Possible selves as contributors to the resilience of young people leaving care: The role of the child and youth care community

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Introduction
- Overview of possible selves theory
- Methodology
- Resilience and possible selves
- Possible selves as contributors to resilience
- Social workers (SWs) and Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs) understanding of resilience
- Role of Child and Youth Care community in promoting resilience/possible selves
- Conclusion
- References

Self concept
- Past self
- Current self
- Future/possible self
- Self schemas

Possible selves
- Expected possible selves
- Feared possible selves
- Hoped for possible selves

Methodology
- Qualitative approach using phenomenological design
- Four Child and Youth Care Centers (CYCCs) in the Eastern Cape
- Three populations: Young People in Care (YPIC), Social Workers (SWs) and Child and Youth Care workers (CYCWs)
- YPIC: minimum of two years in the CYCC and ageing out of the statutory system
- SWs & CYCWs: minimum five years in field of CYC and two years at current CYCC

Data collection and analysis
- Data collection
- YPIC
- Two interviews: one life map and one possible me tree
- SWs and CYCWs = one focus group each
- Data analysis
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Resilience and possible selves: Denise

Extramural activities

Possible self as competent

“With the youth group thing, I never thought, listen here I will become the chairperson”
“Running the whole group every Saturday”
“Thinking of stuff we need and bringing up new ideas”
“I had to get sponsors for whichever event we had”

Resilience and possible selves: Andrew

Turning point people

Hoped for possible self as an air technician

“There was this pilot guy that really inspired me when I was about 11 or 12”
“Also, there was this group who came here [CYCC] with helicopters”

Resilience and possible selves: Jade

Role models

“I wanna see the children who always get into trouble. I want to help them and see what they can do with their talent”

Resilience and possible selves: Denise

Commitment to her education

Planning
Problem solving
Self-efficacy
Navigation and negotiation to resources

Hoped for possible self
Teacher, strong & independent young lady

Feared possible self
Unemployed and losing her children

Content of YPs possible selves & resilience: Denise

Content of YP’s possible selves & resilience: Denise

“very bright, because I am already doing things that are going to make me better”
“my future might be good, actually”

Content of future focus seldom explored

“I go to every extra class that I can go to. But now people want us to pay for the extra classes, so I decided I am just going to ask friends, that have been there, so that they can explain the way that it was explained to them”
### Content of YP’s possible selves & resilience: Andrew

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hoped for possible self</th>
<th>Fear possible self</th>
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<td>Air technician</td>
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“because we lead a rough life [speaking of gangs and drugs]. There is no life there [in community]; just sitting down [being unemployed].”

### Content of possible selves & resilience: Jade

<table>
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<th>Hoped for possible self as father</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I will be the best father for them&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I will give them a hug and a kiss and tell them you are my best children; I love you so much&quot;</td>
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<th>Fear possible self as father</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I won’t beat them&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;they will have a mother and a father&quot;</td>
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"I just hold [the anger] for myself and I said ‘I can do better’"

### Development of possible selves

- **Content of SWs and CYCWs**
  - “A resilient care leaver for me, it is a young person who is able to withstand setbacks and disappointments that they will face and bounce back”
  - “you can see it in their behaviour”
  - “you can see that some of the children just have that inner motivation in them”
  - “they [CLs] need to be strong inside, to be able to realise that if I don’t do anything now, nothing is going to happen”

- **Role of CYCC community**
  - Explore content of future focus
  - Promote and develop possible selves
  - Move away from deficit frame of reference
  - Recognize relational possible selves

- **Educational commitment**
  - Positive coping strategies to resist pressure to become involved in drug/gang activity

- **Navigation and negotiation to resources**
  - Self-efficacy

- **"I already have a vision and a mission. A vision where I see myself and a mission will be to take the steps toward my future”**

- **"When they would compete in the gangs and stuff, I would go to the soccer team and play there”**

- **One week later**
  - “a doctor”

- **Three weeks later**
  - “I thought I might consider educare”
  - “there’s so many things I want to do in life”
  - “a designer” “a business woman”
  - “I’m going to register for business management”
Conclusion

Resilience factors can contribute to the development of possible selves
Possible selves can enhance resilience
Social workers and child and youth care workers in this study showed one dimensional and dated understanding of resilience
The child and youth care community has a role to play in developing resilience and possible selves which may help to improve service provision (targeted interventions implemented early in the placement) and improve outcomes for care leavers

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References


Life map and possible me tree:
Denise

References