

## **D. RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

### Narratives of Forgiveness among Older Holocaust Survivors: A Pilot Study

Hartford Faculty Scholars Program in Geriatric Social Work

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### **Abstract**

Religious leaders and philosophers have long acknowledged the importance of forgiveness. In the past twenty years, the concept of forgiveness has moved out of the domain of the religious communities and into the scientific community and popular culture. The scientific community has begun to explore and document the impact of forgiveness in our lives. Forgiveness research can “demonstrate that the healing effects of forgiveness extend beyond personal happiness, health and well-being, to a deeper sense of coherence, wholeness, and integration of the self” (Emmons, 2000, p. 171). Forgiveness affects people throughout their life; however, as older adults face the developmental tasks of conducting a life review, forgiveness can help them recognize the meaning and purpose of their lives (Emmons, 2000).

The pilot study will explore the nature of forgiveness as an aspect of mental health in one cohort of older adults, older Holocaust survivors. Interviews will include a purposive sample of thirty individuals who were living in any country in Europe occupied by Germany from 1933-1945. These survivors now range in age from early sixties to late nineties. As this generation of living witnesses of the Holocaust ages, there is an urgency to learn from them before they die.

Researchers will conduct in-depth narrative interviews to hear the lived experiences of these survivors. Findings will enhance the practice of social workers who assist older adults and their families in confronting unresolved forgiveness issues. The specific aims of this study are to explore the narratives of older Holocaust survivors to understand and describe:

1. their experience, feelings, and expression of forgiveness and unforgiveness
2. changes in perception of forgiveness as they have gotten older
3. alternatives to forgiveness they have developed

4. supports that helped them during the forgiveness process
5. implications for social work practice.

By examining forgiveness as experienced by older Holocaust survivors, this study seeks to contribute to practice based research. The findings will provide a foundation on which to expand research on forgiveness in older adults and has implications for the way social workers address the issue of forgiveness with older adults and their families.

## Research Proposal

For Holocaust survivors to reach old age is not only a privilege - it is a miracle. It certainly isn't what Hitler had planned for them.

Eva David, Participant, Café Europa Program, Los Angeles

As a concept, forgiveness has recently received much attention from the popular culture, with books and magazine articles bringing this issue to national attention. Forgiveness entails making a choice to forego retaliation following an interpersonal offense (Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Research indicates that forgiveness can be an effective coping strategy in helping to reduce stress and resolving feelings of anger, despair, and resentments, which can affect well-being, interpersonal relationships and the quality of life (Konstam, Marx, Schurer, Lombardo, and Harrington, 2002). However, despite the potential impact on mental health and well-being, there has been relatively little research on the relationship between forgiveness and mental health.

Older adults address their developmental task of reviewing their life, reflecting on successes and disappointments and hopefully arriving at positive view of their life. Forgiveness involves a process of healing old wounds and making peace with past relationships. For older adults, forgiveness can help “clear the decks and to enter the later years with as unburdened a heart as possible” (Raines, 1997, p. 25), enhance their sense of well-being, and improve health (Butler, 1963; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Konstam, Maarx, Schurer, Harrington, Lombardo, and Deveney (2000) found that forgiveness is a significant clinical issue for mental health counselors; however, the counselors reported that they did not feel comfortable addressing the issue of forgiveness with clients and requested forgiveness-related professional training. Social workers and other mental health

professionals view forgiveness as a mental health issue affecting the quality of life for many older adults and their families (Halpain, Harris, McClure, & Jeste, 1999; Konstam, et al, 2002). However, because of the lack of research on forgiveness, social workers may feel that they are not properly trained to help older adults and their families address forgiveness related issues. Therefore, this area of study requires additional research.

This study will begin to address the gap in knowledge about the process of forgiveness and its impact on the mental health of older adults. Merriam and Simpson (2000) suggest that in qualitative research “reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their social worlds” (p. 97). This supports the social workers’ philosophy of understanding the person in his/her own environment; therefore, this study uses a qualitative research methodology. The specific aims of this study are to explore the narratives of older Holocaust survivors to understand and describe:

1. their experience, feelings, and expression of the process of forgiveness and unforgiveness
2. changes in perception of forgiveness as they have gotten older
3. alternatives to forgiveness they have developed
4. supports that helped them during the forgiveness process
5. implications for and application to social work practice/

### Background and Significance

There are only two empirical studies on forgiveness with older adults (Hebl & Enright, 1993; Krause & Ellison, 2003). Also, research on how older Holocaust survivors have negotiated the aging process is very limited and, when it comes to forgiveness, nonexistent (Ayalon, 2005).

The developmental tasks of older adults, conducting a life review and making meaning of one’s life in such a way that one integrates one’s past with the present, can lead to the attainment

of integrity (Butler, 1963; Butler, Lewis & Sunderland, 1998). Older Holocaust survivors are reviewing their lives and attempting to resolve old conflicts and find new meaning. For them, forgiveness may prove important in maintaining well-being at the end of life. Empirical studies could inform social workers how to help older adults and their families resolve old wounds and hurts and increase well-being. This pilot study, which examines forgiveness in one subset of older adults, will help social work workers and educators improve the health and well-being of older adults and their families.

### Forgiveness and Older Adults

Many clinicians and theorists believe advancing age stimulates a natural desire for elders to remember life events, review them, and try to make sense of them. Reminiscing can help an older person feel better about him- or herself, ease depression, anxiety, and hopelessness, and heal old family wounds (Enright & Coyle). Addressing issues of forgiveness may prove may help older adults peace with past relationships. For example, the results of a large study of elderly African-American and White males and females indicated that elders who forgave others experienced fewer symptoms of depressed affect, felt generally more satisfied with life, and were less anxious (Krause & Ellison, 2003). While this study limits its scope to older Christian adults, it provides a beginning understanding of the importance of forgiveness as a mental health issue with older adults.

The growth in the psychological and theological professional literature on forgiveness has exploded over the past twenty years; however, there remains much ambiguity and many unanswered questions about forgiveness, “including the definition of forgiveness...how the process works, how to measure forgiveness, what models of intervention might be applicable, and what relevance this has for differing populations” (Konstam, et al, 2002, p. 54).

A bibliography on forgiveness-related articles, books, book chapters and dissertations contains over 750 entrees published since the early 1990's (Scherer, Cooke & Worthington, 2004). A search of the bibliography found only 11 aging-related references (Bono, & McCullough, 2004; Kaplan, Munroe-Blum, & Blazer, 1993; Strasser, 1984; Brink, 1985; DiBlasio, 1992; Krause & Ellison, 2003; Krause & Ingersoll-Dayton, 2001; Girard, & Mullet, 1997; Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, & Girard, 1998; Sandberg, 1999).

McCullough, Exline and Baumeister (1998) identified forty five scientific research studies on forgiveness in the social science literature. Only one study, Hebl & Enright (1993), focused on forgiveness and older adults. They found an increase in forgiveness and positive mental health based on a group intervention with older females. Depression and anxiety decreased for both the forgiveness and the control group participants, so it is important to note that forgiveness intervention may lead to other psychological benefits in addition to easing forgiveness.

Baskin and Enright (2004) reviewed 9 published studies of forgiveness interventions in counseling. Again, Hebl & Enright (1993) appeared on their list. Their research demonstrated the benefits of forgiveness in counseling, based on a process model of forgiveness intervention. Results of the Baskin and Enright (2004) study found that the process model of forgiveness intervention with individuals and groups is more effective than the decision-based model. They also found that forgiveness counseling is an effective intervention. The decision-making model emphasizes that the decision to forgive is a defining moment in the relationship between the forgiver and the forgiven. It has its roots in the cognitive decision-making approach. The process model builds on an affective and cognitive approach and presents forgiveness as a process, rather

than a single event (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1996). Future studies will evaluate the effectiveness of the process model of forgiveness interventions with older adults.

This research will add the experiences of older Holocaust survivors to the previous work on forgiveness (McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen, 2000; Worthington, 1998). Findings will extend the research community's understanding of what protective factors in the individual and or the environment buffer the effects of prolonged physical and emotional stress. This ecological perspective can also inform the work of mental health practitioners about people's natural ability to heal. In sum, the project will explore the impact of forgiveness on the ability of older Holocaust survivors to live healthy, meaningful lives into their later years.

#### Older Holocaust Survivors

The experience of Holocaust survivors, almost 60 years after the end of the Holocaust, remains a source of concern for scholars, historians, social scientists, and religious leaders (deVries & Suedfeld, 2005; Schiff, 1998). Holocaust survivors are those people living in Europe who were affected by the occupation and dominion of Germany from 1933-1945. Even the survivors who were under eighteen when the camps were liberated in 1945 are now in their mid 60's, with many in the 70's, 80's and 90's.

The aging of the survivor population means there soon will be "no living witnesses to the tragedy that befell them" (Glicksman, Haitzma, Mamberg, Gagnon & Brom, 2003, p. 150). Sadly, there is "no research on the ability of survivors to solve their moral dilemma and resolve their feelings of guilt" (Ayalon, 2005, p. 356). As Holocaust survivors age and die, there is "an increasing need to identify and document their efforts and means of survival" (Ayalon, 2005, p. 349), so that social workers can understand how human beings adapt to even the most extreme forms of trauma. If social workers do not act quickly to record their narratives, these older

Holocaust survivors will take with them to their grave the incredible stories of courage, bravery, adaptation, and forgiveness, that can teach us important lessons about psychological adjustment, about healthy recovery, and about living with incompatibilities and inconsistencies (Lomranz, 2005)

Early scientific studies of Holocaust survivors focused on the pathology—the negative psychological impact of the Holocaust resulting in depression, anxiety, signs of post traumatic stress disorders, and other mental health issues associated with trauma and “survivor syndrome.” Study participants were recruited from mental health clinics and often presented as a case study and “little or no attention was paid to the diversity of experience during and after the Holocaust” (Glicksman, Haitsma, Mamberg, Gagnon, & Brom, 2003, p. 148).

The “investigation of life stories of Holocaust survivors is an important resource for understanding both the historical events themselves, as well as the experiences and implications of this period for the lives of the survivors” (Kenyon, 2005, p. 249). The survivors’ individual stories fall within the context of a larger narrative in which the Holocaust has central importance in the lives of the survivors (Abramowitz, Lichtenberg, Marcus, & Shapira, 1994; de Vries, Suedfeld, Krell, Blando & Southard, 2005). For some, narratives of survival have meaning and are purposeful; for others, they are without meaning and hope.

The complex life stories of these individuals are recorded as oral histories and archived at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, Yad VaShem in Israel, the Fortunoff Archives at Yale University, and at local Holocaust museums throughout the United States. The Survivors of the Shoah project has collected over 52,000 personal narratives. These narratives are not only the stories that the survivors tell; as living stories, the survivors represent hope and potential, pain and loss. What can those survivors who have experienced unimaginable injustice

teach us about forgiveness? How do survivors of unprecedented separation and loss make meaning of their lives and complete unfinished business? How can their experience help other people recover from deep personal hurt, tragedy, and abuse?

Do these survivors become more vulnerable as they age? (Barak, Aizenberg, Szor, Swartz, Maor, & Knobler, 2005; Shmotkin, Blumstein, & Modan, 2003). How have they experienced the sometimes challenging transitions of the third and final stage of life? (Abramovitz, Lichtenberg, Marcus, & Shapira, 1994; Shmotkin & Lomranz, 1998). What can we learn from their stories that can improve social work practice with other older adults who have experienced critical life events, trauma and horrible injustice?

The diminishing of the population of Holocaust survivors and the growing interest in forgiveness offers social work practitioners and researchers a compelling opportunity to learn from them. Currently, there is little research about forgiveness among older adults or Holocaust survivors. The study of forgiveness offers promise for helping older adults rise above despair and make meaning of their experiences. Social work researchers bring a unique perspective to this issue by appreciating the complexity of the concept of forgiveness and meaning making for Holocaust survivors and other older adults. By studying the life experiences of older adults who endured the Holocaust, survived the atrocities perpetrated by one group upon another, and triumphed over adversity, social workers will learn about survivors' experience of forgiveness as they in their lives as they are aging and are making meaning of their life experiences. The in-depth interviews will help social workers gain a needed perspective about how one group of older adults addresses forgiveness. The findings may have implications for other older adults who are struggling with forgiveness-related concerns.

Theoretical Perspective

The study of older Holocaust survivors involves complex concepts and relationships as this aging population confronts both the stressors of aging such as retirement, death of a family member or close friend, and accepting the prospect of their own death. They survived the mass extermination of Jews by the Nazis in World War II and bring a combination of vulnerability and resiliency to their aging process. Forgiveness within this population is based on the interplay of pre-Holocaust, Holocaust, and post-Holocaust experiences and their physical and psychological adjustment to their aging process (Glicksman, et al., 2003; Landau & Litwin, 2000). Table 1 presents factors, such as family structure, location, satisfaction with work, locus of control, and the stressors of aging, that may impact the process of forgiveness for older Holocaust survivors. Although the diversity of the experience is important in understanding the older Holocaust survivor, there is no empirical data that addresses how these factors, individually or in any combination, have affected the quality of the Holocaust survivors' lives, even before they reached later adulthood (Baer & Goldenberg, 2003; Landau & Litwin, 2000) (Appendix A).

#### Narratives/Narrative Gerontology

Narrative gerontology is a scientific methodology for listening to narratives of critical life events and understanding how older Holocaust survivors have used forgiveness to transcend terrible experiences, to accept the prospect of death, and to experience a sense of well-being. Narratives or "life stories" help us to understand how people make sense of their world and provide their life with meaning and purpose (Emmons, 2000). Narratives provide a natural bridge linking gerontology and the lives of Holocaust survivors (de Vries, et al., 2005), providing a vehicle to help explain "how Holocaust survivors age and how the quality of their aging can be understood in light of their catastrophic experience" (Lomranz, 2005, p. 256). Telling narratives offers older adults a sense of agency about their lives as they reconsider their past experiences,

often with a revision or expanded understanding of the events (Butler, 1963). Older Holocaust survivors have an additional and perhaps more significant challenge to “integrate traumatic experiences into a broader life story...as well as to ensure that the intergenerational chain of memory is not broken” (Lomranz, 2005, p. 256).

### Conceptual Model of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not forgetting or denying one has been hurt. Forgiveness is an acknowledgement that we are human beings who deserve respect (Enright, 2001). Forgiveness involves both psychological and theoretical perspectives; however, according to Enright & Coyle (1998), “until quite recently, the scientific community has not noticed the link between forgiveness and the alleviation of such distresses as depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and low self esteem” (p. 139). Social workers, to define forgiveness with individuals, families, groups or in community settings, hear stories of pain and loss and hope and courage. Some clients have learned to forgive; many have not.

Forgiveness involves three dimensions of human behavior: affective, cognitive and behavioral. Enright and the Human Development Group have developed a four-phase spiral process of interpersonal forgiveness: (1) uncovering, (2) decision, (3) work, and (4) deepening, which include a total of twenty steps (Enright & Coyle, 1998) (See Appendix B). People may experience these steps in nonlinear and nonsequential order. These steps require cognitive, behavioral, and affective decisions and considerations. Enright and the Human Development Group (1991) have identified 17 psychological variables that emerge from the process of forgiveness intervention (Appendix B). Researchers have not utilized the Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness or the 17 psychological variables with older adults.

### Preliminary Studies

The proposed study builds on this researcher's skills as a qualitative researcher and is a logical extension of research agenda on forgiveness and older adults. The theme of forgiveness was palpable in narratives of oppression told by an ethnically diverse older adults sample (Cohen & Greene, 2006), in narratives of spiritual development articulated by women in midlife (Cohen, 2001) and in stories of early childhood sexual abuse, physical, and verbal abuse perpetrated by parents on young children and later by adult children on older parents. Social worker must develop the skills, knowledge and comfort in work with older adults and their families in addressing forgiveness.

The proposed study builds on recent qualitative studies that examine resiliency rather than pathology in Holocaust survivors (Ayalon, 2005; Glickson, van Haitsma, Mamberg, Gagnon, Brom, 2003; Greene, 2002; Suedfeld, Soriano, McMurtry, Paterson, Weiszbeck & Krell, 2005; de Vries, Suedfeld, Krell, Blando & Southard, 2005). It expands this literature by focusing on forgiveness and its implications for social work practice with older adults.

This study will contribute to my research agenda to explore forgiveness and older adults. The findings will be the based for future research on the use of forgiveness as an intervention to heal interpersonal relationships and to improve the mental health and well-being for culturally and ethnically diverse older adults. Knowledge from this study will help social workers learn how to better serve older adults and their families in addressing forgiveness- related concerns.

## Methodology

### Research Design

In this study, the meaning of the Holocaust survivors' experiences is central and narrative gerontology provides a vehicle to capture the distinctive experiences and similar themes in their lives. Older Holocaust survivors will give voice to their narratives of forgiveness and

unforgiveness and how they have made meaning of their lives. Narratives can be empowering and transformative, giving older adults permission to claim agency and authorship about the events in their lives. By telling the narratives in their own words, “older Holocaust survivors have the opportunity to reflect on the events and experiences of their lives as part of a developmental process” (Shmotkin & Lomranz, 1998, p. 153).

Social workers need to understand how to use the process of forgiveness to enhance older clients’ well-being and to contribute to their good mental health. The findings from this study will increase understanding of forgiveness and of how the process of forgiveness helps older people to resolve unfinished business with older adults and their families.

### Sample

Thirty older Holocaust survivors living in Dallas, Texas, and Atlanta, Georgia, comprise the purposive sample for this study. The Program Directors of the Survivor Holocaust Survivor Project at Jewish Family Service agencies in these two cities have agreed to help with the recruitment. The researcher selected these two agencies because she has previously worked or volunteered at both agencies. This study will employ the definition of Holocaust survivor used in other Holocaust studies: anyone living in a country occupied and dominated by Germany from 1933-1945. In qualitative methodology, the quality of the data determines sample size; however, since many factors affect how Holocaust survivors’ experience forgiveness, the projected sample size is 30, or until saturation occurs and no new themes emerge.

### Measures/Instruments

The primary source of data for this study will be interviews that capture the life stories of these older Holocaust survivors. A structured interview will collect sociodemographic data about participants and semi-structured interviews will encourage these older Holocaust survivors to

share, in their own words, their narratives of how they have experienced forgiveness in their post Holocaust years. Preliminary questions for the semi-structured interview are included (See Appendix D). However, at the beginning of the grant, 6-8 Holocaust survivors and Holocaust researchers will meet to advise the researcher how to refine and frame questions for the semi-structured interview protocol. Since in qualitative research the investigator serves as the primary instrument, the researcher will convey an open, receptive and nonjudgmental listening attitude throughout the interview process (Merriam, 1998).

### Procedures

The researcher will conduct face to face interviews at the JFS office, the older adult's home or a community location agreed upon by both interviewer and participant. At the beginning of each interview, according to standard IRB protocols, each participant will sign a consent form explaining the purpose of the study, the anticipated risks, and how to withdraw from the study. Some of these Holocaust survivors have previously participated in oral history projects in which they were videotaped as they shared their stories of loss and pain, adaptation, and resiliency, so for many of them, this will not be the first time that they have told their stories. However, since the subject matter is very personal, these Holocaust survivors are considered high-risk subjects. If someone becomes distressed, the interview will conclude immediately upon his/her request. If additional support is needed, the survivors have access to the social workers at the Jewish Family Service agency. The explanation of the referral process will occur at the beginning of the interview.

The interviews will last approximately 1-1/2 hour. Permission to record will be requested. The researcher will tape the interviews, with permission from the participants, and transcribe them verbatim to capture and preserve the exact words of the participants. Field notes taken

during and after the interview will supplement transcribed records. Each participant receives an alias used on tapes, accompanying consent forms, researcher's notes. Transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the TCU Department of Social Work office. The principal investigator and trained MSW staff will interview thirty Holocaust survivors between the two sites in Dallas, Texas and Atlanta, Georgia. MSW staff who are interested in participating on the research team, are comfortable speaking with Holocaust survivors about their experience, and are willing to follow the grant protocols will receive training prior to beginning the interviews.

### Data Analysis

This study will utilize an inductive approach to data analysis. Constant comparison data analysis involves “moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 178) in an effort to make meaning of the data. Data analysis, involving thematic analyses, will begin after the first interview and continue throughout the data collection. As themes begin to emerge from the data, the researcher will attempt to understand the themes in light of the original questions. Analytic memos will provide a tool to record emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hunches.

Two techniques of data analysis, biographical (Denzin, 1989) and psychological (Alexander 1988) are proposed. Denzin's biographical method identifies nine problematic presumptions which structure how people tell and write about their lives. They include “(a) the existence of others, (b) the influence and importance of gender and class, (c) family beginnings, (d) starting points, (e) known and knowing authors and observers, (f) objective life markers, (g) real persons with real lives, (h) turning-point experiences, (i) truthful statements distinguished from fictions” (p. 17). These concepts will be significant in analyzing the complex experiences

of older Holocaust survivors. In this study the starting point includes early family history, changing family structures and loss and adaptation throughout the lifespan. In addition, the data analysis includes looking for turning point experiences called “epiphanies” or “interactional moments and experiences that leave marks on people’s lives” (p. 96). The analysis of the interviews will include identifying any turning points (both the event and the process) that moved the individual closer to or further away from forgiveness.

The second method of data analysis, suggested by Alexander (1988) is more psychological and offers two means of making meaning of the data: “letting the data reveal itself” (p. 268) and “asking the data a question” (p. 268) to identify themes and patterns to assist making meaning from the interviews. Making sense of the data means using inductive reasoning to discover what valuable information the data hold. The researcher will mine the data to determine how these Holocaust survivors have experienced the forgiveness process in their lives and how their aging process has affected their perspective. With the data analysis complete and the themes identified, the researcher will compare the findings with the Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness (Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1991) (Appendix B) the seventeen psychological variables (Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1991) (Appendix C), searching for similar themes and emergent themes specific to the Holocaust experience.

Throughout the process of data analysis, the research team will consist of the researcher, her assigned Hartford research mentor, the TCU research consultant, the institutional faculty sponsor, two faculty members at Brite Divinity School with interests and expertise in forgiveness and in providing pastoral care to older adults, and qualitative research colleagues in the Qualitative Research Special Interest Group at TCU.

## Rigor

Trustworthiness is a key consideration for achieving rigor in qualitative research. Research results are “trustworthy to the extent that there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability” (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). The following strategies will insure rigor in this study. To strengthen internal validity, the researcher will employ the following strategies: member checks, peer examination, triangulating data, collaborative research, colleague review, and controlling for researcher bias. An audit trail and work with others to identify and manage personal biases will strengthen validity and reliability. The findings from this study will include thick, rich descriptions so that the readers can know whether they can generalize the findings to their situations.

### Project Timeline

1 <sup>st</sup> quarter Sept. –Nov. 2006	Update literature review; IRB approval; develop recruitment flier for two sites; develop training; take research course; hire a student assistant; attend GSA; meet with focus group to help frame questions
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter Dec. 2006 – Feb. 2007	Finalize interview schedule; Conduct training at both sites; Begin interviews in Dallas; hire transcriber; train interviewers in Atlanta; begin interviews;
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter March – May 2007	Begin coding data; continue with interviews; transcribe; begin data analysis; begin application for NIH funding to expand research; seek over funding sources
4 <sup>th</sup> quarter June – Aug. 2007	Continue with interviews; transcribe and code; continue data analysis; work on NIH grant
5th quarter Sept. –Nov. 2007	Complete interview; continue coding; transcribe; continue data analysis; submit grant to NIH and other potential funders; present preliminary results to research sites; submit proposal to present at CSWE and SSWR
6th quarter Dec. 2007 – Feb. 2008	Continue coding; continue data analysis; incorporate feedback from sites; begin working on draft of first manuscript; Submit proposal to present at GSA; update lit review
7th quarter March – May 2008	Manuscript refinement; Submit first manuscript and begin working on second manuscript; develop PPT for presentations; disseminate results to research sites; incorporate feedback from sites
8th quarter June – Aug. 2008	Continue developing PowerPoint presentation; develop curriculum modules to train social workers; Submit second manuscript

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**Appendix A**

**Table 1: Factors Affecting the Process of Forgiveness in Older Holocaust Survivors**

	Pre-Holocaust	During Holocaust	Post Holocaust	Aging Process for Survivors
Age at the time of occupation/Holocaust				
Gender				
Age at the time of liberation				
Country of origin				
Family structure pre-Holocaust (single, married, with/out children)				
Location during Holocaust: Work camp Concentration camp Partisan unit -Hiding in the woods				
Attitude of community in which they settled				
Family structure after liberation (marriage, re-marriage, children?)/size of family				
Social supports and networks				
Locus of control				
Satisfaction with work				
Having living family of origin members post Holocaust				
Stresses of aging (retirement, death of a spouse, physical health)				
Access to health and social services				

## **Appendix B**

### **The Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness**

#### **Uncovering Phase – cognitive and emotional**

1. Examination of psychological defenses (Kiel, 1986).
2. Confrontation of anger; the point is to release, not harbor, the anger (Trainer, 1981).
3. Admittance of shame, when this is appropriate (Patton, 1985).
4. Awareness of cathexis (Droll, 1984).
5. Awareness of cognitive rehearsal of the offense (Droll, 1984).
6. Insight that the injured party may be comparing self with the injurer (Kiel, 1986).
7. Realization that oneself may be permanently and adversely changed by the injury (Close, 1970).
8. Insight into a possibly altered “just world” view (Flanigan, 1987).

#### **Decision Phase – decision making process**

9. A change of heart, conversion, new insights that old resolutions strategies are not working (North, 1987).
10. Willingness to consider forgiveness as an option.
11. Commitment to forgive the offender (Neblett, 1974).

#### **Work Phase – defining new cognitive strategies**

12. Reframing, through role-taking, who the wrongdoer is by viewing him or her in context (Smith, 1981).
13. Empathy toward the offender (Cunningham, 1985).
14. Awareness of compassion, as it emerges, towards the offender (Droll, 1984).
15. Acceptance, absorption of the pain (Bergin, 1988).

#### **Deepening Phase – meaning making**

16. Finding meaning for self and others in the suffering and in the forgiveness process (Frankl, 1959).
17. Realization that the self has needed others’ forgiveness in the past (Cunningham, 1985).
18. Insight that one is not alone (Universality, support).
19. Realization that self may have a new purpose in life because of the injury.
20. Awareness of decreased negative affect and, perhaps, increased positive affect, if it begins to emerge, toward the injurer; awareness of internal emotional release (Smedes, 1984).

Enright & the Human Development Study Group (1996)

### Appendix C

**Table 1--Summary: Psychological Variables Engaged in a Process Intervention on Forgiveness**

Variable number	Description
1.	Examination of psychological defenses
2.	Confrontation of anger, the point to release, not harbor, the anger
3.	Admittance of shame and guilt, when this is appropriate
4.	Awareness of atheism
5.	Awareness of cognitive rehearsal of the offense
6.	Insight that the injured party may be comparing self with the injurer
7.	Insight into a possibly altered “just world” view
8.	New insights that old resolution strategies are not working
9.	Commitment to forgive the offender
10.	Reframing, through role taking, who the wrongdoer is by viewing him or her in context
11.	Empathy toward the offender
12.	Awareness of compassion, as it emerges, toward the offender
13.	Acceptance; absorption of pain
14.	Realization that the self has needed others’ forgiveness in the past
15.	Realization that the self has been, perhaps, permanently changed by the injury
16.	Awareness of decreased negative affect and, perhaps, increased positive affect, if this begins to emerge, toward the injurer
17.	Awareness of internal, emotional release

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From: R. D. Enright and the Human development Study Group (1991). The moral development of forgiveness. In *Moral behavior and development*, 1, p. 148. Erlbaum Press.

## Appendix D

### Preliminary Questions

The following questions will be used to guide interviews in this narrative study:

Semi-structured interview questions to be modified with Hartford research mentor and Holocaust survivors

1. Where did you grow up?
2. What was life like for you as you were growing up?
3. Tell me about your life now. What is important to you?
4. What are some of the challenges that you face in your life as you have gotten older that you did not face as a younger person?
5. How do you manage these challenges?
6. Tell me about your experiences during and after the Holocaust. Who or what helped you to survive these adverse life events?
7. How do you define forgiveness?
8. Tell me about a situation in which you experienced forgiveness.
9. Who or what provided you support? What kind of support do they provide?
10. How has your perspective of forgiveness changed as you have grown older?
11. What do you want to tell younger people about forgiveness?
12. What do you want to leave as a legacy for others?
13. Is there anything that I haven't asked that you think is important for me to know?