CHAPTER 2 – METHODS

To capture the essence of the therapist’s self, an exploration and understanding of therapist beliefs and values that determine their world-view are critical. The present study was conceptualized with a view to develop an in-depth understanding of therapist belief system and obtain a detailed experiential account of how this world-view influences their therapeutic practice.

Paradigmatic Stance of the Researcher

For the purpose of this study a mixed methods research design was used, so as to include both qualitative and quantitative data in the study, to enrich the results in ways that one form of data may not allow. The mixed methods research design has been defined as:

The collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003, p. 212).

It has been recognized as a powerful third paradigm choice providing ‘the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results’ (Johnson, Onwueggbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 129). Fixed mixed methods designs are mixed methods studies where the use of quantitative and qualitative methods is predetermined and planned at the start of the research process, and the procedures are implemented as planned (Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

Keeping the objectives in mind, a qualitative dominant mixed methods research study was planned to explore the beliefs and values of therapists and understand how they impact their therapeutic practice. The qualitative-dominant mixed methods
research is “the type of mixed research in which one relies on a qualitative, constructivist-poststructuralist-critical view of the research process, while concurrently recognizing that the addition of quantitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most research projects” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 124). Thus, whereas the qualitative strand would help to develop an in-depth understanding of therapist beliefs and values the quantitative strand would help obtain additional information to capture the therapeutic practice of the therapists. The findings could then be triangulated to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research area.

The first step in conducting a mixed methods research involves deciding whether to use an explicit theoretical lens. It has been suggested that in planning and implementing mixed methods research the researcher states explicitly the philosophical stance adopted and the design framework used for organizing the inquiry (De Lisle, 2011). The framework that integrates the epistemological, ontological and methodological premises has been referred to as the interpretive paradigm or framework of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Multiple paradigms exist for research inquiries, such as positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, and participatory/advocacy perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and the paradigmatic stance of the researcher needs to be stated at the outset.

The philosophy of science that underlies the quest for knowledge incorporates; ontology (the beliefs or assumptions regarding the nature of reality and being), epistemology (the beliefs about how we know what we know, and the relationship between the participant and the researcher), axiology (the role of values in the research process), methodology (the process of conducting the research and the procedures involved), and the rhetorical structure (the writing and the presentation of the research) (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Ponterotto, 2005). It is
suggested that the researcher identifies the ontological stance that will determine the research process and procedures.

Over the years there has been substantial discussion in the mixed methods literature about mixing paradigms of research and methods. This linking of paradigms and methods has been referred to as the “paradigm debate”. It has been amply suggested that philosophical perspectives should be explicitly stated and acknowledged in mixed methods studies based on whether qualitative or quantitative strands dominate the research (Creswell, et al. 2003).

For the purpose of the current research, with a dominant qualitative strand, a constructivist paradigm was adopted as it fit the area of research and the demands of the objectives. The constructivist paradigm emerged from the philosophy of phenomenology and hermeneutics. While Husserl emphasized the study of subjective experience in phenomenology, Dilthey and other German philosophers’ highlighted the study of interpretive understanding or meaning making in hermeneutics (Mertens, 2010).

The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology. It proposes that there is no single reality and that each individual constructs his/her own reality, based on their personal experience and context. These individual constructions are not true or false in any absolute sense. Therefore, it espouses a transactional and subjectivist epistemology, where the knower and responder co-create understandings. Thus, the research, in the constructivist paradigm, cannot be value-free and reflexivity of the researcher is encouraged. The methodological stance, therefore, is dialectical, hermeneutical and naturalistic. The researcher and the participant together develop a construction of meaning, and the researcher attempts to obtain multiple perspectives to construct meaning from rich and varied narratives of the participants, opting for a
more personal, interactive mode of data collection. Data interpretation is rooted in the context of the participants studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 2010).

**Design Framework**

Mixed methods make available a range of research designs based on the following classifications: (1) priority (QUAN or QUAL dominant or equal); (2) implementation (parallel, sequential, conversion, multilevel, or combination); (3) integration; and (4) theoretical perspective (implicit or explicit and related to purpose or research questions) (Creswell, et al. 2003).

Considering that in the present research the priority was on qualitative data and it was planned that both qualitative and quantitative data would be collected and analyzed at the same time, the embedded qualitative dominant, also known as the concurrent nested design was selected. In concurrent nested designs, quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed at the same time. However, priority is usually unequal and given to one of the two forms of data—either to the quantitative or qualitative data. The nested, or embedded, forms of data are, in these designs, usually given less priority. One reason for this is that the less prioritized form of data may be included to help answer an additional question or set of questions and integration usually occurs during the data analysis stage. These designs are useful for gaining a broader perspective on the topic (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). The embedded design is used to enhance the application of a traditional quantitative or qualitative design; the supplemental method is used in service to the guiding approach.

The table below outlines the design framework used for the present study to allow for an in-depth understanding of therapist experiences and beliefs in the context
of their stage of professional development and nature of work along with the sociocultural, economic-political and developmental life-contexts and understand how it impacts their therapeutic practice. The table has been developed as suggested by Brannen (2005).

Table 1

*Design Framework for the Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Step</th>
<th>paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paradigm</td>
<td>Interpretative-constructivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale and Purpose</td>
<td>To obtain information about research participants’ beliefs and values and their therapeutic practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>Embedded Qualitative dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Design</td>
<td>Concurrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Concurrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analyses</td>
<td>Descriptive and thematic for Quantitative Constructivist grounded theory for Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-inferences</td>
<td>Integrated findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Discussion organized around research questions Quantitative and Qualitative data integrated from data collection for analysis, discussion and conclusion Focusing on Complementarity- Each type of data analysis enhances the other. Together the data analysis from the two methods are juxtaposed and generate complementary insights which together create a bigger picture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Strategies – Using Constructivist Grounded Theory

The qualitative part of the study was conducted using the constructivist grounded theory approach of qualitative research. According to Bowen (2006), the approach “calls for a continual interplay between data collection and analysis to produce theory during the research process” (pg. 2). The researcher collects data and alongside codes and analyzes the data to evolve categories on which the theory will be grounded. Based on the analysis the researcher then decides what data to collect next and where to find that data. Creswell (2007) suggests “process questions – questions about experiences over time or changes that have stages and phases are best answered by grounded theory” (p.239).

Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006). Strauss and Corbin (1998) define grounded theory as an inductive theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) mention that ‘the grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon’ (p.24).

In essence, grounded theory methods follow systematic inductive guidelines to collect and analyze data to build ‘middle-range’ theoretical frameworks which explain the collected data. Through this research process, grounded theorists aim to develop analytic interpretations of their data which allows to further data collection, which then adds to their developing theoretical analyses. Since Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory methods, qualitative researchers have claimed the use of these methods to legitimate their research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012).
Charmaz is credited with the development of the constructivist grounded theory. This theory transformed the dynamics between researcher and participant and also pitched the researcher as an author and theory builder. The researchers needed to immerse themselves in the data and ensure that the respondent narratives were embedded in the final research outcome. Charmaz (2000) has contended since the mid-1990s that a constructivist approach to grounded theory is both possible and desirable because “Data do not provide a window to reality. Rather the 'discovered' reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural and structural contexts” (pg. 524).

For constructivist grounded theorists Charmaz’s (2006) work provides guidance in making meaning from the data, and translating participants’ experiences into theoretical models accessible to readers. She highlights that grounded theorists need to acknowledge the thorny question of how to resolve the tension between developing a theoretical model of participants’ stories and still ensuring that the participant voices are present in the written text.

Denscombe (2010) says that grounded theory is most useful when being used in a qualitative and exploratory research, focusing on studying human interaction. The grounded theory approach has become firmly associated with qualitative research and since it emphasizes discovery, it is also associated with exploratory research. As Goulding (2002) notes ‘Usually researchers adopt grounded theory when the topic of interest has been relatively ignored in the literature or has been given only superficial attention’ (p. 55).
Conceptual Framework

To guide the study a circular conceptual model was developed that highlighted the mutual influence of the two categories to be studied: the therapist Weltanschauung and therapeutic practice. The conceptual map was informed by the review of literature and guided the development of the tools.

The Therapist Weltanschauung

This encompassed the therapist belief system that comprised of therapist beliefs and values.

- Beliefs about self as therapist
- Beliefs about psychotherapy
- Religious and spiritual beliefs
- Values, both personal and professional

Therapeutic Practice

This included aspects of therapeutic practice.

- Theoretical orientation
- Therapeutic process
- Therapeutic style
- Cultural adaptations in therapy
Who is a Psychotherapist?

For the purpose of the study there was a need to first clarify, “Who is a psychotherapist?” The term psychotherapist is often used as an umbrella term to include all mental health professionals who are trained to treat individuals with emotional or relational problems and include, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors and social workers. In defining the population of their study with 3800 psychotherapists across the globe, Orlinsky, Ambühl, et al. (1999) addressed a similar dilemma of defining who was a psychotherapist. They acknowledged that considering the fact that the total population of psychotherapists was difficult to define precisely, and the fact that psychotherapy is typically practiced by members of several different professions, they chose to obtain data from all individuals who were locally accepted as therapists, counselors and were providing therapy and counseling services. While using such a broad definition was favored by the large sample size in their study,
other studies of psychotherapists have limited their sample to therapists listed in professional bodies/associations or including therapists with a graduate degree in psychology. For the purpose of the study, a psychotherapist was defined as ‘an individual who has a postgraduate training in psychology and is practicing counseling/psychotherapy to treat individuals with psychological problems’. The inclusion criteria to select sample for the study was outlined based on this understanding.

**Tools**

Keeping the research questions in mind the following tools were utilized for obtaining information from the research participants.

**Questionnaire**

In conducting a study, information about the backgrounds of the participants and the contexts in which they are being studied is critical in understanding their narratives (Mertens, 2010). To obtain demographic information and therapeutic practice details about the participants that would be too tedious to obtain in the interview a brief questionnaire was developed.

**Conceptualizing the questionnaire.** Based on the review of literature, concept map and the objectives of the study, some of the areas to be assessed were translated into items for the questionnaire and the questionnaire was designed to include three sections:

- Demographic data
- Training and supervision
- Current Therapeutic Practice: Professional identity, theoretical orientation, and practice details in terms of clients seen and settings of work.
While developing the items for the questionnaire, the researcher referred to the Development of Psychotherapists Common Core Questionnaire – India (DPCCQ) developed by the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) a Collaborative Research Network (CRN) led by Orlinsky of the University of Chicago. This group developed the DPCCQ with an aim to study the development over the entire course of their professional career, including therapists and counselors of all professional backgrounds, theoretical orientations, and countries (Orlinsky, Rønnestad, et al., 1999). This helped to ensure a comprehensive coverage of details of therapeutic practice. Once the questionnaire content had been decided, statements or items to obtain that information were listed and response categories decided.

**Format.** The questionnaire was formatted and questions requesting personal or confidential information were located at the end to ensure better response (Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman, & Tysinger, 2002).

**Pilot.** The questionnaire once ready was piloted on two participants to ensure that it was adequately providing the information required.

**In-depth Interview Guide**

Qualitative data was collected using in-depth interviews to understand comprehensively the beliefs and values of the therapists and explore how the beliefs and values influenced therapeutic practice. Yeh and Inman (2007) suggest that using a constructivist approach concerned with cultural contexts and shared meanings requires a highly focused and intensive interview process that allows the researcher to get in-depth information.

Depth interviews enable the researcher to obtain detailed narratives from the participants that helps the individual voices to find representation in the data. Discussion in qualitative research has highlighted effectively that it is important to
consider that the voice of the respondents is not free of researcher biases (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Miles and Huberman (1994) go on to identify two sources of researcher bias, which include the effects of the participants on the researcher and vice versa. The need to present the multiple and diverse voices, rather than a univocal singular voice, devoid of context has been adequately implied. Thus, as a qualitative researcher it becomes important to be aware of the voice that we listen to and privilege and how we choose to represent them (Chadderton, 2011; Mazzei & Jackson, 2012).

By obtaining detailed narratives from therapists from varying contexts, such as age, gender, religion, setting of therapeutic practice, the researcher could guard against seeking the voice that is easy to listen to and classify, and instead find space for voices that are diverse and rich to ensure that the plural reality is adequately represented.

An interview guide was developed to ensure that therapist narratives could be explored and relevant themes could be covered, at the same time allowing for flexibility by not interrupting the flow in the conversation. The interview guide used for data collection is appended at Appendix C. The interview guide began with exploring therapist motivation for joining the profession, training and supervision experience, and the theoretical orientation used. This was followed by an exploration of therapist beliefs about themselves and psychotherapy, religious and spiritual beliefs, and values and how they impacted practice. The interview guide evolved as the research progressed to include questions that would generate additional insights. This ensured that there was flexibility to explore in depth areas that were of interest and also obtain more details on unique aspects that the participant narratives offered. Knox and Burkard (2009) presented considerations in qualitative interviewing in
psychotherapy research and emphasized that researchers be aware of the philosophical underpinnings of the research and develop the interview in accord to that. In using constructivist-interpretivist perspectives, interviews would involve more engagement with the participants and generate inquiry to understand the meaning of their experiences.

**Pilot.** To get acquainted with the research interview guide and develop an understanding of whether the domains of enquiry were eliciting information that were relevant to the objectives of the study, the researcher conducted two initial interviews. These were conducted in April-May, 2012. The participants included a female therapist, working in general hospital, schools and private settings for the last 12 years and another male therapist, who had practiced in a College setting for 5 years and was currently not practicing. While the female participant was Hindu, the male participant was Christian. These interviews helped answer not just logistical questions of amount of time taken for conducting the interview but also gave an understanding of the depth and breadth of data that the interview guide would help to obtain.

Religion emerged as an important determinant of individual world-view and based on this it was decided that participants from different religious orientations would be included to allow for a rich exploration of this area. Based on the pilot interviews, the interview guide was modified to remove overlapping or repetitive questions. The order of questions was organized to ensure better flow of the interview.

The major learning from the initial interviews was to develop the stance of a researcher. This process brought into awareness that my role as a therapist often helped the interviews in terms of listening and exploring sensitively, however, in the initial interviews it was also identified that giving more direction and being focused to
obtain information and asking more questions actively might help me obtain relevant data for my research.

**Sample**

The study was conducted on practicing psychotherapists and the sample included participants with a minimum qualification of a post-graduate degree in clinical psychology or counseling psychology. The inclusion criteria also included a minimum requirement of five years of experience as a therapist/counselor in the field to ensure the participants had a chance to reflect on the interplay of the personal and professional. Rønnestad and Skovholt (2003) identified six phases in the professional development of therapists from advanced trainees to master therapists. An attempt was made to include experienced (with 5-15 years of experience) and master therapists/counselors (who have more than 15-20 years of experience and were considered experts in the field).

Considering that the setting that one works in and the client group that one caters to may impacts therapeutic practice, the study attempted to include participants from different settings so as to ensure richness and variety of data. Therapists adhering to different theoretical orientations and working with different client groups were contacted to bring in different perspectives. Considering that there are more women in the field of counseling and psychotherapy, an attempt was made to contact men who were in the field to fulfill the criteria of data sufficiency and necessity. To ensure diversity in religious and spiritual beliefs, therapists with different religious orientations were included in the sample.

The sample was obtained through purposeful sampling. Patton (2014) defines purposeful sampling as “selecting information-rich cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (p. 264). Purposeful
sampling helps to obtain in-depth information and yield specific insights. It has been recommended that a small carefully selected sample could ensure a complete understanding of the population, particularly if the sampling decision is made keeping in mind the research design and the study objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). In delineating types of purposeful sampling, Patton (2014) mentions theoretical sampling that is guided by the inductive strategy of grounded theory and involves selecting cases to illustrate theoretical constructs.

The sample is built as the theory emerges moving from exploration to deepening to verification. Thus, grounded theoretical sampling becomes more selective as the emerging theory focuses the inquiry. Additional cases are added to support constant comparison as a theory-sharpening analysis process. Inductive sampling is challenging because the sample must be created as the inquiry unfolds. (p. 289)

According to Charmaz (2006, p. 96), “theoretical sampling means seeking pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories” in the emerging theory till the categories get saturated. Thus, data was collected from information rich cases till a theoretical understanding that threw light on the study objectives emerged from the data.

**Location of the Study**

The study was located in the city of Mumbai, with most participants selected from the city. Mumbai being a metropolitan city gave an opportunity to cover several mental health settings where professionals are practicing in different capacities and catering to a varied clientele. With the researcher located in Mumbai it was convenient seek participants from the city. One participant was located in Pune,
(though he worked in both Mumbai and Pune) and he was included to bring in more male voices in the research.

**Data Collection**

Data was collected from June, 2012 – January, 2013, over a period of eight months, from sixteen therapists till data sufficiency and saturation was obtained. For the purpose of the research, therapists were identified through the following strategies:

**Through Personal Contacts**

The researcher contacted therapists that she knew formally or informally earlier, now approaching them to participate in the research. Most therapists showed interest in the research area, readily agreed and were forthcoming with giving time.

**Through Suggested Referrals**

The researcher also spoke to other colleagues working in the field to obtain references of therapists who would fulfill the criteria for the research, and would be willing to participate in the study. Here the reference from another professional helped obtain consent to participation.

**Through Available Information**

Participants were contacted through online search engines or other information services. Though initially reluctant as they did not know the researcher personally, consistent follow up and information about the research helped obtain some participants.

Data was collected till theoretical saturation was achieved, i.e., no new conceptual insights were being achieved and the researcher had sufficient data to substantiate the theory. Theoretical saturation is associated with theoretical sampling.
in grounded theory, which involves specific sampling decisions that evolve during the process of research.

Interviews were conducted over two sessions, each session lasting on average an hour and a half to two hours. The interview guide kept evolving through the process of data collection, as new data kept emerging.

**Participant Profile**

Table 2 presents the profile of the participants. Of the sixteen participants, ten were women and six men. The age range of the therapists was 30 years to 68 years and the years of experience ranged from 6 years and 2 months to 25 years. Six of the sixteen therapists shared their religious orientation as Hinduism, two as Islam, two as Christianity and one Zoroastrian. The other therapists identified themselves as secular, atheist, agnostic, spiritual and human.
### Table 2

**Participant Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>PLACE OF PRACTICE</th>
<th>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>BIRTH ORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arindam</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Thane</td>
<td>19 years 8 months</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Last Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ameesh</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>13 years 4 months</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>Remarried</td>
<td>First Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>12 years 6 months</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Middle Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishrat</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>Single, Unattached</td>
<td>Last Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirghayu</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Pune</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>Last Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepak</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>Last Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>25 years</td>
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<td>Single, Unattached, Ten</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hina</td>
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<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>Zoroastrian</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Last Born</td>
</tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Middle Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keshav</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>15 years 2 months</td>
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<td>Married</td>
<td>Last Born</td>
</tr>
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<td>Married</td>
<td>First Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheetal</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>18 years 11 months</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>First Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Navi Mumbai</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
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<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>Humanity</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Fourth Of Five</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 All names have been changed to ensure anonymity of participants
Ethical Considerations for the Present Study

Ethical issues are present in any kind of research. The applications of appropriate ethical principles are therefore critical when conducting research (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000). The rights of participants would need to be respected and protected in the process of achieving the aims of the study. Thus it has been recommended that right from the stage of preparing research protocols, potential ethical issues that can be anticipated in the study are considered, such as informed consent, confidentiality, data generation and analysis, research/participant relationships and reporting of final outcomes (Orb et al., 2000). For the research results to be valuable and to ensure researcher accountability, research must be planned and conducted ethically and responsibly (D. B. Resnick, 2011).

Brinkmann (2007) expressed the imperative to discuss power when conducting research, stating that asymmetrical power relations between the interviewer and interviewee were inevitable as the interviewer set the interview agenda with the right to pose questions. Research interviews are subject to the interpretation and reporting of the researcher (Kvale, 2006), and anonymity may also lead to denying participants a voice in the research product that has emerged from their narratives (Parker, 2005).

To ensure that the research was conducted responsibly and ethically the following ethical principles were followed:

Approval from the Doctoral Advisory Committee

A doctoral advisory committee was constituted that included an academician and a practitioner from the field. The research proposal was presented to the committee for consideration of ethics. The committee closely monitored the research progress and reviewed the analysis and the research writing.
**Voluntary Participation**

Participation in the study was voluntary and the participants were provided all information about the research before consent for participation was sought.

**Informed Consent**

Written informed consent was sought from all the participants after informing them about the nature of the research, procedures involved, its implications and use of data collected. The participants consented to the interview being audio recorded. The recording was switched off for the sections of the interview that the participants did not want recorded.

**Confidentiality**

The identity of the participants and the name of the organization and institute were kept confidential to respect privacy. The research document includes changed names.

**Right to Withdraw from the Study**

The participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

**Access to Interview Transcript**

The participants were provided with the transcribed copy of the interview to review. If there were sections of the interview that they did not want included in the analysis the sections were omitted.

**Research Rigor**

Rigor in research ensures that the findings can be trusted and can inform practice. In grounded theory, Charmaz (2006) emphasizes the criteria for rigor as credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. Credibility of the study is concerned with how close is the representation of the findings to what has been presented by the participants. Morrow (2005) mentioned using specific techniques to ensure that rigor
in research is ensured. Specific strategies to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the present study are listed below:

**Prolonged Engagement in the Field**

Data was collected over a prolonged period of time and interviews with the participants were conducted over two sessions.

**Multiple Sources and Methods**

Data was collected using the questionnaire and the in-depth interview guide, ensuring both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained.

**Peer Debriefing**

The research supervisor reviewed all the interview transcripts and the emerging themes were discussed. The follow up interview with each participant was conducted post this discussion. The advisory committee gave feedback and suggestions after reviewing the work.

**Member Checking**

The transcripts along with the preliminary analysis framework were sent for review to the research participants. Within a constructivist paradigm, member checking has been seen as a critical technique to establish credibility (Charmaz, 2006).

**Inclusion of Thick Description**

The analysis incorporated quotations from all participants. The analysis chapters included detailed participant narratives verbatim to ensure participant voices were represented.
Audit Trail

The raw data through interview transcripts, audited transcripts, notes of discussions with supervisor, coded files and memos were available to provide the audit trail of the various steps from the raw data to analysis and interpretation.

Reflexivity: Locating the Researcher

It has been accepted that the research process by no means is objective, and the researcher through their position, perspective, and presence co-construct the data. Thus, the final research product is what is co-created by the participants, the researcher and the relationship of both within a given social context (Finlay, 2002). It is desired that the researcher explicitly examine “her research agenda and assumptions, subject location(s), personal beliefs, and emotions” that influence the research (Hsiung, 2008; p. 212) to enhance the trustworthiness, transparency and accountability of their qualitative research (Morrow, 2005).

Reflexivity has been understood as an on-going meta-cognitive process of self-awareness within the researcher of how she influences the research process and how the research influences her. Gilgun (2010) discusses three areas in which a researcher can consider becoming reflexive: the area or topic of research and the personal meaning it has for them, the participants chosen for the research and the audience to whom the research findings are directed. Hertz (1997) urges researchers to explicitly locate themselves in the research as she believes that researchers are imposing themselves at all stages of the research process from problem formulation to analysis and the writing of the research.

The importance of journal keeping and memoing during the research process has been emphasized as it generates self-awareness and self-reflection and facilitates the process of on-going scrutiny of the researchers perspectives, expectations and
experiences (Watt, 2007). Qualitative investigators are also encouraged to record their own biases, feelings, and thoughts and to state them explicitly in the research report. Documenting the researchers voice at all stages of the research, not just helps, build context and adds richness but also leads to an open and honest way of doing research and increases the authenticity of the research (Gilgun, 2010).

Keeping this in mind, the researcher at every point of the research maintained notes of how personal ideas, perspectives and experiences shaped the research. The research writing was interspersed with personal and field notes to highlight the thinking that went behind the research. The chapters included details of the personal relevance of the area being researched, data collection experiences and reflections. The final analysis and discussion incorporated the researchers’ perspectives on the emerging findings.

**Personal Reflections**

**Acknowledging the therapist identity.** My identity as a therapist directed and influenced the research in many ways. The research was a personally meaningful endeavor as a therapist to discover how the therapist self influences therapeutic practice. The research enquiry birthed from my personal experience as a practitioner and the changes and shifts I saw in my beliefs and therapeutic style as I worked with my clients. The research questions, the conceptualization of the study, data analysis and research writing were guided from the perspective of a therapist and psychotherapy trainer. Over the years that I worked on this research I continued practicing as a therapist and teaching psychotherapy, both of which influenced the shape that the research took.

Being a therapist also helped me connect with other professionals in the field and obtain consent for participation in the study, which involved many hours of
engagement with the interview process. The participants were willing to make time for the interviews as they viewed a request from another professional more credible.

Further, most of my observations of the therapeutic settings were from the lens of a therapist. As a practitioner, I was more attuned to aspects about settings and boundaries, and most of my interview notes included this documentation. These notes were helpful as I wrote sections of research that documented the therapeutic setting details.

**Making way for the researcher.** Entering the world of the participants with openness and wonder and bracketing out my beliefs, as a therapist to genuinely attend to the participant’s view was both a challenge and learning. Being a trained psychotherapist I entered the research field with my personal beliefs about the management of psychological concerns and the professional therapeutic role. Through the research interviews, participants shared experiences and practices where their beliefs and values at times diverged with mine. At such moments, debriefing with the research supervisor and discussing the data and its meaning helped considerably. Though being a therapist helped considerably in making meaning of the data, there were times the therapist had to make way for the researcher to ensure that all data was adequately represented.

**Sharing narratives and personal stories.** The personal and the professional of the therapist are hard to separate. This was true of the research interviews as well. Though the interviews were to understand therapists’ beliefs and values and their influence on therapeutic practice, the discussions involved considerable levels of personal sharing. I am inclined to believe that being a therapist helped me relate to the participants of the research so as to facilitate the process of sharing. An attempt was
made to create a safe and empathic environment for the respondents that facilitated the process of sharing.

While some therapists eased into the interview process instantly, others did so gradually. I remember that my first interview with Rita was quite technical, dry and factual, however during the second meeting certain ease developed and there was an open sharing of her professional journey.

There were the special moments during the interviews, when participants shared how they had never thought of some things before, leading to collaborative discoveries, telling me how it needs a witness sometimes for us to showcase something. Jiya’s excitement during the interview, and thoughtfulness over issues that she had not thought about, made me realize that the interviews left both of us changed. A special moment was Ameesh sharing a dream he had the night after his first interview, and the thoughts that the interview had left him with. A lot of meaning making happened during and after the interviews, as the respondents began reflecting on beliefs and values that were sometimes left unarticulated in day-to-day practice.

The narrative telling vacillated from personal stories in first person, to the ‘shoulds’ and ‘musts’ in the second person. There were moments where the connection was from a therapist to a therapist while at other times the stories came from a “been there done that” frame. Father Joseph’s style of asking about me, my work, my role as a mother and using that as examples to share his ideas about therapy and human behavior and change, left me feeling deeply connected.

Many untold stories were revisited, loss and death, success and achievements, were all woven in, as the respondents let me into their lives and much more.

**Building relationships.** The research interviews helped develop and build relationships that outlived the research timelines. The deep sharing of information and
emotions led to forming emotional connects with the research participants. This became evident when months after the interview I would meet them and receive warm hugs, updates about life events and invites to life celebrations.

Ameesh was only a professional colleague till the research interview. The interview created an interpersonal space for him to share his personal life events and emotional journey and he shared openly about many aspects of his life. Through the years, he kept in touch to stay updated on the progress of the research, and kept me abreast about his life developments. When I met Deepak, he mentioned that he was very reticent and shy, and met very few people. After the interview he mentioned feeling almost embarrassed to be talking so much on our first meeting. Through the sharing of his story he felt deeply connected with me and spoke about his special relationship with his mother. Though we never met after the interview, I receive a reply to a Diwali greeting from Deepak every year. Ishrat, Shabana, Dirghayu and Hina have maintained regular contact at a personal and professional level and I continue to learn from them.

A journey of personal growth – reflecting on personal practice. This research also led me on a personal journey to reflect on my own identity as a psychotherapist and subject to scrutiny my own professional practice. Discussions with other therapists validated the good practices that I was following in my work and reinforced my beliefs about supervision and self-care. The discussions with other professionals also facilitated acknowledgment of my personal growth areas and gave an impetus to my working on things I wanted to incorporate into my own therapy practice to further my growth and development as a therapist.
Methods of Analysis

As the quantitative and qualitative data was obtained from each participant, the analysis of the data was initiated. The methods employed to analyze the data and the steps involved have been listed below.

Analyzing Quantitative Data

A code book was developed to facilitate entry of the questionnaire data for analysis. The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables.

Analyzing Qualitative Data

The data obtained from the interviews was analyzed in accordance with the grounded theory approach of qualitative research. Grounded theory practice involves simultaneous data collection and analysis. Based on the data the researcher constructs analytical codes and categories from the data and theory development continues through each step of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Steps in grounded theory research, as suggested by Charmaz (2006) were followed in the study and have been presented below:

Gathering the data. The interviews with the participants were electronically recorded and word-by-word transcription was done. Additional questions that emerged while transcribing and ideas that needed further clarifications were noted for the follow up meeting with the participants. Memos and notes were maintained to document the ideas and thoughts that the data obtained was generating. Preliminary codes were identified from the data obtained. This helped further the process of data collection with the other respondents and based on the information obtained the interview guide was reviewed at each stage.
The research supervisor reviewed the transcribed interviews and the themes being generated were discussed and noted. Peer debriefing, that involves receiving feedback from a research supervisor or colleague is recommended to ensure credibility in research. Once this was done, participants were contacted again to share summaries and obtain additional information. (This could not be done with one of the participants due to difficulties in obtaining time and for two other participants the transcripts were complete and detailed and did not require further follow up with them).

**Coding the data.** Coding entails defining what the data is all about through creating the codes while entering the data. Charmaz (2006) says that coding is a crucial process which leads directly to developing theoretical categories.

Considering that data analysis involved managing large data sets, Atlas.ti 5 was utilized to aid the process. The use of computer-assisted software in managing and analyzing qualitative data is increasingly finding acceptance. Software programmed for analyzing qualitative data assist researchers in codes, developing networks and facilitating model development. According to Weitzman (1999) software can be broadly classified into text retrievers, text base managers, code retrievers, code based theory builders and conceptual network builders. Code based theory builders help researchers code and study the relationships among the codes, and conceptual network builders help in creation and analysis of the network displays. Atlas.ti is a sophisticated qualitative analysis workbench that provides a range of tools to analyze qualitative data.

The steps followed in coding the qualitative data have been outlined below:

**Line by line coding.** Line by line coding was the first step in data analysis and involved naming each line in the data. This process was followed to ensure that the
researcher was close to the data and the analysis was built ground up (Charmaz, 2006). Further, line by line coding helped in making decisions about what kinds of data needed to be collected next.

**Focused coding.** Once all the data was coded line by line, focused coding to identify codes that continually reappeared in the initial coding and using those codes to work through large amounts of data was attempted. Focused coding involved using codes that were more selective and conceptual than line by line coding, which allowed to manage larger segments of data (Charmaz, 2006).

**Axial/theoretical coding.** Axial coding highlighted the relationship between the categories and the sub categories obtained through focused coding. This phase in coding helped in reassembling the data that was fractured during line by line coding to develop a coherent frame for the data.

**Memo-writing.** Memo-writing was used to facilitate the process of analysis by drawing out connections between the data and document patterns and relationships that were emerging from the categories obtained. Memo-writing is the intermediate step between coding and the first draft of the completed analysis (Charmaz, 2006). It is comprised of elaborating processes, assumptions and actions under a particular code. Through going beyond individual cases and codes, memo-writing helps the researcher define patterns and categories as carefully as possible. Charmaz (2006) says memo-writing should free the researcher to explore ideas about categories and should be treated as preliminary, partial and immanently correctable. It helps the researcher direct the shape and form of the emergent analysis from very early stages of the research.

Memo-writing directly leads to theoretical sampling which entails collecting more data to clarify ideas and arrange them more comprehensively. Data is collected
for the purpose of developing the emerging theory, not for increasing generalisability (Charmaz, 2006). Theoretical sampling assists the researcher to fill out categories and discover variation and define gaps within them. It helps refine the analysis and make it more complex, hence it should be conducted in the later stages of the research so as to avoid a premature closure. Thus, theoretical sampling makes the memo-writing more precise, analytic and incisive.

Although the above stages have been presented in a series, the analysis in grounded theory is an iterative process and at each stage requires revisiting the data by reading the transcripts and referring to and creating memos.

**Theory building.** Based on the emergent themes, a grounded theory model was created. Developing a comprehensive and integrated theory is the final step in grounded theory research. This involved immersing oneself in the data, and going through the memos and writings to understand the relationship between the emerging codes and move towards categories and eventually towards theoretical integration. Connecting all the research themes and developing a framework to depict the findings of the study was a challenging exercise.

Charmaz (2006) suggests that through the constructivist grounded theory approach we do not attempt to create a general abstract theory but move towards building ‘situated knowledges’ (p.136). The researcher attempts to tell a story through her analysis about people, their lives and the contexts where they are situated. Thus, theory in the constructivist paradigm is seen less as an explanatory framework and more as the researcher’s interpretive framework through which she presents her data.

As Charmaz (2006) advises, that the model developing process should involve being open to the unexpected and also a degree of playfulness and wonder on part of the researcher. To develop the grounded theory model, categories were progressively
and inductively derived from the data obtained. Once the categories were derived, the most significant categories, which subsumed other categories of data, were raised to theoretical/ conceptual categories. Charmaz outlines clearly that categories that emerge from the data are raised to concepts, in terms of their ‘theoretical reach, incisiveness, generic power, and relation to other categories’ (p. 139). These theoretical concepts subsume other categories, and serve as ‘interpretive frames and offer an abstract understanding of relationships’ (Charmaz, 2006, p. 140).

**Triangulating the Qualitative and Quantitative Data**

The quantitative and qualitative data was triangulated during the analysis and writing to present a comprehensive understanding of therapist beliefs and values, their therapeutic practice, and the interaction of the two. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) define triangulation as an “attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint” (p. 112). Since almost every method in social science research suffers from limitations, triangulation offers a multimodal approach that allows minimizing the limitations to a large extent.

The following chapters present the research findings and the grounded theory model that emerged from the data. The initial chapters focus on presenting therapists’ journey of entering the profession, training, practice and supervision to provide the reader a glimpse into each participant, followed by chapters presenting therapists’ beliefs and values.