitations

Methodological limitations existed for the study, based on the phenomenological nature of the research. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that relies on subjective experiences of individuals; therefore, it is difficult to establish triangulation of data or implement random sampling. Thus, the generalizability of the research is not possible. Lack of generalizability is a limitation of any qualitative study with a small sample size

that is not randomly selected and where subjectivity is an integral part of the approach. In particular, phenomenological research entails data collection typically dependent on interviews as the sole source of information.

This research strategy also required individuals to voluntarily participate. A self-selection bias could have occurred in who volunteered. For example, it could be that either individuals with a more positive or negative experience of transformational coaching opted to take part, which would skew their perspectives. However, as this study was only the first exploration into the experiences of individuals, and was not meant to be generalized to other groups, this bias is not as critical as if the study was a quantitative outcomes study. I anticipate that researchers will conduct additional quantitative and qualitative studies on transformational coaching to develop the knowledge base and solidify the evidence on transformational coaching.

Another limitation was the potential for individuals not to offer information in interviews. Responses from interviewees can be distorted due to personal biases, anger, anxiety, and lack of awareness because interviews are greatly affected by the emotional state of the interviewee (Patton, 2002). Researchers work to establish an important balance between participants and themselves that can influence participants' willingness to share information freely (Maxwell, 2013). Participants can be engaged but not take part deeply, depending on whether they are more or less inclined to contribute to someone who is a stranger or someone with whom they feel more comfortable (Patton, 2002). I worked to remain aware of this issue and provide a situation that was comfortable for participants. Interviews can also be influenced by the extent to which participants perceive a status or power difference between the researcher as a Ph.D.

student and themselves. I maintained awareness of the relationship and used common experiences in the program and passion for youth to help establish rapport and create a comfortable setting in which participants were willing to offer their experiences.

Summary

The research study was a qualitative transcendental phenomenological study of eight youth-serving human service professionals working in Bermuda's public schools to explore their experiences in the transformational coaching intervention. The objective was to create a rich and deep understanding of these professionals' experiences in transformational coaching, as well as the common essence of these experiences. This research provides the first exploration into transformational coaching and helps reveal whether transformational coaching has potential to support professional thriving for public sector employees working with youth. Additional research will be required to establish the outcomes associated with the intervention. The results of this research will be presented in Chapter 4, and the implications will be presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings from eight in-depth interviews with teachers who work for the Bermuda Government in the public school system and who have participated in transformational coaching. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences these human service professionals have with the training, to understand if transformational coaching is an intervention that holds potential for a proactive way professionals can enhance their personal domain, experience transformative learning, and boost their ability to thrive at work. I used a phenomenological research design to explore experiences in transformational coaching. This approach was best suited to allow an in-depth exploration of experiences and focus on the meaning-making that occurred in experiences. This method also allowed for an exploration into the commonality of experiences, necessary for understanding if transformational coaching has broad potential. The qualitative data were collected by Skype interviews with participants between July 2016 and February 2017. In this chapter, I describe the community partner and study setting, participant recruitment and selection, participant profiles, data-collection and -analysis process, data-verification procedures, the research findings, and evidence of quality.

Community Partners and Study Setting

To complete this research, I partnered with an organization that delivers the transformational coaching intervention under study: the Bermuda Government's youth development department. Before submitting my IRB application, I sent an e-mail request to the youth development department to inform them of my research and request their

support through a letter of cooperation. Because my community partner was located in a Bermuda, this dictated my study setting.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

In this section, I describe the participant recruitment and selection steps that I took. I recruited participants with the assistance of my community partner, who circulated an e-mail I drafted to describe the study and its purpose, the eligibility requirements and time commitment expected of participants, as well as details of a stipend for their participation. Due to confidentiality requirements by the Government, I was unable to contact participants directly and relied on my community partner to send and receive correspondence from interested participants.

I was successful in identifying eight participants through my community partner. Because only eight participants volunteered, I did not need purposeful sampling to narrow the participant pool. Phenomenology requires no set number of study participants; rather, the goal is to have enough participants to understand the shared essence of experiences with the phenomena under study (Creswell, 1994; Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). Reid et al. (2005) recommend between five and 25 participants, whereas Creswell (1994) recommended up to 10 participants. With the eight interviews I conducted, I was satisfied that I was not obtaining any new information and that I had reached saturation and closure, and I had sufficient data to understand the shared essence of experiences.

Once study participants volunteered to participate, I sent them an informed-consent form to review and return with their signature. This included details regarding the provision of a $40 stipend for participation. It also included information for support

contacts if they experienced any stressful feelings as a result of their participation. No participants requested this support.

Participant Profiles

This section provides a basic profile of the eight research participants. I applied pseudonyms to protect participant identity, referencing participants as Jack, Carol, Tina, Kate, Joy, Jackie, Vickie, and Rachel. Participant 1, Jack, is a Bermudian man, aged 49 years, who has been working in the public school system with students for 27 years. For most of Jack's teaching career, he worked with middle school students between the ages of 11 and 13 years. He is the director of an alternative school for students who are not able to remain in mainstream education. Consequently, he now works with students from 11 years of age up to 16 years of age.

Participant 2, Carol, is a Bermudian woman, aged 43 years, who has been working in the public school system with students for 14 years. Carol has always worked with middle school students between the ages of 11 and 13 years. Participant 3, Tina, is a Bermudian woman, aged 42 years, who has been working in the public school system with students for three years. However, for the first 2 years she was a substitute teacher. This was her first year with her own classroom, teaching full-time. Carol teaches high school students between the ages of 14 and 18 years.

Participant 4, Kate, is a Bermudian woman, aged 50 years, who has been working in the public school system with students for 18 years. Kate has worked with students in middle and high school, ranging in age between 10 and 19 years. Participant 5, Jackie, is a Bermudian woman, aged 53 years, who has been working in the public school system with students for 6 years. Jackie has worked with students in middle and high school as

well as in an alternative school setting, with students between the ages of 11 and 18 years.

Participant 6, Joy, is a Bermudian woman, aged 31 years, who has been working in the public school system with students for 8 years. Joy has worked with students in middle and high school, with students between the ages of 10 and 18 years. Participant 7, Vickie, is a Bermudian woman, aged 34 years, who has been working in the public school system with students for 6 years. Vickie has worked with students in middle and high school, with students between the ages of 10 and 18 years. Participant 8, Rachel, is a Bermudian woman, aged 43, who has been working in the public school system with students for 12 years. Rachel has worked with students in middle school, with students between the ages of 9 and 13 years.

Data Collection

I conducted one face-to-face interview through Skype with each of the eight research participants. With the permission of the participant, I recorded each interview using EasyAudioRecorder on my mobile phone and my laptop, and each interview lasted between 35 and 65 minutes. Before the interview began, I reviewed the consent form with each participant, and reminded them of the voluntary nature of their participation.

To guide the interviews, I developed an interview protocol that consisted of seven open-ended questions. I also obtained the basic demographic data presented in the participant profiles. Although I followed the protocol strictly, I also used open-ended probes to elicit more detailed responses than were initially provided. In my own professional experience as a mediator and coach, I have seen how the richest responses

and deepest insights typically result from follow-up probing. For every question asked, I followed-up with up to three probes such as the following:

- "Can you explain that in more detail?"
- "What was the impact of that?"
- "Why was that important?"

These questions helped ensure participants provided rich descriptions in response to each question. When the interviews concluded, I also dedicated 10 minutes to take personal field notes on any observations I had from the interviews, such as one participant's nonverbal responses, demeanor, or other personal thoughts. These notes helped to inform my initial list of codes used during data analysis.

Within 24 hours of completing an interview, I transcribed the recordings verbatim by hand to an electronic word document and saved it to a password-protected file. This file was synchronized to an online storage system, Dropbox, for backup purposes. At this stage, I removed all identifying information and applied pseudonyms. In each interview transcript, I also inputted my field notes so they would be evident during my data analysis. I cross-referenced each transcript to the original recording to ensure accuracy and then shared the transcript with the participant for verification. I then deleted the original recordings to maintain participants' privacy.

Data Analysis

To assist in the data management and analysis, I uploaded all interview transcripts to the qualitative research software NVivo 10 for Mac. I used NVivo 10 by QSR International as I had prior experience with the software from my qualitative research course and because it is one of the top-selling software programs for data analysis

(Janesick, 2011). The next stage of my analysis was the coding of all the data. Although I planned to use deductive and inductive methods, I focused on inductive coding, as this allowed me to extract themes directly from participant interviews rather than pushing my assumptions and expectations into the analysis. D. Thomas (2006) identified a five-step process when using inductive coding:

1. Prepare the raw data files and format them for consistency.
2. Read the text until familiar with the content.
3. Create categories (codes).
4. Merge codes (themes) or uncode text as needed.
5. Refine the categories and search for subcategories.

I started the data-analysis process by reading each transcript two times before beginning any coding. This process allowed me to gain a broad understanding of the data and the common trends that occurred. It also allowed me to adjust my initial set of deductive codes, so my coding was inductive from the start. This initial set was 20 different codes reflecting the intended use of deductive and inductive coding. I used these as a starting point for data reduction and first order coding.

During the third reading of the transcripts, I coded the data using my initial list of codes. However, if my intuition was that a new code was needed, I created a new code. The total number of codes upon completion of my first round of first-order coding expanded to 50 codes. When all interviews coding was complete, I reviewed all codes and merged those that appeared, upon reflection, to be similar. This resulted in subsuming codes together so the final number of codes was 25 codes, including an "outlier" code used to track information that did not fit in others codes (see Table 1). This

result fit with Creswell's (2013) recommended number of finals codes, ranging between 25 and 30.

With this final set of codes, I again performed all coding and assessed the results. Table 1 shows the results from first-order coding, including the total number of times a code was tagged and the percentage of times that code was tagged of the total number.

Table 1

Final List of Codes and Incidence of Codes

Code	Total number of references	% of total codes
Better relationships, results, & service	31	12
Commitment to having an impact & making a difference	13	5
Self-confidence, belief, & hope	11	4
Commitment & perseverance to self-vision	11	4
Growth & development	9	3
Handling challenges & mistakes	7	3
Energy & passion	6	2
Seeing more creative possibilities, opportunities, & strategies	15	6
Nonjudgment	7	3
Question thinking, assumptions, & judgments	26	10
Self-reflection	10	4
Must be open & receptive to transformation	5	2
Self-transformation & awakening	7	3
Greater relief, peace, joy, positivity, freedom, or happiness	9	3
Less guilt, stress, or frustration	9	3
Accountability for decisions & actions	21	8
Authenticity & values-actions alignment	8	3
Acceptance & letting go	7	3
No excuses or blaming	7	3
Focus on what I can control & not being held back by past	6	2
Forgiveness & patience	4	2
Presence, responsive, & good listening	9	3
Facing & addressing difficult emotions	9	3
Greater compassion & empathy	4	2
Outlier	8	3

Before I completed second-order coding to group codes into themes, I reread my proposal to give myself a fresh perspective to the research results. It was important to

revisit the conceptual framework underpinning the research. After reviewing my conceptual framework and reflecting on the codes, five themes emerged (see Table 2).

Table 2

Final List of Themes and Incidence of Themes

Theme	Total number of references	% of total codes
Perspective taking	48	19
Responsibility & commitment	66	25
Better relationships & results	59	23
Personal well-being	55	21
Risk taking & growth	16	6

Data Verification

Once I identified the themes, I circulated the codes and themes to participants for verification (see Appendix C). This form of member checking was an important step in ensuring the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

Research Findings

In this section, I describe the research findings. This includes data analysis for each theme that provides evidence of the common essence of participants' experiences in transformational coaching and describes instances where data links to the study's research questions. I describe these themes using direct quotations from the interview transcripts. An interpretation of these findings in relationship to this study's research questions appears in Chapter 5.

Theme 1: Perspective Taking

The first theme of perspective taking included data tagged with the codes nonjudgment, questioning thinking and assumptions, and self-reflection. The essence of

this theme is that individuals tended to be better able to consider different perspectives, view their thoughts as only interpretations rather than factual truths, and critically reflect on how they make meaning to become more open to different ways of thinking. As part of considering different perspectives, participants often mentioned being able to notice and withhold personal judgments to view their environment more openly. The following section provides detailed accounts of participants' references to enhanced perspective taking as a result of their experience in transformational coaching.

Jack. Jack made many references to greater perspective taking throughout his interview. The first reference was in response to the question of what stood out for him where he discussed the importance of reflection,

> I think all teachers, all people in leadership positions in any organization should do this course. I felt that in terms of a staff development point of view, I can really see how this is beneficial to stakeholders because it really gets, well it's almost like it engages in a level of appreciative enquiry. It's a very reflective staff development tool that I think that everyone, especially in a leadership position, should engage in.

Jack also made reference to how the training helped him consider the perspectives of his students: "one of the things that this course did for me was to think about how I can get in to the world of my students." Later, when asked to describe any insights he had about himself as a result of the training, Jack explained how the training gave him a new perspective on how to progress his career.

> Coming back home after finishing my PhD, it has been challenging to obtain upward mobility in the system, to do some other things. And I would talk to my

> colleagues, and say, ok, I have the highest degree and I'm just not moving forward, you know. … But what the course did for me was open up my perspective on how to move along the leadership track. Because I thought the leadership track had to look a certain way, and I thought it had to be scripted. …. So, I had to do some deep searching within myself and ask myself those hard questions. Why do I want to be a principal? What is it about that job that seems attractive to me? … I realized that that wasn't what I wanted to do. So being in the course forced me to ask those hard personal questions in terms of my motives and my reasons as to why professionally I was pursuing that track. So needless to say, after doing that soul searching, I moved a different way and so here I am as the director at an alternative school. I would never have scripted that for me.

Jack also added that, as a result of the training, he had learned "to always be self-reflective as a practitioner, always ask yourself those hard questions as practitioners that you are afraid to answer." When probed about why this was important, Jack responded saying,

> I feel that a lot of times leaders are not reflective. I think that a lot of times we get our information from outside, from literature and from persons that we work with telling us how good or bad we are. But I don't know that we spend enough time during the day, internally just looking at and self-assessing situations and saying "well what could I have done differently?" Or "how could I have facilitated a different outcome in this instance?" We don't take enough quiet time to just sit and assess ourselves, or evaluate ourselves.

For Jack, the importance of critical self-reflection was a key theme in perspective taking, allowing him to see things differently: the essence of perspective taking. Jack's experience in transformational coaching positively influenced his ability to see things differently.

Kate. Kate also made references throughout her interview to perspective taking as a result of her experience in the training. When asked the opening interview question to describe her experience in the training, Kate described the following:

> That training is a real eye opener, it presses against your judgments and beliefs and what you hold true, and the way you are wired in who you are. It opens you up to see different points of view and so that for me gives me a better opportunity to work with any young person. I think my training prepared me for working with young people but the PDT actually prepared myself, the personal self, to not get hung up in my beliefs: who I am, what I think, what I think they should be—all the cultural nuances. … As a human being, you know, you always bring your own stuff to the table. You know, who you are, but this training—it presents so much your thoughts, your beliefs, your judgments, that you are able to recognize that they are yours, and put them aside so you can be fully present to whoever you are working with—so they don't get in the way.

When asked what the impact of this had been, Kate added,

> It has opened my patience towards different views and ideas. It has also allowed me to be more of myself, because I am now more receptive to if it's not my way, or putting people in a box, but open to multiple views and ideas in order to get at

> better listening. It's cleared my listening from hearing what they say versus the filter of my beliefs and judgments.

When asked what stood out for her, Kate responded by saying, "the training has allowed me to be more open to experience the communications and relationships with people as they are without judgments." Additionally, when asked about any insights about herself, Kate noted the following learning moment:

> That although I can understand my judgments and my beliefs and I always want to be able to put those aside, they are a part of me. They will never go anywhere. They will always be there. My experience will always be the filter in which I view the world. The difference is I don't have to operate from the filter.

The ability for nonjudgment was a strong theme for Kate. When asked what changes she associated with the training, Kate talked in depth about being more self-reflective as a result of her experience:

> It's allowed me to see me and see how being me can be an obstacle to others and that I can still be me but I can also be aware of how my dominant personality can take over at times.

Kate made many references to perspective taking in commenting on her increased ability to differentiate her view as one interpretation, to withhold judgments, and to have a more open attitude.

Joy. Joy also made reference to greater perspective taking through her experience of greater acceptance and increased ability for nonjudgment that occurred as a result of her participation in transformational coaching. When asked the opening interview question to describe her experience, Joy responded by saying it was a "powerful" and

"eye-opening" experience that enabled her a greater ability for acceptance as a result of changes she made in her meaning-making: "for me it was shifting my opinions, my thoughts about people, situations, experiences that allowed me to let go of a lot." Joy described how the training helped her let go of judgments so she could operate from a clean slate:

> Its helped me to minimize judgments with people in the sense that, before, being a college student and just doing life, you had an opinion of circumstances and just looking from the outside in. Now I have a bigger capacity for compassion and just no judgment. … I'm able to, when situations or life shows up, handle it in a different way to than I would if I didn't have the training. Professionally, I'm able to work with students in a different way—there's no judgment, an openness, an honesty, like a clean slate.

Joy's experience of changing her ways of making-meaning, letting go, and nonjudgment reflect her ability to have a different perspective on her thinking and her experiences as a result of transformational coaching.

Carol. Carol made one significant reference to a shift in perspective as a result of her experience in transformational coaching. Carol now considers limitations differently and draws on her students' perspectives more to overcome challenges:

> Well the 3 years prior to me doing the workshop and me entertaining negativity and focusing on not having this resource, and the Ministry not doing this, or not doing that. I just changed the way that I was preparing to work with limited resources. Allowing the children to take more leadership in the way that they use resources when we did have the Internet, or the computers—using not just myself

> but allowing the children to become a part of the learning process and teaching process too. There are always a lot of new things coming, and we can never keep up with it. But the children know a lot of things, and they are willing to teach you some things, and if you are willing to be open to them teaching you something and they see that you are open to that, they tend to be more open to you.

For Carol, perspective taking took the form of approaching challenges differently and drawing on the views of her students to overcome limitations.

Rachel. Rachel made many references to perspective taking, and in particular not taking things personally when addressing students. When asked to describe her experience with transformational coaching, Rachel described how she is much more open-minded and considerate of the perspectives of her students:

> My experience with the training was very rewarding, and also it allowed me to be in the view of a child—how they feel and just listening and having someone validate my feelings. … It's allowed me to open up my eyes better. … It makes you think twice. It really makes you stop and think of the different strategies you can use. Because we always think of the child from 8:30 to 3:30, but you don't know what's happening after that. So, it helped me not to have tunnel vision but have an open mind, because I was not closed minded but more open minded, and this allowed me to open up my mind to different things, like what a child might be going through; not just that a child comes to the school to be rude, or is acting out just to act out.

Rachel was better able to have more understanding perspectives regarding her students' situations. When asked to describe the impact of being more open-minded as a result of her experience with transformational coaching, Rachel explained,

> It had a tremendous impact on me in terms of what children are dealing with today, and about the peer pressure. Especially with the gangs and the pressure of being in them. … It's not like how it used to me. It's opened up my mind about how students are keeping everything in because they are told to. You know, my family is going through A, B, C, & D, but we have to keep it quiet. And there's so much the child is dealing with, and we think that that child isn't dealing with anything—you know like we think "oh this is just an 11 or 12-year-old," but that 11 or 12-year-old is dealing with something of a 20 or 30-year-old, you know, getting the other sibling ready, and being responsible for that sibling. The mom's out, the dad's out, and they are responsible. So it's made a difference in how I look at the whole child, not just the behavior. It allows me to explore with the child and how the child is feeling, and how the actual behavior may have nothing to do with an actual incident that happened. So, I tend not to take things personal.

Rachel continued to stress this point when asked what stood out for her, by responding with "mainly not taking things personally. It's small here and we tend to take things personal and hold children accountable way more than we should." For Rachel, her change in perspective often allowed her to see things more objectively. Transformational coaching had a significant influence on Rachel's ability to have more open and objective perspectives on her students and experiences.

Tina. Tina described many instances of self-reflection and resulting shifts in thinking. When asked to describe her experience with transformational coaching, Tina described the following,

> It was really philosophical and deep thinking. And it caused you to think about your life and how you think. It was a very deep experience, I found it to be very thought provoking and very reflective—how you think, how you see your life. You know, you as a person, your spiritual growth and how you as a person see and view things, and how you grow. It just makes you stop and think and reflect. Some of the topics brought a different light on how you see things and view things.

When asked what the impact of this was, Tina explained how it has helped her to be less judgmental and consider different perspectives.

> It was quite good at shifting my thinking. Obviously, you want to be a good teacher or mentor, and looking at my way of judging people and how I look at people. You don't have to be so judgmental. … Sometimes it is not easy as a teacher, you have to always reflect as a teacher, you have to reflect every day and be a reflective practitioner. And when I started the training I was just a substitute teacher. I didn't teach a subject or have a classroom of my own and some of the stuff I was sharing with the teachers at school, they couldn't see from my point of view because, you know, I would probably view a young person differently, not being in the classroom full time. But now that the tables have turned and I'm in the classroom, I really have to step back. … So, I've tried to reflect on what I've learned in the training and … I've tried to … bring what I've learned into the

> classroom. And I have to admit it isn't easy, and I don't always get it right. And I have to always go back and reflect and think about what I can do differently.

Tina realized how different people have different perspectives, and the importance of reflecting on her perspective to consider different possibilities. For Tina, the ability to reflect on her own thinking, withhold judgment and consider different views encapsulates how her perspective taking was enhanced as a result of her experience in the training.

Jackie. Jackie described her most significant insight from the training as being the differentiation between fact and interpretation. She described this insight and ability "to now hear a communication and focus on the facts and not get drawn into the story or opinion of another" as powerful.

Vickie. Vickie also experienced shifts in her perspective and her thinking. When asked to describe her experience in transformational coaching, Vickie also talked of distinguishing facts from interpretation and not taking things personally.

> After my first day, I was kind of angry—you know who are you to be telling me that there is something wrong or there is something going on or you know that we look at things a particular way and we listen a particular way, and we only see things as far as we can see them. And we have all of these interpretations about life and we hardly ever, if ever, operate from the facts. And I was completely taken aback. But then once I began to sit with it, I actually began to consider some things, you know, like, do I really operate from the facts all the time or do I operate from my interpretation of what's actually occurred. And I got to see for myself that in some areas, I actually do operate from what I make things mean, which has been, one might say, quite transformative, as it's allowed me a whole

> different place to come from. It's helped me to not take a lot of things personally. Yeah, I guess in being attached to the meaning I give things, it doesn't serve me, one could say, so it provides a way for me to look at situations cleanly and clearly without it being muddy.

For Vickie, there is benefit is being able to operate from the facts instead of her initial interpretations as it allows a more objective perspective on situations. Vickie also described further benefits of considering different point of views:

> What I got from [the training] was that we see what's possible based on where it is we are standing in that current moment. And what else might be possible if we actually took a moment to stand somewhere else and have an appreciation for what the other person sees as well, and not being so stuck on being right about whatever it is that is up for discussion or that is transpiring.

Vickie realized the importance of considering different perspectives and possibilities.

Research questions. The data tagged in the theme of perspective taking describes changes in meaning-making, the focus of Research Subquestion 3. All participants made some reference to perspective taking, often through commentary on greater ability to question their own thinking and consider the views of others, withhold judgment, and not take things personally. All these references represent some form of shift in perspective and ways of thinking. These shifts were fundamental to participants' experiences in transformational coaching and demonstrate research findings connected to the third research question.

Theme 2: Responsibility and Commitment

This chapter includes data tagged with the codes commitment to having an impact and making a difference, commitment and perseverance to self-vision, accountability for decisions and actions, authenticity and values-actions alignment, no excuses or blaming, focus on what I can control and not being held back by past, and handling challenges and mistakes. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to be better able to take full responsibility for their choices, their actions, and their mistakes and remain committed to their self-vision, to making a difference, as well as to their values alignment, despite any set-backs or challenges. Related to this theme was a common notion of not making excuses or shifting blame to others. The following section provides detailed accounts of participants' references to a greater sense of responsibility and commitment as a result of their experience in the transformational coaching program.

Jack. Jack spoke the most comprehensively on the theme of commitment and responsibility. When asked to describe his experience in transformational coaching, Jack thought his experience was beneficial to him as an educator because "it talked about teachers, well not just teachers but adults, taking responsibility for their actions and owning their actions, and being responsible for the decisions that they make." Jack reinforced the importance of this for him when responding to what stood out for him in his experience:

> If you say you are going to do something, you should really follow through, and as an educator that resonated with me because children do not respect educators or their teachers if they don't follow through with their word. So, as an educator, if I say I am going to do something, then I actually have to follow through and

> commit to the commitment. … I do recall [the lead coach] talking about taking ownership and responsibility. He talked about this phrase "I am cause." And I really didn't understand what he was talking about, this "I am cause." And then he started talking about things like justifications, reasons, or excuses are really never justifiable for you not doing what you say you are going to do. … So just the whole concept of not making or not using justifications or reasons or excuses not to accept responsibility, that is one of the philosophical things that stood out for me.

When probed further on what the learning for him was around this insight, Jack elaborated further:

> I think the learning for me was to always be tenacious in ensuring that whatever responsibly I take on, that I actually follow through and get it done, and not just get it done but get it done well. And insist that persons who I align myself with, other stakeholders, especially in being in a leadership position, that I hold them to a high standard of accountability: to ensure that they follow through and get done what is supposed to get done in the best interest of the children.

For Jack, the importance of remaining accountable and committed was an important insight from his experience. When asked how the experience affected his viewpoint, Jack delved further into the notion of owning one's actions and decisions in his personal and professional life,

> One of the things I remember [the lead coach] talking about was when he talked about justifications, reasons, and excuses. I remember him saying how we sometimes try to find ways to avoid, avoiding doing what we have to do and

> making excuses of why we didn't get it done. This whole notion of avoiding things. In my personal life, when sometimes my spouse might ask me to do something, just not getting it done is not a good enough reason for not doing it. And the result of that is then trying to avoid the conflict that results from the decision that I made. So, it just goes back to the notion of accepting responsibility. … Because we all make choices, and as a result of the choices there are consequences. They can be good or they can be bad. … And professionally you know, I think it's a marriage between the two, you know, in terms of making choices professionally. As a leader, there are some good choices you make, but also some bad choices, and you have to be able to stand by the decisions you make, and own it. So, it's this whole concept of ownership that was really thematic for me.

Transformational coaching gave Jack a clear sense of obligation toward owning his actions. When asked for final insights, Jack reiterated once again the importance of his learning around responsibility and commitment.

> It's that whole aspect of personal responsibility. If you are wrong, say you are wrong; if you made a mistake, say you made a mistake. If you made a decision and the consequences are not good, embrace it. If you make a decision, are the consequences are good, embrace that too. This I why I think everyone should take this course. I think a lot of us go around making excuses, so I can only see positive things coming from persons taking this course in terms of owning the decisions they make. … I think this professional development training is definitely something that all persons in leadership positions really need to take. It

> gives you a broad perspective of yourself as an individual and how you should really engage in your leadership role from the standpoint of holding yourself accountable and holding the stakeholders you work with accountable. And I use this phrase with my staff that I got from the training, that we need to commit to the commitment. … Excuses or justifications are never good enough, never acceptable, and we must always take responsibility for our actions. For everything we do, it's never someone else, it's always us. We are cause.

Jack's insights, resulting from his experience, were strongest for commitment and responsibility.

Kate. For Kate, the theme of responsibility and commitment was also strong, in particular around the area of addressing mistakes and acting authentically and in alignment with her values. When discussing her experience in transformational coaching, Kate explained, "it is helping me to look at the authentic me and align my beliefs and values to my actions." Kate also discussed her enhanced ability to take responsibility for her mistakes as a result of the tools she gained through transformational coaching.

> It has also given me the tools to acknowledge my mistakes in a way that I own them and am responsible for the mistakes. … We live in a world based on consequences, and consequences from a negative perspective. Every action has a reaction, and when it doesn't work we call it a negative consequence. Well, when we can communicate in a way that people can see they have choice in the matter and that they can look at their actions and reactions and determine if the action or the consequence worked for them and if it didn't, think what can you put in place for that to change. So, we can get out of the rat race of doing the same thing and

> expecting a different result. So, it facilitates changes more quickly than a natural process. It forces you to recognize you can do something different. You can make change quicker. Which is why I say now I have the ability to catch and correct myself and I have tools that I can go back and take responsibility by choosing to handle mistakes without any justifications. Because before I used to handle mistakes, but with a justification. So, I wasn't really handling the mistake. Whereas now I handle it authentically.

Acting authentically and handling mistakes were key for how Kate's senses of responsibility and commitment were enhanced through her experience with the training.

Joy. Joy also expressed shifts in responsibility and commitment. When describing her experience in transformational coaching, Joy expressed having a significant insight into personal responsibility, "I realized that people are who people are and people do what people do and you can't control that but you can control how you react to them and you can control your opinion and your thoughts about it." For commitment, it was Joy's dedication to making a difference in the lives of young people that was reinforced as a result of the training. When asked how her experience affected her, she responded by saying,

> I'm still here 7 years later working with young people. I think the work I do has had an impact because otherwise I wouldn't still be here. So, I'm impactful with my work. I always wonder, you never really get to know the difference you've made in young people's lives. I've worked with so many, maybe 800–1,000 kids and you never know what impact you've made or haven't made, but sometimes when young people come back, they speak to what you've done and how you've

> helped. So, for me it's just making an impact with young people. And I'm still here working to support them. I think that speaks to the results of it, and the relationships that have formed. So, for me, it's just knowing that what I do impacts young people.

Joy's sense of commitment and responsibility shifted as a result of the training, helping her focus more strongly on being responsible for her reactions and her commitment to change the lives of her students.

Carol. For Carol, focusing on what is within her control and not shifting blame were the key aspects discussed in terms of responsibility and commitment. When describing her experience in transformational coaching, Carol explained her realization around the importance of taking responsibility for our decisions.

> When you had to speak, you had to speak from the I perspective, and I think that most people, including myself, are guilty of always blaming somebody else. And even though people affect our lives, when it comes down to it, our decisions that we make and the way we respond to things really comes from us and how we handle it. I find that, not just here, but just people in general tend to always want to blame someone else and I knew that it was right that if you focus on your piece in it, then that's the piece of the puzzle that gets fixed, and it makes the world so much better. And doing the workshop just confirmed the way I really felt. Because most people in my particular space are not open like that—it's always the neighbor, their husband, it always their children. It's never their own part. … It's just made me realize that the way that I think, I'm on the correct path. And

> even though everyone else does not agree with me, I'm ok because I have to take responsibility for me. And it's made it easier for me to say I don't have to react.

Carol has a greater sense of responsibility for her reactions to things, while being able to let go of what is outside her control, or "not her part" to play. Carol went on to remark about what stood out for her in the training: "it was things like 'I am cause' and that whatever situation I'm in, that I'm the cause of it. So, the way that I deal with things in my life now is different." For Carol, her sense of responsibility for her actions and decisions was clearly deepened as a result of the training. When asked how the experience affected her and what insights she had, she further elaborated on her responsibility to her students:

> I would say that in my professional life and my personal life it has allowed me to just be bold and to stay strong on what I think is right. … I can only give the children my 100%. If everyone else around me comes short, I can't control that; I can't control the Ministry. But what I can control is what I bring. … And that was the big picture for me: that each person has to take responsibility for their own piece.

Carol's sense of responsibility toward what is within her control was strengthened as a result of her experience in transformational coaching.

Rachel. For Rachel, the theme of responsibility and commitment was not as strong as for the other participants. However, in reference to being more open-minded and willing to think creatively as a result of the training, Rachel did state, "at least I can say I've tried. All you can do is try, rather than sit there and do nothing and you know,

and feel defeated." This reflects an increased sense of responsibility for trying to find effective strategies and solutions when working with students, and not giving in to defeat.

Tina. Tina made a number of references to responsibility and commitment. When asked to describe her experience in the training and the impact it had, Tina responded by mentioning how the training made her think about responsibility.

> Some of the stuff we looked at—mistakes, what it is to be a good listener, your responsibility, the causes of things and your reactions to things—and making the right choices: how you handle mistakes and your responsibility to things. It made you think.

When asked to elaborate on her enhanced sense of responsibility for her reactions and choices, Tina discussed in greater detail the notion of handling mistakes and not blaming others.

> You know one thing with the training, it was the whole thing of, a lot of times, we as humans, it's easy to shift the blame on someone else and not take responsibility when you have messed up or reflect on the choices you have made, and take that ownership. And a lot of times we don't want to take ownership or think about what has gone wrong or why things happen the way they do. It's not just this person is doing something to me, you know, I have some ownership in it. And I must admit I went through that this weekend, looking at my choices, thinking am I doing the right thing? And I think it's good because it helps you to overcome and learn how to handle mistakes. It helps you take responsibility. Yes, I have made a mistake but all is not lost. You make a mistake, you deal with it, you deal with the consequences, and then you make steps of choices of what you are going

> to do differently. Because you are always going to have situations that come in your life, and you're always going to have problems, but it's how you handle them, that was the bigger thing that the training has brought out. That was a good learning curve not just for young people but for us as adults. A lot of time we blame others but we have to step back to see the bigger picture.

For Tina greater responsibility in addressing mistakes was a key insight from her experience in transformational coaching. When asked what changes she associates with her experience, Tina talked more about being consistent in her commitment to her goals.

> They talked about declaration or stands. When you make a stand or declaration, those things will come to pass but you have to be consistent. If you didn't have that training, you would get frustrated, you know, you will have down moments with young people. … So it's keeping me on that road of applying the principals to my life, and those declarations of what I want in my life, and not giving up on things I want to see accomplished, and being consistent, and my goal setting. You have to do things and be consistent in that thing you want to be good at. And sharing that thought process more. Its helped me continue in the road of being consistent in setting measurable goals and being consistent in fulfilling them, and saying what I want, knowing what I want, putting things in place to get what I want, putting those action steps in place. I have my vision board and I look at it to see where I am and think about what I need to do to get there.

Tina's sense of responsibility toward consistent action in pursuit of her goals and self-vision was also enhanced as a result of the training. Overall, her commitment and

responsibility toward her reactions, choices, mistakes, and goal-achievements was strengthened as a result of transformational coaching.

Jackie. Jackie also discussed responsibility in her ability to handle her mistakes. When asked how her experience affected her, Jackie responded by saying, "knowing that I made a mistake and handled it had me move forward powerfully." Although Jackie did not go into similar depth as other participants in her discussion of responsibility and commitment, she clearly had an enhanced ability to manage her errors with greater responsibility.

Vickie. As with Jackie, for Vickie the theme of responsibility and commitment was similarly less pronounced than for other participants. However, when asked what thoughts stood out for her, she referenced responsibility: "the consistent thread has been, you know, who am I being each moment, moment to moment, and what is my being creating." Jackie's commitment and responsibility toward who she is being in the present moment was a key insight for her.

Research questions. The data tagged in the theme of responsibility and commitment describes changes in participants' personal domain, the focus of Research Subquestion 2, and their ways of thinking, the focus of Research Subquestion 3. For all participants, the sense of responsibility and commitment to either self-vision, values, or making a difference was heightened as a result of their experiences. This outcome reflects findings connected to changes in participants' beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence, often presented as an intentional avoidance of making excuses or blaming others in favor of a mindset shift toward greater accountability for decisions, actions, and mistakes. These changes in ways of thinking about responsibility and commitment also reflect

shifts in meaning-making. In demonstrating changes in the emotional intelligence and personal domain of participants, and as a result their meaning-making and thinking, the theme of responsibility and commitment provide findings related to Research Subquestions 2 and 3 of this study.

Theme 3: Better Relationships and Results

This chapter included data tagged with the codes seeing more creative possibilities, opportunities and strategies; better relationships, results and service; presence, responsive, and good listening; and greater compassion and empathy. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to believe they had better relationships, relationship skills, and enhanced student results as a result of their experience, often due to enhanced communication and compassion. The following section provides detailed accounts of participants' references to improved relationships and enhanced student results as a result of their experience in the transformational coaching program.

Jack. Jack made a number of in-depth references to changed relationships and classroom results as a result of the changes he experienced in the training. When specifically asked about the impact of the changes he experienced, Jack responded,

> One of the things that this course did for me was to think about how I can get in to the world of my students. How can I build better relationships with each one of the students in my classroom? And not just see them or see me as teaching content: this is what I have to teach, I have make sure to cover this sequence in the curriculum, and so on. It just really opened my eyes to having more of a human touch, and really making connections with each of the students in my classroom. … You not just there to cover the content; you are there to teach the

> whole child. So you aren't just responsible for their academic development, but also responsible their social development. And sometimes as educators, we tend to be a little bit disproportionate in our approach because there is so much pressure to get the content covered, but that social piece is equally as important to develop as educators. … And it definitely gave the classroom culture a different feel and not being perceived as so rigid or inflexible or clinical. There was a bit of a more relaxed feeling in the classroom where hey, ok, I can talk about other things in the classroom without feeling like I can't. So, it recalibrated the culture in the classroom.

Jack's shift to greater focus on the socioemotional side of his teaching resulted in enhanced classroom relationships and culture. Jack also talked about his greater awareness of treating students equally as a result of the training.

> In the classroom, there are students who appear to be confrontational or who you perceive to be argumentative and who are asking questions just to ask questions and who you might perceive to be annoying. But there's a way to engage or to disengage that behavior. So, it was almost like a learning of what not to do in those instances, to be more effective in my classroom setting. And to make sure I treat all my students equitably. You know, sometimes you have to go the extra mile to explain why certain things are not acceptable. So, it's just finding that balance or that medium where, ok, I will give you reason and walk you through it so you can get it. So, it's about being smart enough about knowing when and when not to and having more with-it-ness in the classroom setting to meet the needs of the students.

Jack's ability to manage classroom disruption and have greater understanding and effort toward student misbehavior was enhanced as a result of the training. Jack's classroom relationships and culture were positively influenced as a result of his experience in transformational coaching.

Kate. For Kate, the theme of better relationships and results was deep. When asked to describe her experience in transformational coaching, Kate discussed her ability to be more present with her students.

> [The training] sort of gives you a clean slate to operate from and work with young people. As a human being, you know, you always bring your own stuff to the table, you know, who you are, but this training, it presences so much your thoughts, your beliefs, your judgments, that you are able to recognize that they are yours, and put them aside so you can be fully present to whoever you are working with, so they don't get in the way. … Other trainings don't bring this to the forefront, so when someone is saying something that triggers a memory, a judgment, a belief, you get to recognize that it's yours so you can move it aside and be fully present and not bring it into the experience with the person you are working with. And the impact is that the young people can truly be heard. And from my experience in working with them, they continue to say "wow, you hear me; wow, you understand me; you get what I am going through." And it's an opening to support them in getting whatever they need. So, the impact has been, young people feel heard, young people feel that they matter, young people feel that you are interacting with them in a way that is different from other teachers. So that impact means that they get more out of the interaction.

For Kate, being able to put aside her judgments allowed her to be more present with her students so that they felt genuinely listened to, improving her interactions with them. Kate also discussed her greater sense of authenticity and ability to put aside judgment as a result of the training, and when asked what impact this had she explained:

> I am able to serve young people in a genuine way. I've also been able to open up conversations that I may not have opened up previously with family members as well as my supervisors. So, the training has allowed me to be more open to experience the communications and relationships with people as they are without judgments. It has improved my relationships; it has improved who I am as a person; it has improved how others see me as well. I would say I am a very friendly person. However, you have to work to get into my space. But since the training, that friendliness has now opened up so others don't have to work that hard and I allow people in. So, it's improved those interactions, those relations, both personal and professional.

For Kate, it is not just student relationships, but also those with her family and colleagues that were positively influenced by the changes she experienced in transformational coaching. Kate provided insight into how relationships had improved as a result of insights she gained through transformational coaching: "I recognized that there were relationships that were challenged, family relationships, because of my abruptness, boldness, assertiveness. And as I sat in the workshop and began to recognize those things, I could actually see how they impacted my relationships." Kate went on to describe the changes based on her greater self-awareness and attitude of nonjudgment and openness: "it's increased my supervisory skills, created better staff relations: listening more to their

ideas. I've grown as a result of it. I can take other people's ideas and mull it over and I get a better result." Kate's increased self-awareness of how she interacts with others resulted in better communication and leadership, and thus better relationships and results. Kate continued to discuss how much her listening has been influenced by her experience in the training:

> The most significant impact it has had on me is my listening skills have improved tremendously. And not just listening to the words that are said, but the words that are unspoken. Young people may say something and you have this sense that there is something more. Before the training, I would stop. After the training, I inquired. I don't leave an assumption that there may be more and it may be this. But I ask the next question and sometimes that opens up more. … So we get results. We get closer to results because they get closer to what's bothering them or what they want out of life. And they see it for themselves and you can support them. I think that's how we get outcomes. We can get better outcomes.
>
> With better listening, Kate achieves better results.
>
> Kate also mentioned how her speaking has also been influenced by the training,
>
> I've learned that when I watch my words, I can be even more uplifting and empowering, even when I am using corrective actions. The words don't have to be punitive and negative. More reflection can get at the behavior versus the emotions and getting defensive. Its allowed young people to talk and share more. It's built their self-expression. They feel that I understand them more because they are able to talk and I am not telling them this is what you should do. It's

> more of a facilitation of them getting to the correct behaviors that they want versus coming from a punitive perspective.

Kate's enhanced ability to listen, control her emotional responses, and be authentic as a result of her experience have all resulted in better relationships and better student outcomes.

Joy. Joy also referenced enhanced relationships and student results throughout her interview. When asked to describe her experience in transformational coaching and the influence it had, she said,

> I can speak to people in my family I couldn't speak to before because I've shifted. So relationships have redeveloped, reconnected, re-formed, based on my transformation and my shifts, whereas before I wouldn't have spoken to those people because of what I thought they did or didn't do, or what I thought was right or wrong. But now I have to let that go to move forward. And even at work, you know you have relationships, and you have ups and downs, and you have discussions, but I address the facts of what occurred and handle my mistakes with my team, and accomplishments too, and keep moving, versus getting caught up in the drama of it all. … I'm also able to work with students in a different way: there's no judgment, an openness, an honesty, like a clean slate. Before this work, I had opinions and judgments about stuff that I've heard but now it's like I get that people are people, everyone has their own struggle, their own story, and it doesn't make any difference to me, so I guess I have more compassion for where people are at.

Joy is more able to be open, receptive, and compassionate toward people as a result of the training. When asked what difference this has made, Joy elaborated:

> It helps me to minimize judgments with people in the sense that before the training, being a college student and just doing life, you had an opinion of circumstances and just looking from the outside in. Now I have a bigger capacity for compassion and just no judgment, like everyone's got something going on and there's nothing to do about it, there nothing wrong with you, it's just how it is; so for me there's no judgment, and a bigger space for compassion. And just taking people for who they are, no judgments, no stories, no opinions, it's who you are and that's fine by me, and let's work on that and just keep the relationship moving. It allows me to be to listen to the young person versus listening to myself and my thoughts about the person or situation. By doing this I feel I am able to be more responsive to them and their needs. Having more compassion for people also allows me to see the possibility in people and situations which allows for coaching to occur. Once you form an opinion or judgment about someone or something, you limit possibility. So being in a place of less judgment and more possibility I feel allows me to be more effective.

When asked what difference having no judgments and greater compassion has made, Joy delved further:

> Young people can sense when you aren't genuine, and can sense when you aren't truly there to support them, or you have another agenda. So, for me just staying open, and having compassion and no judgment. I'm like a clean slate for people. So, when young people come to me they know "she's not going to judge me, or

> have an opinion about what I did or didn't do, she's not going to look at me some kind of way," so I think my students are able to say "you know what, she's open, fair, honest—a space for me to just come and talk, not having to get judged or have an opinion about me. Whereas normally I have to get a lecture or I have to get judged, or I did something wrong." But they know that when they come to me, they're not going to get any of that. I'll listen. Its gives them a voice. They are able to be heard, and get their needs met when they come to me.

For Joy, her ability to withhold judgment has had a strong positive influence on her relationships and the student results she works toward. Overall, transformational coaching has positively influenced Joy's relationships and student results.

Carol. Carol made less reference than other participants to relationships and results, however she did discuss her improved motivation toward serving her students. When asked how her experience affected her, Carol explained,

> In terms of my work life, it does help me when I feel like the Ministry isn't working, classrooms not being the way they should be, not having the resources we need, in finding a way to make it happen so that I can give the children the best that I have and not wasting time looking at what I don't have and working with what I do. It just gave me a little more inspiration to do that.

Although Carol did not explicitly mention improved relationships or student results, it is fair to assume that a greater commitment and motivation toward giving her students her best efforts would result in better classroom relationships and results than had she not experienced the renewed inspiration.

Rachel. Rachel made a number of references to improved relationships and results. When first asked to describe her experience in transformational coaching, Rachel described her realization around the importance of listening in relationships.

> The training gave me an idea and outlook of how we tend to think that we are listening, but we aren't validating the person's feelings. So that's allowed me to transfer this into my home. My son, you know, he was 3 but was talking to me, and I was answering him but I was doing something else. He'd say "you're not listening to me," and I said "I am listening." But at the same time, he wanted me to actually look at him. So, it was transferable because I thought about it from an activity we had done in the training about talking and listening to each other and validating each other. So, it was transferable. When I did that with my son, he said "now you're listening mummy," because I actually turned around and stopped doing was I was doing and just listened to him. Because all he wanted me to do was validate him, and actually look at him, because I had been doing other things. So, I didn't give him my undivided attention like I said I was.

As a result of the training, Rachel realized the importance of genuine listening and was able to be more present with her son. She also elaborated on the ability to listen more authentically with her students,

> There was an activity about really sitting down and listening and validating a person's feelings without interrupting. So, when a student is upset, I just sit and really, really listen and validate their feelings and repeat what they said. So, the student gets a better understanding that I am listening because I've repeated what they've said, instead of just telling them the rules or expectations or the school

> policy, because those things can come later. But the main thing is to listen and validate the feelings of the student.

For Rachel, improved listening was a key takeaway that improved relationships with her son and her students. Another key insight for Rachel was around the significance of not taking things personally, and the influence this has had on her interactions with students because it enables her to think of different strategies. She provided an example: instead of getting upset at a student's misbehavior and taking it personally, she considered the root cause of the misbehavior and how she could actually address it. She said, "you know, like if the child didn't eat, I can go to the counselor and there are some programs that can give you food." Rachel went on to explain the difference it had made for her in being more open to thinking creatively instead of being rigid and taking things personally:

> It's allowed me to have more tolerance and patience. And listening to others perspectives about how they feel because, the way I view things is not always how others do, nor should it be. Everyone is entitled to their own feelings and opinions and I have learned that not all the time people can see things, and you might think that people and their perceptions, that they should see things a certain way but you can explain to them how you feel in a way that you understand their point of view, and how they are entitled to it. Whereas I used to just say "how can they not see that; what are they dopey?" But now I say "you know what, that's their view and their perception." So, I learned to have more patience.

For Rachel, her experience in transformational coaching has allowed her to be more patient with her students and explore more effective strategies to address situations that

arise. This result indicates how her relationships and student results have strengthened as a result of the training.

Tina. Tina made very distinct references to enhanced student relationships and results during her interview. When discussing her increased ability to self-reflect as a result of her experience in transformational coaching, Tina explained the intention behind her reflection as being able to improve her service to students:

> I want my classroom to be a place where students want to come and want to strive, so it's how I can have a better relationship with that student, which will aid his or her learning. … It helps me, even when I have my situations, to go back to the drawing board and thinking about "ok, how can I make this week a better week, how can I achieve what I want to achieve for the next 6 months in my classroom."

When Tina later responded to how the overall experience in transformational coaching affected her, she also discussed its influence on how she appears in the classroom to her students:

> I think professionally its helping me to view young people differently and not just see them as people coming to the classroom learning, but being there for them: being that person, an approachable person, being a person they can share things with, or being a person that isn't just in their academic life but also their emotional life. I've been that person. Helping them improve how they see themselves, how they see others, and helping them grow as a person.

For Tina, transformational coaching strengthened her classroom presence and student relationships.

Jackie. Jackie also made reference to improved personal and workplace relationships as a result of her experience in transformational coaching. Jackie opened her interview by saying that it was a "mind and life changing experience" that allowed her to "apply the process in my life to reestablish relationships with family and former coworkers, that I felt had been ruined for life." Jackie redeveloped relationships as a result of her experience. When responding to what changes she associated with her experience, Jackie cited being better able to work with all demographics and "have them see their potential through obstacles." Jackie's ability to work with all types of individuals had improved. Jackie concluded the interview by describing her final insights from her experience, stating that her greater ability to separate facts from interpretation "has caused improved communication, fostering relationships that I would not normally had ventured into." For Jackie, improved communication has resulted in new, reestablished, or strengthened relationships. Overall, Jackie's ability to form and maintain relationships was strengthened as a result of her experience in transformational coaching.

Vickie. Vickie's experience in transformational coaching positively influenced relationships and the ability to work with students. One of the results Vickie discussed was her greater sense of empathy as a result of the training.

> I think in one token, it's made me more empathetic to others. And it's also supported me in being more peaceful. … I can be very cold and unempathetic to people, and detached, and aloof with regards to other people's feelings and needs and wants, which doesn't work in relationships. So, those two elements, being empathic and peaceful, have supported me in maintaining those relationships that

> are important to me. But also, creating a bridge for me to be able to create new relationships with new people.

Having a greater sense of peace and empathy toward her students has strengthened her relationships and allowed for new relationships to develop. Vickie went on to describe the overall influence of her experience in transformational coaching, and again referenced how it influenced her ability to work with students.

> Professionally, it gives me a place to stand in operating with young people that is very different than most would. I can honestly say that here the culture often feels like young people should be seen and not heard. If we're not talking to you, then just shut up, be quiet, and sit in the corner. Being in this work has created for me, or has supported me in creating a space where young people can be themselves and be heard and have an appreciation for the important contribution that that they are, even when they are in an upset or doing things that don't work. So, it's given me, it's put me in a position of being available, being a resource, a genuine resource to young people. And not just when I want to hear them but when they want to express themselves.

Vickie opined she is more available and open to young people as a result of her experience. When asked to elaborate on what insights from the training had led to this openness, Vickie responded by explaining the importance of listening, presence, and nonjudgment in her approach to students:

> The importance of listening, the importance of, in each moment recognizing that it is a new moment. And even though I interacted with Johnny yesterday, the Johnny today is not the same Johnny as yesterday. He is different based on

> whatever experiences he has had since yesterday, so really being open to it and in tune to who people are going to be on any given day, regardless of past interactions. So that's something I have grown in.

As a result of her experience, Vickie is more present, open, and available to the students she works with. This outcome reflects the positive influence of transformational coaching on Vickie's relationships with her students, and her ability to work toward positive results with them.

Research questions. The data tagged in the theme of better relationships and results describes changes in participants' personal domains and meaning-making, the focus of Research Subquestions 2 and 3 respectively. In connection to Research Subquestion 2, participants mentioned being more present and listening more authentically to others, and having greater patience and compassion toward others. This outcome evidences changes in emotional intelligence. Participants also described enhanced belief in the strength of their relationships and results, showing strengthened self-efficacy and confidence and therefore growth in emotional intelligence. In addition, participants described being able to think about a wider range of strategies or opportunities for students, indicating a change in meaning-making and ways of thinking, the focus of Research Subquestion 3. The theme of better relationships and results include findings for Research Subquestions 2 and 3.

Theme 4: Personal Well-being

This chapter included data tagged with the codes greater relief, peace, joy, positivity, freedom, or happiness; less guilt, stress or frustration; self-confidence, belief, and hope; acceptance and letting go; forgiveness; facing and dealing with difficult

emotions; and energy, passion and motivation. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to experience greater well-being through increased positive emotions and mindsets as well as reduced negative emotions and mindsets. The following section provides detailed accounts of where participants made reference to greater personal well-being as a result of their experience in the transformational coaching program.

Jack. Jack did not discuss his own personal well-being in great detail during his interview. However, when asked specifically about the feelings that were generated by his experience, he did make reference to experiencing a range of emotions, but ultimately one of happiness:

> It's almost like I went on a journey and at the end of the course I could see how it came together but while I was going through the course, I felt a lot of different emotions: anger, frustration, confusion. And some days I felt happy because I felt like, yes, I got it.

Although Jack experienced positive and negative emotions throughout his experience in transformational coaching, ultimately, once he comprehended the insights and learning's, he felt a positive, happy emotion.

Kate. In contrast to Jack, Kate talked at great length throughout her interview on many different aspects of her improved personal well-being. When talking about her renewed sense of authenticity, Kate described its positive influence on her well-being: "it gives me freedom to really be me without a mask. It gave me acceptance of who I am with my strengths and weaknesses." The feeling of freedom and self-acceptance each contributed to Kate's positive well-being. Kate went on to state,

> For me, it is a rewarding experience that I could be the authentic person that I believed myself to be, and that I now see it in the interactions and reactions from others. So that builds my self-esteem and self-confidence, and has allowed me to progress professionally.

This is a clear positive shift in Kate's well-being. Similar to Jack, Kate also described feeling a range of emotions throughout her experience in transformational coaching, but ultimately attained a feeling of happiness.

> You get emotional because you want to say "that's not for me, that's for everyone else." You get frustrated and you get angry. And there are periods that brought up the emotional sad side because I also recognized that there are relationships that were challenged, family relationships, because of my abruptness, boldness, assertiveness. And as I sat in the workshop and began to recognize those things, I could actually see how they impacted my relationships. So that brought sadness. But once I worked through the process, it was happiness. Because it's the happiness that you can do something about it.

For Kate, even the challenging aspects of her experience resulted in positive emotion, contributing to her overall well-being. Kate also discussed the specific influence the training had on her ability to let go and forgive herself for the pain she carried over the death of her father:

> Losing my dad at an early age of 16, I carried a story for years about it and I held on to the pain because I blamed myself so long. I had seen a social worker and a therapist, and kept a journal. But the training helped me see that I wasn't responsible, but that I held onto those conversations about the loss. It was a part

> of who I was and that after the training I recognized that I could release all of those things and it didn't have to be forefront in my life. I also learned forgiveness, to forgive myself for all those years of standing in losing my dad and being a riot act to family, because I felt my other half was gone.

And when asked what difference this made, Kate elaborated,

> Miles lighter and the ability to live life happier and to truly grieve and heal. I am now able to celebrate the memory of him without the sorrow. Whenever I get in an emotional state, I have the ability to reflect on what is really bringing that emotion, getting me upset. And in the reflection, I am able to identify those things that otherwise just fly by. But I am able to stop and reflect on it, and see the facts versus the interpretation of it. Once I lay out the facts, I get clear from that and operate from the facts versus the interpretation, which generally is what brings forth the emotions. And it feels good. It feels like a freedom that you don't have to carry around baggage.

Kate described the results of being able to forgive herself.

> It has helped me recognize my hang-ups in life and that I am a giving person. I give to the world, and I give to the community, and I give to young people. But what I did not do was give to myself. So, I would get used up for everything else and have no more to give to myself. I was living like 75, 80% of my full potential. So, I've recognized that since taking time for me, since putting me first, from the training, that I am healthier. Healthier physically. I don't get sick as much. I am healthier. The stress doesn't manifest itself to bring down the immune system

> because I can let go of things. … And with me, the impact is less stress, less frustration.

In being able to let go, forgive and better manage challenging emotions, Kate's sense of relief and freedom as well as less stress and frustration support her well-being. Kate mentioned these positive emotions again when responding to what stood out for her in the training.

> It's almost like "what would the world be like if everyone has the opportunity of doing transformation work." And I began to think about our interactions, what would they be like. Would we have less hang-ups, would we have less frustration and anger if we are able to be heard for what we say and not through the filter of interpretation, and always having to correct and correct and correct or having to justify what we say and what we do. It allows a freedom to experience life for what it is in the moment, versus what we think others should be, or how we should be, or how things should be in the future. You just get to enjoy the moment and enjoy life experiences, and you can choose what you want. … I can truly say I am a new me because of it.

Kate's experience of positive emotions such as freedom and happiness, as well as the reduced experience of stress, frustration, and sadness, all illustrate the depth of influence on her personal well-being.

Joy. Joy made one clear reference to a positive change in her personal well-being. When discussing her increased sense of acceptance and ability to let go of things, Joy described how it allowed her to let of unhelpful emotions.

> A lot of times something would happen and I would hold on to it, or I would make it mean something or be upset and its needless suffering. The other person has moved on, but it's almost like that thing called guilt or regret, you know, they've moved on, they aren't carrying it around. So, for me it's allowed me to detach from things and not get stuck for long periods of time, so you know deal with it, address it and keep it moving. You know what, tomorrow's a new day and what happens today is not what happened yesterday. So not holding on to the story, other than getting the facts of what occurred, it means the emotion that's attached to, it's no longer there.

In being able to let go of sadness, guilt, and regret, Joy's well-being was enhanced.

Carol. Carol made a number of references to ways her experience in transformational coaching supported her personal well-being. The first reference she made was during her discussion about having greater ability to focus on what is within her control, and letting go of what is not. Carol explained the importance of this:

> I could feel the results internally, spiritually, and feeling more bold with how I felt. Not in a disrespectful way, just being able to command a better presence for myself. It just made it easier for me to feel strong. … It's just that much easier for me to feel bold and not worry or feel guilty that I made a decision.

Carol's self-confidence improved as a result of her new attitude toward responsibility. She elaborated on how her new attitude, as a result of the transformational coaching experience had affected her:

> Prior to [the training], for like 3 years, I was just feeding into a negative cycle. And it allowed me to step outside of that cycle and separate myself from that

> space and just work with what I had. Which is how I came into the system; with working with what I have. But like with anything, it can wear you down after a time. And it kind of gave me the inspiration to be able to do that.

And when asked about what thoughts stood out for her, Carol further added "I just felt like it was like a halo, a peace, and a serenity." Carol experienced renewed energy toward a positivity as well as a sense of peace and calmness as a result of change in mindset and attitude. Carol also had the most significant response in how her physical well-being was positively influenced, when discussing the importance of her insights around taking greater personal responsibility for herself.

> Before, I used to feel like I would have to overcompensate, like what I did was never enough. But now I don't feel I have to do that. I feel a lot more relieved. I don't feel like my pressure is up like it used to be. I feel so much more relieved. Actually, I will say to you, I was on two pressure pills before I did that workshop, and maybe 6 months after, I came off one of my pressure pills. And I hadn't changed my diet or lost any weight or anything, I hadn't even started to walk. So ever since I've done the workshop, it has allowed me, even though I'm still overweight, to be healthier as far as my pressure is concerned. It made me realize that a lot of times when people have pressure, and in particular me because I've had pressure from very young from taking on so much, that my mental and my emotional and spiritual state was actually a big cause of my pressure. Because once I relieved my mind of that intense pressure of feeling obligated, feeling guilty, trying to do this and trying to do that, and stopping all of that nonsense, it immediately brought my pressure down. It is incredible.

For Carol, not only was her mental well-being positively affected by her experience in transformational coaching, but so was her physical well-being.

Rachel. Rachel made one distinct reference to a change in her personal well-being as a result of her experience in transformational coaching. When asked how the experience affected her, Rachel explained that she used to get weary and annoyed with the adults she worked with much more, but as a result of the change in mindset and attitude that she experienced, she is better able to manage these frustrations.

> I feel less stress and less frustrated. I tend to get very annoyed and frustrated because I have a low tolerance level, not with the children but with the adults. I expect adults to know better. It's allowed me to have more tolerance and patience. And listening to others' perspectives about how they feel because the way I view things is not always how others do, nor should it be. Everyone is entitled to their own feelings and opinions.

Rachel has been able to be more patient with her colleagues, which has resulted in less stress and frustration: a significant factor in personal well-being.

Tina. Tina also made a number of references to how her experience positively influenced her well-being. When discussing the shift in mindset and attitude that resulted from her experience, Tina experienced having less frustration as well as more patience and motivation.

> If you didn't have that training, you would get frustrated: you know, you will have down moments with young people. So, I thought the training was quite good because it prepares you for young people. It made, or prepares you not to be too

> judgmental, to have patience, and that it will be a journey up and down. … When you can step back and reflect, it allows you to go forward with a renewed energy.

Later when asked about any feelings she experienced, she reiterated the positive results: "It was a good feeling. A lot of deep thinking, reflection. I am a spiritual person; for me it touched my core spiritually. It was a happy feeling." Her final reference to how her well-being changed in response to what changes she experienced. "It helps me to be a more positive person. It helps me be a more determined person, more positive." Tina felt a number of positive emotions as a result of her experience in transformational coaching, as well as reduced frustration, all supporting her general well-being.

Jackie. For Jackie, key areas related to well-being included less regret, as well as greater freedom, peace, and purpose. When describing her experience in transformational coaching, Jackie explained,

> It was a mind and life changing experience. It had me look at my life without regret, to see the promise of what was available for me. I now have a sense of freedom and purpose in my life that allows me to experience peace.

When asked about the feelings she experienced during the training, she listed hope, empowerment, healing, forgiveness, and freedom. These positive emotions support Jackie's well-being.

Vickie. Vickie also made reference to her enhanced well-being. She believed that her ability to consider different perspectives has "supported me in being more peaceful." She elaborated on this when asked about what changes she associated with her experience, "definitely those things about being more empathetic and peaceful. And solution-oriented versus focusing so much on the problem. You know, really being

solution focused." Vickie was better able to experience peace and compassion as a result of her experience, and not just to others, also to herself.

> One might say before this I was very, although I'm nonconfrontational, I was still quite combative. Although I held back emotion, I would hold it back for so long and then I would explode. And that wasn't working for me. So, I pretty much used this work to support me in that area. Do I still have my moments when that occurs? Yes, of course I do. I'm human; I'm not always going to be perfect. But this work has also given me a place to stand with regards to being compassionate, on not just others, but myself too.

Vickie has a greater capacity for compassion toward herself and others, supporting her well-being.

Research questions. The data tagged in the theme of personal well-being describes changes that respond to Research Subquestions 1, 2, and 3. Participants described experiences of energy, passion, and motivation, the focus of Research Subquestion 1. Commonly mentioned was either increased positive emotion or decreased negative emotion, such as greater sense of relief, peace, joy, and happiness, or reduced feelings of stress, frustration, and even guilt. This outcome shows changes in emotional experiences and addresses the focus of Research Subquestion 2 on emotional intelligence. Participants' increased well-being also connected to their enhanced ability for acceptance, forgiveness, and ability to let go of unhelpful ways of thinking. These changes in mindset address the shifts of meaning-making associated with Research Subquestion 3. The theme of well-being included findings related to each subquestion of this research study.

Theme 5: Risk taking and Growth

This chapter included data tagged with the codes growth and development as well as self-transformation. Although fewer data emerged in this theme, each participant made at least one reference, thereby warranting it as an independent theme. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to become more open to risk taking as well as pushing themselves beyond their comfort zone to attain personal growth and better results. The following section provides detailed accounts of where participants referred to enhanced risk taking and growth as a result of their experience in the transformational coaching program.

Jack. Jack's reference to challenging himself for the purpose of growth came in response to his renewed "commitment to the commitment," whether those commitments are personal or professional. When describing the impact of owning his commitments and choices, Jack explained,

> Well it's definitely challenged me as a leader to improve my skillset, and what I mean by that is that leadership and learning is a continuous process and you never reach the mountain top where there isn't anything else to learn; but it was a means of helping me to expand and grow in terms of what it means to be an effective leader.

Jack's experience challenged him in such a way that he was able to experience growth.

Kate. Kate also made reference to risk taking and growth during her interview. When discussing the ability to be more authentic and present as a result of transformational coaching, Kate explained:

> The impact for me is growth. That I am able to continue to grow and develop. … I am more open to taking risk. And therefore growth occurs. So, I don't feel as stagnant as I was prior to the training. From an academic perspective, this has opened me up to explore and inquire about what I am reading. And instead of just taking in academic work, I explore and ask questions. The exploration automatically spurs growth because I am going to look for more information to validate what I read, or not. So, it has you continue to progress, to make steps to move forward. Or instead of forward just moving your life.

When asked why this was important, she added "because it turns on lifelong learning and lifelong learning is always the opportunity to produce positive results." For Kate, her experience pushed her to take more risks and develop as a person; a quality she valued.

Joy. Joy made reference to learning, growth, and going outside of her comfort zone when discussing her experience in transformational coaching. When describing the feelings she had experienced, Joy talked about intrigue:

> those feelings of interest, curiosity—like what is this? I was able to apply my psychology background to this, but see how different this work is from that and powerful it is. So, for me I guess it's just that curiosity and intrigue. This is different but I like it. I wanted to learn more.

The training excited her to learn and grow further. In responding to what changes she associated with her experience, she talked about going outside of her comfort zone.

> The training pushed me outside my comfort zone and had me stretch way beyond what I thought I was capable of doing. So, I would say one of the biggest changes for me personally and professionally is being able to step outside of my comfort

> zone and speak in front of people, and now I do that and run workshops and lead groups and speak in front of people. I would have never thought I would do that. I shifted what I thought about me in order to embrace a possibility that I didn't think was possible before.

Joy experienced growth in public speaking as a result of challenging herself. She later referenced her insight around the importance of pushing herself outside of her comfort zone:

> What I learned is when you are doing everything right, you aren't learning or growing, but when you make mistakes and you go out of your comfort zone, you may not get it right the first time, but when you make mistakes, there's nothing wrong with it. There's growth and development in that; it's a learning opportunity. I think society says, well, if you don't get it right, there is something wrong. So, for me, one of my biggest learnings is that it's ok to make mistakes, and to push yourself outside of your comfort zone. It's an opportunity for learning and for development in that. The training taught me its ok to take a risk, and if it doesn't work, try something different. Let's try this approach for Client A, this approach for Client B. It was a huge learning to take risks in how I work with young people, as everyone needs something different.

Joy had strong insight into the importance of challenging herself for her own growth and development, as well as for the students with whom she works.

Carol. Carol did not talk in detail about her own growth experience, but she did make reference to the intention of growth in transformational coaching: "When you got there you were made to understand that we were all there to learn and grow, and

everything was to reflect on yourself." Carol understood that in reflecting on herself, she would experience growth and development.

Rachel. For Rachel, the theme of challenging herself was also significant. When talking about her increased ability to think creatively as a result of her experience, Rachel explained,

> That's another thing I learned — to challenge myself and go outside of my comfort zone and think outside the box. Don't be so rigid and think with tunnel vision. Explore and don't be afraid to do so. You know what I think about a teacher is my own personal feelings, and if I don't get out of that box, then I'm not serving the student.

Rachel realized that challenging herself to think creatively, even if it pushes her out of her comfort zone, was essential in her efforts to serve her students effectively.

Tina. Tina made two references to her experience in transformational coaching that contributed to her growth. The first reference was a brief statement about realizing the importance of reflective thinking as "part of [her] personal growth." Later in the interview, when asked what changes she associated with her experience, she talked about her commitment to her self-vision: "I have a vision board now and I look at it to see where I am and think about what I need to do to get there. It's helped me in my personal growth." Tina made the connection between her insights and how they contributed to her growth as an individual.

Jackie. Jackie made one reference to being more able to challenge herself professionally. In responding to how the experience affected her, Jackie explained that the training had pushed her to "be flexible to explore other roles outside of

administration." This outcome reflects professional growth in being able to expand her role responsibilities.

Vickie. Vickie also made one reference to growth during her interview. When asked what difference it made that she is now more solution-focused, Vickie responded by saying, "it creates an opportunity for one to continue moving forward and for one to grow." Vickie also made the connection between her insights and her ability to grow and develop.

Research questions. Research Subquestions 1, 2, and 3 were addressed in findings associated with the theme of risk taking and growth. Research Subquestion 1 sought to establish motivation toward learning and growth: the essence of findings for this theme. As a result of transformational coaching, participants were more open to risk taking as well as going outside their comfort zone to grow and ultimately realize better student results. This change also reflects an attitude change toward risk taking and growth, addressing Research Subquestion 2, which focuses on changes in beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence. Research Subquestion 3, concerned with changes in ways of thinking, was also addressed in participants' direct descriptions of self-transformation: a process that occurs in one's ways of making meaning. Data tagged in the theme of risk taking and growth provides evidence responding to all three of the research subquestions.

Negative Case Analysis

There were also instances in which data from participant interviews did not fit in to one of the core themes. Three participants made reference to the nature of the training structure and delivery. Carol talked about the structured and professional approach of the program when asked to describe her experience in transformational coaching.

> And what I've found in the past is that a lot of times when you are doing the [professional development], you just doing the [professional development] because you want the hours. But with this, you can't just go there for the hours; you really have to be an active participant. So, you couldn't use your cell phone. And I think a lot of times, adults working in the school system, when we do [professional development], you'll notice a lot of people have their cell phones out. I'm even guilty of doing it at times. And that is a form of disrespect. So, when I did the [professional development], they commanded one's complete attention and respect for what their position was with the group. I totally was blown away by that. And there were some people there that really had a problem with that, and they got kicked out. And um, there were so many things, like you had to line up, and if you were the first person in the room, you just went to the front. And those rules and those structures, I felt, they commanded respect.

When asked what stood out, Carol also added,

> Even from the enrollment process, the level of professionalism was equally shared across the border. People knew their place, um, and we're talking about the persons that worked there. Everyone knew their role and they played their position really well. I've always loved Martha [the Program Lead] so from a personal level and a professional level, I admire her, respect her and love her. And meeting Tom [the head coach] the first time, you know when he first started talking of the business of the workshop, and he commanded the respect of all of us, and when he was up the front sharing his message and commanded that respect, and that's why people were there.

Rachel also discussed the professionalism she encountered in her experience. When asked what stood out, Rachel mentioned a theme similar to one Carol raised about the professional nature of the coaching team and how this enhanced her experience of transformational coaching:

> I would say personally, the team itself and how they interacted and worked with one another. They were in-sync and it made you feel comfortable. I've been in other programs or establishments where you could tell people weren't on the same page. This was well organized. You can have program that tells you A, B, C, & D but when you see it in action, then you can say, "ok there is some substance to this." Their teamwork is really, really good. And every time I went to the workshop, it was always different but it was all connected. And the wrap up—it all comes together. So, I was able to be there and be present, and I never got lost and I understood the concepts and was able to use the concepts.

She reiterated this level of professionalism when asked what insights she had about her experience: "It's well planned and organized. And if they had any issues, you wouldn't know it. I am very observant and I've seen things that are not organized. And this program is organized."

One individual seemed to have a significant influence on Joy. When asked what stood out for her, she described one of the coaches:

> Kiana (one of my coaches) for me was a big support in my development. She coached me professionally but also personally; she was a huge part in coaching me in not just applying these principles to my work environment but if you're not living it for yourself and practicing it for yourself, then it makes it more difficult

> to actually give back to somebody else. So, once you actually internalize some of these things, and do it for yourself, I've found it's made it a lot easier to work with my students. Kiana was very instrumental in me learning professionally but also personally.

These responses all refer to the nature of the training delivery and those delivering it; an aspect not captured by previous themes. These outliers are unconnected to the study's research questions

Another area not captured in the research findings but mentioned by two participants was the need for participants to be open to have their ways of thinking challenged for the experience to create positive changes. When asked what thoughts stood out, Tina responded by saying,

> It was very profound. I have been exposed to philosophy, so for me I was very receptive to that kind of thing. Deep thinking, thinking outside of yourself: those are things that I like. Some people may not quite like that so much, especially in terms of where they are or their religion. But I thought it was quite good.

She later added, "I believe in the methodology. But it's not for everyone; not all people will be open to it." Carol also mentioned a similar notion when asked for any final insights on her experience:

> I was open to it before I went there and I feel that's why I had such an amazing experience. And so, I feel if people are in that space, it's easier to for them to get that message. I do know there were other people that did not get that message because they were not open to it. They were just there for PD (professional development hours). So, it really depends on the person. I have shared my

> experience and encouraged others to go and get it, but not everyone is on a spiritual journey and I felt it was a very spiritual experience for me. And as much as we want the world to be a better place, not everyone is spiritual or seeking a spiritual journey and some people don't want to discuss anything to do with themselves.

The general themes coming out of these participant responses addressed how and why transformational coaching works—its coaches, its structure, its professionalism, and participants being open to the process. These were not themes mentioned across all participants, nor did this data link to the research questions for this study, but were data worth capturing.

The last outlier was mentioned by Tina. She was referencing a personal story shared by one of the coaches about placing expectations and judgments on others.

> I remember there being a situation mentioned about a gang member who walked away from that lifestyle. But someone had killed someone close to that person and I remember the gang member called [our coach] and asked her "what do I do, I want to kill this person but I have chosen the way of nonviolence" and I don't remember what [our coach] said she said, but that person didn't go and kill the other person. And I was teaching my students about nonviolence, and ways of being nonviolent, and I think that gang member, and whatever he did—it spoke volumes, because you would think that person would have gone and killed that person. So, I remember bringing that up with my students and I thought it was quite powerful.

Although this was not her personal experience of growth, as the other examples in the research findings have been, it does relate to the theme of perspective taking, and not judging or assuming things about others, but remaining open. Although these findings did not fit with the main research themes or research questions, they supported the overall findings.

Evidence of Quality

All researchers need to ensure the quality of research to make a positive contribution to their field and community. To ensure the quality and trustworthiness of a qualitative research study, a qualitative researcher must demonstrate credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability (Creswell, 1994). The process for establishing credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability will be described here.

Process for Credibility

Credibility requires the researcher to ensure that findings make sense (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The primary methods used in this research for achieving credibility were data triangulation across a sufficient number of research participants (referential adequacy), providing rich description through direct quotations that support the themes identified and highlight meaning-making and emotions of experiences, as well as researcher self-reflection.

Process for Confirmability

Confirmability requires the researcher to demonstrate reasonable neutrality in their role and status as the researcher. In the process of conducting interviews, I drew heavily on my skills as a certified mediator and coach to be able to bracket my thoughts

and judgments to remain present with participants. I also relied on direct quotations to justify the themes I identified, limiting the ability of my interpretations of what was said to influence the findings.

Process for Dependability

Dependability of the research requires that the researcher demonstrate stability and consistency in the research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To ensure stability and consistency, I followed an interview protocol where the only variation from the prescribed questions was open-ended follow-up probes that encouraged participants to provide a more comprehensive response to something already stated. I also recorded and transcribed all interviews and verified the transcripts through a second review of the transcript relative to the recording, as well as through member checking with participants.

Process for Transferability

Transferability requires a researcher to demonstrate the broader application of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This research focused on the experiences of public school teachers, as a subset of public administrators and civil servants who work with youth. Public school teachers are not the only public sector employees working with youth, and this study's research findings are relevant for all government-employed human service professionals. The performance of government-employed human service professionals influences clients. Supporting their ability to thrive is important because of the positive results it can have on client relationships and results. The broader need to create thriving for not only public sector employees working with youth, but all government-employed human service professionals establishes transferability for this

research. This will be described in more detail in the Social Change Implications and Recommendations sections included in Chapter 5.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences that government-employed teachers had in transformational coaching program. This chapter provided a detailed description of my research findings, as well as an overview of the processes used to recruit and select participants, the procedures for collecting, analyzing, and verifying the data, and ensuring its quality. Findings were presented aligned with five identified themes and included a description of which research questions the tagged data provided evidence for. Subquestion 1 sought to identify changes in participants' experience of vitality, energy, and motivation toward learning and growth, addressed in the fourth theme of well-being and the fifth theme of risk taking and growth. Subquestion 2 sought to distinguish changes in participants' beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence, addressed in the second theme of responsibility and commitment, the third theme of better relationships and results, and the forth theme of well-being. Subquestion 3 sought to identify changes in meaning-making and ways of thinking, addressed in the first theme of perspective taking, the fourth theme of well-being, and the fifth theme of risk taking and growth. Chapter 5 will provide my interpretation of the research findings and will also present the study's implications for social change, limitations, and recommendations for future research and practice, based on the findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers, as a subset of youth-serving professionals, employed by the Bermuda Government with transformational coaching. Previous studies in human services assessed stress and burnout interventions but lacked research beyond this focus to a strengths-based approach of how to maximize performance and support professional thriving (Beltman et al., 2011; Liu & Berg-Klug, 2013; Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). Performance coaching looks at performance maximization; however, gaps persist in knowledge in the coaching literature. Coaching studies have been criticized for their lack of theoretical and conceptual development, construct fidelity, and process clarity (Cox et al., 2014; Egan & Hamlin, 2014; Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Maltibia et al., 2014; Theeboom et al., 2014). This lack includes gaps in research about different types of coaching to understand the types of coaching interventions that work. One such gap is in the area of transformational coaching, one of the most developmentally oriented coaching techniques, and the focus of this study.

This qualitative research study sought to fill this gap by exploring the experiences that youth-serving professionals, employed by the Bermuda Government, have in transformational coaching. Key findings in this section demonstrate that participants' experiences in transformational coaching positively influenced their ability to thrive at work by increasing their personal domain resources and creating transformative learning. This research will help public administration managers and leaders better understand the value of transformational coaching as an effective professional development and

sustainable performance-maximization strategy for government-employed professionals working with youth.

To guide the exploration, I built on one broad research question: What are the experiences of youth-serving professionals working for the Bermuda Government using transformational coaching? To support the main research question, I used three subquestions:

a. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' experiences of feeling vitality, energy and motivation toward professional growth and success?
b. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence?
c. What influence does transformational coaching have on teachers' meaning-making or ways of thinking?

Subquestion 1 focused on revealing any changes in the critical components of thriving. Subquestion 2 and subquestion 3 explored any influences on the personal domain and transformative learning respectively. To answer these questions, I used a transcendental phenomenological research design that included semistructured, in-depth face-to-face interviews with eight public-school teachers. Using this approach allowed an account of what shifts and insights occurred for individuals, including any instances of growth in the personal domain or transformative learning that would support an individual's ability to thrive in the workplace. The desire to understand experiences and the meaning-making that occurred for individuals during transformational coaching was suited to qualitative methods that seek to reveal the richness of subjective experiences (Moustakas, 1994) and

establish the shared essence of experiences (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, in-depth interviews are necessary to make sense of people's experiences (Patton, 2002, p. 104). I solicited volunteers for this study with the assistance of a community partner, the Bermuda Government's youth development department.

After identifying and selecting participants, I conducted Skype interviews with eight participants. These were recorded and transcribed to ensure research confirmability and dependability. To analyze the data, I used deductive and inductive coding, with greater emphasis on an inductive approach. Although I used both approaches, because phenomenology employs epoche, I emphasized inductive logic as the analysis progressed. Five themes emerged from the data: perspective taking, responsibility and commitment, better relationships and results, personal well-being, and risk taking and growth.

In this chapter, I review the conceptual framework and interpret the research findings based on the identified themes in relationship to the initial conceptual framework and the literature on professional thriving, the personal domain, and transformative learning. These findings reveal that participants had common experiences of growth in the personal domain, transformative learning, and increased capacity for professional thriving. Once I interpret these findings according to each theme's relationship to the conceptual framework, I provide a summary of the conclusions for each of the three research subquestions. I then discuss the positive social change implications, the study limitations, and my final recommendations, before concluding the study.

Conceptual Framework and Research Subquestions Revisited

This chapter provides a review of the conceptual framework and the associated research subquestions used in the interpretation and conclusion of this study's findings. The conceptual framework underpinning this research includes areas of professional thriving, the personal domain and emotional intelligence, as well as transformative learning. I designed the research subquestions so that each subquestion focuses on one of these areas. The following section briefly reviews each of these concepts and the research subquestions they are related to.

Professional Thriving

Professional thriving indicates that professionals sustain themselves and flourish in their careers; feel a sense of vitality at work; and are motivated toward growth, progress, and success in the workplace (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). Thriving has two key aspects: vitality and growth through learning (Porath et al., 2012). When individuals experience vitality, they bring a sense of passion and energy to their work, are connected to the mission and purpose of their organization, and have a deep level of role engagement that can motivate others (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Thriving individuals commit to their personal development and proactively seek and establish opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills to develop, excel at work, and maximize impact (Spreitzer et al., 2012). The concept of thriving at work is central to this research, because it has implications for the ability of human service professionals to provide the best possible service to youth, thereby maximizing their results sustainably with time. I designed Research Subquestion 1 to elicit information regarding changes in the experiences of

thriving, evidenced by participants' changes in energy, vitality, and motivation toward learning, growth and success at work.

The Personal Domain and Emotional Intelligence

One key aspect that determines the ability of an individual to experience professional thriving is the individual's personal resources, described as their personal domain. Thriving in human services connects to an individuals' personal domain, including their experiences, beliefs, values, and socioemotional skills (Prosser et al., 2013; Wendt et al., 2011). The experience of energy, commitment, motivation, and openness to learning that signifies thriving are attitudes and mindsets, demonstrating the centrality of the personal domain for thriving. The importance of the personal domain is also supported by the plethora of research on the importance of emotional intelligence in influencing performance. Growth in the personal domain and of one's level of emotional intelligence is a critical enabler of thriving. I designed Research Subquestion 2 to elicit information regarding participants' growth in their personal domain, evidenced by changes in their beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is a process of effecting change in a person's way of thinking and making meaning. Transformative learning requires a shift toward a more inclusive, reflective, and integrative way of making meaning that considers alternative possibilities and outlooks (Mezirow, 1997). Changes in meaning-making schemes, beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions provide evidence of transformative learning and result in growth in the personal domain. The ability for transformative learning to enhance an individual's personal resources causes it to be an important factor in

enhancing the individual's ability to thrive. Transformative learning is the objective of transformational coaching. I designed Research Subquestion 3 to identify instances of transformative learning by eliciting data indicating changes in participant meaning-making and ways of thinking.

Summary and Transition

Based on the conceptual framework and related evidence, it is logical that experiencing growth in the personal domain and transformative learning enhances the ability to thrive at work. In the following section, I interpret each theme in relationship to thriving, growth in the personal domain, and transformative learning. I then provide a summary of findings for each research subquestion, indicating the positive potential of transformational coaching to support thriving. Findings extend the knowledge base of methods that could be effective in supporting an individual's capacity to thrive at work.

Interpretation of Findings by Theme

In this section, I interpret the findings of the five key research themes, as well as the discrepant data tagged in the outlier category. This section includes an overview of participant remarks relevant to each theme and includes a discussion of how the theme links to thriving, growth in the personal domain, and transformative learning. This section also includes evidence to support these links in the coaching literature.

Theme 1: Perspective taking

Overview of participant remarks. The first theme of perspective taking constituted 19% of the tagged data. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to be better able to consider different perspectives as a result of their experience in transformational coaching. Participants often described changes in how they made

meaning in situations as well as feeling better able to differentiate fact from interpretation. Jack referred to how the training helped him consider the perspective of his students and gave him a new view on how to progress in his career. He believed the training allowed him to "see things differently." Kate talked deeply about being more self-reflective as a result of her experience and made many references to perspective taking and her increased ability to distinguish her view as only a personal interpretation. Joy also described a change in her meaning-making and ability to think differently in situations and believed she had greater perspective taking abilities.

Carol believed she considers limitations differently and more readily draws on her students' perspectives to overcome challenges. She has a more positive mindset toward limitations. Rachel described being much more open minded and considerate of the perspectives of her students as a result of the training. She is better able to have a more understanding perspective regarding her students' situations. Tina described many instances of self-reflection and resulting shifts in thinking. She explained that she now considers different views and understands the importance of self-reflection to see different possibilities and perspectives.

Jackie described her most significant insight from the training as the differentiation between fact and interpretation. She described her ability "to now hear a communication and focus on the facts and not get drawn into the story or opinion of another" as powerful. Vickie also talked of distinguishing facts from interpretation and the ability to see different perspectives and possibilities as a result of being more objective in situations. Participants commonly described the ability to consider different perspectives and the benefits that ability brings.

Participants described being better able to critically self-reflect, withhold judgment, and take occurrences less personally. Jack commented that the training helped him realize the importance of critical self-reflection, challenging his ways of thinking about situations. For Kate, the ability to be nonjudgmental was a strong theme, and she made many references to withholding judgment and having a more open attitude. Joy discussed her greater ability for nonjudgment, which allowed her to operate from a "clean slate."

Rachel made many references to now being more open-minded and being able to take things less personally when addressing students. She believed her change in perspective has allowed her to see things more objectively. Tina explained that transformational coaching has helped her be less judgmental of others and to reflect on judgments in others and put them aside. Vickie also described her greater awareness of not taking things personally and remaining open to different views. A common theme emerged of critical self-reflection and awareness, less judgment, and greater objectivity in participants' perspectives.

Thriving. The enhanced perspective taking experienced by participants directly links to thriving. In their theoretical argument about the significance of professional thriving, Prosser et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of self-reflection and perspective taking in differentiating those who thrive from those who do not. The authors explained the importance of stepping back from an internal perspective, where every challenge is seen to directly relate to oneself, one's actions, or one's identity, and instead taking a view that all people are part of a broad and complex interplay of factors in which one is rarely the central player. Such views hold less potential for individuals to take

things personally (Prosser et al., 2013, p. 324), as described by participants. This argument was supported by early research by Bibou-nakou (1999, as cited in Chang, 2009), who found that teachers who did not take students' disruptive behaviors personally reported higher personal accomplishment and fewer feelings of stress and burnout. Although reduced stress and less burnout do not necessarily mean an individual is thriving, they are prerequisites for thriving. An individual cannot thrive and feel energetic and motivated if they are feeling emotionally exhausted and depleted.

Growth in the personal domain. The increase in perspective taking described by participants reflects growth in the personal domain. Greater self-reflection was a key aspect to their perspective taking, reflected in the 10 references to self-reflection across the data. The Augusto-Landa et al. (2012) study on the relationship between emotional intelligence, affect balance, and burnout provided support for the importance of self-reflection. The authors found that self-reflection played a critical role in helping people manage stress and burnout by allowing them to make connections among their emotions, mindsets, and behaviors. In making these connections, individuals enhance their capacity for self-awareness, a key component of emotional intelligence. Individuals also referred to improved attitudes toward challenges and setbacks, demonstrating greater resilience and reflecting growth in their psychological capital. Psychological capital is a critical personal factor to support the purposeful and agentic work behaviors of task focus, heedful relating, and exploration that drive thriving (Paterson, 2014). Its increase shows further growth in the personal domain.

Another theme related to perspective taking mentioned by participants was the ability to be less judgmental toward others and take the actions of others less personally.

This was mentioned specifically seven times in the data. In being able to withhold judgment and remain objective, individuals were able to relate with greater compassion to others, including students. Empathy is a key aspect of emotional intelligence and therefore this outcome reflects a greater level of emotionally intelligent behavior and thus growth in the personal domain. The greater ability of participants to self-reflect, to withhold judgment, and to relate more objectively with others indicates growth in the personal domain, which can support thriving.

Transformative learning. Participants commonly indicated fundamental changes in their ways of seeing things as a result of self-reflection and perspective taking. Questioning and shifting thinking was the second most common code across participant interviews, capturing 10% of all tagged data. Participants directly identified being able to see and think about things differently. This transformation of meaning-making resulted in growth away from a more limited and restricted mindset and allowed participants to see a greater range of interpretations, options, and possibilities. The change in the way participants understood and interpreted circumstances fundamentally shifted as a result of their increased ability to self-reflect and consider the perspectives of others, indicating experiences of transformative learning that support thriving.

Links to coaching literature. The ability for coaching to facilitate perspective taking is supported in the literature. In the Blackman et al. (2014) survey of coaching clients, respondents stated their experience in coaching helped them identify and challenge things they usually took for granted and to look at things from a different perspective. In the Gazelle et al. (2015) study on coaching and physician burnout, the authors argued that coaching was effective at reducing burnout because of its focus on

having individuals examine and question fixed patterns of thinking and automatic assumptions, thereby supporting perspective shifts toward new ways of thinking. Burnell (2013) also highlighted the critical role of self-reflection in creating transformative learning and supported the concept that coaching facilitates reflection. Participants in the present study's coaching intervention described these same instances of self-reflection and perspective taking, a key element in the ability to thrive professionally.

Theme 2: Responsibility and Commitment

Overview of participant remarks. The theme of responsibility and commitment constituted 25% of the tagged data. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to be better able to take full responsibility for their choices, actions, and mistakes and remain committed to their self-vision, to making a difference, and to their values. Participants often described greater accountability for actions and choices and intentional avoidance of making excuses or using justifications to defend decisions.

Tina and Kate specifically mentioned having an enhanced sense of responsibility, as well as a better ability to handle mistakes without blaming others or using justifications. For Tina, greater responsibility in addressing mistakes was a key area of growth and Kate talked extensively about her enhanced ability to take responsibility for mistakes as a result of the tools she gained through transformational coaching. Jackie also discussed responsibility in her ability to handle mistakes. When asked how her experience affected her, she responded saying, "knowing that I made a mistake and handled it had me move forward powerfully." Although Jackie did not go into the same depth as other participants in her discussion of responsibility, she had an improved ability to manage her errors with greater intentionality and accountability. Vickie discussed her

sense of responsibility slightly differently, as being more aware of and responsible for her day-to-day actions and the influence they have.

For Carol, focusing on what is within her control and not shifting blame were key lessons from the training. She explained her realization of the importance of taking responsibility for decisions as well as her reactions to things. The phrase "I am cause" stood out for Carol. Jack also mentioned this phrase and his insights around the importance of remaining accountable, no matter what. He discussed the notion of owning his actions and decisions in his personal and professional life. Joy described a significant insight in personal responsibility: "I realized that people are who people are and people do what people do and you can't control that, but you can control how you react to them and you can control your opinion and your thoughts about it." A clear theme emerged of owning and being responsible for one's decisions, reactions, and mistakes.

Participants also mentioned an enhanced commitment to either their self-vision, values–action alignment, or their desire to make a difference in the lives of young people**.** Tina, when asked what changes she associates with her experience, discussed being more committed to her goals and self-vision. She explained that she now uses a vision board to help guide and motivate her. For Kate, transformational coaching is helping her be more "authentic" by aligning her beliefs and values to her actions. Carol's enhanced sense of responsibility has deepened her commitment to influencing youth, and transformational coaching has improved her motivation and inspiration toward serving her students. Jack similarly discussed a more intense commitment to his students and his commitments in general. He made numerous references to "committing to the commitment," and described this insight as his key lesson from the training. Joy described her dedication to

making a difference in the lives of young people, reinforced as a result of the training. Jackie also described feeling a greater sense of purpose in her work as a result of her experience in transformational coaching. Participants did not only feel more accountable for their choices as a result of their training, but also became more deeply committed to their vision, goals, and desire to make a difference through their professional purpose of working with youth.

Thriving. The connection between thriving and an individual's level of commitment and personal responsibility was supported in the literature. In research by Nowell and Boyd (2014) and Boyd (2015) on sense of community responsibility, the authors defined sense of community responsibility as "feelings of personal responsibility for the individual and collective wellbeing of a community of people not directly rooted in an expectation of personal gain" (Nowell & Boyd, 2014, p. 231). When individuals experience feelings of responsibility and commitment to the community, those feelings drive participation and engagement, thereby directly contributing to thriving (Boyd, 2015). Participants described this type of commitment to the community 13 times in the data, discussing their enhanced commitment to influencing the youth they serve.

Participants discussed strengthened commitment to the purpose of their profession. This importance of meaningful work has been linked to professional thriving by some authors. In the Spreitzer et al. (2005) original model of thriving, positive meaning was a critical personal resource that enabled agentic work behaviors that were antecedent to thriving. The authors argued that individuals who experience positive meaning at work are more likely to engage in task-focus, heedful relating, and exploration. When individuals see their work and work-related tasks as meaningful, they

are more likely to focus on them and keep them prioritized when setbacks occur. When individuals experience positive meaning at work, they are also more likely to address problems more creatively, stimulating exploration. Where meaning is created in relationship with others, people experience an interdependence, resulting in heedful relating (Spreitzer et al., 2005). These agentic behaviors contribute to the vitality and learning that is central to thriving. Niessen, Sonntag, and Sach's (2012) diary study of thriving at work provided evidence of this link. The authors showed that when employees experience positive meaning at work, they feel more vital and have a higher sense of learning. Prosser et al. (2013) suggested that one key differentiator between individuals who thrive at work and those who do not is a connection to purpose at work. In the Wendt et al. (2011) study on the phenomenon of thriving in social-care fields, one major theme underpinning those employees who experienced thriving was believing in the importance of making a difference. In Spreitzer et al. (2012), the authors sampled a group of young professionals and found that when an individual has a stronger personal mission and purpose about their work, they are more resilient when facing difficulties. The authors concluded that finding ways to make work more meaningful is a key driver of professional thriving. Increased sense of personal responsibility and commitment to working with purpose contribute to a person's ability to thrive at work.

Growth in the personal domain. An enhanced sense of personal responsibility and commitment also shows growth in the personal domain. Responsibility and commitment are values that drive behavior and fall within the personal domain. Increased sense of personal responsibility was the third most common code described by participants, with 21 references made to greater accountability for choices, actions, and

mistakes. Cooper (2012) provided support for the role of personal responsibility in influencing the personal domain in a discussion of behavior-change policy tools. Cooper distinguished between internal and external controls. External controls focus on rational-choice decision making by implementing limits, requirements, boundaries, and standards; in contrast, internal controls seek to cultivate and strengthen professional values, beliefs, and standards to achieve desired behavioral change. Cooper argued that internal controls play a key role in influencing behavior because internal attitudes, values, and beliefs influence behavior. Ryan and Deci (2000) similarly highlighted the role of internal control in their differentiation of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They distinguished internal, intrinsic forms of motivation (based on one's values, conscience, sense of personal importance, and desire for congruence) with external, extrinsic motivation (a more ego-driven form of self-control rooted in rewards, punishments, and compliance). The authors provided a range of support from past studies to show that people whose motivation is more internally driven through values such as personal responsibility have greater interest, excitement, confidence, persistence, creativity, vitality, self-esteem, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000), all aspects of the personal domain. An enhanced sense of personal responsibility reflects growth in the personal domain that can support thriving.

The increased commitment described by participants is also a form of internal control and indicates further growth in the personal domain. Participants made 19 references to being more committed to their self-vision and values, and 13 references to being more committed to having an impact. Being purpose-, vision- and values-driven are forms of internal motivation that reside in the personal domain. Greater commitment to

professional purpose, self-vision, and values also indicates emotionally intelligent behavior (Goleman, 1995). As previously mentioned, commitment also reflects positive meaning; a key personal resource defined in the Spreitzer et al. (2005) original model of workplace thriving. These are all personal-domain attributes that redouble when one bolsters their internal controls, such as strong commitment and responsibility.

Transformative learning. The increase in commitment and responsibility described by participants also connected to experiences of transformative learning. Participants mentioned shifting away from the use of justifications, excuses, and laying blame when handling mistakes or setbacks 14 times across the data. Respondents made six additional references to not allowing the past to be a barrier and focusing on what is within their personal control. These shifts demonstrate a change in how one makes meaning when things do not go as intended or planned, or when circumstances occur that are out of a person's control. This shift in understanding reflects transformative learning that resulted in different ways of being for participants, allowing greater ownership of actions, more powerful handling of mistakes, and the ability to let go of things they could not personally control. These shifts in meaning enabled greater commitment and responsibility for participants, indicating how transformative learning facilitated growth that supports thriving.

Links to coaching literature. Past coaching literature showed that enhanced personal responsibility and commitment to one's self-vision, goals, and professional purpose is an established outcome in coaching. In the Maltibia et al. (2014) literature review of the effectiveness of coaching, the authors' listed finding meaning in work as a common intended outcome of coaching interventions. In the Backman et al. (2014)

survey of coaching clients, participants cited the ability to develop action plans and change habits to meet goals as one of the benefits of coaching. In the Bartlett et al. (2014) literature review of coaching interventions, the authors found that enhancing clients' self-vision was a commonly cited outcome. Similarly, the Theeboom et al. (2014) meta-analysis of well-validated studies on coaching effectiveness found that coaching had a positive significant impact on goal-directed self-regulation (p. 12). Grover and Furnham's (2016) meta-analysis also showed goal attainment was one of the most well-validated coaching outcomes across the past 10 years of coaching studies. In one study of coaching and physician burnout, the authors concluded that coaching was effective at addressing burnout in part because of its focus on values and accomplishments, with focus on clarifying and aligning values to one's goals and purpose (Gazelle et al., 2015). Coaching has a strong history of influencing aspects of personal commitment and responsibility, both of which clearly boost workplace thriving. Participants in this study commonly described deeper levels of responsibility and commitment, supporting their ability to thrive.

Theme 3: Better Relationships and Results

Overview of participant remarks. The theme of better relationships and results constituted 23% of tagged data. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to believe they had better relationships, relationship skills, and student results because of their experience in transformational coaching. These improved relationships frequently connected to enhanced communication skills, patience, and compassion.

Jack talked about putting greater emphasis on the socioemotional side of his teaching and having greater awareness of treating students equally. Jack believed he has a

better ability to manage classroom disruption and be understanding toward student misbehavior. He also feels his greater focus on the socioemotional side of teaching has resulted in enhanced classroom relationships and culture.

Kate, when asked to describe her experience in transformational coaching, discussed her ability to be more present with her students. She believed that in being able to put aside her judgments, her students feel more genuinely heard, which has improved the results of her interactions with them. Kate also believed that her increased self-awareness has resulted in better communication and leadership abilities. On some occasions, she stressed improvement in her listening skills and her ability to remain present in her interactions with young people. Kate also commented that her increased ability to self-manage through difficult emotions had helped her in interactions with others. She mentioned improvements in personal and professional relationships as a result of the awareness and self-management she gained in the training, which she also believed has improved student results.

Joy similarly expressed being able to develop better relationships and achieve better student results because of her experience in transformational coaching. She described being more able to be open, receptive, and compassionate toward people as a result of the training. For Rachel, a key insight was how she is better able to think of different strategies as a result of her shift toward a more open and less judgmental perspective. She feels her experience in transformational coaching has allowed her to be more patient with her students and explore more effective strategies in addressing situations that arise.

Rachel also mentioned being more present with her son and listening more authentically and patiently to her students as a result of the training. Tina believed the training changed how she appears in the classroom, which she feels has strengthened her classroom presence and student relationships. Jackie also referred to improved personal and workplace relationships as a result of her experience in transformational coaching. She believed her people-skills and ability to work with all types of individuals has improved. Jackie concluded the interview by stating that her improved communication has resulted in new, reestablished, or strengthened relationships.

For Vickie, one of the results she experienced was a greater sense of empathy. She believed she is now more available and open to young people. When asked to elaborate on what insights from the training led to this improvement, Vickie explained the importance of listening, presence, and nonjudgment in her approach to students, which she believes has strengthened her relationships with them. Participants all commented on improved relationship skills, relationships, and results.

Thriving. Improved relationships and relationship skills, as well as perceived improvement in results, contributes to thriving in a variety of ways and was the most commonly referenced code throughout all five of the data themes: participants made 31 references about their stronger self-belief regarding relationship skills, service delivery, and results. This outcome indicates an increase in their self-efficacy—their belief in their ability to be successful. Ample evidence supports the links between self-efficacy and thriving. Bandura's (1977) original theory of self-efficacy posited that people derive encouragement from beliefs in their abilities, reflecting the energy and vitality that accompanies self-belief. The experience of energy and vitality are critical to thriving.

Additional empirical research, with constructs such as psychological capital and core self-evaluation, both of which include self-efficacy, validated the link to thriving. Psychological capital is the positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success, based on one's motivation, effort, and persistence, and empirically links to an increase in the agentic work behaviors task focus, exploration, and heedful relating that lead to thriving (Paterson, Luthans, & Jeung, 2014).

In the Porath et al. (2012) construct of thriving, the authors also linked thriving to an individual's core self-evaluation, a combination of their self-esteem, locus of control, emotional stability, and self-efficacy. The authors concluded that this link exists because individuals with a more positive core self-evaluation are more likely to be confident in their ability to be successful and thus more likely to engage in activities that provide them with energy and vitality. In the Wendt et al. (2011) study on the phenomenon of thriving in social-care fields, one major theme underpinning those employees who experienced thriving was self-confidence and self-belief in their ability to do their job and make a difference. When an individual believes in themselves and their professional abilities, they gain energy and motivation, core elements of thriving.

Additionally, research on burnout adds further support to the link between thriving and self-efficacy. In a meta-analysis on teacher self-efficacy and burnout, teachers who had stronger beliefs in their ability to successfully teach the most difficult and challenging students were less likely to experience feelings of emotional exhaustion and burnout (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). Although the absence of emotional exhaustion does not indicate thriving, it is a necessary prerequisite for thriving. Individuals who are emotionally exhausted cannot experience the vitality and energy that

is characteristic of thriving. People's beliefs in their ability to influence students contribute to their ability to experience vitality, energy, and motivation at work, and therefore is a critical contributor to the experience of thriving.

Positive relationships, achieved with effective relationship and communication skills, are crucial to the experience of professional thriving. In the original model on thriving, Spreitzer et al. (2005) averred relational resources were one of the four key personal attributes considered critical for an individual to experience thriving. Additionally, heedful relating, one of the three agentic work behaviors critical to thriving, builds on relationship skills. Heedful relating is individuals' ability to fit in with and work well with others on a work team. Spreitzer et al. (2005) explained that when individuals work well with others, they actively provide support and help others, which results in the experience of positive energy. When individuals can work well in teams and collaborate, they are also more likely to learn from each other. The joint experience of energy and learning are the hallmark traits of thriving. The authors also believed that relational resources promote exploration, the second of the three agentic work behaviors that mediate relationships between personal and organizational resources and thriving. Spreitzer et al. (2005) suggested that people who experience a high degree of connectivity with others create expansive emotional spaces that open possibilities for exploration, creativity, and experimentation. This point was clear in Rachel's description of being better able to see different and more creative strategies for students as a result of her improved perspective and relationship skills.

Empirical evidence supported the Spreitzer et al. (2005) theoretical model of thriving and the importance of relational resources. In a sample of university staff and

nonprofit managers, Spreitzer et al. (2012) showed that collaboration skills were among the strongest predictors of thriving, including the ability to communicate and solve problems effectively. Strong communication skills and relationships support the ability to thrive. An individual with better relationship skills is better able to relate heedfully, which contributes to experiences of vitality and learning and therefore facilitates thriving.

Growth in the personal domain. Increased self-efficacy and relationship skills also indicate growth in the personal domain. Increased ability to communicate, demonstrate empathy, and listen with presence and authenticity reflect an increased level of emotional intelligence. Being able to authentically engage with and genuinely listen to others shows strong emotional engagement with others, a component of emotionally intelligent behavior (Goleman, 2015, 1995). Furthermore, participants made four references to increased empathy and compassion, another key component of emotional intelligence. Growth in the personal domain was also evident in participants' increased levels of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is part of an individual's psychological capital, one of the critical personal resources that support thriving (Paterson, 2014). In addition to direct links between relationship skills and self-efficacy with thriving, their strengthening also indicates growth in the personal domain, further demonstrating their importance in facilitating thriving.

Transformative learning. Participants' experiences of greater self-belief in their abilities, as well as improved relationship skills and results, also demonstrated instances of transformative learning. Improved communication and relationship skills, as well as increased self-belief and self-confidence, enabled participants to shift their understanding and interpretations of relationships, enabling them to see different strategies and

opportunities for how they work with and relate to others. Participants mentioned transformative learning 15 times, demonstrating that shifts in thinking widened their ability to consider different options. Participants described being able to relate to others with greater empathy, compassion, and patience because of their ability to interpret situations with less judgment. These shifts indicated transformative learning and further supported participants' improved relational resources to facilitate thriving by making meaning in supportive ways.

Links to coaching literature. The ability for coaching to increase an individual's self-belief and lead to better relationship skills was evidenced in the literature on coaching. In the most recent meta-analysis of coaching literature identified here, improved self-efficacy was the most strongly supported outcome across studies from the past 10 years (Grover & Furnham, 2016). In the Blackman et al. (2014) survey on coaching effectiveness, the authors found that one benefit commonly cited by coaching clients was feeling more confident. In Grover and Furnham's (2016) meta-analysis, few studies measured communication or relationship skills; however, the authors did note one 2013 study by O'Connor and Cavanagh that showed coaching's ability to improve quality of communication. Participants in the present study commonly described better relationship and communication skills, enhanced relationships, and improved student results, indicating heightened self-efficacy. Each of these factors supported their ability to thrive.

Theme 4: Personal Well-being

Overview of participant remarks. The theme of personal well-being constituted 21% of tagged data. The essence of this theme was that individuals tended to experience

greater well-being through an increased experience of feeling positive emotions and better emotion management as well as fewer experiences of feeling negative emotions. Jack, when asked specifically about the feelings generated during participation in transformational coaching, described experiencing a range of emotions, but ultimately one of happiness. Kate, when talking about her renewed sense of authenticity, described a sense of freedom to be herself as well as greater confidence. For Kate, the program enabled her to be more authentic, which felt rewarding. Similar to Jack, Kate also described feeling a range of emotions throughout her experience in transformational coaching but said it ultimately resulted in a feeling of happiness. Kate also discussed the specific influence the training had on her ability to let go and forgive herself for the pain she carried over the death of her father. When asked what difference this made, Kate elaborated that in being able to let go, forgive, and better manage challenging emotions, she experienced a sense of relief along with lower stress and frustration.

Joy, when discussing her increased sense of acceptance and ability to let go of things, described being better able to let go of difficult emotions. In being able to let go of sadness, guilt, and regret, Joy's well-being improved. Carol experienced greater positivity as well as an increased sense of peace and calmness as a result of her change in mindset and attitude during coaching. Carol's self-confidence improved as a result of her new attitude toward responsibility, and she described feeling a renewed sense of energy. Carol also believed that her improved well-being changed her physical health so much that she no longer needed her blood-pressure medication. Rachel explained that in the past she would easily get weary and annoyed with adult colleagues but now is better at managing her frustrations. Her newfound patience has resulted in feeling less stress. Tina,

when discussing the shift in mindset and attitude that resulted from her experience, also described experiencing less frustration as well as more patience and positivity. She also referred to how her shift in mindset and attitude has increased her motivation and determination at work.

Jackie described experiencing less regret, as well as greater freedom and peace as a result of transformational coaching. When asked about what feelings occurred for her during her experience, she listed hope, empowerment, healing, forgiveness, and freedom. Vickie believed that her ability to consider different perspectives helped her to be more peaceful. All participants described some form of increased positive emotions, or reduced stress, reflecting their enhanced personal well-being.

Thriving. Personal well-being is a critical requirement for thriving to occur. For participants, a significant part of their greater well-being was due to increases in positive emotions and decreased negative emotions. Participants made 18 references to emotions throughout the data collection. Extensive literature supports the link between the experience of positive emotions and healthy-emotion management with thriving. In the Spreitzer et al. (2005) original model of thriving, the researchers defined positive affective resources as the experience of feeling positive emotions in the process of doing work. Positive affective resources were listed as one of four key personal resources needed for an individual to experience professional thriving. The authors theorized that when an individual experiences positive affect, such as happiness, joy, peace, and hope, they recover more quickly from setbacks and negative emotions. This is necessary if an individual is to feel energetic, motivated and open to learning: the components of thriving.

Positive affective resources also reinforce the three agentic work behaviors that contribute to thriving. Positive affective resources enable the mindset needed to sustain task focus. They promote exploration because when individuals are in a more positive state, their thinking broadens, enabling greater creativity. Positive affect also promotes heedful relating because when individuals feel positive emotions in relationship with others, they are more likely to attend to that relationship effectively. Porath et al. (2012) provided empirical support for the link between positive affect and thriving in their study of young adults and young professionals. The Paterson et al. (2014) study also provided support for the link between positive affect and thriving by linking the combination of hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism with professional thriving. Hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism are forms of positive affect. The experience of positive emotions supports the experience of thriving.

In addition, most participants specifically mentioned either being better able to manage challenging emotions or described experiencing less stress and frustration. The ability to manage negative emotions, such as stress and frustration, supports the ability of an individual to thrive at work. Across samples of professional surveys, including young professionals, university professors, nonprofit managers, and blue-collar workers, Spreitzer et al. (2012) found thriving employees reported better health and less stress. As with emotional exhaustion, if an individual is highly stressed and perpetually frustrated, they will be less likely to feel a sense of vitality or have the energy to expend on growth and development. Although the absence of these negative emotions does not directly result in the experience of thriving, they are precursors to the ability to experience the health, wellness, and positivity needed to thrive.

Growth in the personal domain. The improved well-being participants described was a personal-domain phenomenon. Individuals tended to experience greater well-being as a result of increased ability to feel positive emotions, better emotion management, and reduced experience of negative emotions. These changes reflect increased positive affect (Spreitzer et al., 2005) a critical personal-domain resource.

The data also included nine references to better emotion management. Identification, interpretation, and management of emotions are critical parts of a person's emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran (2004). The 11 references made to general increases in self-belief and self-confidence expand on the previously discussed role of self-efficacy in boosting personal-domain resources and the ability to thrive. Increased self-belief along with the 11 references made to either greater forgiveness or acceptance also indicate growth in participants' collective psychological capital, a key personal resource in facilitating thriving. The increased experience of feelings such as hope and mindsets of acceptance and self-belief, reflect increased psychological capital and constitute further growth in the personal domain.

Transformative learning. The ability to experience different emotions in response to circumstances reflects changes in the meanings attributed to circumstances such that resulting feelings were different. Transformative learning shifted the meaning made in situations. Chang (2009), in his reflection on research by Bibou-nakou, Stogiannidou, and Kiosseoglou (1999), discussed the ability for shifts in the interpretation of situations to cause a change in emotions felt. In an analysis of teacher burnout, Chang highlighted that circumstances themselves do not produce feelings. It is

the ways individuals interpret their circumstances that create the emotions one feels. Participants' descriptions of less frustration, regret, and annoyance in particular situations indicated changes in how they made meaning of interactions with others. Participants were able to shift their understanding and attitudes toward others such that they felt less negatively influenced by their interactions. This outcome demonstrates that transformative learning occurred for participations in a way that allowed greater experience of positive affect and improved psychological capital.

Links to coaching literature. The coaching literature supports improvement in well-being as a result of coaching. A number of early coaching studies linked coaching with improved well-being and resilience as well as reduced anxiety and stress (Grant et al., 2009, 2010; Green et al., 2007, 2006; Spence & Grant, 2007). More recent studies have continued to support these links. In the Blackman et al. (2014) survey on coaching effectiveness, the authors found that one benefit commonly cited by coaching clients was worrying less. Grant's (2014) study on coaching effectiveness found that coaching aligned with enhanced resilience and sense of work-life balance. Meta-analyses by Theeboom et al. (2014) and Grover and Furnham (2016) showed coaching interventions to have a positive significant effect on well-being, and some studies linked coaching to improved positive affect (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Coaching has an established history of improving personal well-being. Participants in the present study similarly described enhanced well-being from their experience in transformational coaching, supporting their ability to thrive at work.

Theme 5: Risk taking and Growth

Overview of participant remarks. The theme of risk taking and growth constituted 6% of tagged data. The essence of this theme is that individuals tended to become more open to risk taking or pushed themselves beyond their comfort zone to attain personal growth and better results. Jack referenced proactively challenging himself to grow in response to his renewed sense of commitment to his responsibilities, goals, and relationships. Kate also referred to risk taking and growth during her interview, describing that her experience pushed her to take more risks and develop as a person. Joy made reference to learning, growth, and going outside of her comfort zone when discussing her experience in transformational coaching. She also talked about experiencing intrigue during transformational coaching and feeling excited to learn and grow further. Joy specifically highlighted her growth in public speaking as a result of challenging herself to stretch beyond her comfort zone. For Rachel, the theme of challenging herself was also significant. She described her insight in the need to challenge herself to think outside the norm, even encouraging her to go outside her comfort zone to serve her students effectively.

Jackie explained that the training had encouraged her to be more flexible and consider different professional roles than those that were familiar. This flexibility reflects professional growth in being able to expand her role responsibilities. Vickie described that the insights she gained during her experience in transformational coaching had provided her with an opportunity to move forward and grow. Tina similarly described an experience of growth as a result of her reflective thinking, encouraged in transformational

coaching. All participants mentioned either enhanced risk taking or the experience of personal growth as a result of challenging themselves.

Thriving. Growth and risk taking directly related to thriving. Learning is key to thriving. If an individual feels the vitality and energy aspect of thriving without the learning component, they are likely to feel stagnated (Spreitzer et al., 2012) and unlikely to thrive. The experience of growth and personal development, described 11 times by participants, showed they are learning, thereby enabling them to thrive. Participants also made four references to risk taking and pushing themselves beyond their comfort zones. These purposeful actions indicate the agentic work behavior described by Spreitzer et al. (2005) as exploration. Spreitzer and colleagues considered exploration to be a critical mediating variable between individual and organizational resources and experiences of thriving. Exploration contributes directly to the experiences of learning and vitality. Individuals who explore and find new ways to work pique their curiosity and inspire energy and motivation. Furthermore, as individuals try new approaches and strategies, they are likely to learn, grow, and refine their skills. Exploration produces additional personal resources, including positive meaning and positive affect, further promoting the ability to thrive. Exploration builds positive meaning because, as individuals try different approaches and learn new ways of understanding things, they build meaning. The more individuals explore, the more likely they are to experience the positive feelings that often accompany a sudden insight into new thoughts. Risk taking, exploration, and growth are central to the experience of thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Empirical evidence for this link is evident in the Paterson et al. (2014) study on employees and supervisors, demonstrating the relationship between thriving at work and

self-development. In the Wendt et al. (2011) study on the phenomenon of thriving in social-care fields, one major theme underpinning those employees who experienced thriving was the desire to be challenged at work and have a positive attitude toward the challenge. The ability and desire to learn, grow, and develop, often through risk taking and challenging oneself, is critical to the experience of thriving. Participants in the present study commonly described risk taking, challenging themselves, and the experience of growth as key to the experience of thriving.

Growth in the personal domain. The positive and open attitudes toward risk taking and growth participants described reflect growth in the personal domain. These attitudes of openness toward challenges and increased motivation toward risk taking are emotional states and personal-domain factors that are stronger as a result of participants' experiences in the training. Embracing the unknown and challenging oneself for the sake of growth is a key part of self-actualization (Maslow, 1943) and a component of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997). Openness to risk taking and motivation toward personal growth reflect growth in the personal domain that supports thriving.

Transformative learning. The risk taking and growth experienced by participants also reflect transformative learning**.** Participants described pushing themselves out of their comfort zone to see things differently. Participants were more open and curious to explore various possibilities, and their critical self-reflections for the sake of growth resulted in new ways of seeing things. Their exploration enabled transformative learning. In seven instances, participants described self-transformation, either through experiencing an awakening or a sudden insight. The way participants challenged their thinking, pushed themselves, and took risks for the sake of growth and

development resulted in experiences of transformative learning that can facilitate thriving.

Links to coaching literature. Although an explicit focus on the ability of coaching to create risk taking behavior is absent in the literature, the literature does support the ability for coaching to create learning and encourage exploration and growth. Coaches intend to challenge and support individuals to push themselves to not only achieve their goals but also learn and grow as people (Kuhn, 2014; Leach et al., 2011). In Grover and Furnham's (2016) meta-analysis of coaching studies, the authors showed coaching interventions to have a positive significant effect on creating openness to new behaviors, a first step toward risk taking actions. As individuals try new behaviors and gain competence, they are more likely to engage in further exploration and experimentation (Boyd, 2015). Coaching is a personal and professional development tool that facilitates experimentation, growth, and development in the process of working toward goals.

Outliers

Some comments by participants did not fall into any one of this study's five themes. Three participants referred to the nature of the training structure and delivery. Carol talked about the structured and professional approach of the program when first asked to describe her experience in transformational coaching. Rachel also discussed the professionalism she encountered in her experience when asked what had stood out for her. She believed this enhanced her experience of transformational coaching. For Joy, one coach seemed to have a significant influence on her who she described when asked what stood out for her. These responses all refer to the nature of the training delivery and

those delivering it, not captured by previous themes. The role that the structure and style of coaching plays in coaching effectiveness has been flagged in the literature. In the Theeboom et al. (2014) meta-analysis of well-validated studies on coaching effectiveness, the authors concluded that more research needs to be done on how coaching works, rather than if coaching works. The coaching intervention described by these participants was one that was well structured and implemented, possibly contributing to the way transformational coaching was experienced by this study's participants.

Another area not captured in the research themes but mentioned by two participants was the need for participants to be open to having their ways of thinking challenged for the experience to have positive influence. Tina, when asked what thoughts stood out, responded by saying that some people may not like transformational coaching and that "it may not be for everyone." Carol also mentioned something similar when asked for her final insights. She described how a person's spirituality or openness to having their thinking challenged could influence whether the experience would be suitable for them. In Singh and Jha's (2012) study on the effectiveness of any programs aimed at targeting emotional awareness and emotion management, the authors concluded that the success of any training depends on the willingness and motivation of participants to learn and be open to changing their attitudes and behaviors. In Kuhn's (2014) discussion of personal transformation, the author averred that clients must choose to see things differently to experience transformation. Two recent reviews of coaching literature similarly noted that the willingness and readiness of the client to learn and to be coached is critical to the effectiveness of coaching (Cox et al., 2014; Theeboom et al., 2014). This

evidence supported comments made by Carol and Tina regarding how and why transformational coaching may or may not be effective.

Tina mentioned an additional piece of data tagged in the outlier category. She referenced a personal story shared by one of the coaches in describing awareness of placing expectations and judgments on others. This was flagged as an Outlier because Tina was not sharing her personal experience, but a story told by another individual. However, although this was not Tina's personal experience, as the other examples in the research findings have been, it does relate to the theme of perspective taking and nonjudgment described in the first section of the research findings. The fact that the story told by the coach stood out for Tina reinforces the positive influence the training had on Tina in understanding the importance of perspective taking. However, in general, the descriptions flagged as Outlier data were around how and why transformational coaching works: its coaches, its structure and professionalism, and participants being open to the process. These were not themes mentioned across all participants, but are data worth capturing. Although the data described by participants in this section did not fit with the main research themes, they did not negate the research findings and added to the knowledge gained regarding experiences in transformational coaching.

Research Subquestion Conclusions

In this research study, I used three research subquestions that were designed to elicit information regarding participants' experiences, aiming to understand if experiences of thriving, growth in the personal domain, or transformative learning were evident or supported by transformational coaching. This section provides a summary of

how theme findings support the three research subquestions and a final conclusion for each research subquestion.

Research Subquestion 1

I designed Research Subquestion 1 to elicit information specifically pertaining to any shifts in the direct phenomenon of thriving, evidenced by changes in feelings of energy, vitality, or motivation toward learning and growth. Participant data across this study's research themes supported the link between transformational coaching and increased energy, vitality, and motivation to learn. In this section, I summarize how each of the five research themes provides evidence in support of this link.

The common experience of participants to engage in greater perspective taking reinforced their ability to feel energy, vitality, and motivation to learn, grow, and excel professionally. Perspective taking allows individuals to carefully consider different interpretations and be more objective, helping prevent the emotional drain one may experience from feeling personally responsible for the actions of others (Chang, 2009; Prosser et al., 2013). Less emotional drain allows for more energy and vitality, which are emotional states. As Prosser et al. (2013) found, self-reflection and perspective taking critically differentiates between those who do and do not thrive. Greater objectivity and more perspective taking is not a direct experience of heightened energy, vitality, and motivation to learn and grow, but allows individuals to have the emotional space to remain energetic, passionate, and motivated.

The enhanced sense of commitment and responsibility commonly experienced by participants also supported their energy and motivation toward growth, learning, and professional excellence. As Boyd (2015) argued, when individuals feel responsibility and

commitment to their community and their work, they experience commensurate feelings of engagement and motivation. In addition, the enhanced sense of commitment to having an impact signifies positive meaning and sense of purpose at work: another key factor differentiating those who experience thriving from those who do not (Prosser et al., 2013). These bolstered values support the energy, vitality, and passion for learning and growth that signify thriving.

Participants' beliefs that they experienced enhanced relationship and results from transformational coaching supported their ability to feel greater energy, vitality, and commitment to learning, growth, and excellence. Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy explains that people are motivated and encouraged when they believe in their own ability to be successful. Porath et al. (2012) similarly argued that individuals with greater self-belief and self-efficacy are more likely to engage in activities that bring energy and vitality. Wendt et al. (2011) showed self-confidence and self-belief to be a major theme underpinning thriving for professionals in the social-care field. The stronger relationship skills participants reported, the stronger their ability to experience energy, vitality, and motivation to develop and grow professionally. The Spreitzer et al. (2005) original model of thriving posited that people with strong relational resources, who are able to heedfully relate to others, are able to create emotionally engaging spaces that motivate exploration, creativity, and experimentation: agentic behaviors that facilitate thriving. Spreitzer et al. (2012) showed that collaboration skills were a strong predictor of thriving. Through these improved interpersonal skills, as well as the greater self-efficacy that resulted from these skills, participants' ability to thrive was bolstered.

Well-being also connected to participations' energy, vitality, and motivation to grow and develop through learning. Aligned with this theme, participants made six direct references to increased levels of energy, passion, and motivation. Personal well-being also enabled the experience of energy, vitality, and motivation more broadly. The essence of the theme of well-being was the experience of increased positive emotions and emotion management, as well as decreased negative emotions. Positive affective resources were identified in the original model of thriving as necessary for thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Positive affect allows individuals to be more resilient (Spreitzer et al., 2005), important for sustained energy, vitality, and motivation to grow and develop in the face of stresses, setbacks, and other challenges. Given the importance of positive emotional states in experiencing the emotional states of being energetic, passionate, and motivated, greater well-being supported participants' ability to thrive.

The theme of risk taking and growth directly linked to participants' experience of energy, passion, and motivation to learn and develop. Participants described direct experiences of growth and self-transformation as well as increased willingness to take risks and greater motivation to leave their comfort zones to achieve personal development and professional growth. A significant finding in this theme was the strengthened desire to engage in the exploratory agentic work behaviors critical to thriving. Individuals who explore find ways to remain curious, experiment with different strategies to create better outcomes, and take risks to grow professionally. These individuals are more likely to thrive than those who do not push themselves. The increased desire for risk taking and the valued place on growth reflects shifts in participants' energy, vitality, and motivation toward learning and growth.

Research Subquestion 1 focused on the influence of transformational coaching on participants' experiences of thriving by exploring shifts in their ability to feel energy, vitality, and motivation toward growth and professional excellence. Data captured in each of the five research themes connected to participants' energy, vitality, and motivation to learn, grow, and excel in the workplace. Findings across all themes provided support for the increased ability to thrive as a result of participation in the training.

Research Subquestion 2

I designed Research Subquestion 2 to elicit information specifically pertaining to growth in the personal domain, evidenced by changes in participants' beliefs, values, or emotional intelligence. Research findings and themes provided ample evidence of shifts in participants' beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence in transformational coaching. This section summarizes how each of the five research themes provides evidence in support of participants' personal growth, the focus of Subquestion 2.

The theme of perspective taking connected to participants' bolstered personal domain. A key aspect of this theme was participants' increased level of self-reflection that resulted from their participation in transformation coaching. Self-reflection is a vital element of increasing self-awareness and emotional intelligence (Augusto-Landa et al., 2012). The Augusto-Landa et al. (2012) study demonstrated the essential role self-reflection played in allowing individuals to connect their emotions, mindsets, and behaviors for better emotion management, a critical part of emotionally intelligent behavior. Additionally, the changes in perspective that occurred for participants often resulted in improved attitudes toward challenges, setbacks, and capabilities. These changes in attitude allowed for greater optimism and resilience, aspects of psychological

capital (Paterson et al., 2014), a critical personal-domain resource facilitating thriving. Another aspect of this theme was the ability to be more objective and less judgmental of others, facilitating greater compassion and empathy in participants. The ability to act empathetically and consider the perspectives of others is a trait of emotionally intelligent individuals (Goleman, 1995, 2015). The perspective taking in which participants engaged as a result of transformational coaching created shifts in their beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence that strengthened their personal domain.

The increased sense of personal responsibility and commitment commonly experienced by participants also demonstrated shifts in their values, behaviors, and emotional intelligence. Responsibility and commitment are both values illustrating how transformational coaching created shifts in participants' personal resources by strengthening the importance participants placed on these values. Participants described stronger commitments to their self-vision, goals, or work as a result of their experience in transformational coaching. This outcome reflects a greater level of emotionally intelligent behavior defined by Goleman (2015) through greater awareness of one's personal strengths, values, and goals, as well as greater drive to achieve one's goals. The increased commitment to having an impact through their work also reflects participants' greater connection to the positive meaning of their work with youth. Positive meaning and sense of purpose at work are instrumental personal-domain resources (Spreitzet et al., 2005).

The strengthened sense of responsibility and accountability experienced by participants also connected to their better ability to self-manage. Participants described a better ability to self-manage in response to mistakes and challenges, as well as a greater values–actions alignment. Self-management is a core aspect of emotional intelligence

(Goleman, 1995, 2015) that was strengthened with heightened responsibility and commitment. The increased sense of responsibility and commitment experienced by participants reflects shifts in their personal resources that support their ability to thrive.

The shared belief by participants that they had strengthened relationships and results also indicated growth in their personal domain. Participants described being more present, being better at listening, and having greater compassion, empathy, and forgiveness in their interactions with others. These are emotionally intelligent social skills (Goleman, 2015) that have increased as a result of transformational coaching. In addition, the nature of participants believing in their improved relationship skills and results indicated their increased self-efficacy and self-belief. These are personal beliefs participants held, indicating strengthened personal resources. Participants' common belief in their improved relationship skills, relationships, and workplace results reflected strengthened beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence.

The improved well-being common to participants as a result of their experiences in transformational coaching also reflected strengthened personal resources. Well-being was enhanced by a combination of increased positive emotions or emotional states, as well as decreased negative emotions or emotional states. Participants described feeling more positive emotions such as peace, joy, positivity, self-confidence, hope, forgiveness, and patience. Although emotions differed by participant, they had a common experience of greater positive affect, a key personal resource that facilitates thriving. Participants also commonly described either reduced experience of guilt, stress, and frustration, or an ability to better manage challenging emotions when they did arise. This outcome reflects strengthened emotion regulation and self-management, key attributes of emotional

intelligence (Goleman, 1995, 2015). Greater well-being bolstered the personal domain of participants through greater positive affect and emotion regulation.

The greater appetite for risk taking and growth commonly experienced by participants also reflects growth in the values, beliefs, and emotional intelligence of participants. A positive attitude toward challenges and learning experiences is a trait of emotionally intelligent behavior (Goleman, 1995, 2015) and reflects a value of the importance of growth. Participants also described greater motivation to push themselves beyond their comfort zones. Motivation is an aspect of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995, 2015) that was heightened in participants' propensity to take risks to enhance growth as a result of transformational coaching. The increased desire for risk taking and growth demonstrates changes in the beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence of participants.

Research subquestion 2 focused on the influence of transformational coaching on participants' personal domain by exploring shifts in their beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence. Each of the five themes for this research connected to changes in participants' beliefs, values, and emotional intelligence that bolstered their ability to thrive. Clear support emerged in the research findings to conclude that participants' personal domain was strengthened as a result of their participation in transformational coaching.

Research Subquestion 3

I designed Research Subquestion 3 to elicit information specifically pertaining to instances of transformative learning, evidenced by shifts in participants' ways of thinking or meaning-making. Research findings and themes demonstrated that participants'

experienced these shifts as a result of transformational coaching. This section will summarize how each of the five research themes provided evidence in support of the third research subquestion and participants' experiences of transformative learning, changes in meaning-making, and shifts in thinking.

The theme of perspective taking focused on participants' altered meaning-making and thinking. Participants described instances of questioning their thinking and assumptions. This result was the second most commonly coded category across the data and connected participants' ability to see and think about things differently. Participants described self-reflecting on their ways of thinking and feeling and being better able to withhold judgment to think about things more objectively, and interpret things less personally. These are all changes in thinking and meaning-making that resulted from their critical self-reflection and consideration of the perspectives of others. The changes in interpretation and understanding for participants demonstrate how their perspective taking resulted in transformative learning.

The greater sense of responsibility and commitment commonly described by participants also resulted in changes in their thinking. Participants described reduced propensity to make excuses or blame others in situations. Participants also referenced differentiating between what is and what is not within their control. This understanding allowed them to accept and relinquish things they cannot change. Acceptance is a phenomenon that occurs in one's thinking. Where participants' sense of responsibility and commitment resulted in greater acceptance, meaning-making had shifted. These changes demonstrated how the strengthened values of responsibility and commitment created transformative learning for participants.

Participants' common experience of better relationships and results reflects changes in their meaning-making and ways of thinking. One aspect of this theme was participants' ability to interpret situations with more creativity, enabling them to see more opportunities or strategies than they previously were able to consider. Altered interpretations indicate shifts in thinking. Another aspect of this theme was being able to interpret encounters with others less judgmentally and more compassionately. This was a change in thinking about how to interact with others in a way that strengthened relationships. Better relationships and results connected to participants' transformative learning, allowing them to think less judgmentally and more creatively.

The greater well-being commonly experienced by participants also connected to changes in their meaning-making. The reduced experiences of guilt, stress, and frustration described by participants aligned with changes in how they viewed and thought about challenging situations. In becoming more accepting of setbacks and more open to challenges, participants were able to experience fewer negative emotions, thereby enhancing their well-being. Chang (2009) highlighted the role interpretations play in influencing the emotions one feels in response to situations. This change in thinking demonstrates how participants' ability to interpret challenging situations in a more positive manner supported their greater well-being.

Participants' experience of risk taking and growth also connected to changes in their meaning-making and ways of thinking. Participants described seeing things differently as a result of taking risks and pushing themselves beyond their comfort zone, seeing more options and more possibilities. They also described experiencing growth, and in two participants' cases self-transformation, that similarly led to new ways of

seeing things. Key to their experience in transformational coaching was the change in thinking that resulted from their risk taking and growth experiences. These experiences resulted in transformative thinking for participants.

Research Subquestion 3 focused on the existence of transformational learning as a result of transformational coaching, evidenced by shifts in participants' meaning-making and ways of thinking. Each of the five themes for this research subquestion aligned with changes in participants' meaning-making and thinking that facilitated thriving. Clear support emerged in the research findings to conclude that participants experienced transformative learning as a result of their participation in transformational coaching.

Summary

Experiences in transformational coaching centered around five core themes: perspective taking, responsibility and commitment, better relationships and results, personal well-being, and risk taking and growth. Participants commonly described being better able to consider different perspectives and meanings in the situations they encountered in their day-to-day lives. They also commonly reported experiencing heightened responsibility for their choices, actions, and mistakes and a deeper sense of commitment to their self-vision, their goals, and their professional purpose of helping students. All participants thought they had better communication skills, interpersonal relationships, and student results because of their participation in transformational coaching. The experience of positive emotions and the reduction of stress and frustration were also common across participants, as was their openness to risk taking and their experience of growth as a result of challenging themselves. These results might be due to the professional and skilled nature of the coaching delivered or the participants' openness

to changing their ways of thinking, or both. This study does not quantity such links, but insights provided by some participants provide an indication of this change. Collectively, findings across the five common themes addressed this study's research questions, indicating that transformational coaching had a positive influence on participants in ways that have been empirically linked to thriving. Descriptions provided by participants showed growth in participants' personal domains and evidence of their transformative learning, critical drivers of thriving. Additionally, participants described direct experience of enhanced energy, vitality, and motivation toward learning and growth, further demonstrating the ability of transformational coaching to enhance the experience of thriving. This study provides support for the professional development potential of transformational coaching as an effective strategy to boost employees' personal resources, create transformative learning, and thus reach their potential to thrive.

Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations. First, this research is limited in its focus on individual agency. As Spreitzer et al. (2005) noted in their original model of thriving, personal/individual and organizational elements contribute to the ability of any individual to experience thriving in the workplace. This research focused on individual agency and did not discuss the role public administration leaders must play to ensure the necessary structures and cultures are in place to enable thriving. Beltman et al. (2011) similarly noted in their discussion of promoting teacher resilience in the workplace, "from an ethical standpoint, while individuals may be able to develop aspects of resilience this does not obviate employers from their responsibility to improve the conditions of teachers' work and day to day working practices" (p. 196). If managers and organization

decision-makers use this research to avoid making effort to support employee well-being, growth, and performance, this effort could technically be a limitation of the study. However, as mentioned, the purpose of this research is to fill a gap in knowledge and thereby expand what managers and leaders already know that can support employees. This research is also limited in its focus on teachers, as a subset of youth-serving human service professionals employed in public service. Follow-up studies will need to be conducted to confirm the greater generalizability of the wider professional development potential of transformational coaching for publicly provided youth services.

This study also has methodological limitations, based on the phenomenological, subjective, and qualitative nature of the research. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that relies on subjective experiences of individuals; therefore, it is difficult to triangulate data or implement random sampling, impeding the ability to generalize results. Findings from this research rest on the experiences of eight individuals, with one organization's delivery of transformational coaching. Participants described the coaching delivery as highly professional and well implemented. It could be the case that other transformational coaches or transformational coaching programs do not produce the same results as that experienced by participants in this research. Further validation studies need to be conducted to ensure the process integrity and effectiveness of any transformational-coaching program. Additionally, the benefits described by participants are not statistically significant, due to the small sample size used for this study. Further empirical studies need to be conducted with random sampling, to provide statistical evidence to support the outcomes described by participants in this research in outcomes experienced by employees and benefit to service recipients.

Finally, two participants also mentioned the openness of individuals to transformative learning, coaching, and having their views challenged and changed, as a critical factor in whether they believed transformational coaching would work for others. The transformational-coaching intervention studied in this research was a voluntary program. This implies that individuals self-selected to participate in the training and were thus likely to be open to transformation. The need for participants to be open to coaching and personal transformation was noted by coaching authors (Cox et al., 2014; Theeboom et al., 2014) and will continue to be a limitation in the broad potential for transformational coaching as an effective professional development strategy. Additionally, participants self-selected to take part in this research, and I did not employ random sampling for participant selection. This means that there could have been further self-selection bias among participants, such that only individuals who had a more positive experience volunteered to take part in this research. Additional research employing random sampling needs to be conducted to strengthen the empirical evidence supporting transformational coaching. However, the experiences described by all participants were positive, indicating that, for individuals who are open to transformative learning and coaching, transformational coaching can be effective. Therefore, despite these limitations, transformational coaching still shows great potential as a powerful professional development tool in public administration and civil service.

Recommendations

This section provides recommendations based on this study's research findings. This includes recommendations for future research as well as recommendations for practice. First, as this research was an initial exploration into transformational coaching,

further studies must be conducted to clarify process integrity and provide empirical support for outcomes. This research demonstrated the strength of qualitative methods in deepening the understanding of unexplored topics. While this study's findings expanded the depth of knowledge around transformational coaching by revealing the essence of common experiences for teachers who participated in transformational coaching, this knowledge must be supported with further research. Most importantly, quantitative studies should be conducted to provide evidence for the outcomes associated with transformational coaching. From an academic perspective, these studies will contribute to the field of public policy, administration, human services, coaching, and organizational development.

More important are the practical recommendations for public administration human resource professionals or human services department managers who are responsible for the learning and development programs provided to employees in public service. Based on the positive experiences and results described by participants, providing professional development programs that focus on the personal domain, also known as soft skills, should be a priority for staff-training plans. In particular, the use of transformational coaching as a professional development strategy across public service, especially youth-serving human services, should be strongly considered. However, although this training should be made available to all public servants, and strongly encouraged for all human service professionals working with youth, participation should remain voluntary. Based on knowledge from past research as well as comments made by this study's research participants, individuals must choose transformational coaching. Employees cannot be coerced to participate, as it is unlikely to have the transformative

benefits for individuals who are not open to change. However, for those who are open and willing to develop their personal resources and soft skills, transformational-coaching programs should be available.

Implications for Social Change

Finding ways to help public-service professionals experience thriving will not only benefit the individual employees but public administration as a whole, buoying its potential to increase public sector performance, efficiency, and service results. At the individual level, employees who are thriving experience greater well-being, happiness, and job satisfaction. These results may benefit students, families, and communities where thriving individuals are members. Although these individual-level implications are important, the positive implications for public policy and administration are the focus of this study. Research has shown that employees who thrive demonstrate 16% better overall performance, 125% less burnout, 32% more commitment to the organization, and 46% more job satisfaction than their peers (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Research has also shown that thriving as a construct is better at predicting performance than other commonly linked measures such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2012).

When employees thrive, performance improves. Therefore, having evidence-based training approaches for all areas of public administration professional development is important, given the limited budgets and fiduciary responsibilities of government and the desire for efficiency and effectiveness. If public school educators work with greater levels of energy; motivation; and commitment to growth, development, and excellence, it follows that their services will be more efficient and effective. If teachers have better

ability to consider varying perspectives, a strengthened sense of responsibility and commitment to their work, stronger work and student relationships, enhanced well-being, and a more proactive relationship to risk taking and self-directed growth, then government, the taxpayers, and students will all benefit.

Additionally, establishing effective ways to build the capacity and support the role of all public administrators and civil servants working with youth is of even greater importance, given the level of influence these professionals have over the lives of young people. Working toward proactive strategies and training approaches, including personal development programs such as transformational coaching, is critical. This study has provided an illustration of how to proactively promote thriving, boost the personal domain and emotional intelligence, and support transformative learning of public sector employees working with youth. The additional potential of thriving youth workers to bolster youth results and outcomes provides further societal-level implications. Although this research is not a study of the influence of transformational coaching on youth outcomes, it provides a starting point to explore the positive social-change potential of transformational coaching.

Concluding Summary

In conclusion, this research demonstrated that transformational coaching shows strong potential as an effective professional development strategy that can support the ability for public sector employees to thrive in the workplace. When employees thrive, their performance improves (Paterson et al., 2014; Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer & Porath, 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2012). The ability of human service professionals working with youth to remain emotionally present, engaging, and empathetic to their young clients

helps ensure their services support the resiliency of youth. Researchers showed that merely one positive relationship between an adult and a child, even if that adult is not the primary caregiver, can make a difference in the trajectory of that child (Sabol & Pianta, 2012). Interventions such as transformational coaching help ensure the relationships formed by worker and client in public service have this positive influence. When employees thrive at work, they can sustain their performance, and remain emotionally engaged and committed to the youth they serve, the children benefit, the government benefits, and the community at large benefits.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

The interview questions are:

1) Tell me about your experience in the professional development training.
2) What dimensions, incidents, and people connected with the experience stand out for you?
3) What feelings were generated by the experience?
4) What thoughts stood out for you?
5) How did the experience affect you (both in your personal life and professional life)?
6) What changes do you associate with the experience you (both in your personal life and professional life)?
7) Describe any insights or memorable learning moments you had about yourself or your participation in the training.

Appendix B: Ethical Certificate (Valid for 5 Years)

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Nicola Feldman successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 12/19/2012

Certification Number: 1066065

Appendix C: Verification of Themes

The below chart was shared with all participants via e-mail.

Code	Total Number of References	% of Total Codes	Total Number of Participants where code appeared	Theme	Total Number of References	% of Total Codes
Better Relationships, Results & Service	31	12%	5	Belief in Ability & Importance of Having Impact	12	13%
Commitment to Having an Impact & Making A Difference	13	5%	4	Belief in Ability & Importance of Having Impact		
Self Confidence, Belief, Hope	11	4%	3	Belief in Ability & Importance of Having Impact		
Commitment & Perseverance to Self Vision	11	4%	3	Commitment to Learning, Growth & Excellence	8	9%
Growth & Development	9	3%	5	Commitment to Learning, Growth & Excellence		
Handling Challenges & Mistakes	7	3%	3	Positive Attitude towards Challenges and Mistakes	3	3%
Energy & Passion	6	2%	5	Vitality, Passion & Motivation	5	5%
Seeing More Creative Possibilities, Opportunities & Strategies	15	6%	6	More Open & Able to See Different Possibilities & perspectives	9	10%
Non-judgement	7	3%	3	More Open & Able to See Different Possibilities & perspectives		
Question Thinking, Assumptions, Judgments	26	10%	5	Willingness for Critical Self-Reflection and shift in Meaning-Making	13	14%
Self Reflection	10	4%	4	Willingness for Critical Self-Reflection and shift in Meaning-Making		
Must Be Open & Receptive to Transformation	5	2%	2	Willingness for Critical Self-Reflection and shift in Meaning-Making		
Self Transformation & Awakening	7	3%	2	Willingness for Critical Self-Reflection and shift in Meaning-Making		
Greater Relief, Peace, Joy, Positivity, Freedom, or Happiness	9	3%	3	Well-being	7	8%
Less Guilt, Stress or Frustration	9	3%	4	Well-being		
Accountability for Decisions & Actions	21	8%	4	Beliefs, Assumptions, Attitudes, Values, Ethics	19	21%
Authenticity & Values-Actions Alignment	8	3%	3	Beliefs, Assumptions, Attitudes, Values, Ethics		
Acceptance & Letting Go	7	3%	4	Beliefs, Assumptions, Attitudes, Values, Ethics		
No Excuses or Blaming	7	3%	3	Beliefs, Assumptions, Attitudes, Values, Ethics		
Focus on What I Can Control & Not Being Held Back By Past	6	2%	2	Beliefs, Assumptions, Attitudes, Values, Ethics		
Forgiveness & Patience	4	2%	3	Beliefs, Assumptions, Attitudes, Values, Ethics		
Presence, Responsive, & Good Listening	9	3%	3	Emotional Intelligence (Emotional Awareness, Management and Social Skills)	10	11%
Facing & Dealing With Difficult Emotions	9	3%	4	Emotional Intelligence (Emotional Awareness, Management and Social Skills)		
Greater Compassion & Empathy	4	2%	3	Emotional Intelligence (Emotional Awareness, Management and Social Skills)		
Outlier	8	3%	5	NA	5	5%