

**EXPLORING THE CAREER-RELATED GOALS AND BARRIERS
OF TEENAGE MOTHERS**

by

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ABSTRACT

Despite an increase in teenage childbearing within the province of New Brunswick, there is very little literature on the development of career goals and anticipated barriers to reaching these goals in this population. This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the career-related goals and present/anticipated barriers of three teenage mothers between the ages of seventeen and nineteen. The results of this study suggest that career-related goals and barriers to reaching these goals are more concretely discerned with older teenage mothers (i.e. nineteen years old). Both academic/career-related goals as well as the barriers to fulfilling these goals varied for each participant. Some of the barriers communicated included financial and time constraints, lacking supportive figures (i.e. partner), lacking qualifications, lacking motivation to graduate high school and uncertainty related to a lack of guidance and knowledge in terms of formal education. Implications for counsellors within and outside of the school system are discussed.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

CHAPTER 1

On a national level, teenage pregnancy has substantially decreased (McKay, 2006; McKay, 2012). However, “for some regions in Canada, teen pregnancy rates are trending upwards” (McKay, 2012, p. 168). In particular, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have all experienced an increase in teenage pregnancy (Al-Sahab, Heifetz, Tamim, Bohr & Connolly, 2012; McKay, 2012). In Canada, approximately 40,000 teenagers become pregnant every year, where 20,000 of these pregnancies result in births (Al-Sahab et al., 2012).

Without adequate support and resources, teenage mothers often discontinue their secondary or post-secondary education, which ultimately impedes the possibility of a fruitful career. A multitude of negative consequences may follow, including developmental effects for both the mother and the child (Al-Sahab et al., 2012). Despite this reality, there is little existing literature on the development of career goals with teenage mothers. In an exception to this general lack of research, Stiles (2005) found that one of the leading goals set out by teenage mothers is to establish a successful future career. As one of her participants suggested, “I don’t know yet [what I want to do] but I do know I want to go to college” (Stiles, 2005, p. 333). Similarly, Zippay (1995) examined the effects of a mentorship program with teenage mothers, designed to improve their social networks and employment skills. Of the twenty participants involved in her study, seventeen stated that their mentor had a positive influence on their educational plans. As Zippay (1995) concluded, “It appeared that, for many of these parenting teens, their mentors were a primary personal source of information and encouragement regarding higher education” (p. 61). Together, the Stiles (2005) and

Zippay (1995) articles suggest that teenage mothers can aspire to career paths that require post-secondary education, at least when encouraged to do so by important adults in their lives. However, these studies focused primarily on educational goals; a more in-depth examination of the nature of teenage mothers' career goals, encompassing both educational and occupational outcomes was absent from the literature. My research addressed this deficit by thoroughly examining the career goals and anticipated barriers of a sample of teenage mothers and eliciting information to inform those working with teenage mothers (i.e. guidance/career counsellors at the secondary level) of ways to help this population realize their career-related aspirations.

1.1 Scopes and Bounds

I explored the experiences of a sample of three teenage mothers who gave birth to their babies at the age of nineteen or younger. Excluded from my research were (a) teenagers who became pregnant but gave up or lost their baby through adoption, abortion or miscarriage, (b) teenage mothers who became pregnant after graduating from high school, and (c) adult mothers who had their children as teenagers. The aspect of career development that I focused on encompassed participants' educational and occupational goals and barriers, which are defined below.

1.2 Definitions of Key Concepts

Savickas' (2011) life design theory, which focuses on vocational behaviour in terms of its "contextual possibilities, dynamic processes, nonlinear progression, multiple perspectives, and personal patterns" (p. 14), acted as the guiding theory for my research. Specifically, life design theory proposes that the achievement of career goals is

intrinsically connected to an individual's social networks (e.g., support from family or lack thereof), opportunity structures (e.g., non-completion of high school) and demands on a person's life (e.g., the demands of parenting).

Within my study, teenage mothers were defined as women nineteen years or younger who had given birth to and who had kept their baby, and who were in school when they became pregnant (regardless of whether they remained in school after having their child). I chose to operationally define teenage mothers in this way in hopes of providing a clear guideline for participant recruitment purposes. In terms of my choice of age range, I chose nineteen as my maximum age as it is considered the age of majority in New Brunswick ("Age of Majority in Canada," 2015). As my study aimed to identify the career goals and barriers of teenage mothers, the teenager actually having given birth to a child was necessary. Participants were either enrolled in/or graduated from high school.

According to Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Esbroeck and Vianen (2009), a social network includes those people who help an individual construct and bring meaning to their knowledge and identity. Furthermore, people who are considered as part of an individual's social network are generally well-trusted and convenient. Parents, teachers, friends and colleagues are all examples of such people (Gottfredson, 2002). Gottfredson (2002) defines opportunity structures as the availability and access to employment and training. Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002) expand this point by stating that opportunity structures influence a person's willingness and ability to develop career actions from career interests. Such structures may include race, social class, gender, ethnicity and culture.

Maree and Polland (2009) state that by using the life design theory, researchers must consider the unique needs and demands that individuals possess. These demands include distinct factors that influence a person's life at a particular time and context. Super (1980) clarified this concept by highlighting that a person's demands are generally less during their early years, and become considerably greater as they get older. Lent (2005) describes an individual's career choices (or goals) as an "unfolding process with multiple influences and choice points" (p. 108). Some of these influences include the person's skills, interests, outcome expectations and the development of their self-efficacy. He also mentioned that career paths are multidimensional and evolutionary rather than single or stagnant, and concluded that career goals and career paths are subject to revision as barriers surface or values and interests shift.

1.3 Literature Review

To provide a more detailed and critical analysis of the existing literature that impacts my research topic, I will begin by discussing the research pertaining to the major concepts of my own work. Specifically, I will discuss increases in teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing, and then proceed to discussing teenage mothers' career-related goals and barriers. I will conclude by revisiting the reasons why my area of research is beneficial to teenage mothers, as well as explicitly state my research questions.

1.3.1 Increases in Teenage Pregnancy

Across Canada as a whole, a decrease in teenage pregnancy occurred between 1980 and 1990, where "the overall, long-range trend continued into the first [few] years

of the 21st century” (McKay, 2006, p. 157-158). From 2001 to 2010, teenage pregnancy declined by an astounding 20.3% nationally (McKay, 2012). During the same timeframe, however, teenage pregnancy increased in certain provinces, including by 1.6% in New Brunswick (McKay, 2012). This increase in teenage pregnancy, as indicated by McKay (2012) is a cause for “social concern because teen pregnancy results, in just under half of cases in Canada, in teen childbearing” (p. 170). 40,000 Canadian teenagers become pregnant every year, and a little less than 20,000 deliver their babies (Al-Sahab, Heifetz, Tamim, Bohr, Connolly, 2012). Dryburgh (2000) reiterates these findings by stating that in every Canadian province, excluding Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, teenage pregnancies more often result in live births as opposed to an abortion or miscarriage. For instance, in terms of teenage childbearing, New Brunswick saw a 16.6% increase between 2007 and 2010 (McKay, 2012). Dryburgh’s (2000) research also indicates that older teenagers are likelier to become pregnant and bear children than younger teenagers.

According to Bielski (2013), socio-economic challenges are a dominant reason why teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing have surged in some provinces, including New Brunswick. As Bielski (2013) suggests, “Teenage girls are more likely to get pregnant when they have fewer education or employment opportunities to postpone child-bearing for” (para. 4). In other words, young women who are optimistic about their future in terms of successfully completing a post-secondary degree as well as obtaining employment are less likely to become pregnant (Bielski, 2013). Dryburgh (2000) continues by stating that, without the negative social stigma attached to teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing, teenagers are more likely to participate in the trend. Al-Sahab et al. (2012) also suggest that teenage pregnancy and childbearing occur most

often among individuals who are single, of a low-socioeconomic status, have previously experienced physical and sexual abuse and/or are non-immigrants. McKay (2012) concludes by highlighting that ineffective education on contraceptive methods and sexual health may also be related to an increase in teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing.

As suggested above, teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing in New Brunswick has increased in the last decade or so, especially for teenagers who are socio-economically challenged (McKay, 2012; Bielski, 2013). The following section includes a discussion revolving around the types of career-related goals that teenage mothers may have. Also included in this section are the perceived or present barriers impeding the attainment of these goals.

1.3.2 How Teenage Motherhood Impacts the Development of Self

Steinberg and Morris (2001) maintain that adolescence is a time where an exploration of self in relation to the social world is conducted. Consequently, the teenager can more accurately discover who they are and how they fit in society (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Haley, Gelgand and Rodriguez (2014) expand on Steinberg and Morris' (2001) claim by stating that Erikson's adolescent stage of psychosocial development occurs between the ages of twelve and eighteen. These authors continue by stating that in addition to self-exploration, adolescents are forming their identities and engaging in social activity during this stage (Haley et al., 2014). This stage of Erikson's psychosocial development is also said to be the point in an adolescent's life where they attempt to establish themselves as an entity separate from their family, which consists of developing their values and beliefs system.

In terms of the self-exploration and identity formation that are inherent in Erikson's adolescent stage of psychosocial development, Haley et al. (2014) maintain that at-risk teenagers (i.e. pregnant/parenting teenagers, teenagers who are victims of rape, teenagers who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, etc.) are more likely to face issues, which may result in identity confusion. Identity confusion, also known as role confusion, is the "inability to settle on an...identity" (Capps, 2004, p. 22). Without successfully establishing an identity during the adolescent stage of psychosocial development, teenagers, including pregnant and parenting teenagers, are less likely to successfully complete further stages of psychosocial development. One potential result from an inability to complete these further stages is the development of an unhealthy personality and sense of self. Stages can, however, be resolved at later points in the adolescent's life ("Erik Erikson," 2013).

1.3.3 Career-Related Goals and Barriers of Teenage Mothers

As Stiles (2005) states, "parenting is difficult for even the most stable, mature individuals" (p. 328). These demands are often increased for teenage mothers, because of their varying roles (e.g., parent, student and employee) as well as their own developmental needs (Stiles, 2005). As Clemmens (2003) reinforces, the hardship experienced as a teenage mother is often exasperated by her attempt to balance life as an adolescent and as a mother.

Bissell (2000), Smith and Wilson (2014) state that teenage childbearing has economic consequences, as teenage mothers are likelier to be socially disadvantaged. Dryburgh (2000) reinforces this claim by stating that teenage "childbearing may curtail education and thereby reduce a young woman's employment prospects in a job market

that requires...high levels of training” (p. 11). Smith and Wilson (2014) continue by stating that a teenage mother’s poor economic situation is largely attributed to becoming a mother before completing high school. Looking at the problem through a different lens, Miller (2009) suggests that delaying motherhood past the early 20s and 30s can actually increase a woman’s career-related success, particularly by increasing her hours worked and consequently her career earnings. Smith and Wilson (2014) conclude by maintaining that the financial difficulty experienced by teenage mothers in supporting their offspring continues to be a public and policy issue.

Hellerstedt (2002) proposes that because of a teenage mother’s low socioeconomic status, her baby may be at an increased risk of health-related issues. Klein (2005) reinforces Hellerstedt’s (2002) argument by highlighting how children of teenage mothers are likelier to experience general problems than children of adult mothers. As Klein (2005) states, “these children have increased risks of developmental delay, academic difficulties, behavioral disorders, substance abuse, early sexual activity, depression, and becoming adolescent parents themselves” (p. 284).

Al-Sahab et al. (2012) expand on these findings by stating that because “socioeconomic conditions [often] put these mothers’ children at risk for a range of negative effects on health, physical growth and development” (p. 232), teenage mothers may ultimately seek financial and social support at the cost of remaining in an abusive relationship. Consequently, teenage mothers who are exposed to violence in their partner relationships are less likely to participate in school, both at the secondary and post-secondary levels (Kennedy, 2005). As Kennedy (2005) states, “for adolescent mothers who experience violence in their partner relationships, school performance and participation may be difficult or impaired because of the effects of cumulative violence

exposure, despite the best efforts of many of these young women” (Kennedy, 2005, p. 1511). Interestingly, MacGregor (2009) suggests that returning to school after the birth of a baby can actually act as an alternative pathway to financial stability among women without stable partners. These findings reiterate the importance of identifying and discussing the goals and barriers inherent in pursuing a career for teenage mothers, as well as the strategies they used in pursuing their goals and overcoming their barriers.

Phipps, Salak, Nunes and Rosengard’s (2011) study focuses on the career development among teenage mothers, such as their career aspiration. Along with studying this population’s career-related goals, the researchers also discussed pregnancy intentions. For many of their participants, their pregnancies were unintended, and their careers aspiration required post-secondary education (Phipps et al., 2011). More particularly, in Stiles’ (2005) study of eighteen-year-old teenage mothers, it was found that “[the participants] all talked about how education was necessary to earn good money in the future” (Stiles, 2005, p. 331). Similarly, Zippay (1995), who specifically researched how to expand teenage mothers’ employment opportunities, demonstrated that her participants’ career goals were varied, and included numerous occupations that required post-secondary education. For instance, career goals such as accounting and nursing were among those communicated by the participants. Barto, Lambert and Brott (2015) conclude by stating that, in terms of their abilities to plan and to make decisions surrounding their future careers, teenage mothers’ abilities were similar to their peers without children. Alternatively, career exploration, in other words, the ability to research varying potential careers, was in fact lower among this population of at-risk youth in comparison to their counterparts.

Along with many goals presented by the teenage mothers are the barriers prohibiting the fulfillment of these goals. Common barriers that emerged in both the Stiles (2005) and Zippay (1995) studies were the opportunity structures and life demands that they experienced. Specifically, teenage mothers highlighted the lack of time, money and support (e.g., peer, professional, partner, etc.) that they faced. Other barriers included the lack of knowledge and guidance in areas including financial needs, financial planning, formal education and time management, specifically in terms of balancing time for schooling and parenting. Participants in these two studies described how specific assistance provided by their support networks related to childcare and transportation (to and from work, school and home) would be beneficial. They also believed that increased knowledge and skill development in areas such as filling out college application forms and researching possible career options would greatly benefit them in their quest to pursue their goals. In another study concerned with assessing the supports and resources necessary in helping parenting teenagers reach their academic and career-related goals, Brosh, Weigel and Evans (2009) highlight a few additional barriers faced by their participants. For example, inconsistent childcare, an unstable relationship with the parents of the infant's father and a lack of governmental resources were all highlighted as factors that prohibit successful attainment of academic and career-related goals.

As demonstrated above, the limited body of existing research suggests that teenage mothers have a wide range of career goals, but at least some of them have goals that require post-secondary education. Given the surprising recent increase in teenage childbearing in New Brunswick, as well as its long-term consequences, it is particularly important to understand the types of support that the parenting teenagers living in this

province see as necessary. By becoming aware of these resources, helping parenting youths overcome anticipated barriers to their career-related goals could be achieved more effectively.

1.3.4 Strategies for Overcoming Barriers and Achieving Goals Related to Career

Zippay (1995) suggested that mentors can serve as an important part of teenage mothers' social networks, in terms of addressing the barriers pertaining to career-related goals. Mentoring can be natural (spontaneous and unplanned) or more formal (assigning mentors to work with teen mothers). Mentoring also consists of an experienced person (e.g., teacher, sponsor, role model, or coach) conveying their skills, knowledge and/or emotional support to a mentee. Zippay (1995) characterizes a successful mentorship as one that produces an affective bond, as well as demonstrates significant influential power and effective communication. Zippay also suggested that teenage mothers mentored by people outside of their close circle of friends and family may benefit from increasingly creative ideas and diverse resources. The instrumental function of the mentor would be to provide assistance with the educational and career endeavors of the teenage mother.

In a study of twenty teenage mothers from Cambridge, Massachusetts receiving individualized mentoring, mentors were found to be beneficial for teenage mothers' educational planning. These mentors were also seen as instrumental in supporting these young mothers with numerous education and employment-related activities (Zippay, 1995). Specifically, Zippay found that the assistance that was most common and most influential was when mentors explained the occupational and remuneration benefits of completing high school. The mentors also helped the teenage mothers develop and

enhance their problem-solving and decision-making skills, including identifying and evaluating different options and courses of action and providing key information about these occupational and educational avenues. In addition, most of the teenage mothers admired their mentors and felt cared for and encouraged. Zippay concluded that, for these reasons, mentors might be especially effective with teenage mothers who do not possess a positive role model in their lives.

Stiles (2005) identified support groups, such as school-based support groups and community-based parenting programs, as another intervention strategy that can have a positive influence for teenage mothers. These programs included physicians, nurses, social workers, career counsellors, psychologists, financial planners, health educators and teachers working together to help teenage mothers improve their work-related and living situations. The best results, according to Stiles (2005), came from programs that were comprehensive in nature, long-term, and multidisciplinary. Phipps et al. (2011) reinforce Stiles' (2005) research findings by stating that addressing teenage mother's career-related barriers in hopes of facilitating the attainment of this population's career-related goals consists of implementing support groups aimed at career development.

Al-Sahab et al. (2012) suggested that teenage pregnancy can provide soon-to-be mothers an opportunity to better their lives; having a child at a younger age motivated participants in their study to better their own lives for the sake of their children. Stiles (2005) and Clemmens (2003) reiterate this finding by reporting that teenage motherhood can help stabilize the individual. Furthermore, in Zachry's (2005) study, she explicates that despite teenage pregnancy causing an initial dropout from school, most participants became increasingly interested in their education. This interest was based on their hopes of bettering their child's life, as well as obtaining a satisfying career. Thus, it seems

imperative to promote positive social supports, consisting of the various people who can act as facilitators for positive outcomes in teenage mothers' lives.

According to Turchetti (2012), research on services for enhancing the lives of teenage mothers indicates that many programs for this population lack an integrated understanding of their needs as adolescents and their needs as new mothers. In addition, Bissell (2000) maintains that without taking into account the socioeconomic disadvantages faced by teenage mothers, programs and initiatives aimed at helping them will always fall short. In an effort to address the comprehensive needs of teenage mothers, a group intervention called *Mothering: A Beginners' Group* (MBG) was created by a group of researchers (Turchetti, 2012). The MBG integrates conceptual frameworks including psychoeducation, empowerment and relational therapy. As part of this initiative, a group space was designed to allow teenage mothers the opportunity to form new relationships with fellow mothering teenagers as well as examine their current relationships. Turchetti (2012) reported that participation in this initiative provided teenagers with additional support and helped participants further develop life-management skills. Rothenberg and Weissman (2002) conclude by stating that educating personnel working with teenage mothers on this group's particular needs, as well as developing programs that are long-term and holistic in nature, is necessary.

1.3.5 Support Services for Teenage Mothers in New Brunswick

A discussion paper written for the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (2006) highlighted a variety of available non-school and school-related resources for both pregnant and parenting teenagers. The resources discussed are located all across New Brunswick, including Saint John, Sussex, Fredericton and Moncton. As suggested

in the discussion paper, due to Saint John's alarmingly high rate of teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing, a great number of resources have been allocated to this city. As the authors reiterate, "roughly one in five births to teenage mothers in the Province occurred in Saint John" (Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, 2006, p. 7). With only twenty-five percent of teenage mothers who are twenty-one years old or younger have successfully completed high school, there exists a sense of urgency to provide effective initiatives to help these mothers succeed (Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, 2006). Furthermore, barriers such as referral systems, having to meet particular requirements, long waiting periods and the lack of knowledge about these programs have impeded the access to the services.

First Steps, a transitional home geared towards helping homeless pregnant and parenting teenagers located in Saint John, has continually expanded since opening its doors in 2002. In addition to providing housing, First Steps has partnered with a number of community organizations in hopes of helping the teenage mother transition into a self-sustained life. These partnerships allow the teenage mothers to create what the authors call a *bridging network*, which essentially "connects individuals to different opportunities that can improve their situations, such as access to jobs and educational programs, considering different career opportunities, taking advantage of recreational programs and so on" (Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, 2006, p. 9). First Steps has also incorporated a mentoring service that is provided to women who have moved out of the housing facility into their own affordable apartment/house, which is also made available through the First Steps' Apartment Program. Similar to what Zippay (1995) advocated, the mentoring service provided through First Steps is meant to offer ongoing support to the mother, from basic parenting practices to financial management.

The Family and Child Education program, which provides at-home support to mothers whose children are at risk of developmental delays, assists in educating teenage mothers on the development of their child. This program is available in many areas across New Brunswick, including Bathurst, Miramichi, Grand-Sault, Moncton, Saint John and Woodstock (S. Eisner, personal communication, October, 7, 2014). Heart-to-Heart, a support group offered through the Family and Child Education program, is geared towards enhancing the teenage mother's parenting practices as well as strengthening the attachment bond between them and their child (S. Eisner, personal communication, October, 7, 2014).

The Family Resource Centre, which is available in a number of cities across New Brunswick including Fredericton, Saint John, Bathurst, Chipman, Miramichi, Moncton, St. Stephan, Sussex and Woodstock, offers services to mothers with children under six years old. In addition to providing a drop-in option, the Family Resource Centre has partnered with the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) to provide pregnant and parenting teenagers with information and support in an effort to ensure a healthy pregnancy and growth of the baby. The VON also provides the Healthy Baby & Me program, and within it, two initiatives called Rock & Talk and the Special Delivery Club. The Special Delivery Club provides prenatal education, such as what to expect during the labour and delivery process (Victorian Order of Nurses, 2009), whereas Rock & Talk discusses topics revolving around the child's growth and development (Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, 2006). In her study, Stiles (2005) addressed the existing challenges that teenage mothers faced as a result of their difficulties getting around with their child. Rock & Talk addresses these barriers by also providing transportation services along with childcare services.

The Pregnancy Resource Centre in Saint John and Moncton offers the Home with a Heart program. This program provides parenting youths with information on basic life skills (e.g., how to cook, how to budget, etc.). In addition to the Home with a Heart program, Mums Time Out is an initiative that allows the teenage mother some social time with other parenting youths. This initiative provides an onsite daycare service, so that the mothers can spend uninterrupted time together (C. Thurber, personal communication, September 22, 2014). In addition to the programs and initiatives mentioned above, the province of New Brunswick also provides a daycare subsidy valued at twenty-seven dollars a day to teenage mothers attending high school or equivalent training (Customer Service Representative, personal communication, October 6, 2014).

The Anglophone South school district also offers school-related resources for all youths at risk. Resources that cater to the needs of pregnant and parenting teenagers include First Steps Alternative Schooling program, Woodlawn Alternative School, and the Partners in Alternative Learning Strategies program. These programs provide teenage mothers with the opportunity to work towards their high school diploma, assists with goal setting in a slower-paced school environment (P. Miller, personal communication, October 6, 2014). Individuals graduating First Steps' alternative school are also offered a bursary to support the pursuit of post-secondary education (Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, 2006).

The Anglophone West school district has fewer alternative schooling options than Anglophone South. According to the superintendent for Anglophone West, the focus of this district is to utilize resources in hopes of keeping all students within the 'normal' classroom setting (D. McTimoney, personal communication, October 6, 2014).

However, in exceptional circumstances and after all options to retain a teenage mother in the regular school setting have been exhausted, she may be referred to Enterprise, the only alternative schooling option available within this district (D. McTimoney, personal communication, October 6, 2014).

Anglophone East has a number of options for their students attending their alternative schools, and in particular for teenage mothers, including programs found within the Beaverbrook Centre of Alternative Education (S. Lowe, personal communication, October 7, 2014). Essentially, these programs cater to students between the ninth and twelfth grade. Students in grade nine and ten have the option of attending school on a full-time or part-time basis, whereas students in grades eleven and twelve are offered the School 2 Work program, which includes such options as attending one academic day a week (in a setting of their choice) and interning at a job placement of their choice for four days a week. Furthermore, these placements often lead to offers of employment, assuming that the student performed well during the internship (S. Lowe, personal communication, October 7, 2014).

Anglophone North offers a variety of alternative settings and separate sites. Miramichi Valley High School, James M. Hill High School and Bonar Law High School all provide alternative programs within their school buildings. The school district also has four alternative schooling programs that are separate from their home or neighbourhood schools: the Transition Centre, ELSI-POGTOG, Dalhousie Learning Centre and the Campbellton Learning Centre. These programs provide additional learning support and allow students to attend school on a part-time basis or a full-time basis (L. Orser, personal communication, October 9, 2014).

Francophone Nord-Est also offers a number of alternative schooling options, including PHARE de Néguaac, PHARE de Tracadie-Sheila, PHARE de Shippagan and PHARE de Caraquet. Each of these programs are associated with their home or neighborhood school (H. Haché, personal communication, October 6, 2014). The Francophone Nord-Ouest school district has three alternative schools all called Le Vitrail. These schools, which are located in Edmundston, Grand Sault and Kedgwick, cater to students in the upper high school years (grades ten, eleven and twelve), and maintain a similar curriculum found in the home or neighbourhood school (M. Poirier & P. Morin, personal communication, October 7, 2014). Lastly, the Francophone Sud school district has developed in-school programs called Le Programme de Compétences Essentielles (PCE) and Le Programme de Compétences Essentielles au Marché du Travail (PCEMT). The objectives of these programs are to help at-risk students, including teenage mothers, develop the competencies necessary for establishing a specialized or non-specialized career that most closely suits their interests. In addition to these programs, the Francophone Sud school district houses two alternative schools located in Shédiac and Bouctouche.

In hopes of informing pregnant and parenting teenagers of their legal rights and responsibilities in a way that they can clearly understand, the Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick (PLEIS-NB) developed a user-friendly guide called Parenting: Rights and Responsibilities of Young Parents (Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick, 2014). In addition to addressing common myths, the manual clearly and concisely articulates information on: legal rights while pregnant, responsibilities and obligations as a parent, separating or living separately from the baby's father, adoption, leaves and benefits, social assistance,

healthy relationships and finding help and information (Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick, 2014). This guide is available throughout the province, in both official languages.

In summary, in hopes of increasing support to teenage mothers in New Brunswick, a number of community-based and school-based initiatives have been implemented. These initiatives include: First Steps Apartment Program, The Family and Child Education program, VON's Healthy Baby & Me program and a series of on and off-site alternative setting in all school boards across New Brunswick.

1.4 The Present Study

With the exception of a handful of studies, including those of Zippay (1995), Stiles (2005), and Turchetti (2012), literature relating to career-related goals and barriers of teenage mothers is limited. Al-Sahab et al. (2012) reinforce this notion by stating that a lot of additional research has to be conducted in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the individual needs of teenage mothers. Furthermore, no previous study examining this issue in the New Brunswick context exists.

Due to the increasing rate of teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing in New Brunswick, it seemed imperative that teenage mothers' career-related goals and barriers are closely examined in hopes of increasing the chances of supporting these youths. With an improved understanding of these goals and barriers, it is more likely that the appropriate resources would be identified (despite whether or not they exist). As indicated in the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (2006), failing to address career-related needs of these individuals may very well lead to a life of poverty. In comparison to women who postpone having a child, teenage mothers are likelier to drop

out of high school, work low-income jobs, be unable to attain work, receive social assistance payments, or live on welfare. If these issues are not adequately addressed, then both the teenage mother and her child are at risk for a range of negative outcomes relating to their health, physical growth and development. Furthermore, Al-Sahab et al. (2012) state that teenage mothers who cannot adequately support themselves are likelier to remain in abusive relationships in order to secure some sort of financial stability.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, the current study is both practical and necessary. My exploration of the career-related goals and barriers of teenage mothers intended to yield important information to those working directly with this population of at-risk youth (i.e. guidance/career counsellors at the secondary level) about ways to address and mitigate these barriers in hopes of helping these women fulfill their career-related aspirations. Furthermore, the findings of my research also contribute to and expand the currently limited pool of literature pertaining to this topic. These findings, along with a description of the study itself, are presented in the second chapter.

1.5 Chapter 1 References

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CHAPTER 2

Consistent with the School of Graduate Studies' regulations and guidelines for manuscript style theses, Chapter 2 has been written in the form of a journal article manuscript. Specifically, it has been written to conform to the submission requirements for full-length articles specified by the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, which can be found at:

<http://cjc-rcc.ucalgary.ca/cjc/index.php/rcc/about/submissions>

2.1 Title, Abstract, & Keywords

Exploring the career-related goals and barriers of teenage mothers

Explorer les objectifs ainsi que les obstacles liés à la carrière auprès des mères adolescentes

Abstract

As teenage childbearing is increasing in New Brunswick, it is imperative that teenage mothers' career-related goals and barriers are closely examined in hopes of increasing the chances of supporting these youths. Using the qualitative approach, I explored the career-related goals and present/anticipated barriers of three teenage mothers. Both academic and career-related goals, which included human services worker, nurse and pharmacy technician, as well as the barriers to fulfilling these goals varied for each participant. Some of the barriers communicated included financial and time constraints, lacking supportive figures (i.e. partner), lacking qualifications, lacking motivation to graduate from high school, and uncertainty related to a lack of guidance and knowledge in terms of formal education.

Abstrait

En raison des augmentations de la maternité auprès des adolescentes au Nouveau-Brunswick, il est impératif que leurs objectifs ainsi que leurs obstacles liés à leurs carrières soient examinés dans l'espoir d'un meilleur soutien. En utilisant l'approche qualitative, j'ai exploré les objectifs et les obstacles actuels/prévus liés à la carrière de trois mères adolescentes. Les résultats montrent que les objectifs liés à l'académique ainsi qu'à la carrière, qui comprennent travailleuse des services humaine, technicienne en pharmacie et infirmière, étaient variés entre chaque participante. Certains des obstacles communiqués inclus les contraintes financières et le manque de temps, le manque de soutien à la maison (partenaire), le manque de qualifications, le manque de motivation à obtenir un diplôme secondaire, et une incertitude liée à le manque de conseil concernant l'éducation postsecondaire.

Keywords: teenage pregnancy, teenage mothers, career development, career-related goals and career-related barriers

Despite the overall decrease in teenage pregnancy rates in Canada between 2001 and 2010, certain regions have actually experienced an increase during this time (McKay, 2012). For example, New Brunswick saw an increase of 1.6% in teenage pregnancy between 2001 and 2010 (McKay, 2012). Furthermore, approximately 50% of teenagers who become pregnant carry their baby to term, resulting in 20,000 children being born to teenagers each year in Canada (Al-Sahab, Heifetz, Tamim, Bohr & Connolly, 2012). Even though only a small proportion of these teenagers raise their children at home, these numbers reveal that motherhood is a phenomenon experienced by a substantial number of adolescents in Canada.

Various reasons have been proposed in the literature as to why teenage pregnancy and childbearing exist, and in some provinces, are actually increasing. Socio-economic disadvantages have been depicted as partially responsible for why teenagers get pregnant and decide to keep their babies (Bielski, 2013). As Bielski (2013) maintains, “teenage girls are more likely to get pregnant when they have fewer education or employment opportunities to postpone child-bearing for” (para. 4). Furthermore, Dryburgh (2000) suggests that the absence of a negative social stigma surrounding the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and childbearing can result in it becoming normalized. Ineffective sexual health and contraceptive education may also contribute to increases in pregnancy and childbearing among teenagers (McKay, 2012). Lastly, Al-Sahab et al. (2012) maintain that teenage pregnancy and childbearing is most common among women who are non-immigrant, single, of a low-socioeconomic status and who have been or are currently subject to physical and/or sexual abuse. Although there is an extensive body of literature examining the experience of pregnancy and

motherhood during adolescence, relatively few studies have focused on its implications for career development.

2.2 Career Development in Teenage Mothers

As evidenced in the literature, teenage mothers aspire to a wide range of career paths, including ones that require post-secondary education (Phipps, Salak, Nunes and Rosengard, 2011; Zippay, 1995). In Stiles' (2005) study, a common theme among the participants was their desire for general happiness, independence and a career: "[the participants] all talked about how education was necessary to earn good money in the future" (Stiles, 2005, p. 13). In another study, authors Barto, Lambert and Brott (2015) suggest that teenage mothers' abilities to plan and make decisions in regards to their future career was similar to those of their childless peers.

Despite these aspirations and abilities, teenage mothers often discontinue their secondary or post-secondary pursuits, which can ultimately propel these girls into a life of poverty (Bissell, 2000). As Bissell (2000), Smith and Wilson (2014) reiterate, teenage childbearing has grave economic consequences, as teenage mothers are likelier to be socially disadvantaged. Dryburgh (2000) expands on these findings by stating that, "childbearing may curtail education and thereby reduce a young woman's employment prospects in a job market" (p. 11). Smith and Wilson (2014) continue by stating that a teenage mother's poor economic situation is largely attributed to becoming a mother before completing high school. Looking at the problem through a different lens, Miller (2009) suggests that delaying motherhood past the early 20s and 30s can actually increase a woman's career-related success, namely increasing her hours worked and consequently her career earnings. Smith and Wilson (2014) conclude by saying that the

financial difficulty experienced by teenage mothers in supporting their offspring continues to be a public and policy issue.

As indicated above, limited employment prospects may lead the teenage mother to a life of poverty. Consequently, young mothers may choose to remain in abusive relationships for the financial support. This situation may then place the teenage mother and her baby's physical and emotional growth and development at risk (Al-Sahab et al., 2012, Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, 2006; Hellerstedt, 2002; Klein, 2005). In addition to the health risks that it places on the baby, exposure to partner abuse can also deter the teenage mother from participating in school, whether at the secondary or post-secondary levels (Kennedy, 2005; Kennedy 2006). Interestingly, MacGregor (2009) suggests that returning to school after the birth of a baby can actually act as an alternative pathway to financial stability among women without stable partners.

Previous research has identified a number of specific barriers that prohibited the fulfillment of teenage mothers' career development. These barriers include financial constraints, having insufficient time for education, the absence of social support (i.e. peer, professional, partner, etc.) and a general lack of knowledge and guidance in areas such as how to manage money and how to balance school and parenting (Stiles, 2005; Zippay, 1995). In another study concerned with assessing the supports and resources necessary in helping parenting teenagers reach their academic and career-related goals, Brosh, Weigel and Evans (2009) highlight additional barriers faced by their participants. For example, inconsistent childcare, an unstable relationship with the parents of the infant's father and a lack of governmental resources were all highlighted as factors that prohibit successful attainment of academic and career-related goals.

Proposed strategies to overcoming these barriers included providing the teenage mother with a mentor (Zippay, 1995) or with school-based and community-based support groups (Phipps et al., 2011; Stiles, 2005) to assist them with pursuing their educational and occupational aspirations. Along with these proposed strategies, Rothenberg and Weissman (2002) maintain the importance of educating practitioners working directly with teenage mothers of their particular needs. Bissell (2000) continues by stating that in addition to addressing their needs, practitioners must simultaneously take into account teenage mothers' particular socioeconomic status, in order to effectively implement any particular initiative or program.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The present study is qualitative and exploratory in nature, and is grounded in Savickas' Life Design theory of career development. This theory, which derives from a life designing epistemological position, focuses on the nonlinear progression, contextual possibilities, dynamic processes, multiple perspectives and personal patterns. Life Design theory also considers lifelong learning, flexibility, commitment, employability and emotional intelligence (Savickas, 2011). In terms of barriers to career development, this theory maintains that the lack of stable organizations and secure employment, which has marked the twenty-first century, has resulted in an anxious and insecure worker (Savickas, 2011). As Savickas (2011) maintains, "entering today's work world requires more effort, deeper self-knowledge, and greater confidence than ever before" (p. 13). As a guide to this deeper self-knowledge and greater confidence, the Life Design theory is concerned with the construct of a narrative as a means of building a career. In other words, this theory posits that it is through detailing and reflecting upon their narrative

that individuals will make career-related meaning, plan exploratory activities and form new intentions (Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Esbroeck & Vianen, 2009; Savickas, 2011).

To better understand career development among teenage mothers, this theory suggests that it is important to focus on this population's educational and occupational goals, anticipated and current barriers faced while pursuing these goals, and the opportunity structures, social networks, and personal demands they encounter.

2.4 Research Question

With the exception of studies such as Zippay (1995) and Stiles (2005), there has been very limited research examining the educational and occupational-related goals and barriers of teenage mothers. Al-Sahab et al. (2012) reinforce the necessity for conducting more research in this area by stating that, a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of how to assist this population of at-risk youth cannot be attained without examining their career development.

To address this pressing need in the literature and to expand knowledge of teenage mothers' career development, the following questions were addressed in the present study:

1. What stories about their educational and occupational goals do teenagers who have become mothers tell when they think about their future career?
2. Within these narratives, what do teenage mothers perceive to be meaningful supports and barriers to achieving their career goals, including the social networks, opportunity structures and demands that they anticipate having in their lives?

By addressing these focal research questions, the findings of this study provide a useful framework for beginning to conceptualize career development among Canadian teenage mothers.

2.5 Method

2.5.1 Research Design: Narrative Inquiry

This study was informed by Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) narrative inquiry, which focuses on an individual's stories, experiences, and the meaning of these experiences (Creswell, 2012; Maple & Edwards, 2010). As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest, humans are storytellers who both individually and socially lead storied lives. Through the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories, narrative inquiry seeks to study the way in which these storytellers experience the world (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). In particular, narrative inquiry helps to understand a person's story as it is embedded in their personal and social frame of reference, as well as reveal the important themes in these lived experiences (Creswell, 2012). Peterson and Baker (2010) state that stories are a way of understanding a person's experience in their world, and thus gain a glimpse into their reality. It can be argued, therefore, that using narrative inquiry as a method "is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study" (Peterson & Baker, 2010, p. 3). Furthermore, Polkinghorne (2007) provides justification for the suitability of narrative inquiry in situations where there is limited existing research on a phenomenon by stating that "evidence, such as personal descriptions of life experiences, can serve to issue knowledge about neglected, but significant areas, of the human realm" (p. 472).

2.5.2 Participants and Recruitment

Sample and recruitment. I used physical (e.g., posters) and electronic advertisements in schools, programs and agencies that serve teenage mothers and snowball recruitment strategies to recruit participants for this study. Purposive sampling was used to select participants for inclusion who were nineteen years of age or younger, who had given birth to a child, and who were the primary caregiver for that child.

Three teenage mothers from urban areas within New Brunswick participated in this study. Three participants were used as opposed to the originally sought four to six because of weather and transportation issues, as well as time constraints. Some of the characteristics of this sample of participants included: (a) a seventeen year old participant, an eighteen year old participant, and a nineteen year old participant, (b) they were all in a relationship with their baby's father in some capacity; (c) one of the participants was employed (e.g., financially supporting herself), while the two remaining participants were unemployed (e.g., receiving financial support from another source); (d) two of the participants were currently enrolled in high school, while the remaining participant had graduated from high school and was working fulltime; (e) all three of the participants were English-speaking Caucasian Canadians; and (f) all participants had one child, two of which were eight months old, while the remaining participant's child was ten months old.

2.5.3 Data Collection

I collected data using audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews guided by Wengraf's (2006) Biographic Narrative Interview Method. This method encourages the participant to share as much of their story as they wish, guided by initial probes (e.g., tell

me about your experience of teenage motherhood). While the participant told their story, I wrote notes (e.g., what about teenage motherhood is difficult?). Once the participant's story came to a natural end, I revisited my notes as a catalyst for further discussion (e.g., can you tell me a little more about what you meant when you said that teenage motherhood was difficult?). I asked my participants questions from my Guiding Questions as a way of redirecting them or to elicit specific information about their educational and occupational goals, barriers and relevant life contexts. The interviews lasted between forty and seventy-five minutes for each participant. Due to time constraints, the interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, including all pauses and non-word utterances. A copy of the three complete transcriptions can be found in Appendix C.

Due to weather and transportation issues, as well as time constraints, one of my participant's interviews was conducted over the phone. Although this method of interviewing did not interfere with the data I collected, the lack of non-verbal communication impeded my participant's ability to provide a fluid narrative, and thus impacted her experience in telling her story. This "choppiness" may have consequently tampered with this particular participant's ability to make meaning of her narrative, which is one of the goals of Life Design.

2.5.4 Data Analysis

I analyzed the interview content using Connelly and Clandinin's (2000) interpretive-analytic guidelines for narrative inquiry. Specifically, I began by archiving the data, which involved reading through each transcript and identifying key elements such as characters, themes and plots (e.g., characters and themes: due to a lack of family

support and access to resources, a participant seemed uncertain about her chances of attaining her career goal), and restored the content in chronological order (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Creswell, Hanson, Plano & Morales, 2007). I then proceeded to engage in narrative coding, which consists of categorizing the data from the participants according to such literary elements as time, interactions, places, etc. During this stage, I also identified continuities and discontinuities, gaps and silences, and interweaving storylines within the narratives (e.g., interweaving storylines: two of the three participants found that expensive daycare was a primary cause of their financial strain and could potentially cause significant challenges when pursuing a career) (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). Then, in the final stage of analysis, I interwove my personal field notes and observations with the data that I had collected from my participants. Resulting from this stage of analysis were individual summarizing stories, which I shared with my participants for their input, feedback, validation and modification. The following chapter offers the complete summarizing stories.

2.5.5 Rigor and Validation

Strategies. Polkinghorne (2007) describes a particular threat to narrative inquiry, stating that by virtue of a lapse in memory, disparities between individual's experienced meaning and the stories that they depict about this meaning may occur. I will go into further detail on how I addressed this particular threat by providing my participants with their summarizing stories for feedback and input later on. Furthermore, due to the nature of narrative inquiry, issues surrounding the validity often revolve around the objectivity and trustworthiness of what is written (Polkinghorne, 2007). In hopes of addressing these issues surrounding objectivity and trustworthiness, Polkinghorne (2007) maintains

that the validity of a claim is based on whether or not the reader is convinced by the evidence and argument presented. In hopes of convincing my audience, I not only presented the findings, I described my procedures for reaching my conclusions and linked my findings to existing research about career development in adolescent mothers. I also highlighted the ways that my claims are supported by and/or contrast with previous research. Furthermore, I sought to ensure that the study was conducted as an interactive and collaborative experience, where participants retained ownership of their individual story (Maple & Edwards, 2010; Trahar, 2009). I also utilized the iterative process of data collection and analysis, returning to my “participants to gain clarification and further [explore the] questions that arise[d] during the interpretative portion of the research” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 482). Only one of my participants asked for a modification to her summarizing story. The change was made to a sentence that was used to describe her boyfriend’s secondary school pursuits.

My relationship with the topic. Evaluating the credibility of qualitative research can also involve considering the researcher’s own relationship with the topic and pre-existing beliefs (Polkinghorne, 2007). My fascination with career development among teenage mothers stems from interacting with many teenagers who became pregnant during my high school years, and who subsequently dropped out of secondary school or chose to discontinue their academic or vocational career in order to raise their child. For example, upon my high school graduation, I knew more than a dozen teenagers who had given birth to children before graduating high school. After years of pursuing post-secondary and graduate studies, I often think about these women who are approximately my age. Specifically, I wonder about their current academic or vocational situation and the barriers they faced throughout their pursuits. I also think of whether or

not they are content with their current academic or vocational status, and if it at all reflects what they had hoped for and aspired towards as teenage mothers. My belief is that teenage mothers with little, if any, external support (e.g., financial, emotional, physical, etc.) would experience difficulty establishing a career, and that those who have more resources at their disposal would consequently struggle less. This belief is based on my experiences living in a small town, and seeing firsthand many of the struggles that some teenage mothers faced. These challenges that I witnessed revolved predominately around graduating from secondary school, and entering into the workforce.

As I was not a teenage mother myself, I do not know what it is like to be an emerging adult reflecting back on experiences as a teenage mother. However, I assume that many emerging adults who were teenage mothers are aware of the difficulties associated with establishing a career while parenting a child. This assumption is based on conversations that I have had with women I knew in high school who had children as teenagers, as well as comments that I have heard them state. Ultimately, prior to conducting this research, I believed that teenage mothers would be more likely to associate success with their experiences as a mother as opposed to their experience attempting to pursue a career. Despite my findings being transferable as opposed to generalizable, my experience interviewing my three participants has led me to maintain my belief that teenage mothers are more likely to attribute their overall success to their experience as a mother as opposed to their abilities to attain academic and/or vocational goals.

2.6 Findings

To depict the findings of this narrative inquiry, excerpts from the final individual summarizing stories of each participant are presented below. Although these summaries were written from the interview transcripts, they are the result of the analysis process rather than direct quotations from the original interviews. The summaries have, however, been reviewed by the participants and accepted as accurately representing their experience. Also, all personally identifying information has been removed, and pseudonyms are used throughout. The summaries presented below have been abbreviated due to page limitations. More detailed versions of the stories have been presented in the third chapter.

Rachel

At that particular moment sitting in the bathroom, with the pregnancy test between my fingers, I decided to change my life for the better. I introduced myself to a more mature circle of friends, where I could avoid previous temptations, and subsequently regained motivation to graduate high school.

My mother and sisters, who had and continued to represent a powerful source of support, helped me as I struggled through my first and second trimesters of pregnancy while balancing school-related responsibilities. Noticeably absent during these trying months, however, was my boyfriend and my baby's father John, who had 'conveniently' decided to move to Alberta where he was offered employment. This is typical John - never there when I need him.

It was January, at five months pregnant, when I was told that I had met the requirements to graduate with an adult high school diploma. I felt like I was a burden to

the system and was consequently ‘pushed out’ after having only completed the very minimal requirements.

After welcoming my daughter in May, my life changed beyond expectation. I knew [more than ever] that I needed to continually strive to improve my life, not just for my sake, but more importantly for my daughter’s sake. Consequently, I decided to apply to NBCC’s Human Services program, [but soon found] out that the college would not recognize my diploma, despite my high school principal assuring me otherwise. [It has since been recognized, but I am now on a long waitlist]. Hoping to savour what little motivation I had left, I began job searching, which quickly resulted in me obtaining a less-than-fulfilling job as a health care worker at [a local health care facility].

John, who up to this point appeared uninterested in caring for our child any more than he had to, proclaimed that he could not babysit our daughter while I worked, [as he was] too tired from his night shifts to watch her throughout the day. This worried me for several reasons, one of which included the financial strain that paying for a daycare would inevitably cause. Despite the daycare subsidy that is provided through the Department of Social Development, I had calculated that the income I would obtain through my job would only cover the daycare bills. In addition to my already bleak financial situation [the Department of Social Development had recently revoked all of my funding, except for a portion of the daycare subsidy when I got hired] the lack of time that I could allot to complete daily chores and errands would make my life that much more hectic. John has [also] continuously demonstrated little to any support in all realms of our life together. This lack of support coupled with his frequent bursts of frustration has made me feel like a single mother walking on eggshells. I have tried leaving him, but cannot financially sustain a life on my own.

I would [still] like to one day fulfill my dream career of working with autistic children by completing a university-level degree in Human Services, [but] anticipate that these goals will not be attained without challenges.

Kate

Grade eleven *should* have been an enjoyable and relatively stress-free time in my high school career. I would quickly learn that being young and pregnant, living in an unfamiliar environment and having recently become estranged from my mother would prove otherwise. Despite the valid attempts from my high school's staff and teachers at trying to help me succeed academically, school just seemed so irrelevant to me. The only courses that I felt motivated to attend were those relating to my pregnancy and the eventual birth of my child.

Almost immediately after I gave birth, my boyfriend's mother and older brother offered to watch my daughter during the day in hopes of motivating me to return to school. Similar to my pre-birth attitude towards school, [however], my courses only seemed to add stress to my life, and I seriously lacked motivation to complete any school-related tasks, which consequently began affecting my marks and my desire to graduate.

Despite not feeling motivated to do well in school, I know that graduating is necessary. I really don't know what I want to do in the future and I have absolutely no one to help guide me. I have found myself on two very different ends of a spectrum: one day I want to establish myself as a stay-at-home-mom, and the next day I want to pursue an interesting occupation where I can create my own schedule.

Perhaps the lack of urgency that I feel in terms of seeking a career stems from my current financial situation. I receive a monthly income through family allowance

from the government as well as money from the Department of Social Development, which is more than enough. This income coupled with the small number of bills that I currently have to pay has allowed me to spend money on other things such as baby toys, baby clothes and fast food. My social worker, who visits me once a month to teach me basic skills such as budgeting, cooking and cleaning, advised me to rethink my spending habits and to begin planning for my future. This enlightening conversation that I had with her has motivated me to slowly start planning for a life on my own, with my little family.

Ava

The daycare that my daughter is enrolled in, which is located within and associated with my high school, does not require payment, [and therefore] faces a long waitlist, and subsequently has a high turnover rate. The daycare administrators decided that newborn babies are of a higher priority, and that they should, therefore, be guaranteed a spot over older babies. In other words, once a new baby comes along, the oldest baby in the daycare has to leave. This upcoming June is my baby girl's turn to make room for a new baby.

This situation would not worry me if my finances were not so unstable. [My boyfriend] Gavin and I try to live the best we can off of the income that we obtain through the Department of Social Development and family allowance. With these two incomes, we are still only left with two hundred dollars at the end of the month for emergency spending money. After researching daycare costs, Gavin and I found out that after we factor in the subsidy provided through the Department of Education and Childhood Development, daycare will still cost us a total of two hundred and fifty dollars a month.

Ever since I was a child, I have been motivated to create the best possible life I can for myself. Consequently, I have always performed well in school, and knew that post-secondary education was something that I wanted to pursue. Even after finding out that I was pregnant, I knew that my plans for success would not be compromised, and I continued to flourish in school.

Although my desires to graduate high school, and to pursue post-secondary education are deeply engrained, I am currently unsure of how those plans will unfold. Without the certainty of a safe and affordable daycare service, my future as a high school graduate and as a pharmacy technician is up in the air. This reality makes me sick to my stomach.

2.7 Discussion

All three of my participants communicated, in some capacity, a desire to pursue a career that requires post-secondary education. The career goals included human service worker, pharmacy technician and nurse. Kate receives income from both the Department of Social Development and the government's family allowance. She has minimal financial responsibility as she lives with her infant's father and his family, and consequently appeared less pressured to establish a career. She was also the only participant who seemed uncertain in regards to her occupational goals. Rachel and Ava also both receive some form of financial assistance either through the Department of Social Development, Department of Education and Child Development and/or family allowance. They both live independently with their infants' fathers and consequently have more financial responsibility. Contrary to Kate, they both expressed an increased

sense of urgency when they spoke of their desire to pursue a career, and were both more certain of the occupation that they wanted to obtain.

Within her narrative, Rachel expressed a number of positive experiences that stemmed from early motherhood. For example, she stated that becoming a mother had improved her life, which is something that Al-Sahab et al. (2012) and Clemmens (2003) maintained in their articles. Rachel mentioned that before becoming pregnant for the second time, she surrounded herself with people who she considered to be bad influences. After finding out she was pregnant once again, she quickly reconstructed her friendship circle to include people who would have a more positive influence on her life. In addition to Rachel's daughter helping improve her life, her mother and sisters have played an important supportive role as well. Rachel also maintained how her sense of resiliency has increased since given birth. Among the positive aspects of her situation, Rachel also discussed a number of barriers prohibiting her from fulfilling her career goals. These barriers, which revolve around her personal demands, social networks and opportunity structures (Savickas, 2011) included lacking the qualifications necessary for admission into college and university programs related to her career goals. In addition, her infant's father has demonstrated volatile behaviours towards her and their child and has been generally unsupportive. This has increased her personal demands, which has resulted in significant time constraints. Stiles (2005) reinforced the unique challenges that teenage mothers experience as a result of balancing their varied demands (i.e. student, mother, employee, etc.). Lastly, as Stiles (2005) highlighted, many teenage mothers remain in abusive relationships because of a financial dependency. Unfortunately, Rachel is unable to terminate the unhealthy relationship she has with her baby's father because of her inability to financially sustain a life on her own. As Rachel

maintained, daycare expenses and insufficient funding at the level of the government are predominant reasons why she experiences this financial turmoil, which has ultimately prevented her from fulfilling any career-related pursuits.

Similar to Rachel, Ava also mentioned positive aspects to her situation, which stemmed from early motherhood. For example, once she found out she was pregnant, Ava was able to register in a high school that catered to both pregnant and parenting teenage mothers. Consequently, throughout her pregnancy and into the first few months of parenthood, Ava's unique needs were adequately addressed by the high school personnel. One of the ways that this high school was able to address Ava's needs included providing her with free daycare, up to a certain point. Among the positive aspects of Ava's situation included a number of barriers to fulfilling her career-related goals. Predominately, the lack of money for daycare expenses has and continues to act as a significant barrier to fulfilling her educational goals. Consequently, she has had to reevaluate and reprioritize the personal demands inherent in being a student and a mother (Savickas, 2011). For example, Ava must begin paying for daycare six months before she is expected to graduate from high school (she does not currently have to pay because the daycare that her daughter is enrolled in has a no-fee rule up to a certain age). She is uncertain as to whether or not she will have the financial means to keep her daughter enrolled in daycare at that time. She continued to explain that if she is unable to afford daycare, she will have to postpone completing high school, and consequently her post-secondary training to becoming a pharmacy technician.

Positive aspects of Kate's narrative were also evident throughout the interview. Supportive figures, such as her boyfriend's family, high school personnel and her assigned social worker have significantly helped Kate throughout the first few months of

motherhood. In terms of helping guide her in her personal life, Kate mentioned how influential and motivating her experience with a social worker has been. In addition to the understanding that school administration have demonstrated, Kate's boyfriend's family have acted as a key support in caring for the infant as Kate attends classes. Despite have several supportive figures, Kate discussed how the lack of knowledge and guidance pertaining to post-secondary education in particular, and the subsequent uncertainty that it has caused, has acted as a challenge to her career-related pursuits. Stiles (2005) and Zippay (1995) both reinforced how a lack of knowledge and guidance in terms of formal education can negatively impact teenage mothers' career-related pursuits. Kate also mentioned that her lack of interest in school subject matter has resulted in a lack of motivation to graduate high school.

Overall, this pattern of findings reveals that, as suggested by the narratives of three teenage mothers living in urban areas in New Brunswick, teenage mothers do desire careers that require post-secondary education. For those participants who had more financial responsibility (i.e. living independently with their partner), there existed a sense of urgency to establish a career. For the teenage mother who resided with her boyfriend and his family, and who consequently had less financial responsibility, less urgency was expressed in regards to establishing a career. Furthermore, despite teenage motherhood acting as a general motivator to improve their lives, this population of at-risk youth also experienced a number of barriers, such as financial and time constraints, lacking motivation to graduate high school, uncertainty related to a lack of knowledge and guidance surrounding formal education, lacking qualifications and lacking supportive figures. These barriers appeared to interfere with the teenage mothers' attempts to pursuing their career goals.

2.8 Implications

Despite the varying rate of teenage childbearing across provinces in Canada, I believe that all provinces should consider implementing my suggestions in hopes of increasing support to this population of at-risk youth. My recommendations, which stem from the barriers presented by my participants, implicate both the daycare and education systems. As these systems are provincially regulated, it is the responsibility of the provincial governments to implement these recommendations. In the following section, a detailed account of these suggestions is offered.

Recommendations for secondary school counsellors as well as administrators at the school board level include providing parenting teenagers with access (whether through their school or through correspondence) to courses that are relevant to their day-to-day life experiences (i.e. basic parenting skills, budgeting, time management, etc.). Incorporating courses that cater to this population of at-risk youth is likely to increase their interest and motivation to attend school. An additional recommendation stems from Zippay's (1995) discussion of the positive impacts that mentors have on parenting teenagers. Implementing a mentoring service within a high school would, in my view, help inform and guide teenage mothers in areas including: educational planning, educational and employment-related activities, and life skills (i.e. decision-making, problem solving, etc.). This belief is reinforced by Kate's positive experience with her social worker, who acted as a mentor for more home-related responsibilities. Lastly, it is crucial that school counsellors reach out to local colleges and universities in order to find out if the diploma with which a teenage mother is graduating qualifies her for admission into their institution. Alternatively, if the school diploma does not qualify the

parenting teenager for admission into colleges or universities, the counsellor can inform the young mother of possible transition programs that are available that can help qualify her for admission into post-secondary programs.

Kennedy and Bennett (2006) maintain that school participation, both at the secondary and post-secondary level, can be compromised if the teenage mother is exposed to partner abuse. These authors continue by stating that “practitioners working with adolescent mothers should acknowledge the possible exposure to different forms of violence among many of these young women, identify its potential role as a barrier to school performance and participation, and tailor interventions and programs accordingly” (Kennedy & Bennett, 2006, p. 768). Carlson (1997) provides three general goals that a counsellor can use as a guide to helping support teenage mothers who want to leave abusive partners but feel unable to because of a financial dependency. These goals include: (a) the development of a safety plan (e.g., a concrete plan that can be implemented when the abuse is imminent); (b) enhancing the teenage mother’s decision-making and problem-solving skills (e.g., exercises that reinforce the woman’s right to make decisions for herself, as well as highlighting existing options or alternatives); and (c) reducing isolation and increasing the teenage mother’s social support (e.g., assisting the young mother in acquiring social support outside of therapy). Facilitating a referral to a local transition home for abused women may be a way of addressing the first and/or second of these goals (“Transition Houses for Abused Women,” n.d.). As an extension to the third goal provided, Tutty, Bigood and Rothery (1993) suggest encouraging the teenage mother to attend a support group for women victims of domestic abuse. As Tutty et al. (1993) maintain, victims of domestic abuse who attended support groups showed “significant improvements in self-esteem, belonging support, locus of control,

less traditional attitudes towards marriage and the family, perceived stress, and marital functioning” (p. 325).

Barriers, such as high daycare expenses, in addition to more general financial and time constraints, appeared to challenge my participants in their pursuit of a fulfilling career. For instance, daycare expenses caused a significant financial strain for two participants and consequently increased the stress involved in trying to balance personal demands (i.e. student, employee and mother). Daycare has also been identified as a barrier in previous research (Stiles, 2005; Zippay, 1995). Daycare-related barriers need to be addressed at the level of government policy. One recommendation is for governmental agencies to decrease daycare costs or increase the subsidy provided to teenage mothers in high school, as well as expand the subsidy to include young parents pursuing post-secondary endeavours. Providing more affordable daycare to teenage mothers is likely to substantially increase their chances of future career success. In order to provide adequate support for the members of this population who are most at-risk, an overall increase in financial assistance to teenage mothers living on their own and who are trying to establish themselves in the workforce should be implemented.

In addition to utilizing the above-mentioned recommendations aimed at decreasing the career-related barriers that teenage mothers face, counsellors working within or outside of the school system should also become aware of some of the positive experiences that may stem from early motherhood. As described by my participants, teenage motherhood has helped them cultivate a general desire to improve their lives through academic and vocational training in hopes of acquiring a fruitful career. In addition, particular participants also highlighted gaining an increased sense of resiliency and obtaining astounding support through family, school personnel and governmental

figures such as social workers. By understanding both the positive and negative experiences that may accompany teenage motherhood, counsellors will be equipped to provide a more complete picture of possible futures when working with these kinds of clients and provide them with a sense of hope in relation to their educational and occupational plans.

2.9 Limitations

The small number of participants in my study limits the application of my findings. Only including three participants in my study, as opposed to the four to six that is typically recommended in narrative research, limits the pool of people that may be able to relate to the stories depicted by my participants. In other words, fewer participants represent a smaller range of the kinds of experiences that may exist for Canadian teenage mothers. With this being said, Caucasian Canadian teenage mothers who are between seventeen and nineteen years of age, who are currently enrolled in/or graduated from high school, and who are in a relationship with their infant's father are likely to find my results relatable.

Younger teenage mothers (i.e. fifteen and sixteen year olds), on the other hand, may think of career development and the issue of pursuing post-secondary education in a different way than my three participants. Similarly, teenage mothers from different cultures and ethnicities experiencing difficulty accepting my findings, as my participants are English speaking Caucasian Canadians living in Atlantic Canada.

Similar to the consequences related to the absence of younger teenage mothers in my study, the fact that all three of my participants were either enrolled in or graduated from high school eliminates the chances of understanding the unique challenges

presented to those who have dropped out of high school. In addition to the career-related goals and anticipated/present barriers of this population of teenage mothers going unnoticed, teenage mothers who have dropped out of high school may not view my findings as relevant to their situation.

The fact that my participants were all in a relationship with their baby's father also makes it unlikely that this study adequately reflects the unique challenges presented to a single teenage mother. Rachel's description of the difficulties that she experiences as a result of living with a volatile and unsupportive boyfriend would, I believe, most closely resemble the challenges that single mothers face on a daily basis as the lack of support has resulted in her raising their child predominately on her own. However, a firsthand account of the struggles related to being a teenage mother without any involvement from the baby's father is necessary to more completely understand the full range of experiences that are possible for teenage mothers.

A final limitation was created when weather and transportation issues required one of the interviews to be conducted using the telephone as opposed to a face-to-face meeting. I found that the necessary level of comfort conducive to obtaining an organic and evolving narrative was not attained with my phone interview. In other words, I found that the phone interview, at times, resembled more of a question and answer session than an opportunity for the participant to construct a fluid story. Despite my participant feeling the same way about our interview, she stated that email correspondence for any future communication was preferred because of her busy schedule. Although I do not believe that the telephone compromised the findings that emerged from this interview, I do believe that it interfered with the participant's experience in telling her story. Consequently, this participant may not have fully

benefited from the meaning-making, career constructive component that is offered through the Narrative Inquiry method, as embedded in Life Design.

2.10 Future Research Directions

The preceding limitations clearly suggest that it would be beneficial to conduct additional narrative research on this phenomenon, but with a wider range of teenage mothers from across Canada. Specifically, future research could build on the present findings by exploring the educational and occupational goals of teenage mothers who are (a) younger than 17 years old, (b) from rural and Northern communities, (c) who have different cultural backgrounds, (d) who have dropped out of high school, and (e) who do not have any involvement with their baby's father. Conducting studies with these kinds of participants may reveal career development themes that were not part of the experience of the women in the present study.

Another potential future research direction is to study of the career-related goals and barriers of adult mothers who had their children as teenagers. The present findings clearly revealed that these teenage mothers seek careers that require post-secondary education. My participants' ambition and strong desire to improve their lives by establishing a career was nothing short of uplifting. However, it is not clear whether and how these individuals will achieve their goals to pursue post-secondary education while parenting their children. Indeed, other researchers have suggested that early parenthood may prevent women from attaining post-secondary education (Dryburgh, 2000). Consequently, it would be fruitful and enlightening to extend the present study to the population of adult mothers who had her child as a teenager. Exploring adult mothers' previous career-related goals, current employment situation and the trajectory to

reaching this current situation would be beneficial in shedding light on actual barriers that were encountered in attempting to enter and complete post-secondary education. It would also be advantageous to investigate how the now adult mother attempted to reduce or eliminate her experienced barriers in her pursuit of a desired career, and whether or not she was successful.

A further research direction could potentially involve identifying and evaluating existing initiatives aimed at removing barriers that teenage mothers face in pursuit of their careers across different provinces and different locations within provinces. The participants' accounts of their current and anticipated barriers to establishing a desired career indicates that existing services, even for women living in urban settings where there were educational and social programs designed specifically to assist teenage mothers, are either not advertised or accessible enough, or quite simply not enough of a support. Evaluating these services in hopes of understanding their level of effectiveness in supporting teenage mothers in Canada may help illuminate possible areas of improvement. In addition to highlighting deficits in the services, it would also be informative and beneficial to conduct research on effective components of these services.

In summary, I believe that by conducting similar narrative studies with a wider range of participants, the varied career-related goals and barriers present among Canadian teenage mothers are likelier to emerge. In addition, by evaluating current services aimed at supporting teenage mothers in Canada as well as investigating the career-related trajectories of adult mothers who had their children as teenagers, an increasingly comprehensive understanding of ways to decrease barriers prohibiting fulfillment of teenage mothers' career-related goals will be attained.

2.11 Conclusion

Despite the variance in eagerness to enter the workforce, it was evident that all three of my participants desired to one day pursue a career outside of the home. All career-related goals that were discussed, which included human services worker, pharmacy technician and nurse, require post-secondary education. Upon reflection, my participants indicated that financial and time constraints, lacking supportive figures, lacking qualifications, lacking motivation to graduate high school, and uncertainty related to a lack of guidance and knowledge surrounding formal education were some of the barriers impeding fulfillment of their goals. Potential ways to overcome these barriers include: incorporating secondary-level courses that cater to the needs of teenage mothers, developing a mentorship service, guidance counsellors reaching out to post-secondary institutions to ensure that the diploma that the teenage mother graduates with qualifies her for admission, and increasing/expanding daycare subsidies and/or decreasing daycare costs.

2.12 Chapter 2 References

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CHAPTER 3

3.1 Summarizing Stories

3.1.1 Rachel's Story

Nineteen-year-old Rachel, who was born and raised in Fredericton, New Brunswick, had her daughter at the ripe age of eighteen. Since her baby's birth, Rachel has faced a number of considerable challenges as she attempts to improve her life. Despite her continuous resiliency and her loving mother, Rachel admits that raising her eight-month-old daughter with her unsupportive boyfriend John has, at times, taken its toll. This is Rachel's story.

Positive. The word and what it signifies perpetually spiraled in my mind as I sat in the bathroom staring at the positive pregnancy test that I had just taken. Up to this point, I had only speculated that I was pregnant, recognizing many of the symptoms that I had experienced with my first pregnancy, where I had miscarried two years ago. But now it was confirmed. With a large exhale, I began to ponder how this pregnancy would differ from the last. Being two years older, I more fully recognized the magnitude of my situation, and I did not want to repeat the mistakes that I had made with my first pregnancy. At that particular moment sitting in the bathroom, with the pregnancy test between my fingers, I decided to change my life for the better. Being a woman of my word, I did just that. I quickly introduced myself to a more mature circle of friends, where I could avoid previous temptations, and subsequently regained motivation to graduate high school.

Despite this motivation, nausea and chronic back pains related to my pregnancy made attending school difficult. My mother and sisters, who had and continued to represent a powerful source of support, helped me as I struggled through my first and second trimesters of pregnancy while balancing school-related responsibilities. Noticeably absent during these trying months, however, was my boyfriend and my baby's father John, who had 'conveniently' decided to move to Alberta where he was offered employment. This is typical John - never there when I need him.

It was January, at five months pregnant, when I was told that I had met the requirements to graduate with an adult high school diploma. At the time, I felt like I was a burden to the system and was consequently 'pushed out' after having only completed the very minimal requirements. Due to increasingly severe pregnancy pains and nausea, however, leaving school seemed like the right option at the time. The months after leaving school and leading up to the birth of my daughter were spent preparing for motherhood with John, who had finally returned home.

After welcoming my daughter in May 2014, my life changed beyond expectation. Life was no longer simply about me anymore, it was also and more predominately about my child. Even more so now than the day that I found out I was pregnant for the second time, I knew that I needed to continually strive to improve my life, not just for my sake, but more importantly for my daughter's sake. Consequently, I decided to apply to NBCC's Human Services program. My excitement and feelings of achievement resulting from applying soon vanished after finding out that the college would not recognize my diploma, despite my high school principal assuring me otherwise. Devastated, yet still motivated to attend NBCC, I began a long yet eventually successful dialogue between the high school and NBCC administrators, hoping to have

my diploma recognized. Once finally recognized, I was met with another barrier, specifically that the program's recruitment committee had already accepted other qualified candidates, and had instead placed me on a long waiting list. Hoping to savour what little motivation I had left, I began job searching, which quickly resulted in me obtaining a less-than-fulfilling job as a health care worker at [a local health care facility]. Once again, unsuspecting and looming barriers would soon present themselves.

John, who up to this point appeared uninterested in caring for our child any more than he had to, proclaimed that he could not babysit our daughter while I worked. His excuse was that he was too tired from his night shifts to watch her throughout the day. This news worried me for several reasons, one of which included the financial strain that paying for a daycare would inevitably cause. Despite the daycare subsidy that is provided through the Department of Social Development, I had calculated that the income I would obtain through my job would only cover the daycare bills. So essentially, I would be working in hopes of sending my daughter to daycare. In addition to my already bleak financial situation (the Department of Social Development has recently revoked all of my funding, except for a portion of the daycare subsidy when I got hired), now amplified by the new daycare bills, the lack of time that I could allot to complete daily chores and errands would make my life that much more hectic. To add to my already stressful situation, John has continuously demonstrated little to any support in all realms of our life together. This lack of support coupled with his frequent bursts of frustration has made me feel like a single mother walking on eggshells. I have tried leaving him, but cannot financially sustain a life on my own.

Being keenly aware of my troubles, my mom has demonstrated an outpouring of love and support. It is a result of this love and support, along with my beautiful daughter

that I find it within me to fulfill the promise that I had made to myself and to my daughter after her birth: giving both of us the best possible life I can. Despite the setbacks that I have faced in the past couple of months, I am planning on completing a program within my current employment in hopes of qualifying for a promotion. Furthermore, I still plan on reapplying to NBCC's Human Services program if I do not get accepted for this upcoming fall semester. Ideally, I would like to one day fulfill my dream career of working with autistic children by completing a university-level degree in Human Services. I anticipate, however, that these goals will not be attained without challenges. Financial and time constraints inherent in balancing between motherhood, working, studying and sustaining a life without John's support are inevitable. Remaining resilient, taking one small step at a time, and using whatever supports are available to me is how I see my plans eventually succeeding.

3.1.2 Kate's Story

Eighteen-year old Kate who lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick, found out that she was pregnant at the age of sixteen. By the age of seventeen, she gave birth to a healthy baby girl, while living with her boyfriend and his Russian immigrated family. Despite a slew of supportive figures both at home and at school, Kate has found it challenging to remain motivated and task-oriented in terms of obtaining her high school diploma. This is Kate's story.

I just can't live here anymore! This phrase repeated itself over and over again in my mind, like a carousel, as I engaged in an all-too familiar fight with my mother's boyfriend. Little did I know, this phrase would soon become a reality, as I would find myself moving into my baby's father/boyfriend's family's three-bedroom apartment, a

spot that they had recently acquired after moving from Russia. At eight weeks pregnant and only sixteen years old, I did not have many other options.

Grade eleven *should* have been an enjoyable and relatively stress-free time in my high school career. I would quickly learn that being young and pregnant, living in an unfamiliar environment and having recently become estranged from my mother would prove otherwise. Despite the valid attempts from my high school's staff and teachers at trying to help me succeed academically, school just seemed so irrelevant to me. The only courses that I felt motivated to attend were those relating to my pregnancy and the eventual birth of my child. In spite of this aversion to school and my less-than-stellar marks, I managed to remain enrolled until I was thirty-nine weeks pregnant. Christmas vacation began on an unforgettable note, as I entered my fortieth and final week of pregnancy, and soon after gave birth to my beautiful daughter.

Almost immediately after I gave birth, my boyfriend's mother and older brother offered to watch my daughter during the day in hopes of motivating me to return to school. After six grueling weeks of caring for nothing else but a newborn baby, I found myself once again in the center of the four concrete walls of a classroom. Similar to my pre-birth attitude towards school, my courses only seemed to add stress to my life, and I seriously lacked motivation to complete any school-related tasks, which consequently began affecting my marks and my desire to graduate. Contrary to before giving birth, however, caring for my daughter now replaced any self-driven worries that were distracting me from school.

Despite not feeling motivated to do well in school, I know that graduation is necessary (I am supposed to graduate this upcoming June) in hopes of staying home with my daughter more often, or at least to do something else with my life. See that's the

thing, I really don't know what I want to do in the future and I have absolutely no one to help guide me. I have found myself on two very different ends of a spectrum: one day I want to establish myself as a stay-at-home-mom, and the next day I want to pursue an interesting occupation where I can create my own schedule. Careers that have crossed my mind include a lawyer, a 9-1-1 operator, a nurse and a fitness instructor. So many options, yet so much uncertainty. As my main priority is my daughter, I would like to wait until she is attending school before I begin any career-related pursuits.

Perhaps the lack of urgency that I feel in terms of seeking a career stems from my current financial situation. I receive a monthly income through family allowance from the government as well as money from the Department of Social Development, which is more than enough. This income coupled with the small number of bills that I currently have to pay (i.e. I contribute to rent on a monthly basis and I occasionally buy groceries) has allowed me to spend money on other things such as baby toys, baby clothes and fast food. My social worker, who visits me once a month to teach me basic skills such as budgeting, cooking and cleaning, advised me to rethink my spending habits and to begin planning for my future. Apparently, when I turn nineteen, some of the services that I currently receive (i.e. assigned social worker, monthly income from Department of Social Development, etc.) will either be revoked or changed for less.

This enlightening conversation that I had with her has motivated me to slowly start planning for a life on my own, with my little family. When I lived with my mother, we rented a subsidized apartment and only paid a hundred and fifty dollars a month. My plan is to acquire a similar apartment in the next year or so and to pay approximately the same monthly rent. Living in subsidized housing would not only allow me, my boyfriend and our now thirteen month old child to establish a life on our own, but the

inexpensive monthly rent will permit my boyfriend to hopefully attain his high school diploma (he is currently in grade eleven) without me having to work. A goal after my boyfriend graduates would be to have him attain Canadian citizenship, so he too is eligible to work.

3.1.3 Ava's Story

Seventeen-year old Ava, who first found out that she was pregnant at fifteen years old, lives in Saint John, New Brunswick with her supportive boyfriend/baby's father. Ava is motivated to graduate grade twelve and to continue on with college-level studies in hopes of becoming a pharmacy technician, but is experiencing significant financial-related barriers. This is Ava's story.

What will I do with my baby in June? This question has been on my mind, and quite honestly a source of a lot of anxiety, ever since finding out that the daycare that my daughter currently attends will no longer have room for her in this upcoming June. This daycare, which is located within and associated with my high school, does not require payment, but only has enough space for three babies. As my high school caters to pregnant and parenting teenager mothers, this daycare faces a long waitlist, and subsequently has a high turnover rate. The daycare administrators decided that newborn babies are of a higher priority, and that they should, therefore, be guaranteed a spot over older babies. In other words, once a new baby comes along, the oldest baby in the daycare has to leave. This upcoming June is my baby girl's turn to make room for a new baby.

This situation would not worry me if my finances were not so unstable. My boyfriend, Gavin, has not been able to find work since we moved in together four

months ago. As I became accustomed to balancing grade twelve (my graduation date is in January 2016) with the responsibilities associated with motherhood and of sustaining a life on our own, I realized that working would add too much stress to my already chaotic life. Instead, Gavin and I try to live the best we can off of the income that we obtain through the Department of Social Development and family allowance. With these two incomes, we are still only left with two hundred dollars at the end of the month for emergency spending money. After researching daycare costs, Gavin and I found out that after we factor in the subsidy provided through the Department of Education and Childhood Development, daycare will still cost us a total of two hundred and fifty dollars a month. We cannot even afford daycare with the money we have left over every month!

Ever since I was a child, I have been motivated to create the best possible life I can for myself. Consequently, I have always performed well in school, and knew that post-secondary education was something that I wanted to pursue. Even after finding out that I was pregnant, I knew that my plans for success would not be compromised, and I continued to flourish in school. After telling Gavin of my plans to pursue a career as a pharmacy technician, he was more than willing to support me by taking on more responsibilities with our daughter.

Although my desires to graduate high school, and to pursue post-secondary education are deeply engrained, I am currently unsure of how those plans will unfold. In other words, our financial situation and the daunting reality of unaffordable daycare has made me reprioritize my plans for the future as the demands of being a young, financially-burdened mother have become too overwhelming. Without the certainty of a

safe and affordable daycare service, my future as a high school graduate and as a pharmacy technician is up in the air. This reality makes me sick to my stomach.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Relevance to the Field of Counselling

According to Sheppard (n.d.), a counsellor's role is to help clients prosper, by highlighting their values, capacity for self-determination as well as their personal resources. He continues by stating that

Counselling is the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth and the optimal development of personal resources. The overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully. Counselling relationships will vary according to need but may be concerned with developmental issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insights and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict or improving relationships with others (Sheppard, n.d, p. 1).

When addressing career-related goals and barriers of teenage mothers, school counsellors can help guide the teenage mother as she attempts to address and resolve the distinct problems that she faces. Furthermore, while helping teenage mothers through their career-related crises, counsellors also assist them in making decisions as well as accessing personal knowledge and insight. Part of helping these young women access personal insight consists of highlighting positive aspects of their situation. While speaking to my participants, an increased desire to improve their lives through academic and vocational training in hopes of acquiring a fruitful career, an increased sense of resiliency, as well as an increase in support were all underlined as positive experiences that they faced as a result of early motherhood.

By helping a teenage mother overcome the barriers she faces and fulfill her career goals, the counsellor is fundamentally supporting her quest for self-determination. In the present study, the barriers related to career development included a lack of motivation to graduate from high school, uncertainty surrounding formal education due to a lack of knowledge and guidance, lacking qualifications and lacking supportive figures.

With the information presented in this study, I believe that New Brunswick career and school counsellors will gain a deeper understanding of the career development experiences of teenage mothers. Therefore, counsellors will be in a better position to help develop and to ultimately offer more relevant resources to these mothers. An example of a specific recommendation is to advocate for courses that are more relevant to the day-to-day life experiences of this population of youths. Incorporating courses that address the needs and experiences of pregnant and parenting teenage mothers will, I believe, increase the chances of them remaining enrolled in high school and ultimately graduating, which will positively affect their opportunity structures (Savickas, 2011). These courses may include topics such as safe practices while pregnant, nutrition while pregnant, how to prepare for a baby, legal rights and responsibilities of a parent, safe practices with a newborn baby, nutrition for a newborn baby, budgeting, and planning for the future.

An additional recommendation includes implementing a mentoring service, thus directly impacting the teenage mother's social networks (Savickas, 2011). Counsellors would need to oversee the role of the mentor, thus ensuring that they properly assist with educational and career-related endeavours. If funds and/or resources are not available to implement such a service, then the counsellors, teachers, and/or parent volunteers could

potentially take on the role of mentor. This recommendation stems from one of my participant's testimonies as well as the results of previous research. As indicated in the results section, Kate's social worker provided her with instrumental advice and knowledge regarding basic skills such as budgeting for the future. Similarly, in Zippay's (1995) study, mentors were found to have helped enhance the overall wellbeing of at-risk youths, particularly those who do not possess a positive role model in their lives.

A final recommendation that would help combat challenges associated with lacking qualifications for post-secondary education, and therefore enhancing opportunity structures for this population (Savickas, 2011), includes ensuring that the diploma that the teenage mother graduates with qualifies her for admission into colleges and/or universities. This recommendation requires that the school counsellors become fully informed and remain up to date about local colleges' and universities' admissions criteria, in order to verify whether or not the teenage mother meets the requirements. This recommendation will be beneficial not only for teenage mothers, but also for other at-risk youth who do not follow the standard sequence for completing high school but who, nonetheless, have occupational goals that require post-secondary education (Bartlett & Domene, 2015). Alternatively, if the school diploma does not qualify the parenting teenager for admission into a college or university, then the counsellor can inform the young mother of possible transition programs aimed at qualifying her for admission into post-secondary programs.

4.2 Government Services for Teenage Mothers

High daycare expenses, as well as more general financial and time constraints, appeared to challenge some participants in their pursuit of a fulfilling career. These

issues need to be addressed at the level of government service provision. The following recommendations are primarily geared towards the New Brunswick Provincial Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the Department of Social Development.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and in particular, those working with the Daycare Assistance Program would benefit from the information provided in my study. For example, the twenty-seven dollar a day daycare subsidy that is currently provided to teenage mothers completing high school or a training equivalent in New Brunswick does not appear to be sufficient. I believe that decreasing the cost of daycare or increasing the subsidy provided through this program, as well as expanding recipients of this subsidy to include young mothers pursuing post-secondary education, would help address a number of financial-related barriers. More particularly, if the teenage mother has access to affordable daycare, she will have the option of using the service in order to attend secondary or post-secondary courses, fulfill work-related responsibilities, run daily errands and/or complete household chores. Consequently, less expensive daycare could help the teenage mother more effectively balance the demands imposed onto her personal life (Savickas, 2011).

Increasing the general funding made available to teenage mothers living independently from their parents would, I believe, decrease many of the financial constraints that currently prohibit the fulfillment of their career goals. Therefore, the Department of Social Development would greatly benefit from the information provided in my study. Without proper funding, teenager mothers such as Rachel, end up in unfulfilling jobs as their need for money in their immediate circumstances supersedes attaining a desired future career. As seen with Rachel, without the financial means,

career-related pursuits are either postponed or unfulfilled, regardless of the individual's level of motivation or desire to pursue further education. Increasing funding in hopes of supporting a teenage mother in her pursuit of a dream career is, in my view, positively impacting her opportunity structures (Savickas, 2011), as it would increase her ability to develop a specific career action from her career interests (Brown & Hackett, 2002).

4.3 Conclusion

The present study has explored the career-related goals and current/anticipated barriers of three teenage mothers living in New Brunswick. Among the career goals discussed were human services worker, pharmacy technician and nurse, all of which require some level of post-secondary education. Although varied, some of the barriers underlined by the participants included lacking motivation to graduate from high school, uncertainty related to a lack in guidance and knowledge in terms of formal education, lacking qualifications, lacking supportive figures, and financial and time constraints. In response to these findings, and drawing on existing research and theory, in this chapter I provided several recommendations for the field of counselling. These recommendations, which targeted secondary-level guidance/career counsellors as well as government agencies that work with this population of at-risk youth included: incorporating courses that cater to pregnant and parenting teenagers, implementing a mentoring service at the high school level, secondary-level guidance/career counsellors ensuring that the diploma qualifies the parenting teenager for college or university admission, affordable daycare, and general increases in funding provided to parenting teenagers living independently (i.e. with or without a partner). By understanding both the career-related goals and barriers that my participants indicated as well as implementing recommendations that I

outlined, it is my belief that the necessary support will be in place to help teenage mothers prosper as they pursue their desired careers.

4.4 Chapter 4 References

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APPENDIX A

A. Forms

Exploring the Career-Related Goals and Barriers of Teenage Mothers



A.1 Consent Form

Researcher: Cynthia Chaddock, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick

Supervisor: Dr. José Domene, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick

Contact Information: cynthia.chaddock@unb.ca; 506-260-4817

Please note that this project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of New Brunswick and is on file as REB 2014-119. If you have any questions about the proposed study, please contact the research supervisor, Dr. José Domene; 506-453-5174, jfdomene@unb.ca; or the Dean of Education: Dr. Ann Sherman; Faculty of Education, 506-453-4862, shermana@unb.ca.

Dear participant,

You are invited to partake in this study aimed at better understanding the career-related goals and barriers of teenage mothers in New Brunswick. The study will consist of two interviews, the first lasting approximately 1.5 to 2 hours and the second lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The first round of interviews, which will be audio-recorded, will have the participant discuss her experiences and anticipation as she pursues a career as a teenage mother, which we are defining as including goals for future education and employment. After the first interview, the interviews will be transcribed and from this transcription, a summarizing story will be produced. The second interview will provide the participants a chance to revise their summarizing story, modifying it as

they see fit. A gift card from Sobeys valued at 25\$ will be provided to participants at the end of the second interview. If a participant completes the first interview, but is unable to attend the second interview, this 25\$ gift card will be mailed to them.

After the second interview, and once the final edits are completed, a copy of the story will be emailed to each participant. Please note that pseudonyms will be used, so as to protect the identities of those participating in the study.

The nature of this study ensures that there is minimal risk for everyone involved.

However, participants will be allowed to take breaks whenever they need to, and may skip any questions that they do not want to answer. Lastly, the participants' involvement in this study are completely voluntary and they, therefore, have the right to drop out of the study at any point, and for any reason. Participants may also request to have any information that they previously provided removed from the study up to one month after the final story is emailed to them after the second interview.

All information gathered for this study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and/or password-protected computer. After the study is complete, all recordings will be destroyed, and any other data (i.e. transcripts, fieldnotes, etc.) will be safely stored for potential future analysis. All identifying information will be removed from this data before being stored. Only members of the research team (as listed above) and a transcriptionist will have access to the information.

Please retain a copy of this permission form for your own records, as well as in case you need to contact us at any point. Please be aware that local community counselling and support centers are available for both personal and career counselling (see below).

Family Plus/Life Solutions

199 Chesley Dr.

Exploring the Career-Related Goals and Barriers of Teenage Mothers

Saint John, New Brunswick

E2K 4S9

(506) 634-8295

Family Resource Centre

60 Veterans Dr.

Fredericton, New Brunswick

E3A 4C3

(506) 474-0252

Family Enrichment and Counselling Services

1-356 Queen St.

Fredericton, New Brunswick

E3B 1B2

(506) 458-8211

Any concerns that arise during the interviews or following the interviews can also be discussed with Cynthia, as she has counselling training, and therefore possesses the capacity to provide therapeutic help.

Agreement: By signing below, the participant agrees to participate in the research study described above.

Participant Name (please print) _____ Date _____

Participant Signature _____

A.2 Minors without Parental Consent Form

I affirm that I have been living apart from my parents and/or legal guardians for the last three months, and I request the right to give full and independent consent to participate in the research project, REB 2014-199 conducted by Ms Cynthia Chaddock.

Participant Name (please print) Date

Participant Signature

Researcher Name (please print) Date

Researcher Signature

A.3 Transcriber Confidentiality Form

Confidentiality Agreement

It is understood and agreed that the below identified discloser of confidential information may provide certain information that is and must be kept confidential. To ensure the protection of such information, it is agreed that

1. The disclosed confidential information can be described as:

Participants' contact information (i.e., name, phone number and email address) and any other identifying information provided during the 'story telling' process (the first interview) as well as during the validation process.

2. The recipient agrees not to disclose the confidential information obtained from the discloser to anyone.

3. This agreement states the entire agreement between the parties concerning the disclosure of confidential information. Any addition or modification to this agreement must be made in writing and signed by the parties.

WHEREFORE, the parties acknowledge that they have read and understand this agreement and voluntarily accept the duties and obligations set forth herein.

Recipient of Confidential Information:

Name (Print):

Signature:

Date:

Discloser of Confidential Information:

Name (Print):

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX B

B. Poster



**A Study On
Career Development**

Are you...

- ✓ A woman 19 years or younger, who has given birth to and kept your baby?

✧

- ✓ Interested in participating in a study revolving around your career goals and perceived barriers as you pursue a career?

If so, please contact Cynthia Chaddock at 506-260-4817 or cynthia.chaddock@unb.ca

APPENDIX C

C. Transcripts

C.1 Rachel's Transcript

INTERVIEWER: The kind of question that I, a probing question I guess, would be, you know, what is your experience generally as a, you know, as a teen mom, I guess?

PARTICIPANT 1: It's definitely hard. Like my boyfriend works nights as it is, so we're kind of, we don't even see each other because by the time I get up he's going to bed.

INTERVIEWER: Ah, okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: So that's why I feel like I'm a single mom more than anything. I don't get much help with her at all so, at night time I breast feed so it was not helpful when I was trying to sleep but his family lives in Alberta, so I didn't have them. I got, my parents are really helpful...

INTERVIEWER: They live here?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Probably like 10 minutes away so, yeah. Mine was, right now I'm having a struggle for daycare because I'm going to work. And it's just, first time giving her to someone I trust and I don't know with the daycares, like I don't want anybody that's going to hurt her...

INTERVIEWER: Of course, yeah of course.

PARTICIPANT 1: So the daycare's pretty hard to find, and Social Development, I was on them, they were helping me, then Ryan got his job.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: And then they stopped helping me, they gave me benefits which was good, that was perfect I guess. Now that I'm getting, now that I have a job they give us benefits, they're going to stop giving me benefits so I got to pay for all my own benefits, so that's going to be harder, and it's going to be not as much benefits.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: Um she had an ulcer on her bum when she was younger.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: It was a strawberry birthmark or whatever they're called. So it's on her bum and it's huge, and that didn't hurt her or anything but then when it opened up because of all the bacteria when she poops, so that was like really deep and I couldn't go in the car, couldn't sit her down on her bum, I couldn't even like, to drive anywhere, and I had to drive, he doesn't have his license so I had to drive him to his work but I couldn't because of her bum. And then he worked nights so no one could really watch her at night. So at first it was like well what's wrong, like I know, so I gave him my car, he wasn't supposed to, which I mean...

INTERVIEWER: But you had to do what you had to do, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, so he had to take my car, he has his beginner's I guess, so I told him, I said if anybody catches you like you stole, I never gave you permission but I can't drive you. So that was one of the biggest struggles at first. I mean what else do you do...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Like he works at Co-op so it was like still a lot of money for him to take a cab.

INTERVIEWER: But you're like, you prioritize at that moment, right?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You're saying I have my child at home, like I have to take care of her, yeah you did what you had to do.

PARTICIPANT 1: So that was the hardest part, and with Social Development trying to help pay for childcare is another struggle right now. They have to have a daycare so it's not even like I can go get my aunt or something that I trust, I actually had to go find a daycare that I trust, so, and I don't know what questions to ask them all the time for them...

INTERVIEWER: I know, I know.

PARTICIPANT 1: So that was the hardest part.

INTERVIEWER: You wanted someone that you trust.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And they won't pay for, like they won't pay if we're making too much money now.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: Because I could pay somebody 20 bucks an hour, which would be cheaper for them in their pocket...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: And this one's like 37 dollars a day, which is still cheap for a daycare but from my own pocket that's like almost 700 bucks, so...

INTERVIEWER: That's a lot.

PARTICIPANT 1: They're going to help me pay for daycare but...

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and that's Social Development?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: So hopefully that, they'll help me.

INTERVIEWER: But like you said at this point it's trying to find...

PARTICIPANT 1: A daycare that I trust.

INTERVIEWER: A daycare that you trust.

PARTICIPANT 1: Because I have people that I trust to watch her but they won't pay for them because they're not licensed. So that, and it's cheaper out of their own pocket so I don't understand.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: So that was a struggle now because I'm working, and I usually work 8 to 4, and then by the time I get her and spend some time with her then she's sleeping so...

INTERVIEWER: Do you find it hard, you know, because you were with her all the time...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Before.

PARTICIPANT 1: I cried my first day back to work.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Because I didn't want to go, Ryan was saying how I was lazy and wasn't doing anything at home. I'm like yeah maybe I don't clean the house all the time, I said I try, I said but I want to help her sit up by herself, or get her to walking, so he kind of, I felt like he was pushing me to go back to work. My mom was kind of pushing me to go back to work to help out Ryan so...

INTERVIEWER: But what about, how, what did you want to do?

PARTICIPANT 1: I didn't want to go back to work, but I did it for them. And now I feel like I shouldn't have done it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. You're having regrets?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. But now I just got the job so I'm not going to quit, so I'm going to try to, they asked me if I want to work full-time, the daycare's only full-time as well. So I was going to have to work full-time, pay for full-time daycare, not go...

INTERVIEWER: So basically you're saying the daycare would take her full-time...

PARTICIPANT 1: They only take full-time.

INTERVIEWER: So you would, if you were to work part-time, then you'd still be paying full-time.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: (Unclear) Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah so I pretty much have to work full-time if I'm going to pay for childcare. Even more money while instead of just sitting at home, but that's...

INTERVIEWER: But you're missing her.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: And I cried, and then the first day I went to work Ryan took her, him and his friend took her to Geary so when I got home, she wasn't even home, so I even bawled more (laughs). So...

INTERVIEWER: As a first time mom too, I mean you're experiencing all these things...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: For the first time. And, you know, on top of missing her, being a mom is a full-time job itself. You know, like from my, from what I've heard anyway.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: People say, you know, you have so many responsibilities, you go home and it's like you're, you're job's not done, you're just never...

PARTICIPANT 1: No. And then you get to clean because my boyfriend sleeps all day so the house is still messy. So you got to go home, clean and watch her. I just feel like it's never, it never stops because you're either changing her bum, feeding her, putting her down for a nap, or trying to keep her entertained. (Unclear) it was my fault, I did spoil her a little bit (laughs)...

INTERVIEWER: Well you're a first time mom. I mean that's...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. She had that ulcer on her bum so I was like oh I'm holding her because she's sore and she doesn't feel good, and then it was like oh I'm just holding her because now she's started teething, I would make excuses for always holding her. So now I'm trying to get her down and she's fine for maybe 10, 15 minutes and then she'll cry.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Or if you play with her she's okay, but.

INTERVIEWER: She seems good now, eh? (Laughs)

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah only if I'm holding her.

INTERVIEWER: The smiling, she's just so into it.

PARTICIPANT 1: She's like I know. I could sit here for a few hours and she wouldn't fuss that much because I'm holding her.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: You put her down on the floor, and then she skipped crawling periods so I was worried that she was not going to crawl but now she's standing up on furniture and she's not quite walking alone yet but she is just...

INTERVIEWER: She's 8 months?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah so she's still young.

PARTICIPANT 1: And a lot of people, like I don't compare her to other kids but I see how the development is for each of them and I try to keep her up, you know, seeing where they are each, I have a friend that her baby's only 4 days younger and her little one can crawl and I was like Oh My God I'm not doing my job.

INTERVIEWER: So you're thinking, yeah...

PARTICIPANT 1: So I got to get her to crawl and she won't go on her belly at all, she hates her belly so I googled it and even the sleeping, like she wouldn't sleep in her own crib, I tried to put her down, as soon as I put her down she'd start crying and wake up instantly. So now if I put her on my bed she'll...

INTERVIEWER: She'll go to sleep.

PARTICIPANT 1: She'll go to sleep.

INTERVIEWER: (Laughs) She knows.

PARTICIPANT 1: Only if I'm holding her.

INTERVIEWER: Oh really?

PARTICIPANT 1: Like I got make sure she's in a dead sleep to put her down.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Because if I don't then she won't sleep, she won't go to sleep by herself, so.

INTERVIEWER: And every kid's different too. I mean every child's different, and they have their own developmental, you know, stages and stuff.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, well she was really vocal, like when she, like really early.

INTERVIEWER: She was?

PARTICIPANT 1: She was always talking and, she can say dad, and I don't know if she notices...

INTERVIEWER: Are you serious?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. She'll say dad and she's starting to say ma but I don't know if she's just saying the sound...

INTERVIEWER: I feel like that's early though.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Like 8 months and she's already...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah when she was little she'd always, and at first I was, it went (sound: duh, duh, nah) so it would sound like Nan but...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Duh at the same time. So it must be just the, but now she pretty much knows what dad means.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Because I'm like dad and then I'll point to dad but.

INTERVIEWER: And she knows.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Yeah so she's doing pretty good on her speaking and everything, it was only the crawling I was worried about. And then it was the choking when she was eating.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

PARTICIPANT 1: I was so scared to give her solid, I actually had to go to my mom's to give her her first solid food.

INTERVIEWER: Because you were so scared?

PARTICIPANT 1: So scared. Like I knew First Aid and everything but I don't think I'd feel comfortable. So I went to my mom's and my mom had to give it to her because I wouldn't do it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you were scared.

PARTICIPANT 1: And then every time I gave her like even baby food she would always gag once in a while, on especially like chicken because of just the different textures, and it scared the crap out of me.

INTERVIEWER: And there's, these are common fears too.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Like I mean, every, I've heard so many stories from different moms that are just like Oh My God so fragile and you know what I mean, like it's just, it's all a learning experience for you.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, it's totally different, because even now friends will ask to hang out and I'm like can I bring her with me, like, my boyfriend sleeps all day so I have no, like, you watch her I'm going to go out. It's a I've got to bring her if he's sleeping so...

INTERVIEWER: So things have changed.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. I can't do much. And then the cold weather is killing me right now. I got to start my car like 15, 20 minutes early so it's nice and warm...

INTERVIEWER: For her?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, and then she sweats in the car because I got her warmed up...

INTERVIEWER: (Laughs) dressed up as like a polar bear.

PARTICIPANT 1: Like I have like 2 blankets and then this is a snowsuit, just a light snowsuit but...

INTERVIEWER: So you feel like there's challenges just in terms of like your social...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Your social part of life.

PARTICIPANT 1: Like I turned 19 and I graduated, and I couldn't do anything because she was only a month and, almost 2 months old when I graduated.

INTERVIEWER: So why, can you tell me a little bit about, because you would've had her while you were in school...

PARTICIPANT 1: Um I graduated in January, I was pregnant through school but they, I got my adult diploma because they were trying to get me out of school...

INTERVIEWER: What is that?

PARTICIPANT 1: It's a program in school. Like you only need to be 19...

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: And you need 9 credits, the math, English, like the basics, and then like 2 other ones that you can pick, and then you graduate. But you can't go to UNB, you can't go to stuff unless you're a mature student like, so I had to go to NBCC or nothing because...

INTERVIEWER: Which is still an amazing...

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh yeah, for sure, but if I could, I couldn't be like a doctor right now because I don't have my high school for it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: I couldn't be, like not like I would want to, like I'd do something simple anyway. But I just couldn't go to NBCC, they just tried to push me out of school anyway just because I was pregnant and they wanted me to get out. So I feel like they just kind of passed me.

INTERVIEWER: You felt like that was what your experience was?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. They just wanted to get me out because, and I was only 18, and now it's supposed to be 19, so they were like well it's an exception because you're pregnant and this and this. So I got done first semester because I was only, I had to get 9 credits...

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: And I already was over a year late, because I was supposed to graduate in 2013, and did in 2014. So even in school, being pregnant, that was pretty hard. And like I'd cry, teachers like yelled, they'd tell me I did something wrong, like the hormones...

INTERVIEWER: You were just really like, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, and the morning sickness, I'd go to school, I had to walk to school and it was, I couldn't drink orange juice in the morning, and my prenatal pills I couldn't take, or else I'd be like sick all the way to the bus stop. And I had to walk to my bus stop, so. And at that point Ryan was in Alberta...

INTERVIEWER: He was in Alberta at that time...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah so...

INTERVIEWER: And Ryan's your boyfriend?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: So I had to do that all by myself and live at my parent's place, and every time I'd, and I'd just be sick all the way to the bus stop, my sisters would go to the bus stop with me, and they'd laugh at me and...

INTERVIEWER: And you were thinking...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Same with my back, my sisters had to pick me up off the couch one day it was so bad. Just the back, I don't know why it was just...

INTERVIEWER: Like you were feeling like spasms?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I've heard that, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: So they had to like pick me up off the couch, like had to hold me up because I just couldn't get up off the couch and I was like going to be late for school, and, so, and I wanted to do really good because I wanted to pass so I didn't have to go back when she was little. So I was like well I'll take a year off and then go to NBCC or something so, I did try to apply for NBCC this year, or for September, and they messed it all up because of my adult diploma, they thought I didn't graduate from high school diploma, even though I brought my adult diploma, they were like oh no you didn't graduate. I was like I did, I got a diploma.

INTERVIEWER: Right so they weren't recognizing it.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So they didn't recognize it and then I was the first one to put my, like I was early. And then by the time they figured it all out, kept denying me, like 3 times, they finally were like well it says here you only have, you only have your adult diploma. I was like that is my diploma. And they're like oh, okay. And then it was too late so now I'm like 18 on the list so...

INTERVIEWER: Oh My God.

PARTICIPANT 1: They didn't actually put me up ahead because I was one of the first ones to apply.

INTERVIEWER: So 18 on the list, like there's a list of people to...

PARTICIPANT 1: Waiting. So if anybody like gets out, or says they don't want that program, they switch to another one or...

INTERVIEWER: What's the program that you're currently looking at NBCC?

PARTICIPANT 1: Human Services.

INTERVIEWER: Oh that's the Human Services one.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And my second one was Early Childhood Studies but there was like 23 on the list. But I think (unclear) support worker anyway instead of Early Childhood. Like I like kids but I don't think I could, after having her I don't think I could deal with like a bunch of little ones. (Laughs)

INTERVIEWER: No you know it, it's like...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: One's, one's a lot.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And I'd have another one for sure just not yet. But, and my boyfriend's like no, never.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure when time goes by and you forget how much, because it is, I mean it's challenging for any...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, well he doesn't seem like he, he's just different, like he's not really supportive or anything, so it's, his own (unclear).

INTERVIEWER: No? Do you feel like, you know, has he gone through moments of support and other moments where he's not so supportive?

PARTICIPANT 1: No I feel like when she might be like 2, 3 years old he might, but right now like when she was first born he slept on our couch until she was about 5 months, because of the crying, I mean he did work nights so he, like or at first he didn't work nights I guess, it was like 4 months, but he would sleep on the couch all night. And then one day his brother came down from Alberta, so he was sleeping on our couch, and he got up and he was going up and down, he couldn't, because he couldn't go on the couch. He was like swearing up and down, and then he brought his headphones in and slept in the bed with his headphones in.

INTERVIEWER: Oh My God.

PARTICIPANT 1: So I'm sitting here, like he couldn't feed her because I was breastfeeding, so it was hard for him to...

INTERVIEWER: To connect?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. But now, even like if I go out and he's awake he'll be like okay hurry up.

INTERVIEWER: He wants you home.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. My job interview, I went and then I was like okay I'll be right back, I was like, he goes how long is it going to be, I was like I have no idea. He goes well try to hurry up. I'm like, I'll be...

INTERVIEWER: You'll be however long you're going to be, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So it is something he understands but...

INTERVIEWER: So he's had, at this moment would you say that it's like a problem connecting with her in a sense because he's...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Not, like you said the breastfeeding...

PARTICIPANT 1: He wouldn't feed her...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Not really home all the time to see her. And he doesn't like her crying, and now every time that she goes to him, she'll just cry. So she's a mommy's girl for sure.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: So he finds it hard because he feels like she doesn't like him.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Because she cries.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: But.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe when she's a little older and she's able...

PARTICIPANT 1: That's what...

INTERVIEWER: To talk to him and...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, well I made a joke, I said I'll deal with her when she's little but when she's a teenager you can deal with her (laughs).

INTERVIEWER: That's a good, that's a good compromise. I like that.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So he said that's okay, he'll do that.

INTERVIEWER: That's a really great compromise, because there's...

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: I said 13 and up you have her.

INTERVIEWER: And they're taller, and they're bigger, and they're smarter at that point so it's...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You can't just pick her up and just bring her places.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. She (unclear) toys where she goes right now.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Oh she finds it funny.

PARTICIPANT 1: I give you back to daddy. And like even when like I leave her with Ryan he doesn't know how to feed her like, like by a spoon and stuff. Like he knows how but he just doesn't do half as good.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so it's different, and you're finding like you're taking on way more.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And that you're, you're facing a lot more challenges...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, like I feel like a single mom, so I have like, I don't know how single moms do it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah when you're think, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It's challenging.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, because even now like starting my car in the wintertime, I have to wake him up so he can watch her, to not bring her outside, start my car and then I'll get ready for whatever, and, and he gets mad because I woke him up and she's screaming at that point because she doesn't...

INTERVIEWER: She doesn't, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Doesn't like him or whatever (unclear).

INTERVIEWER: It's just a different face maybe. Like she's not used to, like she sees you, you know, all the time.

PARTICIPANT 1: All the time, yeah. And then even my, well she, my sister, she's 10, and she and her just connect.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's awesome.

PARTICIPANT 1: Like she'll go to my sister before she'll go to me right now, but my sister's 10 so she can play with her a lot more, and I feel like playing with her is hard for me because I want to get the housework done, I want to get her food ready for the next day or whatever. And then she just wants me to play with her all the time. My sister doesn't do anything so she just plays with her all the time.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: They connect really good, because when I was working my 2 shifts they, my mom was watching her because I didn't have a babysitter. Especially on weekends, no one takes people on weekends. So...

INTERVIEWER: And you're working your 2 shifts where sorry?

PARTICIPANT 1: At Bay Shore, I worked Saturday and Sunday.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: And my mom took her, and my mom's like I can do everything, like Jenna takes her, that's my younger sister so, yeah. And they'll just play and I can come to my mom watching her but she can't watch every weekend so I've got to find a babysitter for the weekend, because if he has, he has Fridays and Saturdays off, and then he's still on the sleep schedule so he's still sleeping in the daytime.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah his brain, because he's not used to it.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So I still got to find a babysitter for the weekends and...

INTERVIEWER: So it sounds like daycare is one of the tougher type of things.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And finding daycare that's affordable, and finding daycare that's trustworthy, like you said.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Well because this one that I'm going to, when I went, I went in to go view it and stuff but I didn't really like get to know all the rules and stuff because they just didn't seem really talkative or whatever. She showed me around...

INTERVIEWER: What's the place called?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um it's in Lincoln, it's on Lincoln Road.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: I forget what it's called.

INTERVIEWER: I think I know...

PARTICIPANT 1: It's like Rec and Mac Basin or something.

INTERVIEWER: It's on. It's before the airport?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I think I know what you're talking about, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: It's like, there's a trailer park right across it, and there's like a blue strip building, but it's in behind there, behind the gates.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I wonder if it's the same place. Did you have a good feeling about it or?

PARTICIPANT 1: I don't know. Like I don't know what to expect or anything, but I do like how they don't have that many kids there. Like they have the youngest one right now is 1. And they have every 3 kids for one supervisor, and there's like the baby room. Like I liked how they had like their own separate room for them to nap. It's nice and quiet, and they have, and I said well how long do you guys still watch them when they're sleeping, and she said yeah they don't go too far.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So they're always...

PARTICIPANT 1: So that was good but I'm wondering if they only, I didn't ask them yet but I wonder if they only have, they all go for a nap at the same time or what, because she's on her own sleep schedule, she'll sleep whenever she wants, she'll...

INTERVIEWER: And you still want someone to be there watching her if she's sleeping but the other one's are still up and playing.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Or even a monitor, that was, you know, I don't really, I put her in her crib and, (unclear) she's crying, you'll hear it when she wakes up, because she's usually talking.

INTERVIEWER: Just having a conversation.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So, and then I want them to watch her because right now she's starting to pull stuff up on things.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: So I just want to make sure she doesn't, she doesn't like get her leg in the rail and stuff. She's done that before, but she didn't cry, she just sit there and laugh, like I was like what are you laughing at, and she was stuck in the railing.

INTERVIEWER: So do you have other people, like friends, family, that have, that have experienced this kind of stuff before so you're able to talk to them and see what their experiences are?

PARTICIPANT 1: Nah, not really. Like all my cousins are usually, they're still at home, they're on social assistance. My boyfriend did have a hard go when he was living, when he grew up.

INTERVIEWER: He did?

PARTICIPANT 1: His mom left, or put him in a group home when he was 12. And then his dad beat him when he was younger, and had no, hasn't really seen him since he was 4. And all he remembers is his dad, was that he beat him and, so that was, it's different because we both have, and we're so different. Like...

INTERVIEWER: You and your, you and Ryan?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So we've been raising her different, he doesn't want to tell her about Santa, he's like I'm not lying to my kid, I'm like Ah.

INTERVIEWER: But sometimes you...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, so we still haven't figured out what we're going to do yet for those. Because he's totally different.

INTERVIEWER: So when, you were saying basically, you know, when you were in high school, right when you had her, you still had those courses to do right?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you had her and then you had those courses, those 9...

PARTICIPANT 1: No I was done those courses and then I, like I graduated in January and I was really pregnant. I did have to go to prom when she was born, that was about it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: So with prom, I wanted to take her but it's too hot and this and this, so I didn't end up doing it.

INTERVIEWER: But you went to prom?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You did?

PARTICIPANT 1: I didn't stay too long, that was my first time being away from her. So I think I went for 2, it was 2 hours all together with the whole parade and so, and I got ready at my mom's and she wouldn't eat, because I was still breastfeeding so I sat there and I'm like, and I was trying on my dress, I was like ah I got to feed her. So I just pumped and then I gave to my cousin, gave her the bottle and...

INTERVIEWER: You just had to do what you had to do.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. She was pretty fussy so it was hard to even get ready, and it was hard because I couldn't find a dress, because I was still pregnant so I couldn't really find dresses, I had her in May, May 8 and my prom was like end of June. So I couldn't even find a dress until May. So that was hard, between finding a dress and even shoes, my feet were all swollen up and like everything changes. So, yeah, it was hard finding a dress.

INTERVIEWER: So find, and it seems like, but you did everything, you got your 9 credits, you graduated, went to prom.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you say that, like would you say that you're, like you said your parents lived here? Were they big supports for you during the final months of high school?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, yeah my mom was all about high school. She was more disappointed when I was pregnant because she wanted me to graduate, that was her only goal that she's like, you know, so I felt like it was more pressure to, she kind of pushed me to go to school anyway. So that's why I pretty much did, because I mean she pushed me so hard, and then I went to school and...

INTERVIEWER: How about Ryan, would you say he was...

PARTICIPANT 1: He didn't go to my prom with me. He didn't go to my graduation, didn't do anything so, like I said, he works night too so he had to work, my graduation he, his stepfather was down from Alberta, so he took her and I was so nervous my

whole, like I cried at my graduation and everything because my hormones were still going, but I cried because he didn't know what to do, because I mean he, this is their first time seeing her and Ryan doesn't know what to do...

INTERVIEWER: So you're thinking who are, like, going to take care of her...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And I wanted to make sure she like ate, like you know, was eating okay and so, and then Ryan went with them and didn't even go to my graduation or anything. They just went to his grandmother's so I felt more comfortable, but I couldn't even text them, I couldn't call them because I was at my graduation and it was so long. And then they told me I wasn't allowed getting up at our graduation. Like I couldn't like leave during our graduation ceremony, you can't get up at all. Like you had to be sitting down, can't go to the bathroom, can't do this, so I was like um I got to pump or my boob's going to leak. So that's an exception, and I couldn't carry my phone, I had no pockets, and I couldn't shove it in my bra because I was going to leak all over it.

INTERVIEWER: See I swear that you, everyone has different circumstances and they should just see that and say okay well if you have to go you should go, like that should be the end of it.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So they finally let, like they did let me go pump but they were, it was awkward because I was the only one that got up the whole ceremony and, so I got up and my mom, that's how my mom found me. She's like I know she's leaving at some point. So, and I didn't have my phone so I couldn't call them, didn't know where I was going to put my phone with no pockets, so I was pretty, I mean I cried in the bathroom and I, but she was okay. It ended up that he only fed her the whole 3 ounces the whole time and she's supposed to drink 3 ounces for one feeding, and he fed her 1 ounce and then an hour later fed her another, and another hour after that. He goes she seems hungry all the time, I was like I wonder why.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah you're supposed to give her the whole 3 ounces.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Like you give 1 ounce and then an hour later she's hungry again so he gave her another ounce and, it was like...

INTERVIEWER: Oh My Gosh, like you said, I mean it's too, it's not, like for mothers I feel like it's so intuitive, it's like you carry, you give birth to her, you have that connection with her, where men it's just different.

(Man talking around 24 min- 24:30)

INTERVIEWER: So other than, like would you say that there'd be other people in your life that were really supportive during high school, junior high school?

PARTICIPANT 1: No pretty much just my parents. Like my mom and my dad, even my sisters, I mean my sister was 10 and 14, and I did drop out at one, I think it was in grade

10, because I was working fulltime and me and my boyfriend were trying to live on our own, and they were still like you should go to school and this and this, and so they did help push me but other than that no one really did push me.

(Man talks)

INTERVIEWER: She's going to have such long blonde hair. She's going to be a heartbreaker.

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh her hair all the time is just like right up like this.

INTERVIEWER: It's so cute.

PARTICIPANT 1: I put like barrettes and everything, bows.

INTERVIEWER: She's so beautiful.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What would you say in terms of negative and positive ways that having her so young has helped with school, like in terms of when you were...

PARTICIPANT 1: I think school did push me, or being pregnant did push me to go to school because I wanted to finish it so I didn't have to go back, and I did drop out in Grade 10 and it made me feel like, almost like guilt, like I should be there and this and this, so when I went back and I graduated now I can't go back, it's a big difference. So I feel like she did pretty much help me go to school because she was (unclear), and I used to love going to school, people would be like oh how far along are you and this, like you know. The attention I guess. But...

INTERVIEWER: She motivated you.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. For sure. Because I was like I want to be able to go to, like you know UNB or NBCC, do good at every job and, to tell her I actually did it. My boyfriend didn't graduate so I feel like one of us should've.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely, absolutely.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So when you're thinking, you know, you've mentioned a couple times UNB as a potential, was that, is that your goal? Do you want to go...

PARTICIPANT 1: I wanted to go to STU actually, I'm not sure what I would take, my mom works there, so I get half off, so, yeah. I don't know what I want to be yet but now I'm just deciding to take Human Services and work with autism and stuff. So I can just

take Human Services. I did want to go to Saint John, there's a course for only autism, it's only for kids.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: I think it's in (unclear) or something.

INTERVIEWER: Saint John?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So what's the, what's the curiosity with children with autism?

PARTICIPANT 1: I don't know I just, I like, when I was in high school I dealt with like autism and stuff, and...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Like you had friends who were autistic?

PARTICIPANT 1: I worked with the Best Buddy program.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

PARTICIPANT 1: So I did that, and I loved it. And I wanted to work with kids at first and then I was like well, there's a lot of people who want to work with kids. I said so I just want to put more of a focus on people that actually need the help or, and then I was reading articles in the newspaper and stuff on how hard it is for a family with an, even just one autism kid, and I was like I just want to help them out. Like I mean I couldn't imagine, like she's perfectly fine and then having autism on top of that and being a single mom or something, like I could never imagine.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. It'd be like, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah like it would be like 10 times like harder than having her. I know one girl has 4 autism kids, they're all autism, not as, one of them has it really bad and the rest of them have a little bit.

INTERVIEWER: And they're all her children?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you're thinking wow. Times 400.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And I have to give credit because she is one strong woman, like.

INTERVIEWER: That is crazy.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So what would be, like if you were thinking about in the future and someday applying to STU let's say, and getting into a program, whether it's, you know, surrounding child studies or whatever it is, what would be some of the barriers that you think of in the future? Like 5 years down the road let's say.

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, I don't know, because I don't really know what I want to be quite yet. I just know that I want to work with autism, but I couldn't go to STU anyways because of my adult diploma, because they kind of just pushed me right out.

INTERVIEWER: Even if you apply as a mature student?

PARTICIPANT 1: Maybe, maybe. But they probably wouldn't take me as much as the person that got their, so I feel like they would kind of, they don't understand, they don't know I was pushed out because I had a baby, like I had a baby on the way, they pretty much just know that oh she's probably just too lazy to do her full school or...

INTERVIEWER: And like you said you like school, and you wanted, I mean if you would've been given the option to be supported through high school and finishing, would you have taken that?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. But maybe not when I was pregnant though, but if I wasn't pregnant I'd probably go and finish the whole course, or the whole high school. Like I probably would go back this year because I was just so bored staying home anyways. But now with her, it's like I wouldn't go back to high school, I'd probably just go to, I'd go to NBCC so I could just kind of get it all done with, and then I could start working and have full-time and hopefully save up some money and, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So in terms of like, even going to NBCC, do you see any barriers, you know with being a mom, and like you said almost like a single mom in a sense, in certain senses, and going to school fulltime or part-time or...

PARTICIPANT 1: I don't know. It's scary because that'll be way too hard. Like to go to school and then get daycare and then even have to work part-time after to get extra money. Because like with one income it was pretty hard as it was. Like I got like my, I didn't get family allowance until about 8 months anyway, or I guess it was 7 months.

INTERVIEWER: So financially it'd be huge.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So if I did I'd have to work part-time or something to make a little extra money for myself, because he's pretty much just covering like rent and food and just the basics, but for her to get new clothes or even for me, like I haven't even gotten new clothes that would fit. So for moneywise it'd be a lot harder to go to school, work, and not seeing her at all really. So I don't know if I'd, I don't know if I could do it.

INTERVIEWER: No? And what would be, like if there was a magic wand, let's say like some magic person would come and say (her name) we'll give you whatever you need to help you go to school. What would it be? Like what would you see as actually being meaningful support for you?

PARTICIPANT 1: For support, I just want my boyfriend to help me out. Because he seems like he's not much of a help. He's really negative I guess so I just want him to kind of help me, support, maybe even get like a daytime job to take her but, and then I like mind leaving her with him. I know it sounds bad but I don't know, like I'd rather daycare, like I'd rather go to Lincoln than him watch her because he gets frustrated really easy with her. She'll cry and he won't really know what to do so he'd just be like freaking out, and then he gets mad easily, and then she feels it then she starts crying more (unclear). Like the other day I came home and she was screaming and I was like what is wrong with her, and he's like I had to use the bathroom. So he left her to sit there and cry because he had to use the bathroom. So he spent like 15 minutes while she was screaming and I get home and I fed her, she was totally fine. I was like she was hungry, like feed her, like...

INTERVIEWER: So it's that element of I don't trust you, like I mean I don't know...

PARTICIPANT 1: No I can't trust him.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. In an ideal world he would change and he'd be more supportive.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And he'd be, he'd be more patient maybe.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Because if he would see things my way I guess, because even like my prom and stuff, he had no interest in it. He didn't want to go if it was school-related, or he didn't want to go to my prom, he wouldn't help me pick out a dress, he wouldn't do anything.

INTERVIEWER: He wasn't involved.

PARTICIPANT 1: No. Not at all.

INTERVIEWER: You want him to see things through your eyes, you know.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And I'm, I'm a people person. Like I love people, I like to get out and do stuff and he's the total opposite. He...

INTERVIEWER: He's more of an introvert?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. He's, he's different, he's totally opposite from me so...

INTERVIEWER: And it's, it's so refreshing to see that you're, it seems like you're trying to work things out with him, like you're...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Well a lot of people, it sounds bad because a lot of people were like oh, you know, you can do much better and they're trying to like kind of get me to break up really. Like they were just saying you can do much better and he only thinks about himself (unclear), and then I'm like, and that gets me going in my head, it gets, you know, 10 times worse, and then I even repeat it. Like he was driving her to get Geary the day without a license, and his friend. And I called him I was like, and this was the day I hadn't seen her all day. My first day at work. I was like mom they took her to Geary without a license, I said I'm going to freak at him. Mom's like well (unclear) call the cops on them so I did and he was made at me for 2 and a half days. And then it was like 10 times worse and, I'm like but really you shouldn't do that.

INTERVIEWER: You shouldn't do that and you're putting my daughter at risk.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, and that's what I told him. He goes well your car is, because I have an old car anyway, your car is junk anyway, it's probably not supposed to be on the road, legal. I'm like at least it's on the road, it's inspected, I have my license like, so...

INTERVIEWER: You're trying.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you're doing what you have to do.

PARTICIPANT 1: So he was just making excuses of how, trying to put me down again so...

INTERVIEWER: It seems like, you know you say again, it seems like it's something that happens often.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

PARTICIPANT 1: Like he's always just sees the negative and...

INTERVIEWER: And being, you know, your other half or whatever, it's like you need that support and he's the one right now to support you and he's not doing it. So it's like...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, because I, we broke up not too long ago. It was like a week and a half ago maybe, and I just drove to my mom's I was like I just need a break from all this negative and him being mad all the time. Because as soon as he wakes up he's grumpy. If I'm not home when he wakes up he's like where are you, this and this, and then I call him asking where he is because he's driving this car that not even supposed to

be on the road, and then he'd be like doesn't matter. I'm like really, like you call me so he just gets really angry from the time he wakes up. Especially if I'm not there.

INTERVIEWER: So it's negative.

PARTICIPANT 1: And then if I'm there he gets mad because we're too loud, if he's trying to sleep. So...

INTERVIEWER: There's no good, there's no happy medium.

PARTICIPANT 1: No. There's no, like I can't get him up. He's so, the negative that he has, I try to get out for the daytime and...

INTERVIEWER: So what made you change your mind and get back with him?

PARTICIPANT 1: I couldn't afford my own place, and I'm hoping that if I get a job, and this is another reason why I'm trying to get a job I guess is because if I got this job it would help us financially, and then it will also help that maybe he could get his own car on the road so he could drive without using my car at all, because he, he still used my car to go to work, and then with her, wake her up at like 4 o'clock just to go pick him up at night. It's just way too hard. So I was, and I talked to my mom and stuff because I was at my mom's and she's like maybe if you get, you know, your job and, because she's always trying to push me to get a job or to go to school. Trying to make me do something. So if I was just hoping to go to work, and then I was like well financially, you know, we'd be okay maybe. We'll work on that, that'll probably be done and over with. He'll have his own money, I can have my own instead of relying on him for food or rent.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And he's working at, where is he working right now?

PARTICIPANT 1: He's working with like Admiral but it's at the Co-op.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: Just cleaning overnight. But he's still making all the money and I made like 180 dollars in EI every 2 weeks and that's enough to get my extra groceries because I like to help out whenever I can. My phone bill, diapers, and then I try to buy her like a few clothes or whatever because I like to spend the money on her.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. She's your little girl.

PARTICIPANT 1: Like after this, after my appointment I'll probably go to Target, they have a sale at Target. So I'll probably go up there.

INTERVIEWER: Get some stuff. She's excited.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And then like it was awesome because on Christmas, all of the back pay, family allowance came in right for Christmas.

INTERVIEWER: What is it?

PARTICIPANT 1: My family allowance back pay. I got that all back for 7 months ago, so 7 months back pay.

INTERVIEWER: That would've been awesome.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. That's like 400 dollars a month, times that by 7. So I put it all towards Christmas.

INTERVIEWER: You did?

PARTICIPANT 1: So it was mostly stuff that she needs, I didn't even get her any clothes because I usually get them on Facebook for free. That website is awesome.

INTERVIEWER: What is it?

PARTICIPANT 1: There's a few websites. There's yard sale websites, and I'm part of them.

INTERVIEWER: Oh My Gosh, yeah, like I know there was one in Saint John. Like Saint John Yard Sale.

PARTICIPANT 1: This one's like a Fredericton Yard Sale, there's a bunch of those ones, and then there's like a kid's one that I'm usually on, and there's a free one. So people are just getting rid of junk, they'll put them on there. So I usually put things like clothes whenever I'm done with them I usually put them up because I get them for free.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah so it's like an exchange.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So I pretty much just get a lot of clothes for her for free. Like I was looking, she's getting out of 6 months clothes now.

INTERVIEWER: She's tiny.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And so I put those all on, and then I was looking for like 9 months or, 9 or 12, he just gave them to me. I think I spent 20 bucks on a big box, but other than that. It was 20 bucks though, a big giant box.

INTERVIEWER: Of clothes?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Awesome.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So she is pretty spoiled with clothes, like she has a lot of clothes. Nice and stuff. I do, like that's why I never had to buy clothes, I just get them for free, or either buy them, like their 20, like a big, giant box of, for 20 bucks, you can't beat it. That's even cheaper than Value Village.

INTERVIEWER: It seems like, you know, just like you talking about everything, it just seems like she's been a huge motivator for you.

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh for sure. Like anyone will tell you that. Before I couldn't even go out by myself. Like I wouldn't come here today if it wasn't for her. Because before was like even to go to like Walmart or something to get something, I wouldn't do it by myself. I would get someone to come with me or meet me there or just something. But now with her, like the other day I went to get groceries by myself, I've never done that before.

INTERVIEWER: So she's making you grow up and become independent.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. That and speaking for myself, like with my boyfriend I would never tell him I was going to call the cops on him before. But since it was with her safety I was like I'm going to call the cops if you don't go home. So it was just like...

INTERVIEWER: She's changed you for the better.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: She's changed you for the better.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you know you're thinking of, you know you've mentioned a couple times the future and, you know, working with autistic children and, you know, it's there, it's there.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And I'll probably do it just because I want to do it for her and, yeah. And I wouldn't do anything for myself before, like it was like yeah maybe another day or, and there's a baby class, actually the Family Resource Centre, there's a baby class there, and I go there and meet new moms and stuff. So...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is that Healthy Baby and Me program? Or is it...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah it's, there's one on Mondays that's at the VON. And then there's one on Fridays for adults that struggle and just want to get out of the house. So we go to them usually about twice a week. Now it's not until February. Monday ones. But we

usually go there and then meet new friends, and I actually have them all on Facebook, we talk and...

INTERVIEWER: Oh My Gosh.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So there's support.

PARTICIPANT 1: Before we had no friends. Like I was really shy, like I wouldn't really, like I didn't want to be with the drama that came with people. And now that I have her I'm like okay let's meet some new people. Like you need friends, I need friends.

INTERVIEWER: You guys are like a team.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Little team. Oh My God, the cutest team ever, honestly.

PARTICIPANT 1: She has no teeth yet.

INTERVIEWER: She's so cute. Oh My God like seriously I've never seen such a cute baby, who's like, what a good baby though.

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh yeah. She just sits here but if I put her down to like play she'd be like crying.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. She just wants to be involved. Alright I'm going to quickly just go see if there's anything, so right now you're working, the (unclear), you're working full-time right?

PARTICIPANT 1: Kind of. Right now I'm just getting into the schedule so they're just kind of pushing me in. I think I've worked twice so far, last week, and then this week I work 3 times. So then, I did put fulltime though so.

INTERVIEWER: You did?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And would you say, like for your current work situation, you know being a mom has, like what have the positive, what have been some positive things that have happened in terms of work that have come from being a mom? Like you said motivation, like you said you're more motivated...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. I don't know, I feel like I'm more happier. Like I'm, and I understand more, like I'm working with old people anyways so I feel like old people are like kids in a way because they have a mind, like some of them that I work with have a mind of, you know, a 2 or 3 year old just because they're losing their mind. So I feel like they're just kind of going backwards, I mean they're just starting to act like kids so I feel like I can talk to them more, because I talk to her all the time whether she can talk back or not I still talk to her. So for the communication it helped me a lot. Like I talked to one guy, and I had no idea what he was saying but I was going on just talking. Before I'd be like all awkward like yeah, okay, so. Even my first day like I was talking, I'm more opened and...

INTERVIEWER: So it's like having her, you kind of like, you know, in terms of communication, you've become more open and then you're outside of that.

PARTICIPANT 1: I can talk more, yeah. And then my boyfriend used to be the same way but now he's, like before he could only write things down, me and my mom had to, like we had a hard time growing up because I wanted her to be my friend not a mom kind of, so I had to always write her notes because I couldn't talk to her face to face, and now...

INTERVIEWER: It was just too frustrating?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah or just because I can't, I can't talk to people face to face before, like it was always, texting ruined me I guess because texting all the time you're behind something. So I would tell my mom, like I'd write her a note and then Ryan would get mad because I couldn't talk to him I had to like text him. So it was more of a, because we, going to school, we went to 2 different schools.

INTERVIEWER: You and Ryan?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So we were always texting, more of a texting relationship, and now I am more open and he can only text. So it switched completely.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. Because I'm hearing, I was going to say you're here like, you seem so open and so like comfortable and...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Those little cheeks, I just (unclear).

PARTICIPANT 1: I wasn't giving her attention.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah I know. (Talking to man). So yeah like you, just in terms of communication, in terms of you being more open and things like that.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Like I can talk to anybody now and say anything, like.

INTERVIEWER: You feel more comfortable.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Like before, like I wouldn't be able to come here at all.

INTERVIEWER: Really? That would've been before you would've had her.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Even when I was pregnant I was still kind of, like I was getting better but not as much. So now I'm always talking like I changed completely. Like I've grown up more. In high school I've always had the bad friends then, it was more in middle school, but then in high school I kind of lost them all, they either dropped out, didn't go, and turned to like drugs and smoking and then now that I have, well I had a miscarriage 3 years ago, 2 years ago, and I was smoking pot and I think that's what happened, so when I found out I was pregnant I quit smoking, I quit everything just cold turkey, I was like no way.

INTERVIEWER: You wanted to have her, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah so I quit everything and then I haven't started back up. I do smoke once in a, occasionally, when I'm really stressed with Ryan or whatever but other than that...

INTERVIEWER: You've gone like completely, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, completely opposite. And now my boyfriend still smokes and I get at him, I'm like well I can't say too much but stop it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah you'd think being like...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Like I would never do pot ever again. I want to quit smoking. I actually started smoking at my prom, couldn't celebrate, I couldn't drink because I was breastfeeding, I couldn't do anything so I was like I'm going to have a smoke for my celebration.

INTERVIEWER: That's logical.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. So since then I've just been having a smoke occasionally, which is pretty addicting, because I mean it does, that one smoke at prom and then my boyfriend's like well you can smoke one with your cousin, because I went to prom with my cousin, he's, because I didn't want him to get mad, going with a guy. So he's like you smoked with him but you can't smoke with me, and then I won't tell my mom and dad that I smoke because I just don't want...

INTERVIEWER: You don't want them to know.

PARTICIPANT 1: They quit and I just don't want.

INTERVIEWER: No but like you said it's the occasional thing, it's when you're stressed out so it's not...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah even if she's like too fussy or whatever (unclear) put her to bed, I go for one or me and Ryan are fighting I go for one, but I would never leave her crying and go for a smoke or anything. Like I (unclear) with her. And I make sure she's sleeping or, like being entertained enough.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, she seems like she loves the attention though.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah she does.

INTERVIEWER: She'd be so entertaining. Like I feel like one day I would just be like Oh My God, like you just...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah that's what I tell the daycare. I said she'll make you smile at least once a day. Like she'll make you like laugh.

INTERVIEWER: So in terms of like, when you're saying, you know the daycare situation, the financial situation, those are things that right now with your current work, you know, with establishing a career, you're finding hard, like you're saying okay well I don't know who to give her to, I don't want to give her to anyone, financially it's hard because daycares are really expensive in a financial way...

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Like you said 37 dollar, you know, it doesn't sound like much but it is, like when you multiply that by however many days, that's a lot of money.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. It was like almost 700 bucks, I was like I'll be working to pay for childcare, that's all I'll be working for. I might as well stay on EI and get family allowance and, you know, I'd be better off than, even losing money for daycare if I was making that much. So it's just (unclear) helped me, I might only be paying a hundred and (unclear) dollars for daycare which would be awesome.

INTERVIEWER: That's because of Social Development?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah if they'll do it yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And what are the conditions?

PARTICIPANT 1: Well (unclear) you can to someone like your cousin or something but you have to make like really little money. Like and we're making too much for that. So I have to get daycare, and at the daycare they know all of our hours. They got to know how much we're making an hour, you have to get a note from the daycare saying that they are working, and fulltime, even mine and Ryan's both paystubs for a month,

schedule for a month, and then you go in, you give them all, then you have a meeting or whatever and they'll say how much money you'll get or, and if you're qualified and stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Oh so it's based on how much money you guys make.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That's through Social Development.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. We're not even on Social Development right now so, like I was just getting my, it started off with everything then it started off with no money and just benefits, like health coverage and stuff, and then now it's down to nothing because I'm getting it. I'm getting it through my work.

INTERVIEWER: You're getting like dental and...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. But it's not half as much as Social Development, like they give you a good plan.

INTERVIEWER: At Social Development?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Like I got the Marina and that's like a 5, 6 hundred thing, whatever, and that covered, that covered everything.

INTERVIEWER: Are you serious?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And then for this one, I think on the card like half or something, 230 or something.

INTERVIEWER: So when you, you started on Social Development when you had her?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you stopped it, when did you stop going on it?

PARTICIPANT 1: When Ryan went back to work because we made, because he was making, he was working full-time so he's probably making like 7 hundred dollars every paycheck, and we were, that was like 14 hundred a month, close or whatever. They were only giving us not even a thousand dollars, like 960 something.

INTERVIEWER: A month?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. For mostly just rent and a little bit of food so...

INTERVIEWER: So once you, once he went back to work it was like okay we'll cut back.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. But then we were on long term health benefits, coverage.

INTERVIEWER: With Social Development?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And then that kind of weaned off.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Well I'm still on it technically but, until my work one cuts in. That one will cut out. I think it's like 90 days or something.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And you started it, when did you start your job again? Last week?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. On Friday, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's great though I mean, I know you're saying it's, you know you're having...

PARTICIPANT 1: It's a really boring job.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, is it?

PARTICIPANT 1: The first day I was there I was in with, a room, or I couldn't even go in the room, I was in a hallway because the girl was isolated, and she had diarrhea and puking, whatever.

INTERVIEWER: The girl? The older one.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: She was in there and she couldn't like, you had to go in with like the face mask, the hand, so they were like don't go in unless you need to. Well then it was hard because I was trying to peak in, make sure she wasn't pulling anything out or, you know trying to get out of bed because she was moving. And they asked me to give her a blanket so I had to cover all up to give her the blanket and then go out. So I was there for 8 hours and for 4 of it her husband was there and he gowned up and went in. So I had to give him the, their time, so I had to leave and I went in the waiting room, watched TV for 4 hours. So it's pretty boring. The second time I went in there was another guy and he was, he could get up, you could go in so I sat by his bed, made sure he didn't leave the

room, or if he did made sure I was walking around with him. Then his family member came in for close to 6 hours of my shift so I was in the waiting room for about 6 hours.

INTERVIEWER: And those were your 2 days that you worked?

PARTICIPANT 1: And that's all I pretty much do because most of them like family do come in.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. So you're there to kind of keep them company when, you know, make sure they're okay and, it's almost like a...

PARTICIPANT 1: When family members aren't there. But you still got to be there because half an hour (unclear) and they'll be like okay we're leaving so I have to be there for that half hour until someone else came in.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. So it's not what you want, like that wouldn't be...

PARTICIPANT 1: No. I, but if I, there's a program with them, it's PSW that you can take, it's 425 or something. And that's with the books and everything so if I take that then I could go into people's home so that was what I want to do.

INTERVIEWER: That's what you want to do ultimately.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Cook and clean and help them around. So if I take that program then I can go into their homes. So I kind of just have to hold off until that program...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And was that the appointment that you had today?

PARTICIPANT 1: No the appointment is for I got to do a TB test for my job, and I got the TB testing done 2 days ago, I got to go in for a checkup, and then next week I go for my, I got to go for the second dose, and then I got to go 2 days later.

INTERVIEWER: Oh My Gosh there's a lot of test things and stuff like that?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And then I got to get my flu shot, I don't agree on the flu shot but I got to get it anyway because I'd rather get the flu shot if I'm working in the hospital I guess so I don't have to bring anything home to her.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah you're right.

PARTICIPANT 1: So I won't give her the flu shot. I don't believe in it enough to give it to her but...

INTERVIEWER: There's so many people who still have who are still sick.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It's like the, whatever's out there is so big now it's like it doesn't matter what you have in your body it's like it still makes you sick.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah well my nurse, like I have a nurse that comes to my house to check up. She doesn't have to, it was more of I want her to.

INTERVIEWER: And is she from the...

PARTICIPANT 1: She's from the public health, it's on 300 St. Mary's Street. They just come to my house and if I have any questions like about solid foods and stuff, that she'll answer them. She'll weigh her and she'll, yeah she keeps a record, because I have a hard time writing everything down like when she does it, the age, but she writes her weight down all the time so that when we're done the, done it all she's going to give me the charts. So it's good, like she's kind of like keeping it for me.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, because it's overwhelming. Like there's, you know, being a mom is so...

PARTICIPANT 1: And then to like find out how to even write it down like get the book out and then write it down and, it's like yeah I'll do it later and then you kind of forget.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, get someone to do it for you.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: (Talk about time). So even like let's say with your job, you know if you did go to this, you concluded this course and then you were able to move on and do work within people's homes, and that would be, would you, like is that what you want, like is that your end goal, would that be something that you're happy with?

PARTICIPANT 1: No because I want to take something totally different, I want to work with autism.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah exactly.

PARTICIPANT 1: So yeah, I don't know, I hopefully will get into school next year, so if I take this PSW course, I might even work in a group home, I don't know what I want to do. So if there's like a group home or work with autism, there's an autism centre down Lincoln, I don't know 100 percent what they do, I feel like there's like a daycare, but I wanted to work there, I guess it depends which one pays better. So I did, I do want to work in a group home but I already interviewed them, they don't pay that much so I don't know if I would or not.

INTERVIEWER: And you're, you're interest in that kind of setting, is it, like what would you say that stems from, like where does that come from?

PARTICIPANT 1: For the group home, I don't know I just want people that kind of need people's help and they have a hard time. Like I feel bad for people, like all the time. So people with autism, I just want to help them, and...

INTERVIEWER: You have such a big heart.

PARTICIPANT 1: Same as like group homes, like I see how my boyfriend struggled, especially with like, kind of like neglect I guess, because like his parents didn't want him and thought that money was more important than their love, because they're like oh they'll give you a laptop, they'll give you this and this, you'll be so much happier. And I'm like no he wouldn't be.

INTERVIEWER: He needs that connection with the parent.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Like I would never put her in a group home because you, to give her a laptop and more money than I could. I'd rather spend time with her and go skating, or swimming, or...

INTERVIEWER: Because that's what's going to help developmentally. You know what I mean? When you're telling me about how your boyfriend is with, you know, with her right now, with you, it, you know having that kind of upbringing when he was kid, I mean it doesn't surprise me he's, you know, it's traumatizing.

PARTICIPANT 1: And then when we broke up there was a lot of people who were like oh well he had a hard life. Like that's why he is the way he is. I'm like yeah but he had a good life before, the last 4 years we were together, I mean that's not really an excuse, before that's why I stayed with him because he had a hard life, I wanted to help him, and I find like that's the guys I kind of date now too. When I was like even in middle school, I'd always date like the bad ones or, because I felt like I could help them be good.

INTERVIEWER: I love it.

PARTICIPANT 1: So now like if I ever go for another guy, I'd make sure he has a car, (unclear), making him work.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Because like you said right now the one thing with Ryan, like I need support. I need the support.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. And with prom and stuff, I just feel like he wasn't thinking about me he was more thinking about himself, and that's how he usually does. That's how I feel, but...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Like you're saying there's no excuse on what his childhood was, it's like there's a point where you have to just grow up and you have to, you know, look at people, you know, what are their experiences...

PARTICIPANT 1: Well I remember the night I was having contractions he went to work for 8:30, and I was like well I'm in pain, like I'm going soon, because I was already 4 centimetres dilated done, so he's like call me if anything happens. So at 10 o'clock I called him, I was like I'm going to the hospital. He's like okay well call me if anything happens. I was like okay, well obviously at that point I knew it was bad anyways. So I went in, they said I was still 4 centimetres dilated, I could either stay or leave, so I left thinking it was like false labour or something. And then it was like 1 o'clock, no it was like 1, yeah 1 o'clock at night. My mom was sleeping, she thought I was feeling better. So I go into my mom's room and I start crying, because I was over at mom's place at the time, and she's like well, she goes I'll take you to the hospital because you know I thought you were sleeping, I thought it would've been better by now. So I called him, he goes okay let me know what happens. So I went up and I was like almost 8 centimetres dilated. So I was like, my mom called him she's like you better want to get up here now or else you're going to miss everything. So I felt like he could've came up, he could've got off work around 10, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: He could've been with you, absolutely.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah and even then the first, like I got home, he went to work that night instead of staying home to help me with the first night or anything he just left for work.

INTERVIEWER: Which is what you were saying like it sometimes feels like it's, I'm a single mom.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Because even the first night she was, he was again, we got home probably around 5 or 6, and then went to my mom's house and he picked, and then he got dropped off at my mom's place. So he didn't get to go home with me, didn't get to help me carry my stuff in or anything, so...

INTERVIEWER: That's challenging.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah and it was different because I thought he'd be there more, and then he was still tired from working all night but he was sleeping, and so I couldn't get him of bed because I had her in my hands or whatever, and I was sore, I couldn't get him out of bed. So I was like throwing every possible thing for him to get up because he's supposed to be like not watching me but staying with me, and my mom went home to get some sleep because she was there all the time with me, so I couldn't get him out of bed and it was the first thing (unclear), he knew them so he woke him up for me. Because he wouldn't wake up for me. I was throwing like his wallet, I was throwing lighters, I was throwing everything I could reach.

INTERVIEWER: And he wasn't getting up.

PARTICIPANT 1: No. He was too tired. So I just wish that he would do more.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and when you were, you know when you first have a baby you'd think things would change and that he would be a little bit more...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. I thought that he would be there more, especially, I thought that he, yeah definitely more.

INTERVIEWER: We've covered, like pretty much everything. It's so good though because it's giving me such like a, you know a deeper understanding, it's giving me a really deeper understanding of what's happening and...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. I find that it's mostly the boys that are all the trouble.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah no honestly I would agree.

PARTICIPANT 1: Like if they could just like be a woman for a day, they couldn't do it. Like Ryan told me before that I had it easy going, that he went to work all the time and that he would've rather switch with me. And now that I am going to work and he has her for 8 hours, he, no not even because my mom was watching her for most of the day and then he got her for an hour, he couldn't do it. Like he was stressed, he was pissed off because he just, she was feeling the energy, they can feel it.

INTERVIEWER: They do, eh? She knows.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Like even when me and Ryan would get in a fight I find it's hard because I don't want to yell or anything in front of her so I'll like put her down to play and then go in another room to talk to him. Even though she's younger.

INTERVIEWER: You're doing well.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah so I still try to go in the other room.

INTERVIEWER: Because I mean maybe you know his, Ryan's childhood, he might've seen a lot of yelling, he might've seen a lot of fighting so he might think that's okay.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, and he does, because he tries to yell, he yells at me in front of her. I'm like let's just take this in the other room.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you know.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Because I don't want her to feel it. Like even when we did break up I went to my mom's, I just tried to feed her and being like all angry and upset, she could still feel it because she was grumpy. She wouldn't even eat because she was so grumpy.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. My mom fed her the bottle I just couldn't calm down and she was fine.

INTERVIEWER: She was fine.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Like once you kind of calm down it's like okay I'm okay now.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: (Talk to baby). You probably get so much attention like going around with this cute baby.

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh yeah. Me and my friend went downtown to Tim Horton's and she was about 2 and a half, 3 months, and we were like talking and aw, we'd talk for 2 more seconds, aw, and then they'd sit there and talk like they were waiting in line while we were sitting there talking. Yeah. And then she loves it.

INTERVIEWER: She loves the attention.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. (Unclear) loves attention.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah, she probably...

PARTICIPANT 1: That's why at daycare I feel like it's good for the kids wise, like there's only one other kid right there now but they only have 3 that they'll be taking. And then they all get like the afterschools and the 2 and 3 years old all together in the same room afterward. So she will kind of get some more attention with the older ones.

INTERVIEWER: She would, yeah. She absolutely would. But like you said it's still stressful like oh do I, like...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I'm sure like from what I've heard too, it's like this thing of, you know, at first, like I don't know, I don't know because I don't have a baby but from what I've heard anyways from friends and family it's like you have the baby and it's so stressful. Every first step it's like, you know whether it's bringing her to daycare for the first time, or everything...

PARTICIPANT 1: Feeding her.

INTERVIEWER: Exactly. It's just like once that first step is done, like when you have another baby it's going to be like...

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh yeah. I've heard the same thing. If I can just take her, well I had bad experience with daycare when I was younger. Like my mom gave us like to the in home girl that has her own kids or whatever, and one girl left my sister in the crib and my sister used to like puke when she was crying really hard, and my mom came there early just because she got off work early so she just came early and didn't say anything to her or anything, just popped in early, and the girl was outside for a smoke with her friend and the rest of the kids were outside and my sister was inside in the crib, and she was puking everywhere, she was crying so hard.

INTERVIEWER: Oh My God.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you had that in your head you're thinking like...

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I don't want anything like that to ever happen, yeah. I mean that sucks you had such a negative experience with that.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah and then one girl was, she lived almost by the airport, we used to live in Lincoln, and she let me, I went outside because I was so mad, her son, when we were really the same age, like he was always picking on me and stuff, I was so mad, just went outside, I was like I just want away from him, and she got mad and I got in time-out because I wanted away from him because he wouldn't leave me alone. So I was like I didn't want to be punished for something that you didn't really do.

INTERVIEWER: Alright let me just quickly make sure that everything's covered and then...

PARTICIPANT 1: Did you get a hold of (other participant) the one I was...

INTERVIEWER: I did. (Talk about other participant 1:03ish- 1:05:30)

INTERVIEWER: She just makes it all worth it, eh.

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh yeah. It was funny because when I was having her, they say like when you have a baby you should have like a rhythm or something you do, like you'll either like kind of tap or something when you're, like doing contractions or pushing or anything but mine was as soon as I got hooked up, all I would ask is what's her heart rate, that's the only thing I kept asking because I was, I don't know if it was just because when I was born my mom had, had to have an emergency C-section because my heartrate was going down, because the cord was wrapped around or something, so I

don't know if that's what it was or if it just a habit or I don't know what but every like 2 seconds it's like what's her heart rate, I didn't, I asked what's her heart rate like the 50th time and they're like no answer, and I was like What is her heart rate, I got so mad, and they're like just give me a minute. And I was like yelling at them. And they're like it's fine, it's fine, it's fine, and then, and then afterwards I was like why wouldn't you tell me that her heart rate, they were like it did go down a little bit.

INTERVIEWER: It did go down.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so she's blonde.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay (talking about other girl 1:06:30ish on).

C.2 Kate's Transcript

INTERVIEWER: Alright so basically the first question, it revolves around your experience, like, as a young mom. So basically like were you, like I want to know were you in high school when you found out you were pregnant, did you stay in high school...?

PARTICIPANT 2: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: While you were pregnant, just stuff like that. At the beginning.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, I was in school.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: I found out actually while I was at school because I called them while I was at school to get my test results. Because I got a blood test done.

INTERVIEWER: Because you thought you were pregnant or?

PARTICIPANT 2: No the nurse, I went to the clinic about like a sore hip or something and then they're like oh we're going to send you for a pregnancy test. So yeah, and then they told me I was pregnant.

INTERVIEWER: What grade were you in at that point?

PARTICIPANT 2: 11.

INTERVIEWER: In Grade 11, okay. And your boyfriend was also in Grade 11 at the time?

PARTICIPANT 2: Um he was in Grade 10.

INTERVIEWER: He was in Grade 10?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. He's behind a little bit because he's not from here.

INTERVIEWER: Right, so he moved here from Russia?

PARTICIPANT 2: From, well he moved from Russia to Israel to here. So (unclear).

INTERVIEWER: So he moved, like he's from far.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So basically at that point when you found out that you were, you were pregnant in Grade 11, you were living with your parents?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And how was, you know, what did, how was their reaction when they found out?

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh, I, after I found out I went to the doctor because they called me and said they wanted me to go right away. Then I called my mom from the doctor's office, and she was just like okay well I love you, and I'll talk to you when you get home.

INTERVIEWER: And at that point you had told them that you were pregnant, and she said she loved you, she supported you.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And then you like, you lived with her for a little bit of time or?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: Then I got in a fight with her boyfriend, and then I left.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And you've been living here ever since.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Awesome. And how is it living here?

PARTICIPANT 2: It's fine. Sometimes it's difficult for him to like, his parents don't speak English very well so we don't understand each other well. But other than that it's fine.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and your boyfriend speaks English?

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh yeah. His brother has like perfect English too.

INTERVIEWER: Oh really? Oh they're lucky. Do they both speak Russian as well?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And Hebrew.

INTERVIEWER: And Hebrew? Oh my Goodness. So you were in Grade 11, were you able to kind of like go through school, like you gave birth and then you continued going to school?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, um yeah I was in school until I was like 39 weeks pregnant. And then the day after school ended, it was like for Christmas break, I went into labour, and then had her, and then as soon as like February came, last year I went back to school.

INTERVIEWER: Oh my Goodness, okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And so I've been in, the only reason I'm not in school like right now is because I need to watch her while his mom's visiting Russia, but she's coming back on the 20th.

INTERVIEWER: Of February?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yup.

INTERVIEWER: So you're going to go back to school on the 20th?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And how do you find like, you go to the Fredericton High School?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How did you find like, were they supportive of you, like the teachers and the principal?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. When I was pregnant I got away with like a lot of stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's awesome.

PARTICIPANT 2: Except for one teacher, he was like really, like, not smart, it's funny because I had to pee a lot because I was pregnant and he's like do you have a medical excuse.

INTERVIEWER: You're like ah yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: It was really funny.

INTERVIEWER: So he like let you go to the washroom and stuff like that.

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And when your, and then you they, you went to school until you were 39 weeks and then you gave birth during Christmas vacation, and, is that why her name is Noel?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Oh my God that's so cute. And then did you go back to school after Christmas?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You did. So you would've...

PARTICIPANT 2: Like in February, after the exams. She was 6 weeks old I think.

INTERVIEWER: She was 6 weeks. And how did you find going back?

PARTICIPANT 2: It was complicated. I think I failed like all my classes that term.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, of course, I mean...

PARTICIPANT 2: But yeah, it wasn't like hard because she slept a lot during the day and stuff so like I could get my schoolwork done, it's that I didn't really try I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Did they let you do work like here, did they let you kind of take your school work here or did you have to go to classes?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah I went to classes.

INTERVIEWER: You did? So it was like a regular...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: High school.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And his mom watched her all day.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And you felt, like you felt like because she slept you were able to get your work done but just, you know maybe...

PARTICIPANT 2: I kind of relaxed, because it was the only time I got to relax.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, exactly. I mean you're busy with her and you had just given birth, so that, you know at that time your mind's not like thinking school, you're thinking like...

PARTICIPANT 2: And I was like kind of being lazy for the longest time because I had a C-section, so I was like lying around a lot.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you were sore?

PARTICIPANT 2: Well for like the first 5 weeks, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Were you sore after you had it, the C-section?

PARTICIPANT 2: Not really but I just used it as an excuse.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's interesting. SO they were, would you say like at the time, like right now you're going back in February, were they, did they give you, I guess like were they accommodating for you?

PARTICIPANT 2: The school?

INTERVIEWER: The school, when you said well my mother, or my boyfriend's mom's gone to Russia I have to stay home.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, they have me doing my schoolwork at home right now.

INTERVIEWER: Oh nice.

PARTICIPANT 2: And then once a week I'll be taking it in and getting more schoolwork until I get to go back to school.

INTERVIEWER: Oh that's awesome. So they were understanding.

PARTICIPANT 2: Very. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you're supposed to graduate this June?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Awesome.

PARTICIPANT 2: Supposed to.

INTERVIEWER: And you're going to?

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh I'm hoping so.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: Last year I didn't do too good, but it's because I'm not trying. Because every time I get a chance I relax instead of doing my work.

INTERVIEWER: Because you're busy and you're tired.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah but it's not very good. I have to start studying. So I've been working really hard while she has her naps lately, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What would be like something, if you could think of anything that the school could give you to help you succeed, you know what I mean, to help you graduate, what would it be?

PARTICIPANT 2: I have no clue.

INTERVIEWER: No clue.

PARTICIPANT 2: I think the school's doing a lot on their part and a lot of the reason I'm not doing good is because of myself.

INTERVIEWER: So it's like that lack of motivation?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say like if they had courses that, like let's say they had like a, a course on like, that had to do with her for example, and not like her in particular but how to like, nutrition for children, like would you be more interested?

PARTICIPANT 2: Maybe. I took Parenting when I was pregnant, and like Child Studies, and it was good. I liked those classes, I did pretty good in those classes.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you felt like they were relevant to you.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah like they had to do with you and they could help you. Awesome. So how do you think being a mom has positively changed your life?

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know. I don't, I'm always good now, and I don't do anything bad. Like I don't know, a lot of people my age are out drinking all the time and I don't do that anymore. Like I haven't drank in 2 years.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. So she's kind of given you a reason to like...

PARTICIPANT 2: Be good.

INTERVIEWER: To be good.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And she's like help me grow up a little bit.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, yeah. And like, do you want to give me examples, like of how you've grown up since...

PARTICIPANT 2: Responsibility.

INTERVIEWER: Responsibility, eh?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Having someone else to look after.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's cool. So, okay so you're saying that you're graduating this year and your boyfriend, will he be graduating this year as well?

PARTICIPANT 2: No, he, I have no clue actually. He did half of the year this year in Grade 10, and this term right now he's doing Grade 11. So maybe next year he'll be in Grade 12 but I have no clue.

INTERVIEWER: You have no idea? Okay. He's going, he's doing his own pace.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. We don't really talk about school together because we get frustrated.

INTERVIEWER: Oh really?

PARTICIPANT 2: It's difficult and hard.

INTERVIEWER: It's difficult? (Talking about baby) So what would be like, you know you were talking about the positive things that have happened, you know because of

when you had her, that consequently happened, what would you say like in terms of like negative things, or things that like have been hard for you since having her? In terms of school.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know. Because before I had her I wasn't doing too good in school either. So I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that since having her you've been motivated a little bit to...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah to graduate.

INTERVIEWER: To graduate, yeah, okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Because then I can stay home with her.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, of course. Is that what you want to do?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Well I was going to go, I don't know what I want to do, I have so many ideas.

INTERVIEWER: I want to hear them. I'm so interested.

PARTICIPANT 2: Well, okay, one week I wanted to be a nurse, the next week I wanted to be a lawyer, and then the next week I wanted to be a 9-1-1 operator. So like every week I have a new idea.

INTERVIEWER: Those are really awesome ideas though. Like nurse and lawyer and 9-1-1 operator. Like they're so different but they're so, they're so interesting. And what would you say like right now is what are you leaning towards right now?

PARTICIPANT 2: I have no clue.

INTERVIEWER: You have no clue?

PARTICIPANT 2: I'm going to just finish school and hopefully by the time June comes I can think of something.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. But you, in your mind you're thinking one day I definitely want to go to college or go to...

PARTICIPANT 2: I kind of want to get a job where I can kind of pick my own work hours so that I can like, if she needed me home I can come home or something.

INTERVIEWER: Like independent type of, independent type of work situation.

PARTICIPANT 2: If you're a personal trainer at the gym you pick your own hours.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Maybe I'll do that. I have no clue.

INTERVIEWER: That's so interesting. And do we have, I think we have like a Good Life or something like that on Prospect.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. I go there a lot. Like I volunteer there.

INTERVIEWER: Oh My Gosh. You volunteer like you're, like a trainer?

PARTICIPANT 2: I volunteer like up front and do like the up-front work, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: That's really cool. What made you want to do that?

PARTICIPANT 2: The free membership.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I love it. That's a really great, a great reason. Do you find like working out helps you?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah because I get stressed a lot with school. And with like my boyfriend sometimes. And, you know she doesn't stress me out but everybody else does. She kind of calms me down.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It's hard sometimes having a relationship, it's difficult.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, lately, like the last few days it's been okay. Well last few weeks maybe. But we used to fight all the time when she was smaller.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah? Like the stresses, was it related to the stresses of having her or?

PARTICIPANT 2: Maybe. I just, he always sits on his computer, like every day 24/7. So I kind of just got over it now, I don't really care about it now but before I just wanted more help with her.

INTERVIEWER: Of course.

PARTICIPANT 2: But his mom helps me and his brother helps me. He just needs to grow up a little bit (unclear). We'll see (someone coming home)

INTERVIEWER: So kind of, so you're finding there's a lot of support in terms of his mom and stuff?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

(Talking to brother)

INTERVIEWER: Alright let's see what other questions I have. So, okay, so you're saying basically at this point kind of getting a job where you, you know, where you can fix your own hours and stuff like that.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah that'd be nice.

INTERVIEWER: Would be like what your, you goals are at this point.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, or like with the 9-1-1 operator, you can work like, you work 4 12 hour shifts, like 2 in the day and then 2 during the night.

INTERVIEWER: So wait you would work 2...

PARTICIPANT 2: Like from 7 am to 7 pm for 2 days, and then 7 pm to 7 am for 2 days, and then you get the rest of the days, like 4 days off.

INTERVIEWER: Oh wow. So that's something that you'd want to do, it would interest you?

PARTICIPANT 2: I have no clue. Just thinking.

INTERVIEWER: Just thinking. Just brainstorming. Are there people out there that have like helped you kind of think of, or not like think of ways but like plan out how you would do it, like if you were...

PARTICIPANT 2: No.

INTERVIEWER: No? You've been doing it yourself?

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Alright let's see what else we have. (Talking about baby playing)...And you lived here for how long?

PARTICIPANT 2: Almost 2 years.

INTERVIEWER: Almost 2 years, okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: I've lived here for almost 2 years.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: Is that what you asked?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So when you had her, she's 13 months, so you were still, like you would've lived here for a few months.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, I was like 8 weeks pregnant when I moved in with them.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. (Playing) Let's see what other questions, so you're saying like his, you know your boyfriend's family has been really helpful...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Have other things, like in terms of like even school, like have people, has the school been helpful? Like what would be other supports that you've had?

PARTICIPANT 2: My school nurse was helpful.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

PARTICIPANT 2: But like all nurses are. Because I was breastfeeding and she would let me go and, she would let me go and like pump in her...

INTERVIEWER: Her office?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Oh nice.

PARTICIPANT 2: And let me use her fridge to like make sure it doesn't go bad.

INTERVIEWER: Oh My Gosh. And she was at the school?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice. Would you say like, you were talking about that teacher letting you go to the washroom when you had to...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah that was (unclear).

INTERVIEWER: Would there be any other people that you would say...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah they'd just be always super nice.

INTERVIEWER: They'd always be super nice? Like the people at the school?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have like friends that are kind of, you know, that have the same experience as you have?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah my friend Nicole, she has a baby.

INTERVIEWER: Oh nice. How old is the baby?

PARTICIPANT 2: 7 months, 8 months, 9 months. It was born in May. 9 months.

INTERVIEWER: 9 months old. So she's able to kind of (pause). She's not like a big whiner though, she doesn't whine very much. She doesn't cry.

PARTICIPANT 2: No. She doesn't, unless she's really tired.

INTERVIEWER: She's a good baby.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. (Pause). I like to put on Barney because it's like the sing-a-long and so she's not just sitting down watching, she'll like dance to it.

INTERVIEWER: That's good. Yeah, it's like interactive, she can like do stuff with it.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah I don't like it when she's like a zombie.

INTERVIEWER: No I know it's a good point. (Pause). Okay let me see. Do you work right now?

PARTICIPANT 2: No.

INTERVIEWER: Would you want to work if you could or are you...

PARTICIPANT 2: Maybe. I don't know. Because I'm away from her for 8 hours a day because I go to school all day so I don't know if I could handle...

INTERVIEWER: Going to work on top of that.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You're right, that would be a lot. What do you guys do during the day?

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know. Sometimes we watch cartoons, like in the morning I get her to watch some cartoons because she'll like stay awake for like maybe an hour and then have a nap. And then we'll like get up and play with blocks or like, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, do stuff like that.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. I got her to colour the last few days.

INTERVIEWER: That's what you were saying, you're teaching her.

PARTICIPANT 2: Like markers, but I probably should get some crayons.

INTERVIEWER: Does she usually have one nap in a day?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah she usually like if she wakes up earlier than 7 she'll have a nap around 1 or 2, or I don't know she usually has a nap around 1 or 2. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: She's like the funnest cuddle. She'd be like the cutest cuddle thing ever, like just cuddling all day.

PARTICIPANT 2: She hates cuddling.

INTERVIEWER: Does she?

PARTICIPANT 2: I wish she'd cuddle with me. Like when, I don't know, when she's tired she'll cuddle, but if she's not she always runs away.

INTERVIEWER: She wants to...

PARTICIPANT 2: She never sits still unless there's TV on.

INTERVIEWER: Really? She's active. Do you miss those baby months where she was...?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. When she wasn't moving and then she'd just lay there and I could like walk away and go pee without her like coming with me.

INTERVIEWER: I know, I was going to say. That's the...Does your boyfriend cuddle with her too?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah if she's cuddly.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So she's learning all those, she's learning, or she's learning Russian or she's learning Hebrew?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, and English. I don't think she'll learn Hebrew.

INTERVIEWER: No? Alright, (pause). You like teaching her stuff?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. It's interesting.

INTERVIEWER: So you're saying Nicole, like your friend Nicole has a little kid, does she, or a baby, do you have any other friends that have...

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't really have a lot of friends.

INTERVIEWER: No? Because she's your priority eh?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And lately I haven't had time to go out. So it sucks.

INTERVIEWER: To go out like, to go out with your friends?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Because she was sick. So usually we take the babies with us but she's sick.

INTERVIEWER: She's feeling better a little bit? I find that so cool how you have like, you know, the things that you are thinking about doing later on in life, like, you know, going to law school or being 9-1-1 operator. Like they're so, it's such like, you know, they're such great, they're different but they're so like...

PARTICIPANT 2: I want an interesting job. That's why like a lawyer, like because they'll have like a new case every day or something. Or like a 9-1-1 operator it's something new every day. I don't want to like do...

INTERVIEWER: The same thing over and over again.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And that's another thing with like if you were to do like fitness training or something.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah you'd have like new people to train.

INTERVIEWER: Everyday yeah. And different things. It's never like the same thing over and over again. It's true. It'd be interesting. So like you're, like working within a call centre would not be...

PARTICIPANT 2: It'd be so boring.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah I know eh?

PARTICIPANT 2: I mean it could be interesting because some people would like be funny when they call but I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: When you're thinking about like if one day you're like okay I'm going to go to college or I'll go to university, like even though, I know now it might seem like

a far, far away, but like what would be some of the things that you'd find hard or that you think would be hard in the future, to have her and go to school let's say?

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh, I don't know, I think university would be hard because that'd be a lot of like studying. So I don't know how that would work. But I'm thinking if I wait until she's in school and I'm in school at the same time then we can both go to school and then come home and like do our homework together.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that's true.

PARTICIPANT 2: So it could be interesting.

INTERVIEWER: It's fun that you're thinking of it like in a positive light, like you're thinking okay what like...

PARTICIPANT 2: To make it work.

INTERVIEWER: To make it work.

PARTICIPANT 2: And then so I can still have time with her.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: Like a teacher.

INTERVIEWER: That's true, that's true. What's your boyfriend's name?

PARTICIPANT 2: Stefan.

INTERVIEWER: Stefan, okay, like Stefan but Stefan?

PARTICIPANT 2: It's the same thing I think. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: Because some people call some things, like Stefan and Stefan, they call it the same thing. I mean it's the same name I think, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: She's teething.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, well yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: And she's chewing on everything. So I give her the phone case because it's like rubbery but not the actual phone.

INTERVIEWER: That's a good idea.

PARTICIPANT 2: Because this was my Christmas present.

INTERVIEWER: Your phone was?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. From my dad.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that's nice. Are you still in contact with your dad?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, he lives in Grand Falls though.

INTERVIEWER: Grand Falls is in Ontario?

PARTICIPANT 2: No it's, it's like 2 hours away, 1 hour and a half, 2 hours, yeah. Like past Woodstock.

INTERVIEWER: And he's working there?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. He lives there with my little sister and my stepmom.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And do you get along with your little sister and your...

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Stepmom.

PARTICIPANT 2: But I just haven't been able to talk to them lately because my sister is like in the hospital, and my dad's working a lot so...

INTERVIEWER: Is she okay?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. I think she's fine. She just has depression.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: So, they put her there just in case or something.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's hard. So if your, you know if, at the end of the day like, you know, when I do this, when I write this up would there be anything that you'd want me to write up that, you know, that would help you. Like you know if you're thinking

about your life, how would people be able to help you? How would I be able to help you? How would anybody be able to help you?

PARTICIPANT 2: I have no clue.

INTERVIEWER: No? Like even if you're thinking financially, if you're thinking money, if you're thinking school, if you're thinking job, babysitter, like you know some of the girls I've spoken to they said things like cheaper daycare.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, I have someone to watch her all the time.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so that's not your thing.

PARTICIPANT 2: No. And like I have a social worker who helps me with money.

INTERVIEWER: Oh really?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How does that work?

PARTICIPANT 2: Well it's like, in youth assistance with the government.

INTERVIEWER: It's through like Social Development?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. So it's like the same things just for younger people who need help.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So the social worker, like every month gives you an amount of money?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And there's a child tax so like I don't need help with money.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice. That's awesome.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah it's a lot of money, that's why (she has so much toys?).

INTERVIEWER: You find like you're...

PARTICIPANT 2: Like every time I'm out I want to buy her a new toy.

INTERVIEWER: Oh really?

PARTICIPANT 2: But they told me not to for the next while because she has too many.

INTERVIEWER: What would be other things that you would like buy with that money?

PARTICIPANT 2: I have no clue. Sometimes I don't know, I eat out sometimes. And I buy her toys. And I buy a lot of formula and like food for her. And then I buy food for the house sometimes. And then sometimes I like I get my boyfriend a sweater or something if he asks me. And I pay rent here.

INTERVIEWER: Oh do you?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. I help them.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice.

PARTICIPANT 2: And I buy her a lot of clothes, like lately I've been buying her a lot of clothes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you hear that Target liquidation...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah I heard it I just didn't, I don't want to go. I've been lazy lately.

INTERVIEWER: I, I'm thinking the sales are going to be great but there's going to be so many people.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. I don't like people.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: I buy things that we need around, like I needed a controller for this game system so I bought myself one, and it's pink and it was on sale so that was fun.

INTERVIEWER: Oh that's nice, is it a PlayStation?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of games do you play on it?

PARTICIPANT 2: I, there's so many like different variety of games. But I don't ever play it anymore. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: You're too busy?

PARTICIPANT 2: I haven't played it for like a week. Actually probably like a few days, never mind.

INTERVIEWER: It feels like a long time though.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You just find yourself too busy?

PARTICIPANT 2: No. I don't know. I don't really know what I do.

INTERVIEWER: Taking care of her, that must be...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Like last night she was sleeping and she was coughing so hard that she was gagging so I had to like wake her up. I didn't have to but I wanted to.

INTERVIEWER: You wanted to make sure she was okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. I didn't want her to just sleep.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, is she just getting over the cold that she was having, or the pneumonia?

PARTICIPANT 2: I hope so. But she wasn't coughing before and she's coughing now so I hope it's not getting worse.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: I've been giving her the medicine every 8 hours.

INTERVIEWER: Does she have her own doctor?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, she has an appointment to get her needles done at the end of this month so I might talk to her then.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: She's late on her needles because my doctor's never in her office.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 2: Because she has a kid of her own this age.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, so she's busy.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So that's awesome that you have like that social worker that kind of, you know...

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah she helps me with everything, because where she's a youth worker she helps me like with like, I don't know like she said she's going to help me like learn how to clean and cook and get my own apartment, and make appointments.

INTERVIEWER: That's awesome. Is that what you want to do, want to get your own apartment?

PARTICIPANT 2: Eventually. I'm hoping around December because she's starting to get a little older and we're sharing a room with her still so...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So having, and you'd want to live in Fredericton?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah for now. Until her dad's done school.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: But I'm hoping to get like the cheap apartments through the...

INTERVIEWER: Through Social Development?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Because that will help a lot.

INTERVIEWER: Of course. And what is that exactly like are there, is it just like one apartment building where young moms or young families can kind of go or?

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know. It's just subsidized housing. Like I remember my mom had it and she had it over here. On Parkside. And she only had to pay like a hundred and something for rent, and that, so it was really interesting.

INTERVIEWER: That's not a lot of money. That's really, that'd be really great for you and your boyfriend.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, it was like 2 bedrooms, it was really nice.

INTERVIEWER: Oh My Gosh. Is this a 3 bedroom?

PARTICIPANT 2: This one, yeah. (Pause).

INTERVIEWER: Did you guys spend Christmas here?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Well we kind of had our Christmas on Christmas Eve but it was pretty fun. And then we went to Grand Falls on Christmas day.

INTERVIEWER: Oh that's nice, to see your dad?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Does your boyfriend drive? Does he have a car?

PARTICIPANT 2: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you guys, did your dad just pick you guys up?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. He stayed home though.

INTERVIEWER: Oh your boyfriend did?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. He wasn't here when my dad came so he just stayed home. That was okay. We had fun anyways. Okay, I'll find something that she'll like, she hates this. I try to put it on so she'll like be active when she's watching it.

INTERVIEWER: I know, that's what you were saying.

PARTICIPANT 2: But she doesn't like it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you find Netflix has better selection?

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know. There's just all the shows that she likes so, she likes Dora.

INTERVIEWER: Does she watch Frozen?

PARTICIPANT 2: She did once. But then she fell asleep.

INTERVIEWER: It's such a popular movie with kids like it's crazy. So does your social worker come here sometimes?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And she has meetings with me.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah?

PARTICIPANT 2: Like once a month she's supposed to.

INTERVIEWER: And what does she go through like on a meeting, like a day, a meeting?

PARTICIPANT 2: She just asked me, I don't even know, sometimes, it's always something different. Like last time she told me I need to call her phone, like, to make sure it works, and that was my homework for the month.

INTERVIEWER: To call her phone?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. And she tells me I have to like make eye doctor's appointment for myself.

INTERVIEWER: Oh you feel like you need glasses?

PARTICIPANT 2: No she just said that I should go get checked.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Because when I turn 19 I'm not going to like get it for free anymore. So she told me just to go check everything before I turn 19.

INTERVIEWER: When do you turn 19?

PARTICIPANT 2: In December.

INTERVIEWER: So you just turned 18 now?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: So she gives you some like homework assignments to do?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Nothing too hard though.

INTERVIEWER: And is she, does she stay with you, like she's going to be with you for however long you want?

PARTICIPANT 2: Well until I'm 19. And when I'm 19 if I still want to be with like the people there I'll get like a normal case worker, not youth but for everybody else.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And they've been super helpful with you?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. They've been helping me out since I got pregnant.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 2: Like they would give me money every month when I was pregnant for like, to prepare for her. Then after she was born they'd give me money for formula every month.

INTERVIEWER: Nice.

PARTICIPANT 2: Like, yeah, it was nice. Then after she turned like 4 months old they stopped giving me money for formula.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Because she was going to start eating like big people food.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: But she was breastfed all the time so the money wasn't used for formula.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So you had, basically you had social, you had well social assistance through your social worker, and you had the government family allowance, okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, it's a lot of money.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so you and your boyfriend, you both don't have to work?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice, spend time with her.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. He can't work though.

INTERVIEWER: Because of his citizenship?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 2: He's not a citizen.

INTERVIEWER: No? Is he applying for it?

PARTICIPANT 2: Maybe. I think so, I don't really know. It's his dad, he's just here with his dad, so it's all his dad doing it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. Okay. And his dad usually lives here?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. He's just, he's at work, he's a truck driver so he's at work.

INTERVIEWER: So you have the house to yourself generally.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. With Ted.

INTERVIEWER: With Ted.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice though.

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh hey Ted. I just said your name and you walked out, it was weird.

INTERVIEWER: I think that's pretty much it. You've given me so much great information and I really appreciate, you know, you meeting with me.

PARTICIPANT 2: It's fun. I'm so mean. It's funny how she reacts. She doesn't like cats or like anything in her hair. I always put things in her hair but she always takes them out, unless I distract her from it. Then she freaks about it. Like the other day I had a headband on her and she forgot about it for like an hour then she looked in the mirror and found it and got mad...

INTERVIEWER: So if you have any questions at all, like between now and the next time that I, that we talk, don't like hesitate to call me until whatever. You said you have a new cellphone number? (41:13)

C.3 Ava's Transcript

INTERVIEWER: So basically I'm going to ask you just kind of like a beginner question and feel free to go into as many, you know, as much depth as you want, like this is kind of your, you can tell me however much of the story that you want to tell me basically. So the very first question that I have for you, it's just about your experience as a teenage mom, or like as a young mom basically. So kind of telling me, you know, when did you find out you were pregnant, and, you know, were you in school at the time, were you living with your parents, so stuff like that.

PARTICIPANT 3: I found out I was pregnant when I went to the nurse at Harborview, because I was trying to get on birth control.

INTERVIEWER: Oh okay.

PARTICIPANT 3: It's pretty ironic.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. How old were you when you, when you went to that nurse?

PARTICIPANT 3: I was 15.

INTERVIEWER: You were 15, and...

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: so you went to the nurse and that, Harbour, was it a, was it your high school or?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah that was my high school before I went to First Steps School.

INTERVIEWER: And that's in Saint John?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes it is.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So tell me a little bit about that, like how, were you surprised?

PARTICIPANT 3: I kind of was because I had a feeling that I could've been pregnant, I was tired, like even just to sit on the floor and get back up it was like I ran a marathon. I was out of breath and I'm a pretty tiny person. So that was something I never experienced, so then I thought I have to get on birth control again because, you know, I don't want any unplanned pregnancies.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And how, yeah keep going, sorry.

PARTICIPANT 3: And so, what?

INTERVIEWER: No keep going.

PARTICIPANT 3: Oh. So I had made an appointment with the nurse at Harborview, and she had told me that she was not giving me birth control until I take a pregnancy test, and after that pregnancy test I have to come back in two weeks for another one.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So basically you took two different pregnancy tests?

PARTICIPANT 3: No I only had to take one to find out I was pregnant.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and you took it right there with the nurse?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And so you're saying, you know, you were a little bit surprised when you found out.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. I was but then it was kind of like, well that explains why I was tired.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So what did the nurse when she, you know, when you first found out, was she supportive, like she was a high school nurse so did she give you any resources, any material?

PARTICIPANT 3: She did give me resources but she, I don't know she went more towards I have to get an abortion.

INTERVIEWER: Right, yeah. And you didn't want one at all, you were like I want to keep this baby?

PARTICIPANT 3: No.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. And then when she realized I wasn't changing my mind about abortion she went straight for trying to get someone to adopt the baby.

INTERVIEWER: Oh wow.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So she was pushing her own values on you?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. How did you feel when she was doing that? What was going through your mind?

PARTICIPANT 3: I didn't really appreciate it because, you know, although I wasn't, although I was still young it kind of was between my family, what decision should have been made.

INTERVIEWER: Exactly. Yeah, absolutely. I think that's a really great point, I mean she should've taken that into account but it's your decision and, you know, it's a decision that you can make with, you know, your family and the baby's father, absolutely.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So was your family supportive?

PARTICIPANT 3: My mom was, my dad wasn't. My dad told me I was never going to graduate and that I was just going to be a stay at home mom for the rest of my life.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And that, did it upset you when he said that?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah it did.

INTERVIEWER: Of course. And what about your, the baby's father?

PARTICIPANT 3: He was very supportive.

INTERVIEWER: He was. And is he, are you still currently with him or?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah I live with him.

INTERVIEWER: You live with him, okay, so he's been a supportive, a supportive person since the beginning?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's really nice to hear.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So everything, it seems like, you know, from what I understand you're still in school, you're, what grade are you in?

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm in Grade 12.

INTERVIEWER: You're in Grade 12, wow. So you, your baby's a year, a year and a half?

PARTICIPANT 3: No, so what had happened was I was in Grade 9 and then First Steps what they do is they do not offer Grade 9 or 10 courses, so you're automatically in Grade 11 when you start.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. Okay.

PARTICIPANT 3: So I had finished 11 last semester.

INTERVIEWER: And now you're in Grade 12?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you're going to graduate at the end of the year?

PARTICIPANT 3: I'll graduate, pretty much but it'll be January.

INTERVIEWER: January of, like next year.

PARTICIPANT 3: 2016.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's amazing. That's really great. I didn't know, I had no idea that that's how First Steps worked. I thought it was like a high school from Grade 9 to 12. That's really awesome how they have that kind of program.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So how do you like, sorry...

PARTICIPANT 3: They only want you to collect credits because that's all that really counts when you're going to college or university.

INTERVIEWER: So they're prepping you for that, for going to college and university?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And is that what you want to do?

PARTICIPANT 3: I want to go to college.

INTERVIEWER: You do? What do you want to do? What's your end goal?

PARTICIPANT 3: I want to be a, I'd like to be a pharmacy technician.

INTERVIEWER: That's awesome (name), that's really great. That's really awesome. Where does your interest come in pharmacy?

PARTICIPANT 3: I know I want to do something in the healthcare, and I didn't exactly want to be a nurse.

INTERVIEWER: No?

PARTICIPANT 3: But the pharmacist interested me, but I didn't want to go to university.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. What, and you're leaning towards college because you think, you know, in the future that going to college and maintaining, you know, motherhood it would be easier to balance?

PARTICIPANT 3: I want to go to college because I know, like, they're not much money (not in?), just having a Grade 12 so having something to create maybe just even a couple dollars more (goes a long way?).

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, absolutely. That's a really great, you seem to have your head on your shoulders, like you're really, and you seem very mature.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that having, you have a daughter right?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And how old did you say she was?

PARTICIPANT 3: She's 8 months.

INTERVIEWER: She's 8 months old. That's so cute. Would you say that having her has like, how has it changed your life? You know from (name) before having her and (name) after.

PARTICIPANT 3: It made me realize that it's not just me I have to think for. It's her too.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

PARTICIPANT 3: So she's a part of all of my decision-making.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So part of, you know, maybe your, your motivation to finish high school and to go to college and get a diploma or a degree in pharmacy technician, like do you think that's, the decision to do that is based a lot on her?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, I would say.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you...

PARTICIPANT 3: But I think I would've done it anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah, eh? Like you were always motivated?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? That's really great to hear. I mean I think those ambitions are, you know, are amazing, and to have it, you know, kind of in front of you and you're saying, you know, I'm almost graduated and college is just around the corner, I think that's really great. Are you thinking about going to college right after you graduate from First Steps?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. I don't want to take any time off.

INTERVIEWER: No?

PARTICIPANT 3: No.

INTERVIEWER: You're kind of in the mode?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah I feel like if I take time off that it'll just ruin everything because everything's still fresh in memory.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah exactly. Yeah. Do you enjoy school?

PARTICIPANT 3: It depends. Like some days are better than others.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: But on the most part, I do.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? Do you find, you know, do you find it hard going to school right now and trying to maintain a life? Like, you know, motherhood and, you know, sustaining a life on your own too?

PARTICIPANT 3: It can be but it helps that my boyfriend's up with her at nighttime.

INTERVIEWER: Oh he's, so he stays up?

PARTICIPANT 3: He's out of school.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's really great. So he seems like he's a really supportive guy.

PARTICIPANT 3: He is.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? How long have you guys been living on your own for?

PARTICIPANT 3: Just about 4 months.

INTERVIEWER: 4 months? And before that you were living?

PARTICIPANT 3: With my mom.

INTERVIEWER: With your mom?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Was he living with you at the time too?

PARTICIPANT 3: No.

INTERVIEWER: No, okay. So he seems like, since you guys moved in 4 months ago, he's really stepped up and he's been helping you out to make sure that you're, you know, you've slept well and that you're rested for school.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's awesome. And what about First Steps, like people within, I guess teachers or even administration or whatever, like do you find that they've helped you, or have supported you?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. I lived there for 5 months during my pregnancy so they have helped me out a lot.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So how did that work, was it your choice to move there or?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah it was my choice.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And they've helped you like they were giving, you know, they gave you accommodations, they were understanding too?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes they were.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Okay, perfect. Let me just see here, so would you say that, so you've given me some positive things that, you know, that have happened to you because of your daughter. Like you said, you know, the decisions that you make now are, she influences them and she's a motivator in some ways. Do you think that there's anything that's, that's challenging about going to school and having a baby?

PARTICIPANT 3: It can be challenging because she does get very cranky.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: And it gets really hard, you know, I'm trying to get ready in the morning and then she's cranky while I was trying to get ready.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah and then like I have to have her at lunchtime too because she's in First Steps daycare.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. Okay. I didn't know they had a daycare too.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah they accept 3 babies at a time.

INTERVIEWER: Wow so she's a lucky, she's a lucky one.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Great. So you see her during lunchtime.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah and sometimes she gets really cranky. So it can be kind of difficult.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? Is it because you don't like seeing her cranky?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it can be difficult. Especially when you're, you know, you're in school and you're trying to focus I guess on, on your school and she, you know, anything like that that could be upsetting or something it might throw you off.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, for sure. So you're saying, you know, you're thinking in the future and you're thinking about going to college and getting your degree in pharmacy technician. When you think of the future, do you think of any barriers or challenges that might be in the future?

PARTICIPANT 3: Childcare.

INTERVIEWER: Childcare's a big one?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah because at First Steps I don't have to pay for daycare.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 3: And I have less than 200 dollars leftover after I get groceries and all that.

INTERVIEWER: Oh my gosh.

PARTICIPANT 3: And, yeah, so I wouldn't ever be able to afford a daycare at this point.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. So daycare's a big one.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So how would, you know if I had the magic wand and I would be able to, you know, to help you with that, like what would you want, would you like free daycare, subsidized daycare?

PARTICIPANT 3: If it could even be like, because I can have it subsidized by assistance.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 3: Like that's the thing, it's about 2 hundred and 50 dollars. Even subsidized.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. And that's a month?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's really expensive.

PARTICIPANT 3: So like I said it would be very difficult, so probably if it could be, I don't know, 75 dollars to a hundred dollars like, (that's?) pretty reasonable.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. I'm just trying to think, I know that I had contacted a long time ago the department, I'm not sure if this is the same thing that you're talking about but I contacted the Department of Social Development and I was asking about subsidies and they were saying if you're in high school or a training equivalent, I wonder if that would be college, they give up to 37 dollars a day. Is that the same thing?

PARTICIPANT 3: No because they only give 20 dollars a day.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, and that's, is that through the Department of Social Development?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 3: Because First Steps, I do have subsidized daycare but First Steps only takes that 28 dollars.

INTERVIEWER: Oh that's why it's free.

PARTICIPANT 3: And they don't expect anything more.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That's really helpful for First Steps but like you were saying after you graduate, it's difficult absolutely. I've heard...

PARTICIPANT 3: After.

INTERVIEWER: Sorry?

PARTICIPANT 3: After this semester she's not going to be in that daycare anymore because it's, so after every June they accept new applicants, the youngest babies get in first.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. So...

PARTICIPANT 3: So I'm not going to have daycare after June.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So do you have, like what have you been thinking? What are your plans for that, for June?

PARTICIPANT 3: I have no idea.

INTERVIEWER: That's, yeah, that's stressful.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I mean it's true because like you were saying, you know, you only have 200 dollars left a month after you pay all your bills and stuff.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, alright. So I'll definitely mention that. The daycare part. You were saying that you, you do get money, where do you, like you get money every month from Department of Social Development and, as well as from Family Allowance?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And does your boyfriend work?

PARTICIPANT 3: No. He does not work.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Does he want to or?

PARTICIPANT 3: He does.

INTERVIEWER: But it's hard to get a job?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. He's been looking.

INTERVIEWER: I know, it's so tough, it's a very tough economy.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So he would, in an ideal world he would be working?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So if, in June, or after June is it a possibility that he watches her during the day or?

PARTICIPANT 3: I don't know because I think my worker's really going to start pushing him to go to the (workers?) and stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. So there's a possibility that he won't be able to...

PARTICIPANT 3: That it wouldn't work, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That it wouldn't work, okay. Oh my goodness. I didn't know that it was that expensive every month.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah it is.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know anyone else who's kind of in the same situation, that has like, that has had different resources that they'd be able to share with you, with daycare?

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm sorry I didn't understand that question.

INTERVIEWER: Like do you have like any other friends who have babies or even family members who have babies who have to send their kids to a daycare, like would they know of anywhere that's cheaper or?

PARTICIPANT 3: The cheapest I know is the Early Childhood Centre.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 3: And they're about 220.

INTERVIEWER: 220 a month. Okay, so it's still really expensive.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So basically you're saying if you had the option either of a cheaper daycare anywhere between 75 dollars or 100 dollars a month, or less than that ideally, that would be helpful for you?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah it would.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, perfect. Thank you. I'll definitely write that in. Thanks, (name), for that. Alright so I'm just looking again at my questions, just to see if there's anything else from that section that I have to, okay, academic, so daycare's the big one. So you're talking a little bit about some people in your life I guess that have been supportive. You've mentioned your boyfriend, the people at First Steps have been really supportive, your mom you said at the beginning was really supportive.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Are there anybody, is there anyone else or even programs or other resources, it doesn't have to be a person that have, that has helped you since the beginning?

PARTICIPANT 3: That's about it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And that's, I mean that's a lot too when you, you know, when you think about it. I know in the daycare, in that aspect more support is needed, but you know having a supportive boyfriend and a mother that's there for you and, and a great school I guess, like I've spoken to a couple people at First Steps and they've, they're all so friendly.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you, like do you have any friends within First Steps that have little children, that have babies, or children?

PARTICIPANT 3: I know a few girls in my class but I'm not really friends with them.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Okay. Yeah, perfect. Alright, thank you so much. I'm just looking to see, and do you currently work (name)?

PARTICIPANT 3: No I do not.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Would you, you know, is that something that you'd want to do or do you think going to school and focusing on that is your main priority?

PARTICIPANT 3: Focusing on my school is the main thing right now.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It'd be a lot to do more than that, eh?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah it would.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? Do you find yourself, do you have, is there a lot of studying and a lot of extra work that you have to do with school at First Steps?

PARTICIPANT 3: Sometimes.

INTERVIEWER: Sometimes.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And, when you, I just want to back up a little bit just so I have a better understanding but you're saying, so 2 years ago, or when you were 15 years old you, yeah when you were 15 years old you had found out that you're pregnant and you were going to that high school, and you were in Grade 9 at the time, right?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And then was it, when did you transition from that high school to First Steps?

PARTICIPANT 3: As soon as that semester was over I went to First Steps.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And you were living there at that time too?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. I went to school when I was pregnant.

INTERVIEWER: You went to school when you were pregnant?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And did you go to school all the way up to when you gave birth?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. I went overdue and got to write my exams.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You're so motivated.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's amazing, was that challenging when, when you did that?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah because they told me that I was going to pass anyway even if I didn't write my exams.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 3: So I was kind of hoping that I didn't have, like I had her so I didn't have to do the exams.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. But you went overdue.

PARTICIPANT 3: But it didn't work out that way.

INTERVIEWER: So they still made you go write your exams even if you were pregnant, super pregnant?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? So how far after you gave birth did you go back to school?

PARTICIPANT 3: I gave birth on June 18th, and I went right back as soon as, yeah, as soon as September started.

INTERVIEWER: Really? So you just had a couple months with your baby.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Really? Did you find it hard going back right after?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, it was.

INTERVIEWER: It was, eh?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How did you find you made, what made it easier?

PARTICIPANT 3: It was easy knowing that she was right upstairs from me.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So having First Steps, at that point the, you had her at daycare at that point, right?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay so having her right there helped.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Alright I'm just going to look to see if there's anything else. So you've already mentioned going to college, daycare being an issue, is there anything else that you think, you know, just for the benefits of, or just for the purpose of having this in the paper and being able to seek other resources, is there anything else that you would say would help you, I guess, succeed going forward, even through graduating high school, even through graduating college, is there anything else other than daycare that would help?

PARTICIPANT 3: Not at this moment that I can think of.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And if there's anything like even after we hang up the phone that you think oh actually there's something that I thought of, whether it's financial, you know, some of the participants that I've spoken to they've talked about financial means, like having some finances, daycare was a big one too so I'm happy that that's something that you're experiencing, well not happy but that you brought it up because it's, it's something that's definitely a lot of the girls I've spoken to, they've said the same thing. They said, you know, daycare's a big thing, it's a big one.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Alright well, you know, you've basically answered all of my questions, I, like I said before (name) you seem so mature and you have so many great plans ahead of you, like it actually gives me goose bumps. Like it just, like it's really great to hear that and, I don't know if you're, if you were all, I don't know if you were like this before you had her but you just seem so determined.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, I was always that way.

INTERVIEWER: You were always like that?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's awesome, and, you know, having her, do you, would you say that after having her you were like okay this is even more, like I want to be able to improve my life, even more now because I have this little girl?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Well what do you think, you're saying your boyfriend wants to get a job. What does he want to do?

PARTICIPANT 3: He wants to go to college too but he doesn't know what exactly so right now he's focusing on just getting a job.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. One day he'd like to go though?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You both seem very determined.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You guys have been together for a while?

PARTICIPANT 3: Since I was 13.

INTERVIEWER: Oh my goodness. You guys have been, yeah that's a long time.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Childhood sweethearts.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's awesome, and he's always been very supportive?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes he has.

INTERVIEWER: That's amazing. Okay. Well (name) I want to thank you so much again for everything, you know, for texting and keeping in contact with me, and for scheduling this interview. It really means a lot for me. So like I said I'm going to, you know, I'm going to transcribe this and, this interview, and then I'm going to get a summarizing story, and ideally what I would like to do is I'd like to go down to Saint John and meet with you, just to have you read over the paper so that, you know, so at least we meet.

PARTICIPANT 3: Alright.

INTERVIEWER: And then I would, you know like I was saying earlier about the gift, I'm going to give you your little present then when I see you too and that will probably be in a couple weeks. Sometime in March but I can text you, and that's okay?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah it is.

INTERVIEWER: Perfect. (27:18)

APPENDIX D

D. Interview Protocol

D.1 Interview I

Wengraf's (2006) Biographic Narrative Interview Method will inform the interview component of my research. I will ensure that each participant is aware that it is her story that will drive our interview. I will begin by asking a probing question (e.g., tell me about teenage motherhood), as a precursor to her discussing her story. As the researcher, I will write notes while my participant shares her story, only interjecting if I need to redirect her. I will have a series of questions at hand that will be used to manage diversions. Once my participant's story comes to a natural end, I will revisit the notes that I made and use them as a catalyst for further discussion. This will hopefully provide more depth to her story. It is also during this portion of the interview that I will ask any other guiding questions which revolve around concepts including, academic/career situation, academic/career story, current academic/career goals, foreseeable barriers, barriers actually faced while pursuing goals, opportunity structures, social networks, and personal demands.

The Script

[Before beginning interview, I would ensure that a sufficient level of comfort has been established]. I would like to begin by thanking you for partaking in this research project. Before starting the interview process, I would like to explain how this component of the research will be conducted. Essentially, I am interested in hearing your story regarding teenage motherhood as it relates to your academic and career-related

pursuits. I will ask questions and you are invited to share as much or as little of your story as you want. Once you come to a natural end, I may ask further questions for clarification. In hopes of remembering important points that you bring up that warrant further discussion, I will write notes throughout the interview.

Probing Question

1. Please tell me about your experience as a teenage mother.

Guiding Questions/Questions Aimed at Developing a Deeper Understanding

2. Please tell me how teenage motherhood has positively changed your life?
3. Please tell me about your current academic situation, including how you got there.
4. Please tell me about the positive and/or negative ways that becoming a mother has affected your current academic situation?
5. If applicable, please tell me how you have tried reducing any current negative impacts that motherhood has had on your academics.
6. What are your future academic-related goals?
7. Please tell me how you believe that being a mother will impact your future academic plans. What barriers do you predict?
8. Please tell me about the ways that you will try to reduce any academic-related barriers for the future.
9. What would you define as meaningful supports to help you achieve your academic-related goals (i.e. social networks, opportunity structures and demands that you anticipate having in your life)?
10. Please tell me about your current work situation, including how you got there.

11. Please tell me about the positive and/or negative ways that becoming a mother has affected your current work situation?
12. If applicable, please tell me how you have tried reducing any current negative impacts that motherhood has had on your work.
13. Please tell me about your future career-related goals.
14. Please tell me how you believe that being a mother will impact your future career-related plans. What barriers do you predict?
15. Please tell me about the ways that you will try to reduce any career-related barriers for the future.
16. What would you define as meaningful supports to help you achieve your career-related goals (i.e. social networks, opportunity structures and demands that you anticipate having in your life)?

D.2 Correspondance for input, feedback and modification on summarizing stories

The email script. Since our last meeting, I transcribed our interview and from this transcription, developed a summarizing story. This summarizing story captures the main theme and important points that you discussed with me. Before I finalize the summarizing story, I would like you to look over it and highlight:

1. Any information that you would like removed.
2. Any information that you would like changed, and how you could like it changed.

If you change your mind in the next week in terms of what you would like removed and changed, please email me or call me. If I do not hear back from you, I will assume that

the information is accurate and ready to be finalized. I will then email you a copy of the final summarizing story for your records.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Candidate's full name: Cynthia Chaddock

Universities attended:

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick
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Publications:

Chaddock, C. (2014, November). *Exploring the Current Resources Aimed at Helping Teenage Mothers Succeed*. Presented at the 2014 Annual NBCDAG Conference in Fredericton, NB.

Chaddock, C. (2014, March). *Exploring career goals and barriers of teenage mothers: A proposed study*. Poster presented at the 2014 CCPA Research Conference in Moncton, NB.

Conference Presentations:

- Attended and presented at the 2014 Annual NBCDAG Conference November 25, 2014
- Attended and presented at the 2014 CCPA Research Conference March 1, 2014