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**Challenging Assumptions:
The Application of a World Views Model
to Involuntary Job Loss.**

This thesis is presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Master of Arts in
Psychology, at Massey University.

Jeff Simpson
1999

ABSTRACT

Research by Janoff-Bulman has established that subsequent to experiencing a highly traumatic event, the world assumptions of trauma victims differ to those of individuals who have not experienced the same trauma. In utilising the Janoff-Bulman trauma model, this study investigated the world assumptions of people who had experienced involuntary job loss (IJL). As a result of my practical experience in outplacement counselling, it was my belief that IJL would be experienced differently by each individual. This study gave an the opportunity to measure the world assumptions of people who had experienced the same event and provided a model to help explain individual differences in reaction to this life stressor.

The world assumptions, perceived level of job loss impact, and demographic factors were measured of 122 IJL participants. Firstly, level of emotional impact was measured, then categorised using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). As a result, 36.9% (n=45) of the participant group were identified as high impact, while 63% (n=77) were identified as low impact. This confirmed the issue of response variation to IJL. A regression analysis found significant differences in four world assumptions between the two groups. The high impact group reported a lower level of self worth compared to the low impact group, though, inconsistent with the Janoff-Bulman model, the high impact group reported a higher belief in benevolence of people, benevolence of the world, and the belief of luck. These findings, along with implications for counsellors working in this area, are discussed with possible explanations proposed.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis with all my love to my wife Tracy, for her belief in me, and to
our little people: Sarah, Hannah, and Jamie.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Dedication	i
	Acknowledgements	ii
	List of Tables	iii
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	SCHEMA, BELIEFS AND WORLD ASSUMPTIONS	7
	Fundamental Assumptions, Delusions and the the Janoff-Bulman Model	9
	World Assumptions	11
	Belief in a Just World	13
	Post Trauma: The Challenge of coming to terms cognitively	18
3	BREAKING THE CAREER CYCLE: IJL AS A LIFE TRAUMA	22
	Employment and Underemployment	28
	Repeated IJL	30
	The Focus of this Study	31
4	METHOD	33

	Procedure	33
	Research Participants	34
	Measures	35
	Perceived Impact of Job Loss (PIJL)	36
	Psychological Distress	36
	Life Satisfaction	37
	Demographic Information	38
5	RESULTS	39
	Range of Psychological Responses to IJL.....	39
	Intercorrelation Between Impact variables and outcome variables	40
	Exploring the Impact on Cognitions Following Involuntary Job Loss	41
	Influence of Demographic Factors on Job Loss	45
	Salary Differences Between 'Old' and 'New' Job	46
	Change in Perceived Status and Life Satisfaction	47
	Repeated IJL	47
	Years in Job , With Employer, and In Paid Work Force.....	47
6	DISCUSSION	48
	Conclusions, Applications and Future Research	52
	REFERENCES	54

APPENDICES 66

APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN STUDY

APPENDIX C: E-MAIL TO KPMG STAFF

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Range of Psychological responses to IJL.....	39
2	Correlation Matrix of Impact and Outcome Variables	41
3	Predictors of Distress and Life Satisfaction	42
4	Mean and Standard Deviations on WAS Subscales for High and Low impact of Job Loss Groups	44
5	Mean and Standard Deviation Distress and Life Satisfaction for Different Levels of Employment Status.....	46