Teacher Narratives of Domestic Violence

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In Memory of Adam James Dawson and Margaret Mary Ives.
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Abstract

Domestic violence has a wide ranging impact upon children. This study explores teacher narratives of domestic violence, the day to day impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and their families and implications for Educational Psychologists when working to support children and families exposed to domestic violence. A three session narrative approach, consisting of group interviews and reflective logs was used to gather teacher narratives. The outcomes from this thesis suggest teachers have a limited understanding of the emotional trauma which can result from domestic violence. Meeting the needs of children exposed to domestic violence thus presents a significant challenge to class teachers. To provide effective support for children exposed to domestic violence teachers require a greater depth of knowledge, and perhaps understanding, in relation to domestic violence as emotional trauma.
Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle - Ian Maclaren
1 - Introduction

1.1 - Rationale and Background

During the completion of this thesis I experienced a personal tragedy which significantly affected my life and as such had a huge influence on my journey through the course of this research.

I have now come to describe the event as traumatic and recognise myself and my family have gone through significant emotional trauma. This experience will be with us forever, and I would love nothing more than to be able to go back in time and change what happened. I am learning to accept the ‘why’ and ‘what if’ that plagues our lives. As a result of the trauma I became reclusive and anxious and a year on I am beginning to regain my confidence and feel more positive about the future. Whilst I have not required the support of mental health services, or other counselling or support services, I have been significantly challenged as a person. The aspirations and values I had in life have been deeply questioned and changed, to the extent I now find it hard to connect with some of my friends as I feel our values are so different. Whilst my friends are very supportive of myself and my family there are many times when it is apparent just how difficult it is for them to understand how we feel. We have coped very well as a family and this can be a double-edged sword as they can expect more from us than we can give, or simply under-estimate our pain.

Such was the impact of the event it became apparent during a tutorial I would need to include ‘a little of myself’ within my thesis. As a result the nature of this thesis changed, including the title. I hope to reflect on how our narratives are central within our practice and will incorporate my narrative through this thesis. My experiences led me to favour a social constructionist paradigm for considering this research. Social constructionists see relationships, interactions and social contexts as influential in the dynamic construction of meaning and understanding. I recognise my experience is not in isolation; it has significantly affected those around me and changed relationships. A relationship was at the core of my trauma, this came to
challenge and change me, and this research. Social constructionism has provided a means of analysis which I utilise in this thesis.

Initially when I began this research it was my intention to focus on teacher narratives of domestic violence and how domestic violence impacts upon class teachers on a day to day basis. As a direct consequence of my own experience of emotional trauma, which was not related to domestic violence, my positionality changed and I began to view domestic violence from the viewpoint of emotional trauma. My positionality changed significantly as I began to frame my own experiences in relation to emotional trauma; I began to recognise similarities in mine and my family’s responses in comparison to a friend and her family who had experienced a significant emotional trauma approximately a year prior to us, again unrelated to domestic violence and also different from my own experience. My positioning focused on my family and the impact on them, the same position as my friend; and similarly a family is at the core of domestic violence. Following my own experiences of dealing with emotional trauma and supporting my daughter, who was three years old, to manage her emotions, I became more interested in domestic violence as an example of an emotional trauma, how this impacts upon children and is then presented and managed in the classroom. My positionality had therefore changed from the perspective of the impact on the teachers to the perspective of the child. In particular I was interested in the impact of trauma on young children, their understanding, coping and the daily impact of emotional trauma on their lives. As a result of my own experiences I feel I have developed a shared understanding, and empathy, with families who have experienced trauma and I became interested in the effectiveness of education as a supportive system. Prior to my own experience I had admired the resilience and coping ability of my friend; in particular I wondered how she was able to cope on day to day basis and this seems to be the main source of admiration of my friends. I have since realised the reality is you just do, you get on with it and somehow you cope – because you have to. I felt I had to find strength to carry on for the sake of my daughter. Due to family circumstances I chose to delay her starting school until the next term as I felt it was important to maintain consistency and familiarity in order to effectively support her in managing her emotions. It was my opinion additional change would cause unnecessary emotional distress and could have a detrimental impact. In particular I worried she might
perceive she had been sent away from the family at a time when she would need reassurance, comfort and support from her family - to reaffirm the concept of the family as a safe haven. I was acutely aware she would require the staff to be aware of her experience in order to effectively provide appropriate emotional support. It wasn’t that she required specialist support, just a shared understanding to enable staff to respond appropriately should she choose to discuss her experiences. Consequently my experiences have profoundly affected my positionality.

The effect of the experience was such that it affected every aspect of my life and I felt completely changed. The impact on my life was beyond anything I could ever have imagined and as a consequence the narratives I developed were extremely influential. It was therefore inevitable my professional practice would also be affected. Initially I was scared I wouldn’t be able to do my job anymore and worried I would break down, however I realised I was capable and that I was able to use my experiences to become a better person and a better practitioner; but I am sorry it had to take such an experience to make me the person I am today. It is therefore as a consequence of my experiences and their impact that I am interested in professional narratives of emotional trauma and how they story themselves and children who have experienced emotional trauma. Domestic violence, in relation to this research, is one example of emotional trauma.

1.1.1 - Domestic Violence

In September 2012 The Home Office announced a new definition of domestic violence would be implemented in March 2013:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality (The Home Office, 2012). (The full definition is included in appendix two, page iii.)

This is the definition of domestic violence applied to this research project. The terms domestic violence and domestic abuse, interpersonal violence or family violence are used, sometimes interchangeably, within the literature to describe violence between two people in an intimate relationship. Within this thesis the term domestic violence, according to The Home Office (2012) definition will be used in the main, however it is
important to be aware of the subtle differences in terminology. Family violence is a term used to describe violent relationships within a family unit; these can be between intimate partners, parents and children, siblings or children towards their parents (Ghate, 2000). The focus of this research is relationships between intimate partners, so for this reason, the term family violence is not applicable. Domestic abuse is often used to consider abusive relationships between intimate partners without assuming physical violence is a feature of the relationship (Barber, 2008). Domestic violence on the other hand refers to relationship between intimate partners, of which physical violence is likely to be a feature, although this is not necessarily the case (Barber, 2008; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Holden, 2003; Ferraro, 1996). This is evident from the Home Office (2012) definition of domestic violence given above. The Home Office definition provides a broad umbrella term covering all facets of domestic abuse, therefore this is the term I have chosen to use within my research. Interpersonal violence is a term which is accepted to have the same meaning as domestic violence (Felblinger, 2008; Lewis-O’Connor, 2004; Martin, 2002); however domestic violence is the more prevalent term within the UK (Peckover, 2003b). Ferraro (1996) acknowledges domestic violence can sometimes encompass child physical and sexual abuse. Violence against children is usually referred to as child abuse and neglect. Within this research child abuse is not encompassed by the term domestic violence; child abuse is considered a separate and distinct form of abuse and is discussed as such where it is relevant.

In considering children’s experiences of domestic violence the term ‘exposure’ will be used as, according to Holden (2003), ‘it is more inclusive of different types of experiences and does not assume the child actually observed the violence’ (p.151). The Adoption and Children Act 2002 added a new category ‘impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another’ (p.71), recognising the impact of domestic violence on children. Prior to this the impact of domestic violence on children was not specifically recognised in the Children Act 1989. Baldry (2007) describes domestic violence as ‘indirect abuse’ of children due to the extensive negative impact of exposure to domestic violence (p.29). UNICEF (2006) estimate up to one million children in the UK have been exposed to domestic violence.
Domestic violence can take many forms other than physical violence and can occur as male on female abuse, female on male abuse, between marital couples, non-married couples – cohabiting or otherwise, same sex couples; regardless of race, socioeconomic status, age and disability (Cho, 2012; Barber, 2008; Dewar, 2008; Casique and Furegato, 2006; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Home Office, 2003; Lawrence, 2003; Peckover, 2003a; Moffitt and Caspi, 1998; Walker, 1979).

Statistics demonstrating the serious and pernicious nature of domestic violence provide justification of its importance as a research topic:

- There were 7.1% of women and 4.4% of men who reported having experienced any type of domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female victims of domestic abuse and 700,000 male victims (Crime Survey for England and Wales 2012/13)
- Overall, 30.0% of women and 16.3% of men had experienced some form of domestic abuse since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 4.9 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.7 million male victims (Crime Survey for England and Wales 2012/13)
- The decline in domestic abuse between the 2004/05 and 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales surveys was statistically significant. However, the current figure (5.7%) continues a fairly stable trend seen since 2008/09 (Crime Survey for England and Wales 2012/13)
- Two per cent of women and 0.5% of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year (Crime Survey for England and Wales 2012/13)
- On average, two women a week are killed in the UK by a violent partner or ex-partner. This constitutes nearly 40% of all female homicide victims. (Women’s Aid, 2006b)
- Domestic violence is often recurrent and increases in severity; in 35% of cases a second incident occurs within five weeks of the first (Walby and Myhill, 2002).
- Separation can increase the risk of domestic violence; the British Crime Survey found 22% of separated women were assaulted by their partners, or ex-partners, after separation (Home Office, 2003).
Women are at greater risk of domestic violence during pregnancy. 30% of women first experience domestic violence during pregnancy; or the violence may increase in frequency or severity (Women’s Aid, 2009; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Daniel, 2003; Home Office, 2003; Department of Health, 2002).

Violence to be more common in teenage relationships than it was previously believed (Barter, McCarr, Berridge and Evans, 2009) with young people at increased risk of violence (Lewis O’Connor, 2004).

Those under thirty are at much greater risk than those over forty (British Crime Survey, 2004).

32% of victims report their attacker had been drinking (Home Office, 2003).

Drugs are less likely to be an issue but when they are reported it is more likely to be in cases of chronic victimisation (three or more assaults) (Home Office, 2003).

1.2 - Structure of the Research

Having outlined some statistics on the serious nature of domestic violence, I will now discuss how this thesis is structured.

Chapter two of this research project is a literature review which discusses relevant background literature and research relating to education and domestic violence. The history of education, educational policy and practice and approaches to education are firstly considered. These are then applied to the individual child and finally, in relation to education, emotionality and learning are considered. The literature review then considers domestic violence, beginning with defining domestic violence and reviewing domestic violence policy and practice. Theories of domestic violence are then presented followed by a discussion of the impact of domestic violence on children. The following section then discusses domestic violence and education considering policy and practice relating to domestic violence within education. This chapter concludes by outlining the relevance of domestic violence within educational research and the presentation of the research questions.

Chapter three presents the methodology associated with this research project. Ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research are presented and
discussed. A methodological critique of domestic violence research is then presented and implications for this research are discussed. The ethical issues associated with domestic violence and educational research are presented in the following section and discussed in relation to this research project. The following sections discuss the methodological paradigms and approaches applied to this research and their implications, these are; social constructionism, a narrative approach and thematic analysis.

Chapter four describes the research methods used in this research project which are: a three session narrative approach, group interviews and reflective logs. This chapter also presents a detailed description of the procedures and data analysis used in this research project.

Chapter five presents a personal reflection which provides a narrative insight into my personal experience of emotional trauma which subsequently affected the direction of the research. The personal narrative of emotional trauma is then linked to the research project to demonstrate the strength of the personal narrative and its subsequent influence and significance.

Chapter six describes the results of the data analysis. The chapter begins with the researcher’s narrative reflection on each of the participants and each of the interview sessions to provide context. The following section discusses each of the four themes which were identified from the thematic analysis of the teacher narratives. The four themes are narratives of the impact on the class teacher, narratives of individual differences in coping, narratives of systemic challenges and narratives of developmental impact.

Chapter seven is the discussion of the research project. The first section presents an initial reflection on each of the research questions; each of themes identified by the thematic analysis is then discussed in turn and related to literature and research presented in chapter two. The discussion concludes by returning to the research questions and discussing the relevance of the themes to the research questions. The implications of this research for schools and educational and child psychologists
are then discussed. The limitations of this research project are then considered before finally presenting the application of the outcomes of this research project.

This research project is of importance and relevance as there is little research into domestic violence conducted in relation to education as a context for development. Whilst the small scale of this research makes it difficult to generalise to the wider population, the objectives of the research were achieved; to provide a supportive intervention to the participants in addition to providing insights into domestic violence as a social phenomenon and to enable the teacher narrative to provide a catalyst for future research.
2 - Literature Review

Within this literature review I aim to demonstrate how domestic violence, as an example of emotional trauma, is relevant to education and therefore of significant importance within the field of educational and child psychology.

This literature review describes how the subject of domestic violence in relevant to education through its impact on the lives of children and the ways their experiences are present within the classroom.

This literature review is organised into three main sections. The first section on education discusses four areas; i) education in history, ii) approaches to education, iii) education and the child and iv) emotionality and learning. The second section discusses domestic violence and is divided into five sections; i) defining domestic violence, ii) domestic violence policy and practice, iii) theories of domestic violence, iv) impact and effects of domestic violence and v) domestic violence and education. The final section concludes the literature review by presenting the aims of the research project and introduces the research questions.

The first section, the history of education, describes the purpose of education and policy development over time. The following section describes the major educational theories whilst considering differing approaches regarding the purpose of education. Within the third section education is considered in relation to the individual child with regard to educational legislation which had more recently favoured a holistic approach. In consideration of the individual child, progressive educational methods are discussed in relation to the purpose of education and the provision of opportunities to develop social and emotional skills. Critical education is discussed and shown to be central to the philosophical aims of education. Having established social and emotional development is crucial to the philosophical aim; making a positive contribution to society, the role of emotions and their effect on learning is discussed in the fourth section. The emotions of the child are shown to be of great importance in the classroom, as they directly affect a child’s readiness to learn. Following on from the importance of emotions, emotional intelligence is discussed as
being significant in meeting the aims of education and making a positive contribution to society.

The educational theories presented highlight children’s lives are influential in their learning and children’s life experiences are central to their development and understanding. It is therefore evident that exposure to adverse experiences will have an impact on their learning and development. Educational theories dictate children apply their life experiences to their learning; it is therefore likely that any significant adverse experience will have an impact in the classroom. Once these experiences are taken into the classroom it is also likely that they will impact upon the teacher and the other children in the class.

The second major section of the literature review discusses domestic violence. Firstly what constitutes domestic violence is outlined. Domestic violence policy and practice is then described, detailing how domestic violence has become more widely recognised and addressed in the last thirty years. This discussion highlights the currently favoured feminist perspective of domestic violence. Alternative theories to explain the occurrence and impact of domestic violence are then presented. This is followed by a discussion of the impact and effects of domestic violence which shows all areas of children’s development can be affected by exposure to domestic violence. A wealth of evidence is presented which shows domestic violence is traumatic and can have a life-long impact upon children. At this point in the literature review it is clear that domestic violence has a significant impact upon the school system, and the development of the individual. The final section of the literature review therefore considers the role of education in addressing domestic violence through protective and preventative approaches. This section demonstrates education has an important role at both the individual and systemic level. Discussion of the philosophical perspectives regarding the purpose of education highlights the adverse effect of domestic violence on the aims of education and the long term costs to society. Domestic violence is therefore of significant importance in educational research and highly relevant within the field of educational and child psychology.
2.1 - Education

2.1.1 - Education in History

The roots of formal education can be traced back to ancient Greece (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2011). Whilst education differed from polis to polis, overall the focus was on the development of the person as a whole, which included the mind, body and imagination. In Sparta the goal of education was military preparation, with little focus on literacy, as military dominance was of great importance. In contrast the Athenian system prepared citizens for peace and war.

In the middle ages schools in England were founded on religious principles. The cultural purpose of the education system at that time was religious training and the achievement of academic qualifications to support religion (Gillard, 2011), with Christianity focusing on preparation for the afterlife. For both ancient Greeks and Christians the purpose of education was functional and focused on the needs of society with education serving political and cultural interests.

Growth in systems of education in the eighteenth century led to increased government interest and by the nineteenth century politicians believed that education was needed for an orderly society and economic prosperity. This led to increased provision of elementary education in reading, writing, and arithmetic (the 3Rs).

During the industrial revolution education in the UK was introduced to the poor through Peel's Factory Act of 1802. Infant schools were first introduced in the early nineteenth century and their purpose was to provide childcare for young children in industrial areas. The Act applied to anyone under the age of twenty-one, and it prevented apprentices working at night and for longer than twelve hours a day, in addition the Act made provision for them to receive some basic education in reading, writing and arithmetic (Gillard, 2011; UK Parliament 2013). Whilst basic education was provided the purpose of infant schools was more than the teaching of the 3Rs and childcare. As Gillard (2011) notes,

“…they also sought to promote the children's physical well-being and to offer opportunities for their moral and social training and to provide some elementary
instruction in the 3Rs, so that the children could make more rapid progress when they entered the monitorial school.” (no page).

It is apparent that education in the nineteenth century constituted more than knowledge of the 3Rs; social and moral training was perceived to impact upon future achievement. The concept of ‘being educated’ at this time was perceived to extend beyond the 3Rs, the aim remains outcomes focused, e.g. the transfer of skills and knowledge to serve the needs of society. Throughout history education has served the needs of society and during the industrial age the teaching of gender specific practical activities was introduced, such as cobbling, tailoring, gardening and agriculture for boys, and spinning, sewing, knitting, lace-making and baking for girls. Thus at this time schooling was teaching skills required for employment in the industrial age. Gillard (2011) states an individual’s approach towards learning was considered to be important as it impacted upon aptitude. A positive approach to learning was perceived more beneficial as children learned faster, ultimately serving the needs of society at a time of unprecedented growth during the industrial revolution.

During the nineteenth century a class-determined education system developed which virtually excluded the lower classes from higher education. In 1835 the average length of school attendance was one year, rising to two in 1851. Compulsory education was first established in England and Wales with the introduction of The Elementary Education Act 1870 (commonly known as Forster’s Education Act 1870) when schooling became compulsory between age five and ten. This was the first piece of legislation relating specifically to the provision of Education in Britain. At this time education was considered by industrialists as vital to the nation’s ability to maintain its lead in manufacturing (UK Parliament, 2013). It was hoped that compulsory education would end child labour, however many children continued to work outside school hours. Truancy rates were high as many families relied on the income provided by children. It is apparent children at this time were perceived as requiring protection from the physical and emotional demands of child labour. The 1918 Education Act (The Fisher Act) raised the school leaving age from twelve to fourteen and gave all young workers the right to day release to access education; although the leaving age was not implemented until the 1921 Education
Act. The 1921 Education Act raised the school leaving age to fourteen and consolidated previous laws regarding education and employment of children and young people. Subsequent acts continued to raise the leaving age and the 1936 Education Act raised the school leaving age to fifteen, with exceptions to allow fourteen year olds to work in certain circumstances (Gillard, 2011). The Education Act 1944 saw the compulsory leaving age rise to age fifteen and then in 1972 to age sixteen. It was recommended that the compulsory leaving age rise to sixteen in the Education Act 1944 but this change was not implemented until 1972 due to the onset of the Second World War between 1939 and 1945. In an attempt to address NEET (not in education, employment or training) statistics the compulsory school leaving age rises to seventeen from the academic year 2013-2014. This does not mean young people must remain in school instead they must be in full-time education, an apprenticeship or full-time employment (over 20 hours a week) with part-time education until the end of the academic year they turn seventeen (Gov.UK, 2013a).

The 1944 Education Act (also known as the Butler Act) made schooling free for all pupils, in particular secondary education. The 1944 Education Act is regarded as one of the most socially progressive pieces of legislation ever enacted in Britain as secondary schooling became available to girls and the working classes. 'It was a landmark piece of social and welfare legislation’ (Bell, 2004; no page). At this time the country was suffering from the impact of the Second World War and the post-war aim was for a much less class ridden society. The 1944 Education Act introduced the tripartite education system. Pupils sat the 11+ to determine which type of secondary school they would attend, grammar, secondary technical or secondary modern. Each school focused on a particular range of skills and had a particular aim. The 1944 Education Act also made spiritual, moral, mental and physical development a compulsory duty. The 1944 Education Act focussed on the whole child by considering not only academia but also children’s social and welfare needs e.g. the provision of free medical examinations, milk and transport.

The Education Reform Act 1988 is the most significant piece of educational legislation since the 1944 Education Act, as it saw the introduction of the National Curriculum. The introduction of the National Curriculum provided the ability to directly compare the attainment of individual schools. This ability to compare
schools was intended to offer parents a greater degree of choice when choosing schools. In reality this has not happened and there is greater accountability placed on schools and individual teachers. During the 1980’s and 1990’s attainment and testing was of particular importance within society and SATs (standardised assessment tasks) were introduced in the first half of the 1990’s. SATs results continue to be used by the Department for Education (DfE) to produce national attainment tables for primary schools. Similarly GCSE, BTEC and NVQ results are used to compile secondary league tables. The government use league tables to compare schools and identify failing schools.

Throughout history education has served the needs of society and the importance and requirements of the education system have developed over time. The societal demands of education have increased such that the content of the educational curriculum is of significant political interest. More recently both Every Child Matters: Change for Children and the Children Act 2004 led to a focus on the child as a whole, and within some authorities this has resulted in significant structural changes and policy changes. However some would argue for a return to focussing on academia. Michael Gove (2009), former Secretary of State for Education, states:

I fear that duties on schools, and teachers, to fulfil a variety of noble purposes - everything from promoting community cohesion to developing relationships with other public bodies, trusts, committees and panels gets in the way of their core purpose – education. (no page).

2.1.2 - Approaches to Education

Paulo Freire is one of the most influential educational philosophers of the late twentieth century. Freire (1970) argued that what is taught and how it is taught is politically determined. He referred to this as the ‘banking concept of education’ describing how the continuation of democratic society is perpetuated through the teaching or indoctrination of political values (Freire, 1970; p.53). The area of debate to be considered here is in relation to the way in which political and cultural interests are served. Epistemologically there are two main approaches to education, what and who to teach, and how to teach. In considering what to teach I propose there are two contrasting perspectives, the development of academia versus social and emotional development.
Since the inception of mass schooling, education has become a core component of childhood and a key area of political debate and policy. As we have seen throughout history the purpose of education has been interwoven with the visions or requirements of the government at that particular point in time. Throughout history the overall aim of education has been to serve society and for individuals to be able to contribute to democratic society. Given the importance of education in the future of society, great debate continues to take place as to the priorities of education – academia or a more holistic approach which includes social and emotional development. This debate considers what to teach, e.g. the content of the curriculum and how to teach, e.g. progressive or traditional methods. Psychology has been influential in education from its inception, particularly when considering how to teach.

William James was a philosopher and psychologist whose work related best to psychology and education. He made a significant contribution to educational theory delivering *Talks to Teachers* (1899) on psychology. James was a pragmatist and saw the teacher’s role as guiding the child through experiences;

> You should regard your professional task as if it consisted chiefly and essentially in training the pupil to behaviour; taking behavior, not in the narrow sense of his manners, but in the very widest possible sense, as including every possible sort of fit reaction on the circumstances into which he may find himself brought by the vicissitudes of life. (James, 1899, p.28).

According to James (1899) education ‘consists in the organizing of resources in the human being, of powers of conduct which shall fit him to his social and physical world’ (p.29). For James the purpose of education is therefore preparation for life, with the teacher providing a role model for the child’s behaviour, which James described as ‘emotional, social, bodily, vocal, technical, or what not’ (p.31). James (1899) described teachers as role models who should supervise ‘native reactions’, which are instinctive and spontaneous, such as fear, love, curiosity and imitation (p.38). According to James the teacher’s role is the development of ‘acquired reactions’, which are desired behaviours (p.38). James views the teacher as central to development; supervising and shaping behaviour. According to James (1899) it is our native reactions which predispose us to learn and the teacher’s role is to
stimulate and shape behaviour which will then determine future conduct. James (1899) views native reactions as essential to the learning process, without these a teacher cannot interact. James sees education as preparation for adulthood and as such views the purpose of education as shaping behaviour.

Dewey was also a psychologist and philosopher who had significant influence in the field of education. Similarly to James, Dewey was also a pragmatist and did not view the role of the teacher as the bearer of knowledge. Dewey (1902) described the purpose of education as a process through which the child as ‘an immature, undeveloped being’ progresses to have ‘social aims, meaning, values incarnate in the matured experience’ as an adult (p.8).

Dewey (1902) argued the child and the curriculum were in opposition and he described these opposites as ‘different educational sects’ (p.11). According to Dewey (1902) the curriculum represented the importance of subject-matter in contrast to the child’s own experiences. Dewey (1902) was critical of the curriculum, which he described as lessons, facts and formulae. According to Dewey (1902) education ignores and minimises individuality and aims to make the child is ‘ductile and docile’ (p.13). In contrast Dewey (1902) believed the goal of education is not knowledge but ‘self-realisation’ (p.13). He argues personality and character are more important than subject-matter. Dewey (1902) draws attention to the differences in educational sects in relation to the logical vs. the psychological. The logical places emphasis on the knowledge and skills of the teacher whereas the psychological focuses on the child and his interests and knowledge. Dewey (1902) saw the teacher’s role as facilitating development;

It is certainly as futile to expect a child to evolve a universe out of his own mere mind as it is for a philosopher to attempt that task. Development does not mean just getting something out of the mind. It is a development of experience and into experience that is really wanted. (p.24)

Dewey took a constructivist view of education believing knowledge is constructed from previous experiences. According to Dewey (1902) development was not possible without the teacher engaging the child’s interest. The teacher therefore has to keep in mind the ‘double aspect of subject matter’; teaching the subject whilst at the same time making the subject meaningful (p.30). Dewey (1902) describes three
evils which can result from failure to keep the double aspect in mind. The first is ‘a lack of any organic connection’ which, for the child, results in material being purely formal and symbolic (p.31). Secondly there is ‘a lack of motivation’ which is necessary to drive the child’s sense of accomplishment (p.32).

But when material is directly supplied in the form of a lesson to be learned as a lesson, the connecting links of need and aim are conspicuous for their absence. (Dewey, 1902, p.33).

The third evil described by Dewey (1902) is the modification of the subject matter, in accordance with the curriculum, to make it presentable for the child. According to Dewey (1902) the ‘logical value’ is removed and all that remains is facts; which affects the development of the child and the overall goal of self-realisation (p.34). Dewey (1902) was also critical of those who defended what he described as empty mechanical exercises and those who proclaimed children took interest from these. According to Dewey (1902) to learn the lesson was preferable to discipline and this was then wrongly defined as interest.

Similarly to James, Dewey (1902) sees education as developing the skills required for adulthood, or ‘self-realisation’ (p.13). Dewey (1902) sees this as encompassing social and emotional development as he describes the goal of education as more than knowledge acquisition.

Dewey’s (1897) perspective of the subject matter of education has implications for what is taught and how it is taught. For example according to Dewey (1897) the social life of the child is the basis for education. He argues literature is the interpretation of experience and therefore the teaching of literature cannot precede experience. Dewey (1897) believes education is life and from its outset life includes, for example, science and art. As a result subjects cannot be introduced at particular grades as they are components of life and experience.

Dewey (1902) sees the curriculum as obstructive rather than aiding development. As a constructionist Dewey (1902) places great emphasis on the experiences of the child and argues these are central to development, which he argues is in complete contrast the curriculum.
Similarly to Dewey, Piaget took a constructivist view of education believing learning is based on experience and interaction with the physical environment. According to Piaget learning was problem based and this facilitated the assimilation of knowledge to develop schemata. Piaget described himself as a genetic epistemologist, concerned with the origins of knowledge. He placed great importance on education and was the Director of the International Bureau of Education from 1929 to 1968 (Munari, 1994).

Piaget’s stage theory of cognitive development was of particular influence in education, for example the age ranges of the key stages in the National Curriculum are representative of the ages attributed to Piagetian theory. Piaget viewed the child as actively involved in learning and believed children would not progress to the next stage of development until their cognitive development facilitated this; based on this premise Piaget argued it was futile to attempt to teach concepts before a child had reached that stage of development. According to Black and Ammon (1992) Piagetian principles of knowledge acquisition are of particular epistemological importance in relation to teacher education as there are implications for what is taught and how it is taught. Piaget viewed the acquisition of knowledge as resulting from interactions and problem solving. He rejected the idea of children being taught and knowledge being passed on through teaching.

In contrast to James and Dewey, who consider the long term goals of education, Piagetian theory focuses on stages of development and the goal of education is to provide an environment which facilitates progress through the developmental stages.

Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist working in the 1920’s and 1930’s. However his work was not known in the West until many years later; Vygotsky’s work ‘Thought and Language’ was first published in English in 1962, in 1987 it was retitled ‘Thinking and Speech’ and republished (John-Steiner, 2011).

Similarly to Dewey and Piaget, Vygotsky took a constructivist view of education believing knowledge is influenced by prior experience. According to Vygotsky (1986) learning does not take place in a social vacuum. In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky
places great importance on the social aspect of learning and believes knowledge develops through social interactions. As such schools can be considered as representations of society and one of the contexts for development. Epistemologically Piaget and Vygotsky’s theories differ significantly as Vygotsky places significant importance on the role of the teacher. Vygotsky sees the teacher as guiding the child by gradually reducing the scaffolding, or teacher support, until the child is able to complete the task independently. According to Vygotsky (1986) the teacher’s role is to provide guidance for a child whilst working within the zone of proximal development to extend the child’s problem solving ability. This is in contrast to Piaget’s theory that a child cannot learn new skills until they are developmentally able whereas Vygotsky theorises a child can learn new skills when given appropriate scaffolding to enable them to complete the task.

Bruner was strongly influenced by Vygotsky in the development of his theories. Bruner (1979) presents a differing constructivist view of education, describing knowledge as a model which is used to construct meaning from experience.

According to Takaya (2008) Bruner was critical of Dewey. Takaya (2008) considered Bruner’s critique of Dewey and states Bruner felt there is an intrinsic attraction to learning therefore it is not necessary for teachers to make subjects more interesting, nor do they need to be related to children’s experiences. According to Takaya (2008) Bruner’s theory of meta-cognition requires reflection on classroom practices, ‘the language of accountability holds a view of education as a matter of how faithfully individual students acquire or copy prescribed contents’ (p.14). According to Takaya (2008) this dictates the existence of prescribed content and that prescribing content is desirable. She further supposes many teachers would not find this ideal or an accurate representation of reality. According to Takaya (2008) the contention here is that teachers are judged on their ability to pass on the prescribed content. Takaya (2008) critically reflects that Bruner’s early views ‘had very little that would challenge this notion of learning’ (p.14). According to Takaya (2008) Bruner places importance on creating a sense of self in relation to learning and this is particularly important in school, as the creation of selfhood is central to the ability to construct meaning from experiences. Similarly to Dewey (1902), who stated lessons for the sake of learning material have no apparent aim, Takaya (2008) believes ‘drills
and memorizations are imposed on students in such a way that students cannot understand the context or significance of these activities’ (p.15). Both Dewey and Bruner place importance on the child’s ability to perceive the relevance of the lesson content, and whilst Bruner feels the content does not necessarily need to be interesting or related to experience it must be perceived as relevant. Takaya (2008) states imposing a large scale curriculum and holding teachers’ accountable, based upon Bruner’s theories, ‘makes less sense’ (p.16). Instead Takaya (2008) argues ‘individual teachers or teams of teachers should create their own local curricula by using such things as a state or district- wide curriculum as a reference’ (p.16). This would not support Gove’s reforms of the National Curriculum which appear to prescribe more of what Takaya (2008) described as ‘drills’ and ‘memorizations’ and additional assessment, which will, by association, lead to greater accountability for teacher (p.15). The importance placed upon assessment and accountability by the government is particularly evident in the title of the Government’s consultation document in relation to the new National Curriculum and primary level assessment: ‘Reforming assessment and accountability for primary schools: Government response to consultation on primary school assessment and accountability’ (DfE, 2014).

According to Takaya (2008) Bruner felt further reform of the education system is necessary, a view I anticipate would be shared by other constructivist educational theorists given there are epistemological contrasts to the Coalition Government, and more specifically Gove’s, philosophies which favour a prescribed curriculum with the role of teachers being to impart knowledge.

Freire was an advocate of critical pedagogy and saw education as a potential instrument for social change. Freire (1970) is critical of the current education system and, as I previously mentioned, described the banking concept of education stating ‘knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing’ (p.53). According to Freire (1970) the scope of students’ actions are limited to ‘receiving, filing, and storing the deposits’ and the projection of ignorance ‘negates education and knowledge as a process of enquiry’ (p.53). According to Freire (1970) it is through acceptance of the teacher as knowledgeable and the student as ignorant that both teacher and student
justify the existence of the teacher. Freire (1970) states knowledge, under certain circumstances, can become sterile and as this becomes the norm critical thought is suppressed which perpetuates prevailing values within society. Therefore it is through mere acceptance of knowledge that a passive approach to knowledge develops and creative thought is oppressed. Freire views the oppressors as those who perpetuate this situation and seek to integrate others into their structure of society. Freire (1970) claims the poor and uneducated, who are typically seen as oppressed, are those who are capable of critical thought. He believes they are better positioned to critically assess the structure of society and the value, or purpose, of education. Those who are educated, in Freire’s (1970) opinion, are those who are oppressed as ironically they no longer have critical or creative thought. This is ‘the very negation of their ontological vocation to be more fully human’ (Freire, 1970, p.55). Freire views education as oppressive and serving the needs of the powerful. He claims the irony of their ontological perspective of becoming more human through education actually results in a form of ignorance.

In contrast to Gove’s philosophies numerous educational theorists reject the purpose of education as transferring knowledge in the form of facts, or as a prescribed curriculum, and perceive education as important beyond the scope of academia, encompassing social and emotional development in the broader context of education as preparation for adulthood (Bruner, 1996; Freire, 1970; Piaget, 1896-1980; Dewey, 1902; James; 1899). It is evident the Government takes a differing perspective where the purpose of education is academia. This is evident from the National Curriculum, attainment and accountability; all of which are promoted by the Government in contrast with constructivist educational theorists.

Under Thatcher’s government The Education Reform Act 1988 saw the introduction of the National Curriculum.

The aim of the National Curriculum was to introduce standardised teaching across all primary and secondary schools. According to The Department for Education (2011) the National Curriculum has three aims:

"It should enable all young people to become:
  • successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
• confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
• responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.”
(Department for Education, 2011, p.2).

According to McLaughlin (2000) there are four areas for philosophical contribution to educational policy, first in relation to power and control, secondly the different levels and contexts in the educational system, third the scope of their content and application and finally the different aspects of educational policy making. McLaughlin (2000) states that policy makers need to recognise their own philosophical beliefs, concepts and values, however, he recognises this requires a political climate supportive of this type of dialogue. In consideration of the areas of educational philosophy outlined by McLaughlin (2000) I propose achieving the first construct currently presents significant difficulty. As White (2012) explains the prescriptive nature of the National Curriculum has led to a top down system with the government as both policy and curriculum makers, and teachers as implementers. This has resulted in a significant imbalance in relation to power and control. Prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum individual schools were responsible for the content of their curricula and its aims (White, 2012). The introduction of the National Curriculum drastically increased Government power in education. The scale of the change, and its irony, is recognised by Darling (1994):

The introduction of the National Curriculum (by a government pledged to reduce government power) represents an extension of government power almost unimaginable to those working in the education service before the 1980’s (p.vii).

In contrast to today, during the 1960’s the philosophy of education was a prominent feature of teacher education as teachers at every level of education ‘were ‘instruments’ of policy’ (White, 2012; p.504). This is in stark contrast to education post 1988 where teachers have become the implementers, rather than instruments, of policy. In 1985 the Thatcher government abolished central government funds which had previously covered the fees of in-service courses for teachers making it clear the Government focus changed (White, 2012). It is my opinion that whilst the Government retain power and control in relation to policy, curriculum and implementation a political climate supportive of addressing educational policy across the areas presented by McLaughlin (2000) cannot be achieved.
White (2012) looks forward to teachers once again having ‘more freedom and power to help shape what their schools offer’ (p.507). He believes teachers and schools would then become involved in improving their practices through consideration of theories and concepts such as education, teaching, learning, indoctrination and socialisation. This would encompass questions such as ‘what is the purpose of education?’ and result in individual schools and teachers considering the content of the curriculum and its aims. As a consequence there would be renewed interest in the area of educational philosophy from individual schools and teachers. Importantly this would mean schools and teachers would be in a position to respond more directly to the experiences, needs and lives of the children. In addition current pressures on the role of the teacher in relation to assessment and accountability would be alleviated which would allow teachers the flexibility to respond to the social and emotional needs of individual children. However the introduction of a new National Curriculum in September 2014 demonstrates this is not the Government’s vision for the future of education. Policy changes reinforce the Government’s perspective of academia as important for success in society. Further evidence is provided from the Government focus on NEET (not in employment, education or training) statistics, and associated plans to raise the school leaving age. As a consequence education is required, from a Government perspective, to be conducive to economic growth (de Botton, 2013; Hardarson, 2012; White, 2012). As I have already discussed, throughout history educational legislation and policy reform has shown that a positive contribution to society is evaluated in relation to employability and being able to contribute to the prosperity of society through employment. There is a drive from the Coalition Government to improve standards within education and to strengthen democratic society through the attainment of knowledge (de Botton, 2013; White, 2012). This is illustrated by the minimum standards for schools which were introduced by the Coalition Government:

Schools that fall below the government target – 40% achieving five good grades with English and maths – face being closed or taken out of local authority control and converted into academies. (Vasagar and Malik, 2012; no page)

Piagetian theory in particular does not support the Government’s approach to assessment and progress. Hopkins (2011) describes an interview in the 1970’s with Piaget which refers to ‘readiness for education’ (no page). Hopkins (2011) recounts Piaget theorised children will learn when they are developmentally ready and
therefore attempting to accelerate this process, according to Piaget, ‘is completely useless’ (no page). Yet the Coalition Government place importance on academia; with the success, or quality, of secondary schools being measured based on levels of academic attainment.

The epistemological approach of the Government raises significant criticism; de Botton (2013) focuses on emotional health and argues ‘our education system leaves us woefully unprepared for some of the really big challenges of adult life’ (no page). White (2012) argues that a successful democratic society needs more than knowledge, individuals ‘also need confidence, resilience, temperance and a host of other personal qualities’ (p.508) and that knowledge cannot be contained in the epistemological domain. In particular White (2012) argues against the philosophies of Gove, he argues knowledge needs to incorporate ‘moral and aesthetic sensitivities’ (p.508). In other words knowledge must facilitate contribution to democratic society. In contrast Gove (2009) stated ‘…time, and effort, is spent on cultivating abstract thinking skills rather than deepening the knowledge base which is the best foundation for reasoning’ (no page). Gove believes a deeper knowledge base develops the ‘foundation for reasoning’ and he argues strongly against ‘so-called general learning skills’ stating standards have plummeted in schools where this approach is used (no page).

According to White (2012) when looking at an aims-based curriculum it is apparent more than knowledge, or facts, is required. White (2012) asserts the need for an aims based curriculum which equips ‘students for a life of personal flourishing’ (p.514) prioritising big ideas, such as human rights and personal well-being will encompass environmentally important ideas such as evolution and urbanisation. In contrast Hardarson (2012) argues against an aims based curriculum claiming the aims of education are open ended and there is no justification of ‘any definitive or exhaustive description of its purpose’ (p.225). According to Hardarson (2012) this is, in part, because intellectual or moral virtues cannot be analysed or defined in terms of behaviour. He argues that equating learning and education is not enough and it is necessary ‘to determine what is truly educative’ (p.231) as not all learning is socially desirable. Furthermore the aims of education differ according to who it serves, for example economic growth might underpin government policy (Hardarson, 2012)
whereas parental aims might be in relation to the childcare on offer. Hardarson (2012) argues that education should enable students to critically evaluate and be intellectually independent. Similarly to Freire (1970), Hardarson (2012) warns against passive acceptance arguing that students who accept, without question, values imparted will always be the ‘epistemic inferior’ (p.233).

According to Hardarson (2012) by teaching a student to explore the values behind an aim and consequently develop an improved understanding, learning moves beyond the predictions of the teacher and as such cannot be specified:

…education that leads to intellectual independence transcends any given list of aims and serves purposes that cannot be completely stated in advance (Hardarson, 2012; p.234).

Similarly to Hardarson, Bruner felt education should not have a curriculum imposed as the scope of learning and knowledge cannot be defined.

It is evident there are a number of differing epistemological perspectives regarding the role of the teacher. Gove argued the role of schools and teachers is too wide and there should be a focus on education; rather than wider societal roles such as committees and the development of relationships with public bodies.

I worry that our schools are being asked to do more and more which, while it might appear desirable, dilutes the importance of teaching and learning. (Gove, 2009; no page).

A contrasting epistemological perspective constructs the role of teachers as much broader, encompassing social and emotional development and preparation for life beyond school. There is a lack of consensus regarding the role of the teacher, which is currently very broad and has wide ranging expectations. It would therefore be unsurprising for teachers to experience confusion and subsequent moral dilemmas regarding their role when considering how to respond to the social and emotional needs of children in their care. Interestingly in the late nineteenth century James (1899) made an observation which would not be out of place today, when considering the scope of the role of the teacher he stated ‘Our teachers are overworked already. A bad conscience increases the weight of every other burden.’ (p.13).
It is apparent the epistemological perspective of the Government leaves little scope for individual differences. Each child is shoe-horned into a top-down one size fits all education system with prescriptive aims and curriculum, and expectations imposed on them. In addition schools and teachers are the implementers of government policy (White, 2012) and are therefore limited in relation to how they can respond to the needs of individual children.

2.1.3 - Education and The Child

Legislation in the last decade promoted the importance of a holistic approach towards children (Every Child Matters: Change for Children, Children Act 2004). This has had a significant impact upon Children’s Services. Every Child Matters promoted information sharing and integrated working to promote each child fulfilling their potential. The Children Act 2004 provided boundaries to improve the regulation of official intervention in the interests of children. However the importance of these documents would, perhaps, depend upon opinion in relation to the purpose of education. Gove outlined the purpose of education as related to standards, and for education to improve standards need to be higher. There has been little reference to Every Child Matters by the Coalition Government, and additionally the Spending Review 2010 outlines plans to cut public spending by £81 billion pounds over the next five years. These cuts to government funding have forced local authorities to reduce spending on Children’s Services which is affecting the most vulnerable (Bloomer, 2014; Dutta, 2014; Oppenheim, 2014; Walker, 2014).

There was recognition in the 1944 Education Act of the whole child and Bell (2004) outlines this as follows:

The 1944 act gave local education authorities the duty to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. So significant was this provision considered, that it was strengthened in subsequent legislation and defined as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, or SMSC in shorthand. Providing for pupils' SMSC development is an important and, in my view, essential contemporary purpose of education. (Bell, 2004; no page).

As discussed earlier social and moral development was indicated to be valued in the early nineteenth Century in infant schools as it was seen to be important in later
schooling and in relation to readiness to learn the 3Rs. The 1944 Education Act valued moral and social development in their own right which, as Bell (2004) states, shows recognition of the importance of development of the whole child. The Coalition Government have diverted from policy which acknowledged, and promoted, the interests and needs of individual children with an apparent return to focussing on the majority, applying a one size fits all mentality.

The concept of teaching the whole child and acknowledging social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, as advocated by progressive education, is not new. Its roots can be found in the educational theories of Montessori, Piaget, Dewey and Vygotsky (Ashton, 1992). Dewey (1902) in particular was a strong advocate for teaching the whole child and acknowledging their psychological needs. A child-centred approach to education advocates the natural development of children; they are considered innately curious, with a desire to learn and actively make sense of the world (Darling, 1994). In addition progressive education views social reform as the aim of education (Institute of Education 2009). Child-centred education is also considered to encompass constructivist teaching methods. The constructivist perspective views learners as constructing knowledge based upon their experiences as opposed to passive absorption (Ashton, 1992). Interest in progressive education arose as a contrast to traditional education methods. The new education movement, influenced by Froebel and Montessori, saw the first progressive British schools in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Institute of Education Archives, 2009). Post-war cultural conservatism of the 1950’s combined with political backlash, and unfavourable press coverage, saw the demise of progressive education (Institute of Education Archives, 2009). The decline of progressive education was further influenced, and enforced, by the government introduction of the National Curriculum. In addition the DES (1992) report ‘Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools’ actively discouraged progressive education methods. According to Ashton (1992) the failure of educational theorists, such as Piaget, Montessori, Dewey and Vygotsky, to influence educational reform is testimony to the difficulties which arise in translating constructivist theory into educational practice.
Despite the demise of progressive education, the principles of child-centred education continue to influence pedagogic practice, and the influence of child-centred approaches to learning persist in the delivery of a curriculum based upon traditional methods. In contrast to the National Curriculum, which lends itself to traditional methods, recent changes to the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) promote active learning. The principles associated with the EYFS correspond with the Montessori Method of self-directed learning through multisensory, active and hands-on activities within a child-centred environment (Montessori Society AMI UK). The aim of the Montessori Method is for children to reach their full potential in all areas of life. Piaget was strongly influenced by Montessori and Piagetian theory remains influential in relation to the provision of a developmentally appropriate curriculum and environment which is advocated within the EYFS. In addition Piagetian theory postulates all children follow the same sequence of development but progress at different rates. It can be argued this has educational implications in terms of the requirement for differentiation within the classroom, and an acceptance that all students are different, and have differing strengths and weaknesses. In addition Piaget placed importance on having a structure which promotes engagement in learning.

Rogers person-centred approach has been influential in education in relation to student-centred learning (British Association for the Person-Centred Approach, 2013). Rogers (1951) approach, applied to education, focusses on the needs of the learner and, similarly to Piaget, promotes active engagement in learning. In addition students are also encouraged to be actively involved in the evaluation of their learning.

According to Rogers (1951) a student will only thoroughly learn what is perceived relevant to the structure of self. Similarly to other educational theorists Rogers places importance on engagement in learning, or self-motivation. Progressive education promotes active engagement in learning and educational theorists argue the perceived relevance of the subject matter directly impacts upon engagement in learning (Rogers, 1951, Dewey, 1902).
Despite active discouragement from the Government and the challenges of applying progressive methods to educational practice, progressive approaches remain influential within education. With planned changes to the curriculum and examination systems under the Coalition Government only time will tell how progressive methods will stand up to increased challenge in the face of a return to a more traditional approach to education. The subsequent impact upon the individual needs of the child and recognition of individuality therefore presents a cause for concern with a return to more traditional methods. It could be argued the general principles of progressive education contrast to the measures of austerity imposed by the Coalition Government’s to achieve its wider goals of economic recovery and debt reduction (Reeves et al, 2013). Kochhar-Bryant (2010) argues there is little economic incentive for schools to promote individualisation.

As I described earlier, education in the last decade has promoted a holistic approach to children and as a consequence concerns arose that contemporary ‘education has become therapeutic’ (Mintz, 2009, p.634). In the last fifty years therapy has become part of general culture (Mintz, 2009) and the introduction of programmes such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) in 2005, which all primary schools were advised to deliver to all pupils, would support this argument. Indeed Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) argue therapeutic education was driven by New Labour’s approach to social justice. Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) argue therapeutic education promotes a deficit model which assumes all children have emotional problems; and therapeutic education creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. Their argument is that children perceive vulnerability and anxiety which consequently requires therapeutic intervention furthermore those who are not able to see their weaknesses have repressed problems and are perceived to be in greater need of therapeutic intervention. Mintz (2009) considers the intrusion of therapy into education and discusses Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) book ‘The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education’. In the consideration of critical education Mintz (2009) suggests that Philosophy for Children addresses the ‘most pernicious aspects’ of therapeutic education identified by Ecclestone and Hayes, such as ‘everyone should feel good about themselves’ and ‘everyone should be protected from other people who might damage their fragile self-esteem’, as children are encouraged to challenge other students’ statements and to find fault with their arguments (p.637).
Mintz (2009) therefore proposes the principles advocated by Ecclestone and Hayes are paradoxically central to the type of education they deem ‘dangerous’ (p.640). Mintz (2009) argues schools should be a place where future citizens can learn how to disagree. Mintz (2009) tentatively suggests the fault may lie with teachers who are side-tracked from developing ‘deliberative citizens necessary for democratic countries’ (p.637) by a therapeutic ethos which leads them to be too protective.

Mintz (2009) also reviews ‘The Therapy of Education: Philosophy, Happiness and Personal Growth’ by Smeyers, Smith and Standish (2007). According to Mintz (2009) Smeyers, Smith and Standish are critical of therapeutic education’s protective approach to self-esteem as this obscures ‘the fact that contingency and uncertainty govern the human condition, the very fact with which education, therapy and philosophy ought to help people come to terms’ (p.643). Smeyers, Smith and Standish fear therapeutic education minimises feelings of uncertainty rather than promoting the acknowledgement and management of these skills; which is where they see the purpose of education.

Based on Mintz’s (2009) critical review it is evident that critical education can play an important role in the development of democratic individuals. If the purpose of education is to prepare individuals for life it is essential the required skills are developed. Therefore the provision of an environment for the development and practice of democratic skills is essential. Epistemological debate may therefore be better placed in regard to how these skills are taught and the role of the teacher in their development rather than whether they are taught.

Based on Hardarson’s (2012) perspective the provision of an arena for epistemological debate, unconstrained by aims, will facilitate the development of epistemological thought. Philosophical education cannot, as Hardarson (2012) argues, be constrained by aims as this would place limits on the scope of its educational purpose and realm. Where this type of education becomes therapeutic may be epistemologically defined by considering who is taught and how. For example those who are not meeting expected developmental milestones, measured according to traditional methods of prescribed aims and a curriculum, require an intervention to address unmet aims and attainment objectives. It is then not such a
great leap to suggest interventions addressing social and emotional development could be considered therapeutic due to the identification of a delay and attempts to address the delay. The provision of a platform for discussion and debate is intrinsically different to a specific intervention which aims to develop, or modify, a particular skill set.

The epistemology of education remains an area of considerable debate. Dewey (1897) stated the process and goal of education are one and the same. He described school as a social institution and education as a social process. As a result Dewey (1897) argues education is a process for living, not preparation. He concluded that school is therefore a simplified representation of life. Based upon the theories considered here the child’s experiences have a significant impact upon their approach to learning and subsequent engagement in learning. It therefore follows exposure to domestic violence has a significant impact upon children’s education and unsurprisingly influences all aspects of their lives, including school.

2.1.4 - Emotionality and Learning

The epistemology of education has been discussed in relation to the type of skills which should be fostered, such as social and emotional development. I will now present the experiences of the individual child exposed to trauma such as domestic violence and the implications this has for learning.

Monahon (1993) describes trauma as ‘extraordinary, unpredictable, sudden, overwhelming, shattering, transforming’ (p.xvi). Domestic violence creates a particularly interesting paradox as it may not always be extraordinary, in some homes it could become ordinary.

Monahon (1993) (a trauma theorist) advises against behaviourist approaches to managing challenging behaviour:

There is a danger that a child who feels guilty and bad about himself as a result of a trauma may become locked into a pattern of provoking the very punishment he fears he deserves. (Monahon, 1993; p.112).
According to Monahon (1993) ‘the memory of trauma is persistent for children’ (p.3) and in contrast to adults they rarely erase the conscious memory of a trauma:

Children over two years of age often maintain an indelible memory image of a traumatic event, complete with recall of incidental details that can come to have great and surprising meaning to them. (Monahon, 1993; p.4).

According to Carlson (1994) children’s exposure to fear and their ability to manage this fear impacts upon their emotional response.

More specifically research indicates cognitive skills, such as memory, attention and learning are affected by exposure to domestic violence (Gustafsson et al. 2013; Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Graham-Bermann et al. 2006; Huth-Bocks, Levendosky, and Semel, 2001; Carlson, 2000; Graham-Bermann and Levendosky, 1998; Sternberg et al. 1993; Fantuzzo et al. 1991; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989).

Psychological interest in emotions and education were popular in the late 1920’s; around the time of the James-Lange and Cannon-Bard theories of emotions. Interest in emotions was less prominent during the latter part of the twentieth century when behaviourist and cognitive psychology gained popularity. This is likely to be due to the lack of importance placed upon emotions by these approaches. Cognitive psychologists accept emotion affects our functioning, despite emotions being anomalous to the principles of the cognitive approach which is an information processing model and computers do not possess emotions. According to Gardner (1985) ‘the computer…serves as the most viable model of how the human mind functions’ and emotions ‘may be important for cognitive functioning but [their] inclusion at this point would unnecessarily complicate the cognitive-scientific enterprise’ (p.6).

In the last twenty to thirty years emotions have recaptured the interest of psychologists and debate regarding emotions has once again became prevalent within psychology (Zuk, 1994; Reisenzein and Schonpflug, 1992; Lazarus, 1991b, 1984, 1981; Frijda, 1988; Staats, 1988; Zajonc, 1984, 1981, 1980). According to Eysenck (1998) there is consensus around four components of emotions:
physiological change, readiness to behave, conscious experience and a cognitive, or meaning, component.

Psychobiology now considers the body and brain as an integrated biochemical system with emotions being the ‘glue that integrates our body and brain’ (p.61) (Sylwester, 1994). According to Sylwester (1994) peptide molecules trigger emotional reactions; cortisol and endorphins are two well-known examples of peptide molecules. Low levels of cortisol produce a sense of euphoria whilst a stress response produces high levels of cortisol. Sylwester (1994) explains the stress responses are unable to differentiate between physical and emotional threat. These responses are evolutionary and according to Sylwester (1994) ‘because most contemporary stress results from emotional problems, these responses are maladaptive’ (p.62). Sylwester (1994) states continued high levels of cortisol can cause long term damage to hippocampal neurons which are associated with learning and memory. Sylwester (1994) points out exercise and positive social interactions, in contrast, raise endorphins which have a positive impact on readiness to learn.

Emotions are central in influencing our behaviour and it is accepted emotions (e.g. anger) occur on a spectrum from mild to intense (Sylwester, 1994). Coping strategies mediate emotional responses, for example a successful coping strategy for fear will lessen the physiological response i.e. increased heart rate, blood pressure and breathing (Carlson, 1994).

Within psychology it has long been accepted that emotions and memory impact upon one another (Uttl, Siegenthaler and Ohta, 2006). Of particular interest in relation to this research is the impact of negative moods or emotions on memory as this has a direct impact on learning. Bower (1981) outlined two phenomena; mood-congruity effect and mood-state-dependent retention. The mood-congruity effect suggests we attend to and learn more about events which match our emotional state. The mood-state-dependent retention suggests recall is improved if we are experiencing the same emotion as we experienced during learning. Ellis and Ashbrook (1988) outlined the resource allocation model which proposes disrupted mood states reduce the capacity which is allocated to other tasks; and this effect will be greater when the task is more difficult or demanding. Mood states directly affect learning, additionally
the emotional reaction aroused by an event can affect the memory of the event, ‘events with strong emotional reactions tend to be well learned and usually more so (within limits) the stronger the reaction’ (Bower, 1992; p.15). As Bower acknowledges there appear to be limits to the part emotions play in remembering events. In contrast traumatic events, which are by their nature very significant, can be remembered with very little emotion, indeed descriptions such as ‘emotionally flat or numb’ may be applied (Horowitz and Reidbord, 1992). The interaction between emotion and memory has implications for learning, according to Sylwester (1994) ‘emotionally stressful school environments are counterproductive because they can reduce students’ ability to learn’ (p.65).

Billington (2013) discusses the lack of critical practice in educational and child psychology. He argues this is driven by statutory procedures and the call for evidence based practice. Billington (2013) describes an inexorable draw, ultimately, to psychopathology, and states practice has developed such that it is assumed ‘thinking [is] primarily mechanical, linear and with no concession to complexity or quality’ (p.178-179). Billington (2013) argues this has led to ignoring emotion and the recommendation of ‘behaviour modification programmes or rigid delivery of routine teaching programmes’ (p.179). In contrast neuroscientists are particularly interested in emotions (and feelings) (Billington, 2013). Billington (2013) states the relationship between learning, emotion and body state is interwoven and acceptance of the importance of neuroscience will require a radical shift in practice for psychologists.

In recent years over the last decade there was a move to acknowledge emotion and feelings within education and a new concept emerged in relation to emotions – emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2004). Emotional intelligence is of particular interest in education as theorists believe it can be taught. Goleman (2004) states we have no control over when an emotion will occur or what the emotion will be, however emotional intelligence allows us to control how long it will last. Similarly Sylwester (1994) argues it is important to have an emotionally positive classroom as it is not easy to change or learn emotions – we have to accept they exist; however it is possible to learn rational processes, which could be described emotional intelligence, to override the impact of emotions. Goleman (2004), however, does
acknowledge that when the intensity and duration of the emotions become distressing professional intervention may be appropriate.

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990) emotions are responses which involve physiological, cognitive, motivational and experiential systems and they accept Weschler’s (1958) definition of intelligence as ‘the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment’ (p.186). Salovey and Mayer (1990) therefore define emotional intelligence as ‘the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions’ (p.189). According to Salovey and Mayer (1990) emotional intelligence sits within personal intelligences in Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences. In consideration of Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) definition of emotional intelligence it is apparent Weschler’s definition of intelligence, as purposeful thinking, is central to their definition. Salovey and Mayer (1990) define three characteristics of emotional intelligence (i) emotion recognition in the self and others, (ii) empathy and (iii) regulation of emotion in others.

Goleman (2004) describes how success in life appears dependent upon characteristics other than IQ. In defining these ‘other characteristics’ he refers to them as emotional intelligence (p.34):

abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s mood and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope. (Goleman, 2004; p.34).

In contrast to IQ, Goleman (2004) argues emotional competencies ‘can indeed be learned and improved upon by children’ (p.34). It is immediately apparent how these characteristics could also be termed resilience, when describing an individual who has experienced emotional trauma. In addition given that the characteristics of emotional intelligence constitute resilience it could be argued teaching emotional intelligence will be of therapeutic benefit in managing emotional trauma.
Goleman (2004) describes how emotional intelligence can be taught to children and he believes it is important to intervene in childhood before problems in adulthood such as aggression, violent crime, depression, eating disorders, social ostracism, and substance abuse develop. According to Goleman (2004) the likelihood of experiencing these problems decreases by teaching emotional literacy (e.g. impulse control, managing anger and finding creative solutions to predicaments). He also states developmental psychologists have been able to identify which lessons are most appropriate at each age in accordance with the growth of emotion and emotional intelligence. In addition researchers have been able to identify interventions for those who are unable to develop the expected competencies at the expected time.

Based upon Goleman’s (2004) theories of emotional intelligence it could be theorised domestic violence occurs due to deficits in emotional intelligence on the part of the perpetrator (and perhaps the victim). Emotional intelligence can be applied to domestic violence using the modelling hypothesis and intergenerational transmission theory as emotional intelligence will be shaped, learned and modelled from adults in the home. Attachment theory would also account for deficits in the parents’ emotional intelligence which impact upon the attachment relationship as emotional cues would be misinterpreted, or ignored altogether, affecting the development of future relationships. Some, not all, psychodynamic theorists would argue violence occurs when an individual is not able to recognise and regulate their emotions and finally the ecological model would consider the emotional intelligence of each sphere, so for example the emotional intelligence of the individual, the parents, the school and the wider society. It is therefore plausible to consider the importance of emotional intelligence in relation to the occurrence and impact of exposure to domestic violence. This is particularly important in relation to this research which is grounded in education and focuses on teachers who are in a position to have a direct influence in the area of emotionality and learning.

In contrast to Goleman (2004), MacLure et al. (2008) recommends practitioners and educators consider ‘reducing the emotional quotient of classroom experience’ (no page). According to MacLure et al. (2008) the developmental maps which underlie early years practice generate deficit views of children, parents and families; which
otherwise would not exist. The resulting developmental discourse then pathologises differences, which in turn leaves parents and teachers open to blame and scrutiny. MacLure et al. (2008) also recognise there are some children who will ‘have life skills and experiences that exceed those encompassed in the simulacrum of the proper child’ (no page), such as exposure to domestic violence; consequently these children may be unlikely to engage in the ‘economy of happiness, sharing and kindness that is promoted in the reception classroom’. Finally MacLure et al. (2008) describe the complex social rules within the classroom environment and state some children may find the resulting mixed messages difficult to manage.

However, to return to Billington (2013), the importance of emotions and body state as a core component of learning, all of which are intricately linked, must not be ignored. Therefore the traumatic experiences of children and the emotions, feelings and physiological responses are interwoven with learning in such a way that they cannot be separated. Therefore they cannot be ignored. According to White and Epston (1990):

…the stories or narratives that persons live through determine their interaction and organization, and that the evolution of lives and relationships occurs through the performance of such stories or narratives. (p.12).

However in considering Billington’s (2013) call to be critical is important to apply critical practice and recognise that the characteristics of emotional intelligence can be considered culturally dependent and specific. Additionally Goleman’s theories of emotional intelligence pathologise and imply all children exposed to domestic violence will develop problems in adulthood. The assumption problems in adulthood can be avoided by teaching emotional literacy overlooks the role of social structures such as unemployment and poverty. Reeves et al. (2013) outline the negative effects of austerity on health in the UK, stating job loss will lead to increased rates of depression, suicide, numbers of people living in poverty and marked rises in homelessness. Hall and Perry (2013) found current austerity measures are adversely affecting families with financial fragility triggering stress and anxiety. According to Hall and Perry (2013) a lack of control over finances can adversely affect psychological well-being.
It is evident domestic violence is a complex social phenomena which cannot be addressed purely through the teaching of emotional literacy. However, regardless of the cause, domestic violence affects the functioning of families and therefore directly impacts upon children. Domestic violence also presents a strain on society (Casique and Furegato, 2006; Home Office, 2003; Golding, 1999; American Psychological Association, 1996) and as such it can be argued domestic violence does not have a positive impact upon democratic society. As discussed earlier, making a positive contribution to democratic society constitutes a core function of education. Therefore domestic violence negatively impacts upon the aims of education. As stated by Vygotsky, schools are a context for development, and therefore significant in their own right in relation to child development. Similarly Dewey (1987) argues school is a representation of life. Given the significance of education in children’s lives and for the future of society, it can be argued schools should do what is reasonably possible to minimise the impact of exposure to domestic violence. In considering the role education can play there are two main areas, prevention and support. Schools are well placed to play a preventative role in relation to educating children about social structures, healthy future relationships and providing a supportive role for children and families exposed to domestic violence.

2.2 - Domestic Violence

2.2.1 - Defining Domestic Violence

In September 2012 The Home Office announced a new definition of domestic violence would be implemented in March 2013:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality (The Home Office, 2012). The full definition is included in appendix two, page iii.

This is the definition of domestic violence applied to this research project.

Domestic violence is a particularly interesting phenomenon, as in contrast to other forms of violence it is inherently paradoxical because there is the presumption of a
loving relationship between those involved (Godbout et al. 2009; Tolan et al. 2006). Additionally the home is held as a dependable, safe and positive developmental influence, which provides comfort, solace and protection from harm (Tolan, Gorman-Smith and Henry, 2006; American Psychological Association, 1996). According to Wolfe (2006), children are ‘torn between a sense of loyalty towards their family and a sense of fear and apprehension; they want the violence to stop, but they do not want their parents to separate’ (p.45).

Whilst there has been a significant focus on domestic violence in the past thirty years women as victims remain the primary focus. According to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence and are more likely to be high risk victims; 96 percent of referrals to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) were women. Male victims of domestic violence are a phenomenon mainly ignored by the media (Du Plat-Jones, 2006). This continues to be reflected with the recent Government agenda ‘Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls’ (VAWG) (2010). The opening sentence of this document states ‘The ambition of this government is to end violence against women and girls (p.3)’. There is no recognition men may also be the victims of violence; domestic violence is constructed as a phenomenon where women and girls are the victims with men (and boys) as the perpetrators. Seven years previously under New Labour Government there was a recognition men were also victims of domestic violence. This is highlighted by a previous publication by the Home Office (2003) ‘Safety and Justice: The Government’s Proposals on Domestic Violence’ states ‘no woman, man or child brings domestic violence on themselves and no one should have to put up with it’ (p.6). However under the Coalition Government there is a strong gender specific approach focussing on women and girls. A recently published report written by Sullivan (2011), Mankind UK CEO, recommends the UK Government produce ‘a partner document…to highlight the plight of male victims in the UK’ (p.46). The change in government focus is likely to have a negative impact on supporting men who experience domestic violence as it reinforces the societal stereotype that men are not victims of domestic violence. Male victims of domestic violence experience the same impact as women; shame, fear, loss of self-worth and self-confidence, guilt and isolation (Du Plat-Jones, 2006). Research has found men are less likely than women to report domestic violence due to fear of
embarrassment, ridicule and lack of support services (Barber, 2008; Dewar, 2008; Du Plat-Jones (2006); Lawrence, 2003). Sadly the current government focus is likely to perpetuate the subject of men as victims of domestic violence as a taboo. According to Barber (2008) societal awareness of domestic violence against men needs to be increased to improve service provision and encourage men to seek support and report domestic violence. The Home Office (2003) recognised that accurate figures relating to domestic violence will not exist until ‘all victims of domestic violence feel safe in revealing the violence they have experienced’ (p.11).

Cho (2012) suggests there may be gender differences in the reasons for perpetrating violence, with men using violence as a means of control and women using violence as defence or a response to male violence. In contrast to other research Cho (2012) found ‘women and men do not vary much in the prevalence, frequency, and severity of IPV, controlling behaviors, or the initiation of physical arguments’ (p.2679). Cho (2012) feels a greater understanding of domestic violence is necessary to understand gender differences as the frequency, severity and initiation of physical arguments fall short of representing the complicated nature of domestic violence. Cho (2012) argues ‘future research needs to pay more attention to the causational and dynamic relationships’ to understand domestic violence (p.2678).

Bidirectional violence is domestic violence where both partners are victims and perpetrators of abuse. In a recent review of domestic violence research Dutton (2008) reported studies repeatedly show bidirectional violence is the most common form of domestic violence. Similarly Renner and Whitney (2012) found a greater proportion of bidirectional than unidirectional violence. More often than not media reporting continues to portray men as the perpetrators (Dutton, 2008). Fergusson and Horwood (1998) conducted a longitudinal study on exposure to domestic violence in childhood. They found very similar reported rates amongst males and females with the tendency for fathers to initiate violence being only marginally higher. They suggest the discrepancy in statistics could be due to the severity of the assault determining when it comes to public attention. Due to greater male strength assaults which cause physical injury or psychological threat are more likely to be male perpetrated (Fergusson and Horwood, 1998). The majority of perpetrators are men according to Women’s Aid (2006a and 2006b). However this is contradicted by
Dutton’s (2008) review of domestic violence research which suggests in 70% of unilateral cases of domestic violence the perpetrators were female. Godbout et al. (2009) suggest reports which indicate women are more violent than men may be misrepresentative due to reporting bias. They suggest women may be more likely to take responsibility for relationship difficulties and violence, whereas men could be more reluctant to disclose violence due to social disapproval.

The perpetrators of domestic violence are similarly diverse to the victims of domestic violence. Victims and perpetrators can be of any age, ethnicity, religion, class or social group (HMIC, 2014; Cho, 2012).

2.2.2 - Domestic Violence Policy and Practice

Attitudes towards domestic violence have changed significantly in the last 150 years. In 1895 a City of London Byelaw imposed a curfew on wife beating due to the noise keeping the neighbours awake. Less than thirty years ago it was considered impossible for a husband to sexually assault or rape his wife as marriage implied consent for sexual intercourse and it was deemed as a husband’s legal right. Marital rape was made a criminal act in 1991 as outlined by The Law Commission ‘Criminal Law Rape within Marriage’ and was clarified in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The United Nations Declaration (1993) on the Elimination of Violence against Women recognised violence against women as a fundamental infringement of human rights.

Over the past thirty years there has been extensive research into domestic violence and significant developments in the national policy and narrative of domestic violence (McKee et al. 2012; Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou and Lindsay, 2011; Home Office, 2003; Jaffe, Crooks and Wolfe, 2003; Peckover, 2003a; Featherstone and Trinder, 1997). Governments and non-government institutions have commissioned research into domestic violence which has informed policy recommendations. New Labour taking power in the UK in 1997 saw a commitment to policy development to combat domestic violence (Rivett and Kelly, 2006) and there had been significant focus at a high level on domestic violence policy (Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou and Lindsay, 2011; Hunter et al. 2010). As previously stated the Coalition Government taking power in 2010 has seen a broader focus on a feminist informed gender-based
agenda with publications such as ‘Call to End Violence against Women and Girls’ by HM Government (2010). Despite research evidence highlighting domestic violence is not a gender-based issue there is no reference to male victims of domestic violence with Coalition Government policy. However Peckover (2003a) states feminist work has made the health and welfare consequences for women and children visible. It is therefore unsurprising this paradigm has been adopted in relation to policy development given work to raise awareness of domestic violence has been conducted from a feminist perspective.

As domestic violence has become more widely recognised there have been concerted efforts to improve both criminal and civil responses. As a result of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 specialist domestic violence courts have been introduced. There is specialist training for the magistrates and prosecutors; and attempts are made to keep victims and defendants apart, with buildings often having separate entrances, exits and waiting areas. In addition victims are supported by independent domestic violence advisors throughout the duration of their case. Starmer (2011) reports a successful outcome in 73% of cases where an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor supported the victim and 66% of victims reported a cessation or reduction of domestic violence as a result. Since recording of prosecutions for domestic violence began in 2004 there has been a year on year increase in prosecutions. The conviction rate has also risen dramatically to 72% in 2009/10 (Starmer, 2011).

In the past fifteen years domestic violence has become viewed as a significant child protection concern (Rivett and Kelly, 2006). There have been a number of policies, significant amendments and guidance in the last decade which directly impact upon children e.g. Every Child Matters (2004), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013), Children Act (2004) and the Adoption and Children Act (2002). However Rivett and Kelly (2006) argue ‘despite all these guidelines it is questionable if practice has developed at an equal pace as a result’ (p.230). They feel there is little evidence of systematic and integrated policy and practice. In considering children exposed to domestic violence Rivett and Kelly (2006) argue ‘all children need some form of help’ (p.235) but the child protection approach may not be appropriate for all. They differentiate between protective services and supportive services. Supportive
services within the UK are often voluntary services, some are specialist, and the majority of these do not work directly with children (Rivet and Kelly, 2006).

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 was ‘the biggest piece of legislation on domestic violence in over 30 years’ according to the Home Office (2005) (p.3). The Act made common assault an arrestable offence, the breach of a non-molestation order a criminal offence, introduced statutory guidance in relation to protection for victims and witnesses and also multi-agency homicide reviews. There was also a commitment to funding domestic violence helplines, internet services and refuge services (Hague and Malos, 2005). In addition the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduced restraining orders that could be imposed despite the defendant having been acquitted of any offence in the criminal courts. According to Rivett and Kelly (2006) ‘whilst the Act does much to improve the experience of those adults impacted upon by domestic violence, it does very little to influence service provision for children’ (p.230). Similarly reviews of policy direction in relation to domestic violence have focused on reducing violence and providing support for victims rather than criminalisation and rehabilitation of offenders (Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou and Lindsay, 2011; Rivett and Kelly, 2006).

Currently criminal law does not criminalise domestic violence. Criminal sanctions to behaviours associated with domestic violence can be applied by the Criminal Justice System. The criminalisation of domestic violence remains an area of debate as criminal law is likely to be more concerned with the prosecution of offenders rather than victim support (Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou and Lindsay, 2011). However in August 2014 the government launched a consultation to consider strengthening the law by explicitly stating domestic abuse covers coercive and controlling behaviour as well as physical harm (Siddique, 2014). This is in direct response to a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2014) which described the police response to domestic violence as ‘alarming and unacceptable’ (p.7).

Jones (2014) describes domestic violence as a ‘pandemic’ and states the Government should treat it accordingly (no page). Yet he states the £347m local welfare assistance fund which is devolved to local authorities to fund local initiatives, such as domestic violence services, will be scrapped in 2015. According to Jones
‘in the first two financial years of [the coalition] government, there was a 31% cut in funding to the domestic violence and sexual abuse sector’ (no page). Prior to the loss of the local welfare assistance fund Jones (2014) reports 35 support services for children have been shut across England since the coalition government came to power. Thus, not only might this mean decreasing support but also increasing stress on families, possibly contributing to violence in the home.

There is also a significant political stance to be considered – whose right is it to scrutinise the family?

Domestic violence and family issues were, in the past, considered private. Today there is a line which has to be drawn in regard to making a decision with regard to when a private family matter can no longer remain private. The difficulty lies in deciding when the line has been crossed. As indicated by policy developments over the last thirty years the impact of domestic violence on the family, and more specifically children, has been recognised. Due to changes in societal acceptance of domestic violence it can be a difficult decision for neighbours, friends or professionals to determine when respect for privacy should be disregarded and private matters should become public knowledge and be open to professional scrutiny. Keir Starmer QC, Director of Public Prosecutions, (2011) describes why a change in attitude towards domestic violence is necessary:

But even if domestic violence remains a priority for the [Crime Prosecution Service], there remains the wider issue of complacency. Most people are still unaware of the extent of domestic violence and its impact. And, although greatly reduced, the refrain "It's just a domestic" is still heard far too frequently. The steps that we and our criminal justice partners are taking to tackle domestic violence risk limited success unless this complacency is tackled head on (no page).

Current domestic violence policy is preventative and there is a focus on raising awareness of domestic violence. It is evident domestic violence has become more prominent on the government agenda in the past thirty years and in more recent years this continues to be the case, as demonstrated by the change to the Home Office definition of domestic violence. There are a number of other government departments, besides the Home Office, providing frontline services e.g. The Police, The Ministry of Justice, The Department of Health and The Department of Education.
It is necessary for each service to acknowledge and proactively respond to domestic violence.

Despite developments in policy and practice domestic violence continues to be a significant social problem (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013) and as such it is important it remains a key priority for government policy development.

The NHS is a frontline service with healthcare providers being well placed to identify those experiencing domestic violence (Tower, 2006; Home Office, 2003; Peckover, 2003a; Culross, 1999), yet it often goes undetected (Du Plat-Jones, 2006). Rhodes et al. (2007) found healthcare providers typically ask about domestic violence in a perfunctory manner whilst taking a social history. Disclosure of domestic violence was generally increased by asking additional topic related questions, providing open-ended opportunities to talk and generally being responsive to patient clues. Research suggests practitioners often feel ill-prepared to ask questions, fear the situation will get out of control, lack knowledge regarding the questions to ask, have concerns about causing offence, are anxious about potentially breaking up a family unit, lack information about available support services and believe that domestic violence is a private matter between partners (Gallagher, 2014; Tower, 2006; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Culross, 1999); however it is important for attitudes towards domestic violence to change as ‘abuse thrives on closed boundaries and secrecy’ (American Psychological Association, 1996; no page).

Midwives and health visitors have standardised questions to include when gathering social histories. However research indicates victims of domestic violence are reluctant to disclose abuse for various reasons (Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Culross, 1999). Women’s health professionals, in particular, and school nurses are well placed to identify domestic violence. This is due to their regular and sustained relationships with patients, which provides regular opportunities for screening and the development of rapport, in turn increasing the likelihood of disclosure (Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Culross, 1999).

The Department for Children, Schools and Families publication Violence Against Women and Girls (2010) recommended statutory guidance for schools relating to
domestic violence and additional training for school staff in relation to identification and signposting. Yet there is no specific guidance relating to school based interventions, e.g. good practice for teachers in supporting children and adolescents who have witnessed domestic violence. The report focuses mainly on support for girls who are the victims of domestic violence and boys as the perpetrators of violence.

It is now recognised that domestic violence is closely linked with child abuse, although explanations for this association are yet to be clearly identified (Renner, 2012; Devaney, 2008; Jaffe and Juodis, 2006; Rivett and Kelly, 2006; Tolan et al. 2006; Chemtob and Carlson, 2004; Department of Health, 2002; Huth-Bocks, Levendosky and Semel, 2001; Moffitt and Caspi, 1998; Featherstone and Trinder, 1997; Stanley, 1997; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989). According to the Department of Health (2002):

"Nearly three quarters of children on the “at risk” register live in households where domestic violence occurs. It is thought that children are most vulnerable to abuse and long-term adverse effects when domestic violence co-exists with parental mental illness or problem alcohol/drug use. (p.16)."

Sternberg et al. (2006) completed a ‘mega-analysis’ of family violence and within their sample 58% of the children were victims of child abuse and witnesses of family violence. Whilst there is recognition of the link between domestic violence and child abuse, research indicates practice does not reflect this awareness (Featherstone and Trinder, 1997). Devaney (2008) refers to ‘professional ignorance’ and ‘avoidance of the issue of domestic violence within practice’ (p.444). In addition he refers to ‘the lack of an organizational mandate and support for front line staff in this area of work’ (p.444). Similarly Humphreys et al. (2001) argued domestic violence is a central issue for statutory child care work. Yet they state it is not surprising it remains a low priority when it is seen as ‘yet another new and separate issue to “take on board”’ (p.184). Peckover (2003a) found Health Visitors were unable to recognise a serious issue such as domestic violence. Peckover (2003a) highlights the need for ‘health visitors to develop further their knowledge and understanding about domestic violence, in order to enable them to recognize and respond appropriately to women and children with whom they have professional contact’ (p.207). This could be equally applied to all frontline services (health, police, social
which come into contact with domestic violence and more specifically all of these criticisms of domestic violence practice can equally be applied to education.

Gallagher (2014) studied educational psychologists’ conceptualisations of domestic violence. She concluded psychologists face challenges in working with domestic violence due to issues of professional sensitivity, the invisibility and secrecy of domestic violence and the lack of clarity regarding role. According to Gallagher (2014) some of the inherent difficulties are due to the dominant discourse of domestic violence as an adult problem. Gallagher (2014) found domestic violence was not described as child abuse and there was a lack of awareness of the links between child abuse and domestic violence, although children living with domestic violence were considered to be at a greater risk of suffering abuse. According to Gallagher (2014) the secrecy of domestic violence was maintained; either when it was suspected by professionals involved with a child or it was known to exist but not written in any records. Additionally Gallagher (2014) found educational psychologists were concerned about damaging professional relationships with parents. According to Ellis (2012) teachers reported similar concerns in addition to fearing the consequences of ‘what could and should be said’ with some families (p.114).

There are national charities such as Refuge and Women’s Aid which provide a frontline service to victims of domestic violence in addition to engaging in systemic work aimed at protection and prevention. There are also locally based charities providing similar services. Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. They provide support to MARACs which are regular local meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared. These conferences will include discussions about children in the family. MARACs are not a statutory provision and are run by individual police forces. There are currently over 260 MARACs operating across England, Wales and Northern Ireland managing over 57,000 cases a year (CAADA, 2013).
There have been significant policy developments in the last thirty years; despite this practice being criticised (Rhodes et al. 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Culross, 1999) and there is little policy which relates directly to children and the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children. According to NICE (2014) ‘there needs to be a wider understanding in health and social care, as well as in society as a whole, about how we can help people experiencing [domestic violence]’ (no page). Currently feminist epistemology unpins domestic violence policy and practice; however there are many alternative theories to explain the occurrence and impact of domestic violence.

2.2.3 - Theories of Domestic Violence

In considering theories of domestic violence it is necessary to consider why the violence occurs and also the impact of the violence on the victims and their children. This is because the theoretical standpoint adopted will have an epistemological influence on decisions relating to intervention.

There are a large number of theories used to explain domestic violence and it is not possible to present them all here. I will therefore present the most influential and currently favoured theories.

- Theories to explain the occurrence of domestic violence

Cognitive-Behavioural Theories

Early explanations in the 1970’s looked towards the psychopathology of abusers and assumed the behaviour was caused by mental illness. Moffit and Caspi (1999) found male perpetrators of domestic violence were 13 times more likely to have a diagnosable mental health condition e.g. anxiety disorders, depression, alcohol and drug dependence, antisocial personality disorder, and schizophrenia. According to Dutton (2008) personality disorders have been found to be more prevalent in men in court-mandated treatment groups, in addition men convicted of wife-assault had significantly lower emotional intelligence than the general population. According to Gibbons, Collins and Reid
‘personality pathology has consistently been found in a substantial proportion of domestically violent men, usually on the order of more than 50%’ (p.165). In addition they found a wide range of personality pathologies exist among domestically violent men. Gibbons, Collins and Reid (2011) argue this requires interventions to be individually tailored to personality pathologies to ensure optimal outcomes.

According to Herman (1992) psychopathology is mistakenly used to explain why women are vulnerable; there is a tendency to blame the victim and to look towards psychopathology to explain their behaviour. This takes attention away from social contextual factors for violence, such as stress due to unemployment and wider patriarchal relations.

While some battered women clearly have major psychological difficulties that render them vulnerable, the majority show no evidence of serious psychopathology before entering into the exploitative relationship. (Herman, 1992; p.116).

According to Herman (1992) the psychological difficulties are caused by the violent relationship rather than as a pre-existing risk factor leading to increased vulnerability of becoming involved in a violent relationship.

Social learning theory is a long-standing psychological explanation of domestic violence (Dutton, 2008). According to social learning theory violence and aggression are learned through witnessing violence in the family (Weldon and Gilchrist, 2012; Dutton, 2008). Tyndall-Lind, Landreth and Giordano (2001) refer to this specifically as intergenerational transmission theory. Moffitt and Caspi (1998) state maltreatment and witnessing parental aggression in early childhood leads to the development of conduct problems. These conduct problems then predict partner violence. In addition Moffitt and Caspi (1998) state aggression is stable across the life course of individuals and is transmitted from generation to generation. However social learning theory is unable to account for the many men who have witnessed domestic violence and but do not abuse their partners (Babcock et al. 1993), nor can it explain whether women are more likely to
become perpetrators, or victims, of violence (Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998).

Feminist Paradigm

As has already been highlighted gender is a prominent factor when considering domestic violence. Debate continues in relation to gender based, or feminist, explanations of domestic violence. Sociologists argue patriarchal society teaches men they are the master of the house and violence may be necessary to maintain order and control (Lundberg, 1990). The feminist paradigm supports the view of domestic violence as generated by patriarchal society and being primarily perpetrated by men to maintain power and control whereas female violence is interpreted as self-protection. Walker (1979) uses a feminist paradigm to explain domestic violence. She states '[her] feminist analysis of all violence is that sexism is the real underbelly of human suffering’ (p.xi). Walker theorises violence can only be eliminated by eliminating discrimination on the basis of gender. Walker (1979) applies a cycle of violence theory to explain domestic violence. She describes three distinct phases, i) the tension building phase, ii) the explosion or acute battering incident and iii) the calm loving respite. According to Walker (1979) women can become adept at maintaining phase three, however when this is followed by an intense period of phase one behaviour this can cause women to lose control of their suppressed rage and seriously injure their partners. Four of the women in Walker’s sample killed their partners and many others used knives or other lethal weapons against their partners. The loss of control theory suggests abuse occurs due to societal gender expectations which prevent men from expressing anger and frustration resulting in a build-up which then leads to a loss of control. However the loss of control theory does not account for the abuse being directed only towards intimate partners and taking place behind closed doors, for example in the home environment. In addition the feminist paradigm does not acknowledge the possible existence of societal expectations on women to also suppress anger and frustration. Finally there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest how long each phase lasts. Dobash and Dobash (1992) suggested many women do not experience the third loving phase and there was no pattern to the violence.
In spite of criticisms of feminist theory, it is the basis of many support services provided to women and children affected by domestic violence, which in turn provides an empirical evidence base for feminist theory (Peckover, 2003a).

Social Theories

Social theories of domestic violence consider the impact of social structures to explain the occurrence of domestic violence. Control theories (or martial power theory) consider the imbalance in power relationships as an explanation of why domestic violence occurs. One such explanation is that violence may be used as a means of control to maintain compliance of a less powerful partner. Babcock et al. (1993) described demand and withdraw behaviour patterns, the demander (usually female) makes emotional requests, criticises and complains whilst the withdrawer (usually male) retreats through defensiveness and passive inaction. Babcock et al. (1993) found couples in violent relationships tended to play both the demand and withdraw roles equally rather than having a typical role. They suggest ‘this could provide the seeds for a great deal of conflict and suggests the potential for numerous power struggles’ (p.47). Additionally poor communication skills, and a man’s perceived lack of power, were likely to lead to more severe male on female violence. According to Babcock et al. (1993) the violence is likely to increase as the male’s power decreases. Based on Babcock et al. (1993) violence is used to redress the power imbalance as a method of equilibrium. According to Dobash and Dobash (1979) ‘a greater understanding of violence will be achieved through a careful consideration of the nature of the social settings and situations in which it occurs’ (p.14). Dobash and Dobash (1979) argue violence is husbands’ domination and coercive control over their wives which is historically and socially constructed.

Psychoanalytic Theories

Similarly to social learning theory, psychodynamic theorists argue exposure to domestic violence affects interpersonal development. Some psychoanalytic theories point to childhood trauma as the precursor to domestic violence. According to Herman (1992) a traumatic event ‘overwhelm[s] the ordinary human
adaptations to life,’ (p.33). Suleiman (2008) reviewed Judith Herman’s contemporary trauma theory and according to Suleiman (2008) there is strong debate regarding trauma and memory. Firstly there are proponents, such as Herman and van der Kolk, arguing in favour of the theory of dissociation - ‘the more horrific and prolonged the trauma, the more the subject has a tendency to dissociate and therefore have no conscious memory of the traumatic event’ (Suleiman, 2008; p.277). Suleiman (2008) see’s trauma theory as linked to the works of Freud and she states Herman’s theory regarding repressed memories is dependent upon the Freudian concept of unconsciousness, however Freud abandoned his seduction theory and claimed memories may be representative of a patient’s desires and fantasies rather than actual events. In contrast proponents of the theory of dissociation argue mastery of a trauma is dependent upon full recall of the traumatic incident. According to Suleiman (2008) Herman and other proponents of the theory of dissociation are critical of Freud for not believing his patients.

According to Suleiman (2008) alternative explanations of trauma theory contest the concept of repressed memory. Philosophers such as Borch-Jacobsen and Hacking are critical of Freud for firstly imposing his seduction theory, of repressed trauma, on his patients; and then secondly argue he ‘wanted to “cover up” his “crime” and inventing the Oedipus complex in the process!’ (Suleiman, 2008; p.279). Furthermore according to Suleiman alternative explanations rejecting repressed memories are presented by clinicians and researchers such as Loftus and McNally; empirical experiments have shown false memories can be created and individuals who have vivid memories of alien abduction are good examples of ‘delusion functioning as a firmly held memory’ (p.279).

In conclusion Suleiman (2008) makes reference to Lifton’s works which illustrate trauma can have a positive or negative impact on an individual. In contrast Terr (1991) argues childhood trauma can manifest as a wide range of clinical presentations in childhood such as conduct disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity and phobic disorder. Terr (1991) argues there is ‘even more diagnostic leeway’ when the traumatised child reaches adulthood (p.10).
According to trauma theory adverse childhood experiences, such as exposure to domestic violence, negatively impact on healthy ways of relating which may lead to repetition of the traumatic experiences in an attempt to master the feelings of terror and helplessness experienced during childhood (Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998). Psychodynamic theorists also consider domestic violence in relation to interactional patterns, focusing on analysis of the interactions which result in violence at a given moment. According to psychodynamic theorists violence may occur due to ‘parataxic distortions’ or ‘transference reactions’, where a situation is re-lived provoking intense rage which erupts into physical violence (Lundberg, 1990; p.245). Bowlby (1988) theorised that thoughts, feelings and behaviour in relation to emotionally significant events and situations have been shut away from conscious processing. This leads to emotions, such as anger, relating to the event or situation, being directed to inappropriate targets. According to Bowlby (1988) it is necessary to identify the cause of the emotions to effectively address the thoughts, feelings and behaviour associated with the event or situation. Psychodynamic theorists would support an individualised approach to intervention and argue treatment is required for each case of domestic violence.

Insecure attachment relationships in early childhood and adult life have been linked to domestic violence (McKee et al. 2012; Godbout et al. 2009; Dutton, 2008; Bowlby, 1988). According to Godbout et al. (2009) early exposure to violence is one of the most consistent predictors of domestic violence. According to Bowlby (1988) the attachment relationship provides an internal working model for future relationships and expectations are developed of a role in future relationships. According to Buck et al. (2012) research evidence supports Bowlby’s theory that perpetrators of domestic violence are insecurely attached. They state ‘the relationship between insecure attachment and domestic violence can be explained by separation anxiety and partner distrust’ (p.3150). Dutton (2008) claims fears of abandonment lead to jealousy, anger and anxiety. According to Godbout et al. (2009) the feelings of anger displayed immediately in response to the unavailability of an attachment figure can be both a source and consequence of domestic violence. Godbout et al. (2009) state ‘anger can be a protest strategy aimed at preventing future separations and
related anxiety, it can also be destructive and provoke an escalation of violence or disengagement from the other’ (p.369). However, it cannot be assumed all individuals who are insecurely attached become violent. Worley, Walsh and Lewis (2004) state aggressive behaviour patterns in adulthood due to insecure early attachment experiences are only present in boys. They suggest this may be due to differences in socialisation, although little is known about early socialisation patterns of male perpetrators of violence. Despite this most children who experience domestic violence do not go on to become perpetrators of domestic violence (Godbout et al. 2009).

Family Systems Theories

Theoretical and empirical approaches to domestic violence (and child abuse) now tend to favour multi-factor frameworks (or family systems theories), such as the ecological perspective, over single factor frameworks (Stith et al. 2004; Ghate, 2000). The ecological model has been used to explain domestic violence. Factors are considered in relation to each of the spheres to determine the propensity of a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence. Dutton’s (1995a) nested ecological theory of domestic violence, described by Stith et al. (2004), refers to four spheres (i) the ontogenic level, which consists of factors specific to the individual; (ii) the microsystem which incorporates all factors within the immediate setting of the abuse; (iii) the exosystem which includes all connections to the wider culture and society and the (iv) macrosystem which incorporates wider cultural values and society. Based on the ecological theory violence is more likely to occur when more risk factors are present.

The spillover hypothesis is another multi-factor explanation of domestic violence which is based on a number of theoretical paradigms; family systems, social learning, psychodynamic and family stress. Each of these paradigms draws on the interrelatedness of the husband-wife relationship and parent-child relationship to explain interparental conflict and interparental behaviour. The spillover hypothesis provides an explanation for the link between domestic violence and poor parenting, suggesting hostility and conflict in one family system (e.g. marriage) negatively influences another family system (e.g. parent-

The Cognitive Paradigm

The application of the cognitive paradigm to explain domestic violence is currently very popular (Weldon and Gilchrist, 2012). According to Weldon and Gilchrist (2012) the processing of cues in relationship conflict, which they describe as ‘implicit theories’, are the precursor to violence (p.761). Weldon and Gilchrist (2012) identified eleven potential implicit theories, such as ‘violence is normal’ and ‘real man’ in perpetrators of domestic violence (p.769). According to the cognitive perspective personal responsibility and negative consequences would be lessened through minimising, blaming and denying (Weldon and Gilchrist, 2012; Dutton, 2008). However rather than this being a behaviour unique to perpetrators of domestic violence it is typical of any ‘counternormative behaviour’ (Dutton, 2008; p.133). Dutton (2008) describes the ‘abusive personality’ which is affected by cognitive deficits in relation to conflict management (p.139). A ‘dysphoric affect’ is generated which involves blaming the partner, leading to frustration and anger at the partner (p.139). Dutton (2008) highlights men who are convicted of wife assault score significantly lower on all components of emotional intelligence. Dutton (2008) claims superficial interventions are doomed to failure. He states early intervention in the form of empathy training and conflict resolution is needed for all school children.

- Theories to explain the impact of domestic violence

Similarly to the breadth of theories developed to explain the occurrence of domestic violence, there are a range of theories to account for the range, and severity, of impact reported as a result of exposure to domestic violence. Theories relating to the impact of domestic violence can offer an explanation in relation to why some children are more resilient than others.
A developmental psychopathology framework is particularly prevalent in explanations considering the impact of domestic violence on children. According to Howell (2011) a developmental psychopathology framework is particularly useful to explain the impact of domestic violence on pre-school children. Howell (2011) argues exposure to domestic violence has a negative impact on early development, specifically emotion regulation and prosocial skills. ‘Children learn emotional regulation naturally through the emotional expressions and explanations given by their caregivers’ (Sternberg et al. 2006; p.90). Howell (2011) further proposes the severity of the impact is dependent upon the availability and responsiveness of the caregiver. According to Howell (2011) ‘family life may impede the completion of major, age-appropriate milestones’ (p.564). Furthermore according to Wolfe et al. (2003) attempts to accommodate, or adapt to, violent events negatively affect social and emotional development. The sensitisation hypothesis suggests frequent exposure to violence presents a greater adaptational challenge and children’s reactions to conflict are consequently heightened, which increases the impact of the interactions (Grych et al. 2000; Cummings, Davies and Simpson, 1994).

Grych and Fincham (1990) state the modelling hypothesis can provide an explanation for children’s behaviour. Modelling has similarities to social learning theory but differs in proposing information about behaviour is also acquired. For example whilst children may learn aggression is an acceptable way to resolve conflict this will be expressed in age-appropriate ways, e.g. with peers rather than with adults. In addition the modelling hypothesis suggests there may be a ‘disinhibitory effect’ giving children approval to be more aggressive (Grych and Fincham, 1990; p.275). According to Grych and Fincham (1990), based on the modelling hypothesis, children exposed to more frequent violence will have more significant behaviour problems as a direct result of increased opportunities to observe violent behaviour.

Grych and Fincham (1990) present the cognitive-contextual model in an attempt to explain the impact of marital conflict on children. They propose both ‘cognition
and affect serve appraisal functions and guide the child's coping behaviour’ (p.278) in relation to context factors such as past experiences. They propose two stages of processing. Primary processing involves awareness of a conflict and an initial affective reaction. This is influenced by characteristics of the conflict episode and contextual factors. Secondary processing involves attributing the cause of the conflict, considering responsibility and blame, and finally considering potential coping responses. Secondary processing is influenced by the child's initial emotional arousal in the primary stage and in turn modulates the initial affective reaction. According to Grych and Fincham (1990) affect and secondary processing then influence the child’s coping response. The success of the coping response in turn influences the child’s level of distress, ‘successful coping leads to a reduction of negative affect, whereas unsuccessful coping may maintain or increase the child's distress’ (Grych and Fincham, 1990, p.278). According to Grych and Fincham (1990) childhood problems are a result of dysfunctional attributions, maladaptive coping strategies and negative attributions.

Psychoanalytic Theories

Psychoanalytic theories also provide popular explanations for the impact of domestic violence on children; in particular attachment theory and trauma theories are commonly applied. Disrupted attachment relationships leading to maladaptive development, as a consequence of marital conflict and domestic violence, are frequently cited within the literature (Howell, 2011; Levendosky et al. 2011; Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Margolin, 2005; Levendosky et al. 2003; Davies and Cummings, 1994; Grych and Fincham, 1990). However there are numerous cultural assumptions within attachment theory which imply mothers are able to be physically available to their children. Additionally disrupted attachments may have political causes such as parents being forced to work long hours or work away from home for long periods of time.

The emotional security hypothesis proposed by Davies and Cummings (1994) develops the cognitive-contextual model and places greater significance on emotionality. They propose children’s responses to marital conflict are regulated
by the implications for their emotional security. In some cases emotional security may be fostered by providing good role models for conflict resolution. According to Davies and Cummings (1994) emotional insecurity is the cause of ‘less effective coping and greater emotional and behavioural dysregulation’ (p.389). Davies and Cummings (1994) identify a direct link between emotional security and attachment relationships, ‘children with secure attachments are less prone to emotional distress’ (p.389). Similarly to Grych and Fincham (1990), Davies and Cummings (1994) indicate there are mediating factors within conflict, such as resolution, which can influence the impact on children. According to Bogat et al. (2006) the emotional security hypothesis would suggest domestic violence has a greater significance and a more damaging impact on children according to the severity of violence to which they are exposed.

There is general agreement that parenting relationships can be a mediating factor for children’s development in relation to the impact of marital conflict and domestic violence (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013; Graham-Bermann et al. 2009, Levendosky et al. 2006; Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2001; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000; Henning et al. 1997; Erel and Burman, 1995; Fantuzzo et al. 1991; Holden and Ritchie, 1991; Grych and Fincham, 1990). In the worst case scenario disrupted attachments have been outlined as the main cause of the intergenerational transmission theory (as described earlier) (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008).

Grych and Fincham (1990) identify marital conflict as a potential stressor which may lead to reliance on coping strategies which could be adaptive or maladaptive. The stress of exposure to conflict in adult relationships can be considered in relation to trauma theories. According to McCloskey and Walker (2000) violence within the family is a source of trauma for children. Margolin (2005) presents trauma theory as an explanation of the impact of exposure to domestic violence, ‘the personal loss and threat associated with violence exposure create a highly stressful environment for youngsters’ (p.74). Children’s exposure to domestic violence is now recognised to be a potential precursor to the development of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Margolin and Vickerman, 2007; Chemtob and Carlson, 2004). PTSD was introduced in late
1970’s and appeared in DSM-III for the first time in 1980. According to Johnson and Zlotnick (2009) PTSD is the most prevalent disorder associated with domestic violence. Lehmann (1997) found more than half of the children, in his sample, exposed to mother assault could be diagnosed with PTSD. However there has been extensive criticism of the DSM-IV criterion for PTSD as it failed to recognise the repetitive and ongoing nature of domestic violence (van der Kolk et al. 2009; Walker, 2009; Graham-Bermann and Levendosky, 1998). According to Graham-Bermann and Levendosky (1998) ‘most children exposed to the emotional and physical abuse of their mothers exhibit symptoms of posttraumatic stress, although few qualify for a full PTSD diagnosis’ (p.125). In addition PTSD has been criticised for failing to account for the symptoms of children who experience domestic violence. According to van der Kolk et al. (2009) this led to children exposed to domestic violence being diagnosed with unrelated co-morbid disorders such as bipolar disorder, ADHD, conduct disorder, phobic anxiety, reactive attachment disorder and separation anxiety. There have been significant changes to the PTSD criterion in the DSM-V published in May 2013. In response to criticism of the applicability of PTSD criteria to children the DSM-V includes a separate set of diagnostic criteria for children. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013) the DSM-V is now developmentally sensitive as diagnostic thresholds for children and adolescents have been lowered and separate criteria have been included for children aged six or younger (for PTSD diagnostic criteria refer to appendix three, page iv).

Family Systems Theories

According to Margolin (2005) family systems theory considers the paradox of the family as the safe haven and the source of violence, potentially leaving the parents less available for caretaking. Within family systems theories the interaction of the interpersonal, family and societal context are considered to explain the impact of domestic violence in the context of the family system becoming overwhelmed.
Levendosky et al. (2003) and Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) applied Belsky’s ecological model to explain the effects of domestic violence on children’s functioning. Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) theorised the trauma of domestic violence alone was not a reliable predictor of the functioning of women and children; instead the trauma of domestic violence needed to be considered in the context of an ecological model. They found the effects of domestic violence on parenting are mediated by psychological functioning, which is directly affected by the availability of social support. Levendosky et al. (2003) found some support for the importance of the mother-child relationship, as described within attachment theory, in the development of social and emotional functioning. According to Levendosky et al. (2003) the attachment relationship is a potential mediating factor in relation to the impact of exposure to domestic violence.

The family disruption hypothesis suggests domestic violence indirectly affects children due to the negative impact on the mother’s psychological functioning and parenting capacity (Huth-Bocks, Levendosky and Semel, 2001). Levendosky et al.’s (2006) later research considered the spillover hypothesis in relation to domestic violence. They suggest domestic violence is a form of marital discord and is therefore likely to be associated with negative parenting behaviour. Levendosky et al. (2006) studied child functioning in children aged one year, in particular externalising behaviour, and found evidence of negative effects of domestic violence in maternal parenting and child externalising behaviour. Similarly Renner and Boel-Studt (2013) found domestic violence adversely affected parenting stress resulting in development of internalising behaviours in children aged six to twelve years old. Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) and Levendosky et al. (2006) found protective factors included maternal parenting, maternal mental health, and social support. Based on the research of Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) and Levendosky et al. (2006) the availability of effective social support structures for victims can reduce the impact of domestic violence upon children through improved parental functioning. According to Holden and Ritchie (1991) the impact upon children’s development from discord in interpersonal relationships, based upon Belsky’s (1984) ecological model, is highly significant and there is extensive research to
say children from violent relationships demonstrate a range of behaviour problems.

In conclusion it is clear children are affected by exposure to domestic violence. There are the direct effects of witnessing violence towards a parent, or parent figure, perpetrated by another adult who is a parent or parent figure. Direct effects are likely to be in the form of PTSD symptoms. Additionally there are also wider indirect experiences of domestic violence, which may not include directly witnessing violence; parenting behaviour is likely to be disrupted causing attachment relationships to be damaged and parenting is likely to be less effective. Finally there is also the impact upon child development in relation to social, emotional and cognitive development as a result of all of these factors in combination as presented in Belsky’s (1984) ecological model.

Margolin (2005) highlights the difference between vulnerability and resilience. Strategies that may be resilient in one situation can have a negative effect in another; for example withdrawing can be protective in response to domestic violence but leads to vulnerability in a school environment furthermore children have little opportunity for social withdrawal as schooling is compulsory. In addition Buckley, Holt and Whelan (2007) caution that the difficulties experienced by children who have been exposed to domestic violence may go unnoticed as they could be ‘mistaken for typical, exasperating, juvenile behaviours’ (p.308).

2.2.4 - Impact and Effects of Domestic Violence

According to Flood-Page and Taylor (2003) on average two women per week are killed by a male partner, or former partner and nearly half of all female murder victims are killed by a partner or ex-partner. This constitutes nearly 40% of all female homicide victims (Department of Health, 2005.) Every year around one hundred and fifty people, (120 women and 30 men) are killed by a current or former partner (Home Office, 2003). Jaffe and Juodis (2006) highlight the impact of murder upon the children of the family as they suffer the loss of the parent who was murdered but also the loss of the parent responsible due to their inevitable
incarceration. Additionally children may also be the victims of murder by a violent parent.

The Home Office (2003) reported 50% or more of women in touch with mental health services have had violent or abusive experiences. Research suggests being a victim of domestic violence is a risk factor for depression (Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2001), anxiety, and suicide (Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998), PTSD (Johnson and Zlotnick, 2009; Margolin and Vickerman, 2007; Chemtob and Carlson, 2004; Smith and Landreth, 2003; Golding, 1999; Graham-Bermann and Levendosky, 1998) and substance abuse (Johnson and Zlotnick, 2009; Margolin and Vickerman, 2007; Smith and Landreth, 2003; Golding, 1999; Moffitt and Caspi, 1999). Golding (1999) reports PTSD is one of the most prevalent disorders in battered women. Whilst conclusions cannot be drawn regarding cause and effect Goleman (2004) claimed deficits in emotional intelligence can lead to mental health issues in adulthood. It could therefore be suggested lower levels of emotional literacy may also contribute to maladaptive relationships and this is perhaps why mental health issues are co-morbid with domestic violence. Alternatively exposure to maladaptive relationships may be the cause of mental health issues and emotional intelligence is a mediating factor in relation to the effectiveness of coping strategies. However without looking at deeper causes these arguments risk circular logic.

There are social and economic costs associated with domestic violence (Casique and Furegato, 2006; American Psychological Association, 1996), besides treatment costs there are also associated indirect costs such as loss of productivity due to victims being unable to work (Golding, 1999). According to the Home Office (2003) domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness, accounting for about 16% of homelessness acceptances every year and more than 130,000 homeless households were re-housed in a seven year period as a result of domestic violence. Additionally Nouer et al. (2014) found mothers were twice as likely to leave their abusive partner as women who did not have children.

Domestic violence is often described as traumatic for victims and witnesses; it has a wide range of physical and psychological effects upon victims (Levendosky and
Graham-Bermann, 2001; Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2000; Golding, 1999). Within domestic violence literature the definition of ‘trauma’ remains unclear despite witnessing domestic violence readily being referred to as traumatic. Whilst there is little doubt domestic violence is traumatic, it is important to consider what constitutes trauma and how this is understood. ‘Trauma’ originates from the Greek word meaning wound. It can be used to describe physical and psychological harm. Physical trauma is considered as actual bodily harm and used clinically. Trauma also has a psychological basis and can be used to describe emotional harm.

Terr (1990) studied childhood trauma and explains emotional trauma occurs externally, however it is quickly ‘incorporated into the mind’ (p.8). According to Terr (1990):

‘Psychic trauma’ occurs when a sudden, unexpected, overwhelmingly intense emotional blow or series of blows assaults the person from outside (p.8).

According to Terr (1990) the effects of trauma are recognisable years later by a parent, teacher or friend if they know what to look for. In addition she argues for many these post-traumatic effects are permanent, whilst for some they fade, regardless of whether or not they are treated psychiatrically.

Maybe after a traumatic event, a child is still “normal”. But the traumatised child is changed – that is certain. (Terr, 1990, p.26)

From another perspective we could use the common experience of violence as a way to question the meaning of ‘normal’. As I mentioned earlier, MacLure et al. (2008) suggests a number of children have experience beyond the ‘simulacrum of the proper child’ (no page), bringing into question the spectrum of normality, which could unnecessarily result in pathologising trauma.

Briere and Scott (2013) list domestic violence as one of the major types of traumatic event along with natural disasters, rape and sexual assault and sex trafficking for example. In addition Briere and Scott (2013) highlight victims of interpersonal trauma are at greater statistical risk of experiencing further interpersonal trauma.
Terr (1990) found the peers of children who were involved in the 1976 Chowchilla bus kidnap later displayed traumatic symptoms as a result of the incident. This shows traumatic events can have a wide reaching impact and even those who are not directly involved can become traumatised. This is particularly important when considering the support network surrounding a child who has experienced trauma. Parents for example may be traumatised by supporting a child who has been abused. This is also true of professionals supporting a child who has experienced trauma. It is for this reason great importance is placed upon the need for clinical supervision. According to the Quality Care Commission (2013) clinical supervision allows practitioners to explore their own personal and emotional reactions to their work. It also ensures service users receive high quality care as practitioners are able to manage the personal and emotional impacts of their practice. Whilst social workers and psychologists have clinical supervision on a regular basis the same is not true of teachers who provide day to day support to children in their care. The Department for Education (2013) outlines the requirements for teachers’ appraisal under the new regulations ‘The Education (School Teachers’ Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012’ and there is no reference to supervision for teachers.

2012; Kitzmann et al. 2003; Carlson, 2000; Davies and Cummings, 1994; Fantuzzo et al. 1991) and cognitive skills (Gustafsson et al. 2013; Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Dodd, 2009; Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Graham-Bermann et al. 2006; Huth-Bocks, Levendosky, and Semel, 2001; Carlson, 2000; Graham-Bermann and Levendosky, 1998; Sternberg et al. 1993; Fantuzzo et al. 1991; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989). Additionally children fear bullying, and many experience bullying due to their home circumstances (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007). Children who have been exposed to domestic violence also display a range of symptoms such as enuresis (Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989), nightmares, insomnia (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989), depression (Saunders, 2003; Carlson, 2000; Sternberg et al. 1993; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989), aggression (Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Graham-Bermann et al. 2006; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989) disruptive behaviour (Renner, 2012; Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Saunders, 2003; Moffitt and Caspi, 1998; Kolbo, Blakely and Engleman, 1996; Sternberg et al. 1993; Fantuzzo et al. 1991), fear (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989) and hyperarousal (Carlson, 2000; Graham-Bermann and Levendosky, 1998). According to the World Health Organisation (2012) domestic violence has been associated with higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity (e.g. diarrhoeal disease, malnutrition). The extensive impact of domestic violence is such that:

…a comprehensive list of all the psychological, psychiatric, social, behavioural, and medical problems found to be associated with a history of childhood exposure to violence would be difficult to construct... (Saunders, 2003, p.357).

According to Thornton (2014) children exposed to domestic violence experience repeated emotional distress and continued disruption to family dynamics. Thornton (2014) states ‘living with domestic violence is emotionally overwhelming for young children’ (p.98). This results in inadequate coping strategies which can lead to children being emotionally overwhelmed, whilst others manage to distance themselves. Thornton (2014) found children exposed to domestic violence depicted themselves as being endlessly forgiving, working hard to gain praise and making themselves as easy as possible to love. In addition the children in Thornton’s (2014) study perceived violence as part of family life, did not expect adults to come to their aid and some children perceived themselves as to blame for the violence.
Domestic violence can have a long lasting and life-long impact (Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Devaney, 2008; Wolfe, 2006; Worley et al. 2004; Home Office, 2003; Dube et al. 2001). Given that children and young people exposed to domestic violence go on to experience difficulties in later life, besides lower academic attainment, inevitably their ability to contribute to society will be adversely affected.

The impact of domestic violence on children has a significant social cost. There is a role for education in addressing the impact of domestic violence. As Dewey (1897) stated, school is a representation of society. As such it should therefore be preparation for life beyond school, according to de Botton (2013):

> The purpose of all education is to spare people time and error. It’s a tool whereby society attempts to teach reliably, within a few years, what it took the very brightest and most determined of our ancestors centuries of painful effort to work out (no page).

According to Kitzman et al. (2003) exposure to domestic violence has a negative impact on children’s functioning, amongst children exposed to domestic violence psychopathology rates are four times higher. Domestic violence can directly impact upon children in the family through their direct exposure e.g. witnessing violent or abusive behaviour or indirectly as a result of the impact on family relationships and family dynamics (Thornton, 2014; Levendosky et al. 2006; Chemtob and Carlson 2004; Huth-Bocks, Levendosky, and Semel, 2001; Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2001; Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2000; Holden and Ritchie, 1991). Thornton (2014) found the presence of domestic violence negatively impacted upon parents capacity to notice and attune to their children’s distress and the containment usually provided by parents was missing; consequently there is a lack of parental support to help children process and understand their feelings.

In attempting to explain the impact and effect of domestic violence on children a number of factors have been identified; psychopathology, age differences, gender differences, cultural differences, situational/contextual differences, differences in exposure to violence, differences in adverse childhood experiences, differences in parenting, individual differences and other mediating factors. Each of these factors will now be considered in turn.
• Psychopathology

Jaffe et al. (2002) outline behavioural geneticists’ arguments to suggest children exposed to domestic violence are at genetic risk for behaviour problems from their parents’ psychopathology. They argue it is the heritability of these disorders which leads to a genetic predisposition for behaviour difficulties. The domestic violence occurs as a consequence of the parents’ psychopathology which is more likely to lead them into violent relationships. Jaffe et al. (2002) studied twins to test behavioural geneticist theory and found domestic violence affects children’s behaviour beyond the influence of genetics.

• Age Differences

There is research to suggest children under the age of three are more affected by exposure to violence than older children (Miller, Howell and Graham-Bermann, 2012; Tailor and Letourneau, 2012; Fantuzzo et al. 1991). According to Bogat et al. (2006) infants are particularly vulnerable due to their close emotional relationship and physical proximity to their parents. Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999) state pre-school children were more likely to be present in the home when violence occurred. According to Howell (2011), based upon a developmental psychopathology model, infants exposure to trauma, such as domestic violence, can affect completion of social and emotional developmental milestones which can result in intense separation anxiety and increased aggressiveness. It can also affect emotion recognition, emotion regulation and social competence (Howell, 2011). Huth-Bocks, Levendosky, and Semel (2001) found pre-school children’s intellectual functioning is both directly and indirectly affected by domestic violence. They found children who had witnessed domestic violence in the past year had poorer verbal abilities than children who had not witnessed domestic violence; and verbal skills and language knowledge are directly affected by the environment. Bogat et al. (2006) found infants displayed trauma symptoms when their mothers exhibited trauma. This would suggest the mothers’ coping strategies are particularly important for younger children. Huth-Bocks, Levendosky, and Semel’s (2001) findings led them to propose battered
mothers suffering from depression and stress are unable to provide intellectually stimulating experiences for their children which indirectly impacts upon intellectual development. In contrast to research indicating maternal mental health affects parenting and parent-child relationships, Bogat et al. (2006) found maternal depressive symptoms were unrelated to infant trauma symptoms.

According to Fantuzzo et al. (1991) ‘violence disrupts the development of empathic and prosocial competencies for preschool children’ (p.264). They hypothesise children placed in shelters will experience more internalising problems due to being removed from their natural environment which leaves children feeling defenceless and open to stress. Whitaker, Orzol and Kahn (2006) found evidence children as young as three years old show aggressive behaviour, inattention/hyperactivity and can present as anxious/depressed. Bogat et al. (2006) found children as young as one year old witnessing or hearing severe domestic violence experience trauma symptoms. Lehmann (1997) found younger children were more vulnerable to PTSD and suggested ‘it is conceivable that younger children, by virtue of development, had greater difficulty interpreting the assaults and the situation, and therefore were more stressed’ (p251). In addition he suggested young children are also more dependent upon adults for their care which could also lead to stress. This is in contrast to Sternberg et al. (2006) who suggested older children are at greater risk due to their ability to reflect on the meaning of the abuse and they may feel self-blame or anger.

According to Du Plat-Jones (2006) school age children are more likely to act aggressively. Within this age group it could be argued this type of behaviour is a learned method of conflict resolution, alternatively it could be a ‘symptom’ of the conditions in some schools. Miller, Howell and Graham-Bermann (2012) describe how children’s cognitive appraisals, of threat and blame in relation to domestic violence, may be linked to behaviour. They found children aged four to five expressed more feelings of threat than six year olds. Research also identifies exposure to domestic violence has a negative impact upon adolescents (Renner, 2012; Margolin and Vickerman, 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Wolfe, 2006; Fisher, 1999) although some theorise adolescents are less affected than
younger children due to reduced dependence on the family unit (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013).

Domestic violence impacts upon children and young people of all ages however younger children are more likely to witness violence or be in the home when it occurs. Previous research indicates domestic violence has a negative impact upon pre-school children’s development; in addition maternal coping is cited to be particularly influential on younger children. Furthermore research indicates the effects of domestic violence on the early development of younger children will lead to difficulties in childhood and later life.

- Gender Differences

Within the literature on domestic violence there are conflicting findings regarding gender differences in behaviour (Bogat *et al.* 2006, Moffitt and Caspi, 1998). Some research demonstrates boys display more externalising behaviour (Tailor and Letourneau, 2012; Bogat *et al.* 2006) and girls tend to display more internalising behaviours (Tailor and Letourneau, 2012; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989). In addition boys reportedly show more symptoms of trauma immediately after the traumatic event whilst girls show more symptoms a year afterwards. (Bogat *et al.* 2006). However these findings are not consistently replicated. Sternberg *et al.* (2006) found no differences in the effects of family violence on children’s behaviour problems based upon gender. Whereas Renner and Boel-Studt (2013) found boys aged 6-12 showed significantly more externalising and internalising behaviour difficulties than girls. Research has found girls experience higher levels of self-blame, for domestic violence, than boys (Miller, Howell, and Graham-Bermann, 2014; Miller, Howell and Graham-Bermann, 2012).

Bogat *et al.* (2006) suggest gender differences in infant trauma symptoms may be due to the mother’s behaviour towards their child due to its sex, e.g. making negative attributions about a son’s behaviour and Graham-Bermann and Brescoll (2000) found boys had more stereotyped beliefs around male power than girls. Fergusson and Horwood (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of
children exposed to domestic violence and found those exposed to male initiated violence developed anxiety, conduct disorder and criminal behaviour, whereas those exposed to female initiated violence developed substance misuse. Fergusson and Horwood (1998) suggest this implies male violence has a more harmful effect on children due to male assaults having more harmful consequences. Whereas Henning et al. (1997) found more psychological distress was reported from those who witnessed the same sex parent being a victim of domestic violence.

According to Fergusson and Horwood (1998) research suggests there are no overall gender differences in adult behaviours in relation to exposure to domestic violence in childhood. In contrast Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson (1998) studied the long term psychological effects on women of witnessing domestic violence and found they reported higher levels of violence in their adult relationships than non-witnesses.

- Cultural Differences

Graham-Bermann et al. (2006) found Caucasian children were more likely to meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD than ethnic minority children exposed to domestic violence. The mother’s mental health was the greatest predictor of traumatic stress for Caucasian children. Graham-Bermann et al. (2006) suggest self-blame may be related to depression and therefore Caucasian children may be more dependent upon their mothers and more affected by their distress. In contrast, the traumatic stress of ethnic minority children was most predicted by the level of exposure to violence and low income. Graham-Bermann et al. (2006) suggest the ethnic minority children’s exposure to additional traumatic events, such as community violence, arrests, and racism, heightened the effects of domestic violence. Social support and religion for the mother enhances coping and reduces their distress, in turn this was a protective element for child traumatic stress. Graham-Bermann et al. (2006) suggest the ethnic minority mothers had learned to cope with socially imposed hardships and were therefore less likely to engage in self-blame allowing them to be more responsive to social support structures. ‘Thus, the cultural context may be relevant to understanding
contributions to both dysfunction and pathways to resilience for mothers and children in different cultural groups’ (Graham-Bermann et al. 2006; p.685). Finally Graham-Bermann and Brescoll (2000) found children from ethnic minority groups had more extreme beliefs in relation to the appropriateness and necessity of physical violence within the family. However these studies are conducted in the USA and may therefore reflect the cultural assumptions of the DSM criteria.

• Situational/Contextual Differences

The victims of domestic violence may be supported by outreach or refuge services. According to Women’s Aid (2006a) 50% of the children in refuge accommodation in England are under the age of five. Fantuzzo et al. (1991) found pre-school aged shelter resident children showed the greatest behaviour difficulties and lowest self-esteem. However the majority of children exposed to domestic violence do not go to refuges (Howell, 2011).

Similarities have been drawn between the traumatic impact of domestic violence and child abuse upon children (Bogat et al. 2006; Culross, 1999; Graham-Bermann and Levendosky, 1998). Further adversity is experienced by children exposed to domestic violence who have to leave their homes to live in a shelter. They experience a high level of disruption; often having to change school (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989; Hughes 1982); this can be due to travel and/or the safety of the family. A consequence of changing schools and/or refuge accommodation can be isolation from peers and loss of friendships (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007).

• Differences in Exposure to Violence

Bogat et al. (2006) report children exposed to more severe domestic violence have more severe symptoms. According to Fantuzzo et al. (1991) the extent and type of violence relates to the impact upon children’s behaviour, in addition to whether or not the child witnessed the violence first hand. If it were the case
that adjustment problems increased directly in relation to the severity of violence then siblings could be expected to demonstrate similar levels of adversity. However research on siblings has shown individual characteristics mediate the impact of domestic violence rather than severity (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Skopp et al. 2005). Skopp et al. (2005) studied sibling differences and found exposure to domestic violence was not a family wide risk factor. They suggest children’s interpretations of perceived threat and self-blame account for differences in sibling adjustment problems. Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera (2012) found the diversity of domestic violence (i.e. the range of acts) the child was exposed to related to teacher reports of emotional and behavioural problems. Those exposed to a greater range of violence were reported to have more emotional and behavioural problems. Renner and Boel-Studt (2013) differentiated between the effects of psychological intimate partner violence and physical intimate partner violence on children aged 6-12. They found children exposed to psychological and physical intimate partner violence demonstrated higher externalising and internalising behaviours whilst children exposed only to physical intimate partner violence led to higher internalising behaviours but not externalising behaviour.

Some researchers claim all violence has a negative impact upon children, to a greater or lesser extent, in accordance with the extent and severity of the violence experienced (Lamers-Winkleman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; Renner, 2012; Bogat et al. 2006; Sternberg et al. 2006). However the severity of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children is not clearly defined. Some children will not demonstrate adjustment problems (Graham-Bermann et al. 2009) whereas others are more severely affected. Other researchers consider the duration of the violence to be of significance. Lehmann (1997) states ‘long-term negative coping responses will interfere with normal development’ (p.252). Additionally Lehmann (1997) theorises long term self-blame and guilt may lead to social adjustment problems in later life.

- Differences in Adverse Childhood Experiences
Research has illustrated that child abuse and domestic violence are likely to occur within the same family (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; Devaney, 2008; Jaffe and Juodis, 2006; Sternberg et al. 2006; Chemtob and Carlson, 2004; Home Office, 2003; Saunders, 2003; Department of Health, 2002; Huth-Bocks, Levendosky and Semel, 2001; Culross, 1999; Moffitt and Caspi, 1998; Featherstone and Trinder, 1997; Stanley, 1997; McCloskey, Figueredo and Koss, 1995; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989) and Sternberg et al. (2006) found children who witness domestic violence do not differ greatly from physically abused children. Similarly Kitzmann et al. (2003) found similar levels of adjustment problems in children who had witnessed domestic violence, experienced physical abuse or had experienced both domestic violence and physical abuse. In contrast Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) found child abuse was a more important predictor of children’s adjustment than witnessing violence.

Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera (2012) found the number of adverse childhood experiences a child was exposed did not increase emotional, behavioural and traumatic symptoms. They suggest, therefore, exposure to domestic violence is a strong enough adverse experience in itself irrespective of other adverse experiences to which the child is exposed. In contrast, according to Renner (2012), research indicates ‘the effects of maltreatment are cumulative, and the higher number of maltreatment types experienced, the more severe the consequences’ (p.183).

• Differences in Parenting

There is extensive research exploring parenting in relation to the effects of domestic violence on children. Evidence suggests conflict in interpersonal relationships affects parenting capacity. The effects can be in relation to the emotional availability of the mother due to stress, negative interactions between the couple leading to negative parent–child interactions (the spillover hypothesis) and inconsistent discipline (Thornton, 2014; Holden and Ritchie, 1991).
Children can be affected by domestic violence as early as pregnancy. Levendosky et al. (2011) highlight violence during pregnancy as being of particular concern due to the impact upon the attachment relationship. They also suggest the infant’s distress acts as a ‘posttraumatic trigger which makes it difficult for the emotionally dysregulated mother to respond with appropriate parenting behaviour’ (p.516). Bowlby (1969) outlined the attachment relationship as particularly important for child development and mental health. According to Bowlby disruption in the attachment relationship can lead to anger and anxiety, and also impact upon relationships in later life. This is of concern as research has shown the parent-child relationship is affected by domestic violence due to the impact on the mental health of the victim which indirectly affects their parenting capacity (Levendosky et al. 2012, Levendosky et al. 2006; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000; Erel and Burman, 1995; Holden and Ritchie, 1991).

Henning et al. (1997) found weak support for the hypothesis that parenting is negatively affected by marital discord, which has an impact on the parent child relationship affecting the adjustment of children in the short and long term. In contrast Fantuzzo et al. (1991) found conduct problems were directly related to inter-parental conflict and familial disruption and children who experienced physical conflict displayed clinical levels of conduct problems and moderate emotional problems. Thornton (2014) studied the emotional impact of domestic violence and found it disrupted the care available, reduced opportunities for communication, forced divided loyalties, disrupted routines and reduced parental ability to provide containment and security.

- **Individual Differences and Mediating Factors**

Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) considered the effects of domestic violence on mothers and children by applying an ecological framework. Their findings led them to conclude behaviour is heavily influenced by the context. Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) are therefore proposing children’s behavioural adjustment is dependent upon a number of factors and
consequently children’s behaviour needs to be considered in this context rather than in isolation.

Sternberg et al. (2006) completed a ‘mega-analysis’ of the effects of family violence on children and stated ‘it is important to note - regardless of the type of abuse, age, or gender, more children had scores in the non-clinical range than in the clinical range’ (p.107). Whilst there are adverse effects from experiencing family violence (witnessing domestic violence and being physically abused) children show remarkable resilience with only a small number demonstrating difficulties at a clinical level. Similarly Graham-Bermann et al. (2009) found 65% of their sample did not have adjustment problems. Graham-Bermann et al. (2009) state resilience can be a protective factor and an outcome factor of exposure to domestic violence. As such they considered resilience on ‘a continuum of adjustment whereby risk factors were associated with decreased functioning and protective factors were associated with enhanced functioning’ (Graham-Bermann et al. 2009, p.658). Children identified as resilient were ‘high in self-worth and social competence with few behavioural problems and little depression’ (Graham-Bermann et al. 2009, p.657). In addition their mothers demonstrated positive mental health and effective parenting behaviour.

Fergusson and Horwood (1998) and Henning et al. (1997) found the family and social context, such as socioeconomic status and family functioning, are mediating factors on the later life impact of children’s exposure to domestic violence.

The impact of exposure to domestic violence and mediating factors is a continuing area of debate. The complexity of the issue is highlighted by the range of factors, e.g. age, gender, severity and duration of violence, that have been identified when attempting to explain the impact and effect of domestic violence on children. In addition there is no consensus regarding the impact of each of these factors. Some researchers have suggested the severity of the impact is related to the severity of the violence, or range of violence, to which the child is exposed (Renner, 2012; Lamers-Winkleman, Willeman and Vissera, 2012; Bogat et al. 2009), whereas, others claim there are mediating factors, such as parenting, individual characteristics
and maternal stress, which promote resilience in the face of adversity (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013; Graham-Bermann et al. 2009; Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Skopp et al. 2005). Wolfe et al. (2003) infer experiencing violence in childhood has a negative impact on development and behaviour over and above other confounding factors whereas Ghate (2000) states the thresholds for harm are, as yet, unknown.

Overall the impact of domestic violence upon victims and their children is well documented within the literature (Tailor and Letourneau, 2012; Ghate, 2000) and research shows the impact of exposure to domestic violence is wide ranging, from physiological to psychological, and can be lifelong (Godbout et al. 2009; Devaney, 2008; Dube et al. 2001; Fergusson and Horwood, 1998; Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998; Lehmann, 1997; Bowlby, 1969). Exposure to domestic violence can have a significant impact on the health and development of children and young people (Saunders, 2003; Wolfe et al. 2003; Moffitt and Caspi, 1988). Children are extremely vulnerable given the wide ranging and longer term implications of exposure to domestic violence in childhood. The Home Office (2003) states ‘the trauma and long-term effects suffered by children living in a violent household is incalculable’ (p.6). Although children’s exposure to domestic violence is a significant concern it often remains hidden:

Children are very much the silent victims of domestic violence. They may witness it or be subject to it, but often their voice is not heard. In 90% of incidents involving domestic violence, children are in the same or next room, and 45% of victims of repeated violence said their children were aware of what was happening. (Home Office, 2003; p.48).

Thornton (2014) sought children’s views regarding the emotional impact of domestic violence. She concluded ‘child victims of domestic violence are very unlikely to spontaneously talk about their experiences’ (p.98). This can be due to fears of not being believed or feeling a need to keep it secret.

Domestic violence is a significant social problem which can have a substantial negative impact upon children. According to the Department of Health (2002) at least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence. According to Laming (2009) 200,000 (1.8%) children live in households where there is a known high risk case of domestic violence. Brandon et al. (2012) found evidence of past, or present,
domestic violence in the living circumstances of over two thirds of the children identified in the biennial analysis of serious case reviews notified during the period 2009 - 2011. Despite the extent of the problem and its impact government funding into domestic violence has significantly reduced. Thirty-one percent of the funding to the domestic violence and sexual abuse sector from local authorities was cut between 2010/11 to 2011/12, a reduction from £7.8 million to £5.4 million (Towers and Walby, 2012, p.3). These reductions in funding will adversely affect the provision of support services, and the research findings detailing the severity and extent of the problem show domestic violence will not simply disappear in their future. Education as a significant context for development and fundamental social structure can therefore be considered to have a crucial role in support for those currently affected by domestic violence and in preventative work with future generations. Given the severity of the impact of exposure to domestic violence there will inevitably be an impact within the educational setting at a systemic and individual level on a day to day basis. The class teacher will be required to provide emotional support and containment to the individual child and manage disruptive externalising behaviour, both of which will impact upon the whole class. The severity of these is also likely to have a systemic impact as school based support systems and behaviour policies are implemented in relation to the management and support of the child.

If what goes on in school thwarts the aims internal to education, the school is no longer an educational institution. What we discover about aims internal to education is therefore relevant to what educational institutions can reasonably be expected to do (Hardarson, 2012, p.232).

As I have previously discussed one of the core aims of education is making a positive contribution to society - being able to contribute to the economy and prosperity of society through employability. Domestic violence has been identified to have social and economic costs to society (Casique and Furegato, 2006; Home Office, 2003; Golding, 1999; American Psychological Association, 1996) and the adverse effects experienced by children exposed to domestic violence will impact upon their ability, and that of their peers, to make a positive contribution to society. Consequently the impact of domestic violence is of significant importance in relation to education. I would therefore argue there is a central role for the education system
to play, firstly in relation to supporting children and young people who experience trauma, such as domestic violence; and secondly in the provision of preventative measures to address violent relationships in the future.

2.2.5 - Domestic Violence and Education

There are a number of pieces of legislation and guidance which relate to child protection in the UK. Schools must have regard to this legislation and children who are seriously affected by domestic violence would be identified by this legislation. Schools have a statutory responsibility for ‘safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people’ under the Education Act 2002 (p.114). Working Together To Safeguard Children (2013) is aimed at helping professionals to identify children who may be at risk and outlines how to protect these children. There are then additional laws in relation to monitoring adults who may pose a risk to children. These include the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012. Children who are not covered by child protection policy, but significant concerns remain, can be supported by the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The aim of the CAF is to support information sharing and multi-agency working to facilitate the provision of an effective package of support for the child and family.

Currently there is no specific legislation detailing a requirement to educate children and young people about domestic violence. In 2009 the Labour Government outlined plans for compulsory sex education PSHE lessons, which would include gender equality and preventing violence in relationships (British Broadcasting Cooperation, 2009; Kirkup, 2009). However contrary to expectations (Paton, 2011), in 2013 The Department for Education did not support the plans and they were dropped. Preceding this decision Gove stated:

...if you look at the way in which we can encourage students not to indulge in risky behaviour, one of the best ways we can do that is by educating them so well in a particular range of subjects that they have hope in the future. (Gove, 2012).

Currently there is no statutory requirement for schools to tackle domestic violence through lessons which raise awareness. PSHE remains a non-statutory subject in the new 2014 National Curriculum (Gov.UK, 2013b). The Sex Education Forum
(2011) clarifies the current requirements for sex and relationships education stating the ‘biological aspects of puberty, reproduction and the spread of viruses […] are statutory parts of the National Curriculum Science which must be taught to all pupils of primary and secondary age’ (p.1). However there is no requirement to cover relationships ‘The broader topic of sex and relationships education (SRE) is currently not compulsory but is contained within non statutory PSHE education within the National Curriculum…’ (p.1). Larasi (2013), co-chair of the End Violence Against Women Coalition criticises the Government’s efforts to tackle domestic violence calling them ‘virtually meaningless’ (no page). According to Larasi (2013) current ‘government work is at best patchy and education policy is a key barrier to improving this’ (no page).

The End Violence Against Women Coalition (2011) identified ten policy priorities one of which was: Ensure universal delivery of a ‘whole school approach’ to prevent violence against women and girls across the primary and secondary education system. The report ‘Deeds or Words? Analysis of Westminster Government action to prevent violence against women and girls’ by Dustin and Shepherd (2013) reviews progress against these priorities. The report states ‘the Secretary of State for Education retains overall responsibility for children’s welfare and safety, including protecting children from all forms of VAWG’ (p.9). According to Dustin and Shepherd (2013) ‘educational institutions and other youth settings are critical, both for supporting young people at risk of, or experiencing abuse, as well as helping to shape healthy, equal and respectful attitudes and behaviours to prevent abuse in the first place’ (p.9). However, in spite of the recommendations, the Department for Education’s VAWG Advisory Group has been disbanded.

Gove’s priorities for the future of education, as identified earlier, were related to the quality of education which in his opinion is demarcated by attainment, qualifications and standards. I find his view that providing a better quality education will reduce risky behaviour an interesting approach. Gove believes poor quality education is to blame for statistics on domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and other behaviours he describes in his argument. Many would suggest a direct preventative approach by teaching about these topics, however Gove (2012) argues for an education in a ‘particular range of subjects’ as the answer (no page). The view of poor education
as a cause of risky behaviour also fails to acknowledge the complexities of domestic violence and the impact it has upon children and families. Gove also fails to acknowledge the psychological trauma caused by exposure to domestic violence is so significant that this alone could be argued to impact upon an individual's education (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012). To assume a high quality education can eradicate all effects of exposure to domestic violence, and is an acceptable preventative whole school approach, is naive and undoubtedly offensive to those who have been exposed to domestic violence and suffered psychological trauma as a result.

The Coalition Government have placed significant emphasis on preventative strategies in relation to domestic violence in areas other than education. A current Home Office advertising campaign ‘thisisabuse’ is aimed at raising teenage awareness of domestic violence. A supporting document for teachers has been produced ‘This is abuse': discussion guide', which provides suggested lesson plans (Home Office, 2013). The approach of differing government departments is also contradictory with the Home Office producing materials for use in schools aimed at raising awareness, whilst Gove, the then Secretary of State for Education, remained focused on the quality of education and claimed improvements in this area would address risky behaviour.

Other preventative work has seen Women’s Aid work with The Home Office to produce Expect Respect: A Toolkit for addressing Teenage Relationship Abuse (Women’s Aid, 2010). The Welsh Government (2012) produced a white paper ‘The Right to be Safe’ which proposed the appointment of an Independent Ministerial Adviser for Ending Violence Against Women and said this role would ensure healthy relationships education is delivered in all schools. Within Wales lessons on domestic violence were successfully piloted with year 5 and 6 (BBC, 2013b). The Welsh Government has a ‘six year integrated strategy for tackling all forms of violence against women’, as part of this domestic abuse lessons, taught by the police, are offered in schools (Schoolbeat.org, 2013; no page). According to the Welsh Government it is at the discretion of individual schools whether or not to deliver domestic abuse awareness lessons (BBC, 2013a). The approach of the Welsh Government is in contrast to that of England where lessons on raising awareness of
domestic violence are currently not a focus. Previously the government has produced an information pack ‘Teenage Relationship Abuse: A Teacher’s guide to violence and abuse in teenage relationships’ (Home Office, 2010). Whilst this document raised staff awareness of relationship abuse and detailed good practice it did not extend to lessons to raise awareness of relationship abuse.

Educational professionals and child psychologists are well placed to identify the signs of domestic violence, support children exposed to domestic violence and prevent domestic violence from repeating itself in future generations (Gallagher, 2014; Thornton, 2014; Ellis, 2012; Peckover, 2003a). According to O’Brien et al (2013) a safe place and a supportive relationship outside of the family is pivotal to resilient ability and a rewarding adult life; and schools are ideally placed to provide this to children exposed to domestic violence. Additionally Thornton (2014) states ‘their primary need is for an attuned adult to notice, understand and co-regulate their emotional distress’ (p.99). She argues it would be of great benefit to children if schools were able to take this approach. According to Thornton (2014) it is essential ‘to start by listening to the communications of young children’ (p.99). Thornton (2014) elicited the views of young children through drawings and argues educational professionals are well placed to repeatedly observe behaviour, play and art work, which are communication methods. This is of particular importance given children do not readily discuss domestic violence (Thornton, 2014).

2.3 - Conclusion

There is a wealth of research indicating witnessing domestic violence has an extensive impact upon children. It affects learning, emotional development, social skills and behaviour. The effects can be long lasting and have a life-long impact. The majority of research has been conducted using self-report from mothers who have been victims of domestic violence, or from perpetrators of domestic violence (usually the mother’s partner) and direct work / observations of children, adolescents and adults who have witnessed domestic violence. As a result the research relates to the context of the home and family. There is little research conducted in relation to education as a context for development.
Within domestic violence research there are recommendations regarding appropriate therapeutic interventions for children who have witnessed domestic violence. Teachers are front line practitioners supporting these children and there is little or no research from a teacher perspective, or to indicate what type of support is needed or beneficial for these children on a day to day basis.

The aim of this research is to explore teacher narratives of domestic violence and the support mechanisms within the classroom and wider school environment. There are recommendations regarding therapeutic support and family interventions, whereas there is limited previous research into domestic violence in an educational context. As such the aim of this research is to consider the impact of exposure to domestic violence within the school context from the perspective of teachers and consider the day to day needs of children exposed to domestic violence. The research questions below were developed to explore these issues.

2.3.1 - Research Questions

1. What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

2. What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?

3. What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

The following chapter will discuss the methodological decisions made in relation to this thesis. These decisions are influenced by the research presented in this literature review. In contrast to much of the previous research into domestic violence this thesis will use qualitative methods. A more detailed discussion of methodological considerations associated with this research is presented in the next chapter.
3 - Methodology

It is evident from the literature review domestic violence can result in significant emotional trauma which adversely affects children and their families. As I have highlighted in the literature review the impact of the emotional trauma, resulting from exposure to domestic violence, can have a significant impact in the classroom. As a consequence the resulting effect on children’s emotional development and coping mechanisms can adversely affect the aims of education for the individual and their peers. Despite there being a wealth of research detailing the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children there is an absence of research related to education. The aim of this research is therefore to gather teacher narratives of domestic violence to explore its impact on learning and functioning and what constitutes effective day to day support for children exposed to domestic violence.

Research Questions

1. What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

2. What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?

3. What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

This chapter discusses the methodological decisions which underpin this research project. Within the first section the choice of research perspective is discussed, the section begins with a description of ontology and epistemology; the ontological and epistemological assumptions applied within research are then discussed. The following section presents a methodological critique of domestic violence research followed by implications for this research. The third section of this chapter presents the ethical issues associated with domestic violence and educational research, and
these are discussed in relation to this research project. The last three sections of this chapter discuss social constructionism, a narrative approach, and thematic analysis. The implications of these methodological paradigms and approaches, which are applied to this research, are also discussed.

3.1 - Choosing a Research Paradigm

Our beliefs and assumptions (ontological perspective) regarding the nature of the world are important as they affect how we understand, construct and evaluate the world (epistemological perspective). The research perspectives adopted underpin a whole research project; they are implicit in the research questions and dictate decisions regarding research methodology which then inform the choice of research methods; according to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) ‘the significance of the interplay of all these aspects cannot be over-estimated’ (p.21). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue ‘It is good medicine, we think, for researchers to make their preferences clear’ (p.4). They suggest this is important for the reader to understand the context of the research.

3.1.1 - Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the questions we ask about the social world, what constitutes reality, the beliefs and assumptions individuals hold about the world (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). According to Willig (2008) ‘It can be argued that ontological concerns are fundamental and that it is impossible not to make at least some assumptions about the nature of the world’ (p.13). Similarly all research therefore makes ‘basic philosophical assumptions about existence’ (Wertz et al. 2011; p.80).

There are two main ontological approaches, objectivist and constructionist, which can alternatively described as realist and relativist (Willig, 2008). Objectivists argue reality is facts waiting to be discovered, it exists independent of our beliefs and understanding and can be directly observed and measured (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Willig, 2008; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In contrast constructionists argue reality is constructed, it is subjective and meaning is produced
through social interaction (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Willig, 2008; Crotty, 1998). Crotty (1998) states ‘meaning is not discovered but constructed’ (p.42).

Ontology is of importance as our ontological perspective about what constitutes reality affects our epistemological decisions regarding how we attempt to know. Whilst Crotty (1998) argues researchers can choose which stage to begin, Grix (2004) argues it is better to first identify ontological assumptions.

3.1.2 - Epistemology

Epistemology is a fundamental philosophical discipline which is particularly important in social research. Crotty (1998) defines epistemology as ‘the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology’ (p.3). According to Hofer (2002) epistemology is of concern from a psychological and educational perspective in relation to ‘how the individual develops conceptions of knowledge and knowing and utilises them in developing understanding of the world’ (p.4). Epistemological perspectives have implications for methodology (Crotty, 1998; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995) and it is therefore inevitable that ‘epistemological questions will also involve discussion of what can be known’ (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; p.19). Consequently Burman and Whelan (2011) argue epistemology must be considered prior to methodology.

There are a number of epistemological paradigms, two of these are positivism and interpretivism (Grix, 2004) they can also be referred to as normative and naturalistic (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Some would argue there is an overlap in ontological and epistemological assumptions (Mack, 2010; Crotty, 1998) and this is illustrated by the interpretivist paradigm sometimes being referred to as constructivism (Mack, 2010). An objectivist ontological perspective is associated with positivist epistemology whereas a constructionist ontological perspective is associated with naturalistic epistemology.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state ‘Comte’s position was to lead to a general doctrine of positivism which held that all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment’
Positivist epistemology assumes truth can be known and knowledge is objective (Mack, 2010) and positivist researchers perceive themselves to be separate from the research. According to Chioncel, Van Der Veen, Wildemeersch and Jarvis (2003) positivists argue ‘what is knowledgeable is directly observable, measurable and quantifiable and that data are objective and independent of researchers’ perceptions’ (p.501). In contrast to positivism, interpretivist epistemology assumes knowledge is subjective. According to Goodley and Smailes (2011) ‘the social world [is] an emergent social process, created by individuals and their shared subjective understandings’ (p.49). Consequently interpretivist researchers view themselves as influential in the research and as co-creating meaning, ‘behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing their frame of reference’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; p.15).

3.1.3 - Implications for this research

Within this research I take a constructionist ontological perspective and an interpretivist epistemological approach as my narrative is central and as such my position is particularly influential in this research. Billington (2012) highlights the role of the researcher as significant and important in qualitative research, ‘in contemporary qualitative research the researcher is part of the process and is influential in its outcomes’ (p.323). As I articulated earlier my own experiences have had a significant influence on shaping the nature of this research consequently my own experiences influence my understanding and constructs. In designing my research it was the impact of my experience which led me to explore how teachers’ experiences influence their constructions of domestic violence. I therefore chose to gather qualitative data in the form of teacher narratives. This would enable teachers to discuss their experiences and facilitate the development of a group narrative. Howitt and Cramer (2011) argue there is no alternative as there is no way to turn the complexities of conversation into numbers or scores.

Domestic violence is a complex social phenomenon which is relatively un-researched in education and I would therefore argue an interpretivist epistemological approach is most appropriate. In addition according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) interpretive approaches ‘fit naturally to the kind of concentrated action found
in classrooms and schools’ (p.20). The education system is complex and multi-faceted. It would therefore be extremely difficult to collect reliable, objective and quantifiable data. In addition there is very little research into domestic violence conducted from an educational perspective. Therefore in this instance a relatively under-researched area is to be considered and to quantify would require assumptions and judgements to be made without any directly relevant research to support, or even justify, those assumptions.

Positivist methods struggle to accommodate the contrasts of feelings and social interactions of individuals as a valid source of data. The interactions and perceptions of the teachers are central to this study. To enable this study to effectively address the key research questions teacher narratives of the complexities of the education system, in relation to domestic violence, are at the core of this research. I believe, based upon ethical considerations and critiques of previous research methodologies (discussed in the next section), it is important to develop an approach to research which can access previously unheard voices, contribute to the available literature, develop new theories and provide detailed guidance for future research and interventions. Furthermore interpretivist methods are favoured for developing theory. It is my opinion an interpretivist epistemological paradigm and qualitative methodology are appropriate for achieving the aims in this study, which are developed from a constructionist ontological perspective.

Reflexive Box

The changes to my positionality within this research, as I have described in the introduction, affected the questioning and analysis as I became acutely aware of the relationship between domestic violence and emotional trauma. However for the participants in the research the project remained oriented towards domestic violence as they were unaware of the changes in my positionality or my personal experiences.
3.2 - Research Methodologies

There is a wealth of literature relating to domestic violence; in particular focusing on the extent to which children are victims of violence (Saunders, 2003; Wolfe et al. 2003). According to Saunders (2003) the very fact that there is a plethora of domestic violence literature and research means there is always an alternative explanation which can be supported with considerable data. Wolfe et al. (2003) argues there is ‘a lack of theoretical clarity and guidance’. In addition there needs to be a greater application of theory which can then guide choices about what to study (Saunders, 2003). According to Saunders (2003) theory development should look for common themes, threads and characteristics. It is evident Saunders (2003) has positivist methods in mind as he refers to hypothesis testing, variables and realistic testing. There are extensive criticisms of the application of positivist methodology to domestic violence research (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Saunders, 2003; Wolfe et al, 2003; Mohr et al, 2000; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999; Kolbo, Blakely, and Engleman, 1996). Edleson (1999) reviewed over 80 research papers and identified ‘problems with definitions, samples, sources of information, measures, and research designs’ (p.15).

3.2.1 - Definitions of Domestic Violence

Definitions of domestic violence often fail to take into account the severity or frequency of exposure to domestic violence a child has experienced (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Wolfe et al. 2003; Mohr et al, 2000; Edleson, 1999; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989). Within domestic violence research data is often presented as representative of children who have only witnessed violence, however children included in these samples are also often targets of violence therefore making the data unrepresentative (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Edleson, 1999). Consequently problems with definition mean studies cannot be considered to be representative of all children exposed to domestic violence due to a number of factors such variability in exposure, frequency, and individual and collective resilience (Saunders, 2003; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999).
As stated by Jouriles et al. (1998), domestic violence is not a ‘homogeneous, unidimensional phenomenon’ (p. 178). Despite this domestic violence has become accepted as a definition which is ‘worn smooth’ by use (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; p.798). According to Lewis-O’Connor (2004) the prevalence of domestic violence is difficult to quantify as there is no common definition. The difference in the use of the terms ‘abuse’ and ‘violence’ is particularly important as the use of different terminology has been shown to produce differing statistics in relation to the prevalence of domestic violence.

3.2.2 - Sampling

The majority of research on children who have experienced domestic violence is based upon samples located in shelters for battered women (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Wolfe et al. 2003; Mohr et al. 2000). It is argued shelter residence presents a stressful period in a child’s life which unrepresentative of their mental health in the long term. In addition the findings also cannot be generalised to children who are non-shelter residents exposed to domestic violence (Baldry, 2007; Edleson, 1999; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999).

3.2.3 - Sources of Information

The majority of data uses mothers’ reports of their children (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Wolfe et al. 2003; Mohr et al, 2000; Edleson, 1999; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989) and mothers have been found to have a tendency to underestimate the amount of violence witnessed (Baldry, 2007). In addition they often incorrectly believe their children are unaware of the violence which takes place (Baldry, 2007). Additionally Fantuzzo and Lindquist (1989) describe abused mothers as rating their children’s behaviour more negatively than other observers.

3.2.4 - Measures of Impact

Meta analyses and literature claims suggest that methods used for assessing the effects of children’s exposure to domestic violence are mainly quantitative, e.g. Children’s Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CIPC), the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) and the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Wolfe et al. 2003; Edleson,
1999; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999). Whilst positivist researchers would argue this provides an accurate and comparable measure of behaviour these measures fail to provide an insight into the feelings and emotions of the child or offer an explanation as to why a child is behaving in a particular way. However positivist research, as described earlier, is not concerned with the social constructions influencing the behaviour, consequently the criticisms within the literature of these measures are from a positivist epistemological approach. Edleson (1999) argues the distinction between internalised and externalised behaviour problems is over represented due to repeated use of the CBCL. Edleson (1999) is critical of a number of variables which are not regularly measured including ‘the disruption of a child’s social support network among…school personnel and friends’ (p.16). According to Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999) most studies they reviewed ‘used the CTS as their only independent measure of the violence’ (p.28). The CTS is a list of items that describe violent and nonviolent actions that may be used in resolving family conflict (Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1989). Fantuzzo and Mohr (1989) raise a number of methodological issues specifically relating to the CTS, in particular the type of exposure (observed, heard, intervened) is not accounted for nor is frequency of violence.

3.2.5 - Research Designs

Finally the methodology used to obtain the data should also be considered. There is evidence to indicate face-to-face interview methods generate a lower rate of disclosure versus self-report methods (Home Office, 2011, Walby and Allen, 2004). The British Crime Survey does not rely on police reports, which means it does not exclusively measure reported crime. This is particularly important when obtaining figures relating to domestic violence as it is a notoriously unreported crime (Gracia, 2004).

Edleson’s (1999) final criticism of domestic violence research is that the majority of studies are correlational yet there are no conclusive findings regarding cause and effect only reported associations, e.g. witnessing violence and behaviour problems are associated, but there is not conclusion regarding the causational relationships. In contrast Kolbo, Blakely and Engleman (1996) state literature reviews have generally supported a ‘positive correlation between children’s witnessing domestic
violence and impaired development’ (p.281). According to Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999) there is a lack of longitudinal research to track children’s functioning across time. Baldry (2007) recommends ‘multiple sources such as parents, teachers and social workers should be used in further studies to corroborate findings’ (p.34).

3.2.6 - Implications for this research

Within this research it is simply not possible to consider the levels of frequency, severity of violence, type of exposure or context of the family background, for example whether the children live with the victim, perpetrator or both, due to both ethical and practical constraints. Whilst it is accepted this will influence the presentations of the individual children, given the lack of agreement regarding impact, and that, within this research the teachers’ narrative is more central, a conscious decision has been made not to address this issue methodologically. In contrast the narrative of domestic violence and what it means for the teachers is a central theme within the research.

Within this research teacher narratives of the children’s behaviour will be used which provide an alternative source to mother reports. Additionally this would support Baldry’s (2007) recommendation to use other sources, with teachers being one of her suggestions.

According to Edleson (1999) ‘a great deal of work lies ahead in the development of a more sophisticated understanding of how children are affected by their exposure to adult domestic violence’ (p.17). It is apparent there are a number of significant methodological issues relating to research into domestic violence. Despite these difficulties, as I have already outlined, domestic violence research within education is under represented and for this reason teacher narratives of domestic violence will provide a significant contribution to this field of research.

Finally a balanced approach to qualitative analysis is sought by remaining mindful of the six analytic shortcomings described by Antaki et al. (2001): (1) under-analysis through summary; (2) under-analysis through taking sides; (3) under-analysis through over-quotation or through isolated quotation; (4) the circular identification of
discourses and mental constructs; (5) false survey; and (6) analysis that consists in simply spotting features (no page). According to Antaki et al. (2001) acknowledgement of these principles will encourage the development of more rigorous qualitative analysis.

3.3 - Ethical Issues

The methodological issues associated with domestic violence research are fraught with ethical dilemmas, particularly for an external researcher.

Domestic violence is a sensitive research topic (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Hydén, 2011) and as a consequence many ethical concerns arise in relation to this area of research. The ongoing methodological criticisms of research into the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children, discussed in the previous section, serve to highlight the ethical issues surrounding this particular area of research e.g. the use of mother reports rather than eliciting children’s voices. The nature of the methodological critique within the literature is intertwined with the difficulties posed by ethical considerations for the researchers as there are significant challenges for the researcher in relation to protecting participants from harm. The difficulties relating to defining domestic violence incorporate ethical issues incumbent in asking participants to disclose regarding severity and frequency of violence and in particular the targets of violence, e.g. children as the victims of violence, as there are significant implications for the researcher in responding to disclosures. In addition given the emotional trauma associated with domestic violence there is potential for retraumatisation which also imposes ethical implications on the researcher in relation to protection from harm.

Whilst there are specific ethical concerns relating directly to children exposed to domestic violence all of the typical ethical issues to be considered when working with children are also applicable when considering research around children exposed to domestic violence (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The main issues relating to direct contact with children would include the age of participants, and their ability to give informed consent, need for anonymity, in addition to more specific concerns such as
the risk of an abusive partner posing a threat to the safety of the children and/or the researcher and finally, due to trauma experienced, there is a risk of retraumatisation. This would necessitate a need to ensure follow up comprehensive psychological support to be available for those involved in the research; which in this instance cannot be provided.

According to Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999) many family variables are uncontrolled, e.g. marital status, family size, age of the mother, ethnicity, child health or family stress. This is a methodological issue which is also difficult to address as an external researcher due to the ethical issues relating to accessing a sample of parents who are victims of domestic violence or identifying, and then accessing, a group of children who have been exposed to domestic violence.

Despite these ethical issues direct work is highly valued by researchers, for example Baldry (2007) states ‘self-reports from children can constitute a reliable method’ (p.30). Similarly Fantuzzo and Lindquist (1989) recommend the use of observational data to assess children’s functioning and suggest school situations would provide an excellent opportunity. Whilst educational psychologists are well placed to carry out this type of work the ethical issues of firstly identifying and then recruiting child participants make this nearly impossible for the purposes of this thesis. It is important at this point to draw a distinction between internal and external researchers. Internal researchers are well placed to for sensitive research as they are already known to their participants. External researchers on the other hand become involved with their participants as a direct result of the research and would not otherwise have been involved. As an external researcher all of these constraints effectively prevent research into domestic violence from being carried out with children and their parents. However all of these issues can be avoided by working directly with teachers and this has the added benefit for me personally as I have the potential to become an internal researcher as schools are my main place of work.

Parker (2005) argues there are political ethics to consider in qualitative research and many of his arguments are particularly pertinent when considering a sensitive topic, such as domestic violence. Parker (2005) argues researchers need to be able to make a clear political assessment of their research, for example he argues it is
necessary for a researcher to take responsibility and consider who is being given a voice and the potential impact of that voice, particularly if this could be detrimental to them and others. By excluding men from domestic violence research, as has often been the case, this may prevent men from having a voice which could then challenge the perceptions of men as perpetrators of violence. Parker (2005) warns against making assumptions about the nature of human beings, in particular that they are inherently good or inherently bad. As I highlighted earlier, Saunders (2003) tells us, there is always an alternative explanation which can be supported with considerable data. This is evident when considering whether or not men are the main perpetrators of domestic violence. In this instance it would be very easy to assume male partners in an abusive relationship are inherently bad, firstly by assuming they are the perpetrator and secondly by then assuming they are consequently bad people. Both of these assumptions would lead to a continuation within research to identify women as the victims of violence and a continued justification for excluding men from a research sample. These considerations raised by Parker (2005) are epistemological assumptions which need to be recognised and considered when selecting participants and the questions to be presented.

Parker (2005) argues there is no such thing as confidentiality within research as the aim is ‘always to discover something new and to show it to others’ (p.17). Whilst Parker (2005) states anonymity is achievable, he warns this can deny the very voice the researcher is seeking to present. Parker (2005) states this conflict represents the image of psychology research participants ‘as fragile beings needing to be protected’ (p.17). It would be very difficult to adequately address this issue when
working with young children, who by their nature, should be protected by adults. In this instance a voice for these children can be facilitated by adults who have a relationship with them. Teachers are well placed to present an educational perspective and to compare and contrast these children to their peers; something their parents would, perhaps, be less able to do. In addition, as has already been acknowledged within the methodological criticisms of domestic violence research, parents (mothers) do not always give an accurate representation of their child.

My research concentrates on teacher narratives of domestic violence and the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children. It could therefore be argued I am assuming causality (Edleson, 1999). As such it is important not to seek problems where they don’t exist as ultimately a problem will be found if one searches long or hard enough. This search for problems would give rise to a further issue Parker (2005) warns against, which is ‘searching for ways to fit things together as if that is the way to truth’ (p.15). Given the plethora of research into domestic violence it would be easy to assume there is truth in the assumption children are negatively affected by exposure to domestic violence and align findings to existing symptoms of trauma. Whilst this may be true it is important to note the research is clear that not all children are affected, and the extent to which they are affected varies, in addition research evidence can be found to support an adverse effect, due to exposure to domestic violence, on every conceivable domain of functioning or development.

“Truth is intimately bound up with the conditions in which the knowledge is produced and the position from which the research is examining the phenomenon in question. This means that psychology should not try, as it usually does, to discover a truth for others independent of the particularities of a situation.” (Parker, 2005, p.16)

Given the complexities of exposure to domestic violence, such as the scope and variation in severity of impact and the influence of social interactions from both home and school, a social constructionist paradigm is particularly relevant when considering exposure to domestic violence. Key adults within a child’s life would include parents and teachers, who may offer contradictory messages about violence, managing emotions, solving social problems and healthy relationships.
Given the methodological and ethical criticisms of domestic violence research I feel there is a clear rationale for approaching teachers and once again I stress the paucity of domestic violence research in education and with teachers as the participants.

3.4 - Social Constructionism

Discontent in the field of social psychology during the 1960’s and 1970’s led to the emergence of a number of alternative approaches to the study of humans as social animals. According to Burr (2003) these approaches have appeared under titles such as critical psychology, discursive psychology, discourse analysis, deconstructionism and post structuralism and she argues the commonality of these approaches is social constructionism. According to Burr (2003) ‘social constructionism can be thought of as a theoretical orientation which to a greater or lesser degree underpins all of these newer approaches’ (p.1). Due to the critical nature of social constructionism dissatisfaction with alternative approaches furthered its development (Hosking and Morley, 2004; Gergen, 1985). Burr (2003) describes social constructionism as a multidisciplinary approach as it is influenced by a number of disciplines including philosophy and sociology. According to Burr (2003) social constructionism is difficult to define but argues the four key principles identified by Gergen (1985), described below, are essential:

1. A critical stance toward taken for granted knowledge
   Social constructionism rejects the idea knowledge can be gained through observation. It invites challenge of commonly accepted categories as they do not necessarily represent reality. In considering the category of gender as socially constructed this takes into consideration cultural variations in the understanding of gender and therefore renders the generally accepted two gender classifications of man or woman meaningless.

2. Historical and cultural specificity
   The categories we use to understand the world are culturally and historically specific. Views about what is appropriate for children have changed considerably. Social
constructionism does not assume one way of understanding is more truthful than another. Psychological theories can also be considered in the same way and only representative of the culture and era in which they were developed. This has particular implications for psychological research according to Gergen (1985) ‘as it begins to outline the possible constraints over what psychological research can say’ (p.268).

3. Knowledge is sustained by social processes
Social constructionism views knowledge as constructed between people in their daily interactions and all knowledge is a current accepted way of understanding. Burr (2003) presents dyslexia as an example of a phenomenon which has been socially constructed. Similarly there are emotions for example which we don’t experience as we do not have the language to describe these emotions.

4. Knowledge and social action go together
Gergen (1985) describes how forms of negotiated understanding are critically significant as they constitute forms of social action. He presents the example of ‘hello, how are you?’ as being intertwined with facial expression and gesture which sustain the activity and therefore contribute to sustaining a negotiated understanding. Similarly constructions of knowledge lead to different actions. Burr (2003) describes how drunks were previously constructed as entirely responsible for their behaviour and imprisoned, whereas now an alcoholic is seen as a victim of an addiction and offered treatment. Constructions therefore have implications for social action.

Burr (2003) identifies a number of features within Gergen’s (1985) four tenets of social constructionism which conflict with traditional psychology. These features, described below, demonstrate why social constructionism provided an alternative to traditional psychology.

Anti–essentialism
According to social constructionism there is no determined nature as the social world is constructed through social interaction. People are not considered to have definable or discoverable features, such as personality.
Questioning realism
Social constructionism rejects the idea of objective facts and argues all knowledge is from one perspective or another, ‘as a culture or society we construct our own versions of reality between us’ (Burr, 2003; p.6).

Historical and cultural specificity of knowledge
Social constructionism is critical of traditional psychology for imposing western theories and perspectives, which are assumed to be correct. ‘The theories and explanations of psychology thus become time- and culture-bound and cannot be taken as once-and-for-all descriptions of human nature’ (Burr, 2003; p.7).

Language as a pre-condition for thought
Traditional psychology generally assumes language is an expression of thought (Burr, 2003), whereas social constructionism views categories and concepts as socially constructed and pre-existing in society. The categories and concepts are acquired through the use of language and therefore language is a pre-condition of thought.

Language as a form of social action
According to Burr (2003) traditional psychology regards language as a passive expression of thought and emotion. In contrast social constructionism views language as central. It is from language the world is constructed and language has practical implications; it is therefore of importance, e.g. ‘I pronounce you man and wife’.

A focus on interaction and social practices
Traditional psychology looks for explanations within the individual to explain social phenomena whereas social constructionists consider social practices and interactions, for example a physical disability can only be seen as such within a society where a difficulty is constructed e.g. stairs.
A focus on processes

According to Burr (2003) traditional psychology uses explanations which focus on entities such as personality traits or models of memory. In contrast social constructionism considers the process of social interaction and how knowledge is constructed in the process of social interaction, 'knowledge is therefore seen not as something that a person has or doesn't have, but as something that people do together' (Burr, 2003; p.9).

3.4.1 - Implications for this research

In consideration of my ontological and epistemological position I previously stated a constructionist interpretivist approach was most appropriate to this research and due to there being very little research into domestic violence from an educational perspective any objectivist ontological assumptions would be made in the absence of directly relevant research. However a social constructionist approach in its nature does not assume an ontological perspective, only an epistemological perspective as all knowledge is constructed in the process of social interaction. The epistemological assumptions of the social constructionist approach are therefore particularly compatible with this area of research.

As I have described in the literature review domestic violence creates a paradox as the violence occurs in the context of the family which should be a safe haven. Central to this paradox is a relationship and without relationships there is no meaning (Gergen, 2009). Relationships and social interaction are core components of both social constructionism and domestic violence making a social constructionist approach well suited to studying domestic violence. Domestic violence does not occur in social isolation – the violence occurs within a relationship it is therefore co-constructed and involves social action Gergen (1985). Later Gergen (2009) described co-action, co- action is more than words; it ‘includes the entire co-ordination of bodies’ (Gergen, 2009, p.34).

As I have already highlighted Parker (2005) warns of the ethical difficulties posed by pathologising, or socially constructing, participants according to one category or another. This is particularly pertinent in relation to domestic violence when
considering social constructions of gender, victims and perpetrators. A social constructionist perspective will facilitate a deeper exploration of domestic violence, how it occurs and how it is understood and therefore provides an appropriate way to explore constructs identified within the literature, such as men tend to be the perpetrators, which continue to be areas of debate as there is contradictory research evidence. A social constructionist approach also accounts for historical changes in constructions of domestic violence which have changed considerably in the last thirty years.

A social constructionist approach facilitates the discovery of new information and this is particularly relevant due to the lack of previous research on domestic violence in the field of education. As such it is not possible to predict the outcomes of the research which could pose ethical challenges when working directly with children exposed to domestic violence.

In order to explore the narratives of domestic violence and the impact upon children, based upon social constructionist principles, I will engage in a relationship with teachers to develop a narrative of domestic violence. The teachers have a relationship with the children they teach and are therefore important in the lives of these children. According to Gergen (2009) everything is relational, ‘we exist in a state of inter-animation’ (p.34). Through the relationships teachers have with the children creates meaning which influences action and without these relationships there would be no meaning (Gergen, 2009). Given that these social interactions create meaning, much of which could be contradictory to that created within the family, teachers will therefore provide a particularly relevant alternative social construction of domestic violence.

Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999) stress ‘the importance of studying children within the context of their life situations and with sensitivity to their developmental changes’ (p.30). Engaging with teachers facilitates both of these by allowing an in depth teacher perspective. Teachers have relationships with these children and are therefore well placed to consider the development of the children in their care and are able to make comparisons with the development of their peers. Whilst the study is not longitudinal teachers are able to talk about changes in a child’s development
over an academic year and many teachers have knowledge of children across the school and how their development has progressed.

The social constructionist perspective sees knowledge as constructed through the process of social interaction. This research will therefore study the social interaction of a group of teachers to develop meaning and generate knowledge. According to Gergen (1985) understanding is a social process which involves communication, negotiation, conflict and rhetoric. It is my intention therefore to facilitate the development of teacher narratives of domestic violence.

Finally it was also of particular personal importance to me that my research had some value for those involved. It took me considerable time to decide upon the specific nature of the topic for my research; however there was always one clear goal - I wanted to complete a piece of research which would have a direct impact on the chosen topic. I didn't want to engage in an information gathering project which would inform the area of research or inform future research. Therefore the value of completing a research project as an intervention was very appealing and the principles of social constructionism fit well with this aim. Everatt (2000) describes how collaborative research with non-psychologists can be highly rewarding. Major insights can be provided by the participants, and the research can be more informed leading to a more effective piece of research. Collaborative research can also lead to increased awareness and engagement with the topic from the participants. This personal aim was a significant driving factor in developing the research methodology and ultimately led to the use of a three session narrative approach (Billington, 2012). This will be described in the next chapter.

3.5 - Narrative Approach

Parker (2005) argues anonymity can serve to protect the researcher from challenge regarding interpretations which have been made within the research. Narrative research, in contrast, openly seeks to share interpretations with the participants to check for validity and truth. Parker (2005) argues ‘empirical truth is constructed from a certain position’ (p.17). Research is, by its nature, socially constructed and,
according to Parker (2005), the researcher should make their part clear to enable the reader to critically evaluate the research. Narrative research is readily able to accommodate these particular ethical concerns raised by Parker (2005) and they are central to the narrative paradigm and social constructionism. The narrative paradigm embraces the co-construction of the research and therefore there are no hidden agendas within narrative research and no concerns in relation to deception, or alternate research questions to those shared with the participants. Researchers applying a narrative paradigm would therefore argue their research aims and questions are transparent to the participants. However, similarly to other research methods, narrative approaches have their critiques. Atkinson (2010) argues qualitative researchers are quick to present narratives without consideration of the context. He argues for ‘systematic ethnographic fieldwork’ followed by a ‘sustained, systematic and disciplined analysis’ (no page). According to Trahar (2009) narrative research is often criticised for presenting narratives as authentic; however Atkinson and Delamont (2006) argue methodological clarity regarding the positionality of the narratives and the positionality of the researcher is what gives narratives their authenticity.

According to Gergen (2009) ‘we exist in a state of inter-animation’ (p.34), speaking (and writing) is a bodily action. It cannot be separated into verbal and non-verbal as an interaction is relational and determined by the action and response. Gergen (2009) argues relationships construct who we are. Others interact with us in a given way and therefore define us and ‘cast us in a particular role’ (p.34). Based on Gergen’s theory teachers have an extremely influential role in a child’s life and their role and interpretations, and interactions, will have a significant impact upon who the child is and how they respond. In order to explore these relationships a narrative approach is particularly complementary. Goodley (2011) argues ‘narratives mould a sense of self’ (p.129). Narratives, or stories, allow us to make sense of ourselves and others within a societal and cultural context (Burck, 2005). According to Goodley (2011) ‘narratives capture private troubles while exposing public issues’, which I feel neatly captures the essence of domestic violence (p.130). Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2011) recognise there is no agreed definition of narrative and there are no clear accounts of how to analyse data; yet despite this narratives remain popular.
“Narrative research is a multi-level, interdisciplinary field and any attempt to simplify its complexity would not do justice to the richness of approaches, theoretical understanding and unexpected finding that is has offered.” (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2011; p.12)

Spector-Mersel (2010) argues narrative inquiry is more than a methodology or a qualitative approach. She argues it is a paradigm distinct from other qualitative paradigms. According to Spector-Mersel (2010) narrative creates historical and cultural stories which, for example, teach about what is forbidden and what is permitted. This is of particular interest in relation to domestic violence because, as I have highlighted within the literature review, historically there has been a significant cultural shift relating to the acceptance of domestic violence in the last 150 years. Families have stories passed on from generation to generation; these stories will include stories of violence and domestic violence. The tensions of reporting domestic incidents due to narratives around what is appropriate within one family and another differ according to each family.

Spector-Mersel (2010) argues the narrative approach is nothing less than a paradigm as it ‘comprises a clear vision of the social world and the way we think, feel and conduct ourselves in it’ (p.209). She argues it is the philosophy of an approach which makes it a paradigm, not the methodology it employs. Ontologically narrative sees reality as ‘socially constructed, fluid and multifaceted’ (p.211) similarly to that of the constructivist paradigm but narrative is more specific as ‘a mutual relationship exists between life and narrative’ (p.211). Epistemologically Spector-Mersel (2010) argues narrative is similar to the constructivist paradigm of interpretative and constructivist processes of understanding. However narrative epistemology is very clear this is done through stories. Narrative epistemology, as described by Spector-Mersel (2010) is particularly relevant when considering this particular thesis. First she states stories are rooted in the narrator’s current situation (what are the teachers’ stories?). Secondly no story can contain everything and is a conscious and unconscious selection (why are particular stories chosen by the teachers?). Finally the narratives are contextual: the immediate and intersubjective relationships of that situation, the social field in which they evolved and the cultural (or political) meta-narratives which provide meaning to any story (how are the stories constructed
by the teachers and the researcher?). Narrative epistemology therefore provides a means by which the research questions can be considered and data collected which can be analysed to answer these questions. However Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2011) argue there is no clarity around what epistemological significance should be attached to narratives.

Spector-Mersel (2010) further argues in favour of a narrative paradigm due to its inquiry aim, as interpretive paradigms wish to positively affect their participants’ quality of life. She suggests there are many ways this can happen in narrative inquiry, such as talking can encourage positive change, giving a voice to marginal populations and the development of practice based on narrative as a tool, for example in improving teaching. All of these are relevant to this thesis, as I have already stated an intervention approach was a major consideration at the outset of this research.

Spector-Mersel (2010) further argues for the narrative paradigm in relation to the inquirer posture. Central to narrative is that the researcher and the research phenomena are inseparable. The stories are created for the researcher in a research setting. Narrative sees the researcher as being central to the research and their voice is central within the text through deliberate reflection and their influence on stories and their interpretation. Spector-Mersel (2010) argues for narrative as a paradigm due to the participant/narrator posture. Within narrative research shared control is a key feature with researchers informing participants and asking for comments in relation to drafts of their reports. In relation to this thesis this particular aspect was not possible due to the size of the thesis and constraints in relation to time; both mine and the participants. In addition the voice of the researcher within narrative research should be clearly heard. Initially this was not a central focus throughout my research; however as the research progressed this changed considerably and my voice within the research became central and significantly influenced the direction of this piece of research.

Finally Spector-Mersel (2010) argues the narrative paradigm, methodologically, is clear in respect of its data – stories. These stories are shaped and influenced by the presence of the researcher. The interpretation of stories is a crucial part of narrative
methodology as they are examined. A holistic approach is taken which requires a ‘multidimensional and interdisciplinary lens’, ‘a holistic analysis’, ‘regard for form and content’ and ‘attention to context’ (p.214).

3.5.1 - Implications for this research

Whilst it is not my intention to come to a conclusion regarding narrative as a paradigm in its own right, there are many principles which are relevant and applicable to this research. I would propose that a social constructionist paradigm, in regard of the importance placed on relationships, and the nature and creation of knowledge, draws me, as the researcher, to engage in a relationship with the teachers in order to develop a shared knowledge, which in this instance is a narrative. I will then impose my own meanings on these narratives through analysis. This will also be affected by my positionality as the researcher and my own narrative which I bring to the research, which is not constructed with the teachers through this thesis but separately. Parker (2005) states ‘‘narrative’ is the performance of the self as a story of identity’ (p.71), this is a difference to social constructionism as social constructionists would argue there is no such thing as a self and this is socially constructed; whereas a narrative approach views a story as a reflection of self. It is clear my narrative will influence my interpretation of the teachers’ narratives and in turn lead to further development of my own narrative. The narrative created by the reader then also further develops the narrative within this research – a narrative is only ever representative of that moment in time. I would argue the interview narrative is socially constructed as it is created within the context of a relationship and reflects the view of the group at that time. However the narrative within this research is not socially constructed – as I am the author and it is intertwined with my own personal narrative. Thus I would argue the research is grounded within social constructionism and a narrative methodological approach has been applied to this research.

The principles of a narrative approach are appealing to this thesis due to it being a relatively unexplored area of research. According to Josselson (2011) the aim of narrative research is to ‘explore nuances and interrelationships among aspects of
experience’ (p.239) in order to ‘bring forth new understanding that will benefit our wider scholarly fields’ (p.240).

3.6 - Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used by early psychologists such as Freud in dream analysis (Boyatzis, 1988). Despite the widespread use of thematic analysis there is very little guidance regarding technique, ‘it has typically been passed… like the motto of a secret society’ (Boyatzis, 1988; p.vii). Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (p.79). According to Josselson (2011) thematic analysis is one such framework which narrative research relies upon. Thematic analysis has been described as a tool to use across different methods, with ‘thematising meanings’ described as a skill shared across different quantitative methods (Braun and Clarke, 2006; p.78). However Braun and Clarke (2006) argue thematic analysis is ‘a method in its own right’ (p.78). They regard thematic analysis as a particularly flexible method as it is not tied to a particular theoretical or epistemological position as can be the case for other methods. According to Burman and Whelan (2011) interpretation and analysis is bound with finding a balance between over-interpretation and under-interpretation.

In an attempt to address some of the methodological criticisms aimed at thematic analysis Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a description of thematic analysis and guidelines for applying the method. They stress the importance of qualitative researchers making their epistemological assumptions and methods clear. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the development of themes is not a passive process and the researcher should ‘acknowledge these decisions and recognise them as decisions’ (p.80). There are a number of decisions which Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss and these will now be considered in turn.

Firstly Braun and Clarke (2006) state it is important for the researcher to know what type of analysis they wish to complete, for example a rich description of the data set or a detailed account of one particular aspect. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a
rich description may be particularly useful when investigating and under-researched area, or when working with participants whose views are unknown.

Secondly Braun and Clarke (2006) assert themes can be identified in two primary ways; using either an inductive approach or a theoretical, or deductive, approach. An inductive approach is described as coding without trying to fit a pre-existing coding frame — it is data driven, although they recognise it is not possible to code in an ‘epistemological vacuum’ (p.84). A deductive approach would be led by the researcher’s theoretical interest in the area, this can lead to a less rich description of the data overall.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) a further decision must be made in relation to whether themes are identified at a semantic or latent level. A semantic approach involves looking at surface meaning and not looking beyond what is written. The significance of patterns is then considered in relation to previous literature. A latent analysis looks to identify ‘form and meaning’ (p.84). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) latent analysis tends to be aligned with a constructionist paradigm, ‘assumptions, structures and/or meanings are theorised as underpinning what is actually articulated in the data’ (p.85).

Finally, according to Braun and Clarke, the epistemological stance must be considered. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) analysis in a social constructionist framework does not attempt to consider individual psychologies or motivation but is more interested in sociocultural contexts and structural conditions.

3.6.1 - Implications for this research

Thematic analysis is applicable to this research project as a rich description of the data set is sought as a relatively under-researched area is being investigated, additionally the participants views are unknown. In relation to this thesis there is no specific theoretical or analytical interest within the field of domestic violence, a more generalised approach of gaining knowledge of an under-researched area as a whole is the aim of the thesis, therefore an inductive approach to coding will be applied.
Themes will be identified using a latent analysis, in attempt to identify meaning in the data.

3.7 - Conclusion

The methodological decisions guiding this thesis have been presented to enable the reader to understand the context of this research. In summary an interpretivist epistemology is applied to this research as my own experiences have a significant influence on shaping the nature of this research. For this reason a narrative approach is applied as it acknowledges the influence and importance of the researcher narrative. The acknowledgement of ‘self’ within the narrative approach is of particular importance as my personal narrative forms the basis of this research and is not constructed with the teachers through this thesis but separately. The philosophies of social constructionism are well suited to the study of domestic violence as relationships and social interaction are core components of both social constructionism and domestic violence. The value of completing a research project as an intervention was one of the main objectives of this research and the principles of social constructionism fit well with this aim. Finally despite the methodological difficulties associated with domestic violence research, education is under represented and for this reason teacher narratives of domestic violence will provide a significant contribution to this field of research.

The following chapter will describe the methods applied within this thesis, a three session narrative approach, group interviews and reflective logs. The procedures used for the data collection and data analysis will then be described.
Within this thesis group interviews and reflective logs were utilised as part of a three session narrative approach (Billington, 2012). Three teachers from two primary schools participated in the thesis. Data was collected from three group interviews and three reflective logs. Group interviews were used to elicit teacher narratives and this was supplemented by a reflective log completed by each teacher. The participants were known to the researcher prior to the thesis.

Within this chapter I will discuss the methods used in the data collection process and how the data was subsequently analysed.

The first section of this chapter describes the principles and method of a three session narrative approach as used in this thesis and a group interview formed the basis of each session. The narrative approach allowed directly involvement of the researcher which provided value as an intervention. The following section outlines semi-structured group interviews and critically considers their application to this research. The third section in this chapter describes reflective logs and discusses their application to this thesis. The following section provides a detailed description of the procedures used within the thesis. The last section in the chapter describes how the data collected from the group interviews and reflective logs was analysed using thematic analysis for the purposes of this thesis.

4.1 - Three Session Narrative Approach

A three session narrative approach was used as described by Billington (2012) and those procedures and principles are adopted in this thesis.

Three sessions were applied in order to facilitate the development of a relationship with the participants. According to Reissman (2008) ‘it is preferable to have repeated conversations rather than the typical one-shot interview’ as this facilitates the development of ‘dialogic relationships’ and ‘greater communicative equity’ (p.26). Billington (2012) applies a social constructionist approach to his research in the
consideration of professional’s social constructions of children (i.e. teachers in nurture groups).

Within this thesis a group interview is the basis of each session. Interviews are the most prevalent method of data collection in narrative studies (Spector-Mersel, 2010; Reissman, 2008; Burck, 2005). In an interview situation the stories are created specifically for the researcher. The narrative approach particularly lends itself to the use of group interviews as it is concerned with active participants; the researcher being a co-constructor (Billington, 2012). Meaning is jointly constructed and it is a collaborative experience (Reissman, 2008).

The questions Billington (2006) poses around children are applied within this project and are reflected in the group interview themes and questions (see appendix eight, page xxiii).

• How do we speak of children?
• How do we speak with children?
• How do we write of children?
• How do we listen to children?
• How do we listen to ourselves [when working with children]? (Billington, 2006, p.8).

These epistemological questions are posed from a social constructionist perspective and the principles of these questions can be applied to domestic violence and children exposed to domestic violence. The nature of Billington’s (2006) epistemological questions therefore facilitates the development of teacher narratives to address the research questions.

In addition Billington (2012) espouses the role of the researcher as an agent of change and therefore the research having value as an intervention in its own right. He argues the researcher is ‘part of the process and is influential in its outcomes’ (p.323). In agreement with Billington’s (2012) approach the participants were encouraged to engage in reflexive practice and this was similarly facilitated through the use of reflective logs. The aim was to facilitate professional development and ultimately in the final session develop recommendations for future practice. Whilst
Billington (2012) introduced his participants to narrative principles and concepts applied in narrative therapy. I was not confident in my own experience and understandings of narrative therapy to directly apply this to my own research; however the participants were informed the aim was to create a narrative of domestic violence and the value of their story was made clear.

Billington’s (2012) approach places value on ‘social justice, encouraging the voice of the participant’ (p.321), values every story and also recognises the value of researchers listening to peoples experiences. The narrative approach is concerned with the story being told rather than a search for truth. Runswick-Cole (2011) explains researchers who perceive a story is co-constructed favour a narrative approach; whilst some researchers argue analysis for themes fractures the data, others argue analysis makes stories stronger and allows societal influence to be identified. The principles adopted by Billington (2012) are fundamental to the narrative approach and are echoed within this thesis as discussed in the previous chapter.

In the application of Billington’s (2012) approach truth value is verified by using the beginning of each session to review the previous session and allow any misunderstandings or facilitate additional comments and reflections. The time frame of the data gathering over three sessions also provides time for the narrative to be reflected upon and revised as appropriate. The provision of an opportunity for offering reflections from the past week also facilitates the assurance of truth value. Further specific considerations of methodology and method as discussed in the previous chapter, and later in this chapter, contribute to the truth value within the thesis.

4.2 - Group Interviews

Interviews are a popular method of data collection in qualitative research (Runswick-Cole, 2011). Interviews appear to be an infinitely adaptable research tool (Breakwell, 2000) and they can be used concurrently with other data collection techniques. According to Burman (1994) ‘interviews can permit exploration of issues
that may be too complex to investigate through quantitative means’ (p.50). According to Runswick-Cole (2011) the popularity of interviews is due to the increasing focus on phenomenology in social sciences, and interviews allow researchers to give a voice to their participants.

According to McCance, McKenna and Boore (2001) interviews are the most popular method of data collection in narrative research. Unstructured interviews are the most commonly selected although both Runswick-Cole (2011) and Parker (2005) argue no qualitative interview is ever unstructured.

Within this thesis semi-structured group interviews were used. There are some key points and principles to note in relation to interviews and more specifically semi-structured interviews as a research method. According to Runswick-Cole (2011) semi-structured interviews have pre-determined questions, or topics, but they may be asked in any order, or questions may be omitted or added in response to what is said. Whilst the topics for discussion are given careful consideration prior to data collection, it is not always possible to control the order in which topics will be discussed. However, in contrast to unstructured interviews, within semi-structured interviews there is less likelihood of deviation from the topic. This means all of the data is likely to be relevant. Using semi-structured interviews ensures a range of data is collected in relation to each of the issues identified in the research questions. In this thesis an informal script was used which included a mix of questions and topics (appendix eight, page xxiii). The questions and topics were re-ordered, omitted and added to as was considered appropriate during the course of the group interview. However semi-structured interviews are not necessarily advocated within narrative research. Narrative approaches facilitate the development of a story, which is unique to the individual (or group) and the researcher’s role is to prompt rather than question (McCance, McKenna and Boore, 2001). An interview schedule which is too structured could instead hinder the development of a narrative causing the features unique to a narrative to be lost. Semi-structured interviews were used within this research as general discussion topics and questions were deemed necessary given this is a relatively un-researched area. They provide freedom to alter the direction and change the sequence of questions, although the general topics, or major questions, remain the same (McCance, McKenna and Boore, 2001).
In addition I am not an experienced researcher, therefore to enable the research to be effective, and in the interests of obtaining data which would address the research questions, semi-structured interviews were considered appropriate in this instance.

According to Reissman (2008) ‘groups use stories to mobilise others, and to foster a sense of belonging’ (p.8). As highlighted by Bion (1948) the success of a group depends upon the skill of the leader and the contribution of the participants. The participants for this thesis were invited to join the group which aimed to develop their practice; therefore there is common purpose to the group, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) perceive this as advantageous. In addition group interviews provide a forum for discussions and there is potential for a greater range of discussion (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) warn of the potential for ‘group think’ to occur (p.432). This is also acknowledged by Bion (1948). Individuals may not speak out against the group and opinions shared within the group are also attributed to be opinions of the group as a whole. Given narrative approaches value the story of the individual and one of the key principles of the narrative approach is the provision of an arena which allows the individual to tell their story I feel these concerns are addressed by the wider principles of social constructionism and a narrative approach. The dialogue in a group interview is co-constructed and it is a representation of the group as a whole, not each individual within the group. Within this research teacher narratives of domestic violence are being sought rather than the narratives of the teacher. In my opinion it is the subtlety of this difference which makes a group interview more appropriate than individual interviews. Furthermore the narrative approach is concerned with the story that is created, not a search for truth. As such group think is not considered to be problematic in relation to this thesis. However this is not to be confused with truth value which is sought and, as stated earlier, it is hoped this is facilitated by the use of a three session approach which incorporates opportunities for reflection. In addition the reflective logs provide an opportunity for the participants to comment on the sessions and their content independently of the group.
Runswick-Cole (2011) states it is important for a researcher to recognise how their positionality, such as knowledge, values, beliefs, gender, race and class will influence the interview. In this instance the key aspect of positionality is my profession as an educational and child psychologist as this creates assumptions regarding knowledge, values and beliefs. The same can be said of the participants who are all teachers. Both of these aspects of positionality were disclosed when the participants were recruited. Positionality is not considered to be a weakness in this research, instead it is acknowledged as a component of the ethnographic framework of the research.

Reflexive Box
Given I have stressed the importance of positionality in relation to narrative research it is relevant to reflect on my positionality at the time of data collection. I experienced a significant emotional trauma only weeks prior to engaging in data collection which caused my positionality to change significantly and also impacted upon methodological decision making. I was emotionally struggling to continue with the research project, yet I was adamant I wanted to continue for the purposes of my own well-being and the provision of a goal to work towards. I therefore needed the structure semi-structured interviews offered in order to maintain control over the direction the conversation would take. My life felt extremely out of control and I felt emotionally vulnerable, as if everyone would know what had happened to me just be looking at my face. In addition I lacked the confidence, or concentration, to effectively facilitate a less structured group interview. It is likely I would make different methodological decisions were I to repeat the research process; however my positionality at the time of the research is a factor of the thesis and contributes to the temporal narrative of the research.

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter the participants were known to me prior to completing the thesis. My knowledge of the participants is purely professional and may, or may not, have influenced the participants to participate in the research. Runswick-Cole (2011) discusses the issue of rapport and participant willingness to disclose information on the basis of fake friendship. I am not aware of whether having prior knowledge of the participants had any identifiable positive or negative impact on this research. Two of the participants had prior knowledge of one another
and worked in the same school. At times this was perceived to influence their interactions and led to them dominating discussion. However this was also impacted by the other participant missing the second session. It is therefore unclear to what extent their prior knowledge of one another affected the group dynamics; although this is true of any type of interview.

Finally power dynamics are an important consideration in a group interview, and it should also be noted power is not unidirectional (Runswick-Cole, 2011). Parker (2005) makes reference to ‘dimensions of resistance’ on the part of the interviewee and states this allows competing perspectives to emerge (p.56). In this thesis the principle of using group interviews was to facilitate the development of teacher narratives and the dynamics of the group provided the forum for this discussion, which would undoubtedly include power dynamics and dimensions of resistance but this is the nature of a group which is socially constructed and as such relationships are a significant factor. This is what makes a group a group (Bion, 1948). As I have already stated the group is the focus for the creation of the narrative in this thesis, therefore the dynamics of the group contribute to the creation of the narrative and, by definition, are what constitute the group narrative.

4.3 - Reflective Logs

Reflective logs, also referred to as diary methods, were utilised in this thesis. According to Breakwell and Wood (2000) there can be significant differences in the structure imposed on a log. They may involve reports of actions, thoughts and feelings in addition to contextual information. According to Willig (2008) the researcher needs to provide instructions without unnecessarily constraining participants as this may undermine motivation to complete the reflective log (the instructions given to participants in relation to the reflective logs are included in the appendix, refer to appendix sixteen, page cxxii).

There are a number of advantages to a diary approach. Diary methods allow data to be collected without the researcher being present (Breakwell and Wood, 2000) and information is temporally ordered giving a profile of actions, thoughts and feelings
over time (Willig, 2008; Breakwell and Wood, 2000). Breakwell and Wood (2000) suggest diary methods will encourage self-revelation and honesty and similarly Willig (2008) argues diary methods facilitate the sharing of personal or more intimate information. There are also disadvantages to diary methods. According to Breakwell and Wood (2000) there is limited control over the data provided and material is therefore self-selected. In addition participants may drop-out or not continue with the initial level of commitment (Willig, 2008; Breakwell and Wood, 2000). It may also be difficult to establish whether the content of the reflective log is true (Breakwell and Wood, 2000). The very nature of having to complete a reflective log may alter the behaviour thoughts and feelings which are recorded (Willig, 2008; Breakwell and Wood, 2000). Finally Willig (2008) identifies ethical concerns associated with diary methods as they may encourage participants to reflect on aspects of their lives which may cause distress and the commitment of keeping a diary may cause increased stress.

Given reflective logs are a method of data collection they can be used in conjunction with any type of methodology. They may help to create a richer picture or contribute to the process of triangulation (Breakwell and Wood, 2000). In relation to this thesis the reflective logs firstly offer an opportunity for triangulation and substantiate truth value within the research; however this is not their main purpose. Their main purpose is to add to the available data and contribute to the provision of a richer narrative.

4.4 - Procedures

4.4.1 - Resources

Table 1, on the following page, details the resources used to complete this research project.
Table 1 - Table of resources used during the period of participant selection and data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant selection process</th>
<th>Session One</th>
<th>Session Two</th>
<th>Session Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Initial letter to Headteachers / SENCos (appendix four, page xi)</td>
<td>• Participant information sheet (appendix six, page xviii)</td>
<td>• Group interview introduction and themes/ questions (appendix eight, page xxiii)</td>
<td>• Group interview introduction and themes/ questions (appendix eight, page xxiii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Initial letter to participants (appendix four, page xi)</td>
<td>• Participant consent form (appendix seven, page xxii)</td>
<td>• Dictaphone</td>
<td>• Definition of child abuse (appendix nine, page xxxii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Letter to selected participants (appendix four, page xi)</td>
<td>• Pens</td>
<td>• Mobile phone</td>
<td>• Definition of Domestic Violence (appendix two, page iii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Letter to unselected participants (appendix four, page xi)</td>
<td>• Group interview introduction and themes/ questions (appendix eight, page xxiii)</td>
<td>• Definition of Domestic Violence (appendix two, page iii)</td>
<td>• Summary of discussion from session one and session two (appendix ten, page xxxiii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information gathering sheet (appendix Five, page xvii)</td>
<td>• Definition of Domestic Violence (appendix two, page iii)</td>
<td>• Reflective logs (instructions for the reflective log can be found in appendix sixteen, page cxxii)</td>
<td>• Illustration of an interconnected theme identified in session two (appendix eleven, page xxxv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Email</td>
<td>• Reading for next session: Howell (2011), Resilience and psychopathology in children exposed to family violence, Aggression and Violent Behavior, 16(6): 562–569.</td>
<td>• Reflective logs (instructions for the reflective log can be found in appendix sixteen, page cxxii)</td>
<td>• Post it notes (four different colours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobile phone</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobile phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2 - Participants

Three primary school teachers were involved in the group interviews. The teachers are from two primary schools located within an outer-city suburb/township consisting mainly of council estate housing covering an extensive area. The prevalence of domestic violence in this area of the city has been identified by the Local Authority Domestic Violence Team as being higher than expected. The two schools are approximately two miles apart.

- Teacher One
  Teacher one is female and less than thirty years old. She does not have children. She is recently qualified (within the last five years) and currently teaching a year one class (5 - 6 year olds) at a mixed gender community primary school for 3 - 11 year olds. The school is larger than average with over 400 pupils on roll and the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average. The majority of pupils are White British. The school meets the Government’s minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

- Teacher Two
  Teacher two is female and over forty years old. She is a mother. Teacher two is an experienced teacher (with a minimum of five years teaching experience) currently teaching reception/foundation stage two (4 – 5 year olds), in addition she is the key stage one leader. Teachers two and three work at the same mixed gender community primary school for 4 - 11 year olds. The school is smaller than average with less than 200 pupils on roll and the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than average. The school meets the Government’s minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

- Teacher Three
  Teacher two is female and over forty years old. She is a mother. Teacher three is an experienced teacher (with at least five years teaching experience) and
currently teaches year six (10 – 11 year olds), in addition she is the deputy head teacher and SENCo. Due to additional responsibilities she teaches her class for half of the week on a job share basis. Teacher three works at the same mixed gender community primary school as teacher two (described above).

4.4.3 - Procedure

Table 2 - Table of actions taken during the period of participant selection and data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24/04/13</td>
<td>Initial letter sent to SENCos / Head teachers in the researcher’s cluster of schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any responses were followed up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/05/13</td>
<td>Follow up email sent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any responses were followed up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/05/13</td>
<td>Email sent to educational psychologists across the local authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any responses were followed up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/06/13</td>
<td>Dates set for sessions and participants notified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/13</td>
<td>Session one (date of last session rescheduled due to participant attending a graduation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective logs issued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading given to prepare for session two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/07/13</td>
<td>Session two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/07/13</td>
<td>Session three.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective logs collected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior approval for the research was obtained from the University of Sheffield School of Education Ethics Review Panel.

I initially discussed my research informally with schools I was covering as a local authority (LA) Educational Psychologist. To begin with participants were invited from only this area of the city, however due to difficulties recruiting participants the population was later widened to include all primary settings in the city. In follow up to
the informal discussions I emailed the Head teacher and SENCo at the fourteen primary schools within the cluster. If the Head teacher or SENCo decided their school was able to participate a letter and information gathering sheet was forwarded, by the Head teacher / SENCo, to all teaching staff in the setting.

If the Headteacher / SENCo did not respond after one week this was followed up with an email to the SENCo to see if they had decided to participate in the research and if any interest had been expressed by teaching staff. Due to low responses the initial letter was emailed to primary schools across the LA by other LA Educational Psychologists who were willing to forward the letter. The Educational Psychologists self-selected which schools received the letter. The Educational Psychologists copied the researcher into the email. A week later the researcher sent a follow up email to the schools to prompt and enquire about responses.

Due to continued low responses social media (Facebook) was used to recruit further participants.

Teachers who were interested in participating in the research then completed the information gathering sheet and returned it to the researcher.

The participants were self-selecting on the basis of completion of the information gathering sheet.

Once enough participants had been obtained for the group interviews to be able to take place a date was set for the sessions and letters sent, by email, to all participants who completed the information gathering sheet. A total of five completed information gathering sheets were returned. One teacher was unable to participate due to being off sick and another due to the dates/times of the sessions. Therefore three teachers were involved in the research.

The sessions took place at the schools participating in the research due to the school staff offering to host the sessions.
At the first session the participants were read the information sheet and asked to sign consent forms. The sessions then followed pre-prepared introduction and themes/questions (see appendix eight, page xxiii).

At the end of the first session the reflective logs were explained and each participant was given reflective log which contained written guidance for completing the log. Two selected readings were also given to participants at the end of the first session (Howell (2011), Resilience and psychopathology in children exposed to family violence, Aggression and Violent Behavior, 16(6): 562–569. Hyden (2011) Chapter 7 Narrating sensitive topics. In Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (2011), Doing Narrative Research, London: Sage). It was explained that it was not essential to read the documents provided.

The second and third sessions began with a recap of the previous session (see appendix eight, page xxiii) and an opportunity to share any reflections on the previous session and over the week.

The third session was facilitated by sharing a summary of the discussion from session one and session two (appendix ten, page xxxiii) and an illustration of an interconnected theme identified in session two (appendix eleven, page xxxv). A3 sheets of paper were provided to facilitate the participants in actively contributing to generating ideas and becoming involved in the construction of new narratives. Post-it notes were given to teachers to record their ideas. Each teacher was given a different colour to facilitate identification of different participants after the session (appendix twenty-two, page cxxxvi). At the end of the third session the reflective logs were collected and the teachers were thanked for participating in the research.

4.5 - Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was carried out (Braun and Clarke, 2006) employing the following steps. Familiarisation of the data took place through the transcription of the group interviews, according to the conventions described by Edwards and Mercer (1987) (appendix twelve, page xxxvi). The transcripts were completed immediately
after each session, so that each transcript was complete prior to the next session taking place. The transcripts were checked against the audio recordings for accuracy. The notes created in session three did not add anything additional to the transcript of the session and therefore were excluded from the data analysis (appendix twenty-two, page cxxxvi). The transcript of each group interview was read in preparation for the next group interview with summary notes (a recap) prepared for the next group interview (appendix eight, page xxiii). This formed an initial list of ideas about what is in the data. After all the group interviews were completed each transcript was read and re-read (the transcripts can be found in appendix thirteen to fifteen). Summary notes were made on the transcripts.

A list of 83 initial codes were developed based on features of each data item (the interview transcripts and reflective logs) which appeared interesting (see appendix twenty, page cxxxii). The reflective logs were analysed in the same way as the interviews, other than there was no requirement for transcription. No systematic differences were identified between the interviews and the reflective logs so these data items were pooled for analysis creating the data set. Coded extracts from each data item were collated under each code by cutting and sticking them onto separate pieces of paper in a list form.

The data set was then reviewed to see how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme. This was done by writing the codes onto separate pieces of paper and organising them into initial theme groups. The codes were then reviewed to identify overlap and coherence. This involved re-reading some data extracts and re-coding them as appropriate. In addition some codes were grouped together to create a new code.

Next themes were reviewed to consider the need to break them down into separate themes. Alternative themes and codes and were identified as a result. At this point an initial thematic map was developed. The initial map was shared with a colleague and the themes and codes were discussed. Jointly the themes were reviewed for overlap and coherence and their overall representation of the data. Through this joint review the labelling of the themes was reviewed as appropriate, individual
codes were considered in relation to each theme to check for validity and overlap within the codes was identified.

Following the joint review I then re-read the data extracts for each code where overlap had been identified. The individual code was analysed to consider how representative it was of the data extracts and the theme heading was reviewed for representativeness of the code. The codes were refined by merging some codes and reworking others by returning to the data extracts and re-coding them. Additionally the theme headings were refined to be more succinct and accurately define the essence of what each theme is about (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Following the research viva the thematic map was further refined to develop a final list of 23 codes (see appendix twenty-one, page cxxxv). Additionally as a result of the research viva five themes were reviewed and reduced to four by incorporating the codes within the other four themes. Finally a revised thematic map was developed (figure 1, page 143). At this point it was felt the coding frame worked well and was representative of data set.

4.6 - Conclusion

This chapter described the three session narrative approach, group interviews and reflective logs which were the methods used in this research project. This chapter also presented a detailed description of the procedures applied in this research project and described the process of data analysis which was completed using thematic analysis.

The following chapter presents a personal reflection; this reflection is a narrative of emotional trauma. This narrative informs the following chapters of this research study and provides a basis for reflection. The provision of my narrative facilitates the development of professional narratives of emotional trauma as a reflection on domestic violence. It felt appropriate to include this narrative here as chronologically my emotional trauma occurred shortly before beginning the data collection.
5 - Personal Reflection

This chapter represents the change in direction of this thesis and the following chapter provides my narrative and a brief reflection.

I find it difficult to manage the pain I cause to others. That is my perception – I cause this pain with Adam’s story. I don’t apologise for Adam’s story I somehow apologise for the pain, the emotions and the feelings it evokes.

Emotion is a pertinent feature to my life and my research. The two collide and cannot be separated. Some events and experiences are forever a part of us and too significant not to leave a lasting impact. I have used my experiences to analyse and reflect upon my data.

5.1 - Adam’s story

In the early hours of 7th March 2013 my waters broke. I was pregnant with my second child. I was excited and relieved as it was eight days beyond the due date. I went back to bed to try and get some rest hoping contractions would start fairly quickly. I lay feeling the baby moving. I was too excited to sleep and contractions began almost immediately. Within an hour I was sure birth wasn’t far away so I contacted the Midwife Led Unit (MLU) to let them know we would be on our way soon. After a brief conversation the midwife said I appeared to be labouring well and to phone and come in when the pain became more difficult or contractions were ten minutes apart, but not to wait too long as second babies can come quickly. By the time I had showered and tried to eat breakfast, to provide what would be much needed energy, contractions were a few minutes apart. I phoned again to say we were on our way and by this time contractions were very close together.

On reaching the MLU I was given gas and air. Following examination the midwife had difficulty finding the baby’s heartbeat. She explained she thought the baby may be experiencing decelerations or she may be finding my heartbeat. We were told it
would be necessary to move me to the hospital by ambulance (there are no doctors at the MLU) as I was not yet ready to deliver. She refused to give any further pain relief due to concerns about the baby. We were then left alone to wait for the ambulance. When the paramedics arrived the midwife was very angry as it had taken half an hour for them to arrive. My partner was told not to try and follow as the ambulance would be going ‘on blue’. Throughout the journey the midwife did not speak to me or offer any reassurance. Feeling scared and alone I reached for her hand but she did not speak to me.

I was quickly taken up to the labour ward and very soon after I heard my partner’s voice, although I don’t know what he said - I just remember hearing his voice, and I reached out to him. The doctors and midwives attempted to find a heartbeat, what exactly happened I don’t know, as I was in another place doing what labouring mothers do.

The doctor called my name and gained my attention and said those awful words… ‘We can’t find a heartbeat, I’m so sorry but your baby’s died’. I remember screaming in physical and emotional pain. I asked for pain relief, perhaps to gain some control over the situation, and was given morphine – which due to the side effects I still anguish over today. I pushed and screamed, pushing the emotional pain, and my baby, away. Neither went away.

‘Did you know what you were having?’

We shook our heads.

‘It’s a boy’ and they showed me the baby, our baby, Adam James Dawson, stillborn at 5:42am on 7th March 2013. Our lives have never been the same since.

We held him for around an hour before placing him in the crib. I was emotionally empty. The morphine made me fall asleep and I was physically sick. I felt cheated of this time with my son due to the effects of the morphine – which was never in my birth plan, but neither was the death of my baby. I was scared to hold him and he wasn’t the baby I knew. The baby I knew was alive. He had long purple feet.
Purple was wrong. I tucked them back up in the towel he was wrapped in and gave him back to his Daddy. We couldn’t dress him; the hospital bag was still in the car because of the emergency transfer; another lasting regret.

I asked the staff to take him away. I couldn’t bear to look at him anymore, watching as he turned all the colours associated with death. I had never even seen a dead body before. Now my son, my dead son lay next to me. It was more than I could emotionally stand.

We stayed in that room until shortly after lunchtime riding an emotional rollercoaster. Doctors spoke to us. Midwives took care of me and Adam. No one could give us any answers. We talked about a post-mortem. Why was I having these conversations?

Bereavement Officers came and went. We talked about his funeral. A white coffin. My baby’s white coffin.

They all said ‘I’m sorry for your loss’. They meant it. I could see the pain in their eyes. This hurt me even more. I had done this. I never thought it was my fault but I blame myself for the pain, and still do. The worst of my pain - how did I explain to a two year old, the day before her birthday, her brother had died?

It wasn’t fair.

How would we tell our family and friends?

It hurt so much.

How would we cope?

I was so scared. My world had been ripped apart.

Shit had happened.
5.2 - Professional Empathy

That is where Adam’s story ends and this story begins. Somehow I do cope. I have experienced emotions I never knew existed. I have been to places I never wanted to go. Grief hurts. I now suffer from anxiety and I am learning to contain the emotional torment that can boil over unexpectedly. It is like standing on the edge of a cliff, only I don't even realise I am standing there until I nearly fall.

It is evident this experience was a ‘sudden, unexpected, overwhelmingly intense emotional blow’ (Terr, 1990) and therefore constitutes emotional trauma. As Terr (1990) suggests the effects fade but there is no escaping the fact that you are changed.

As Monahon (1993) suggests your expectations and feelings of safety are transformed. Trust you previously held is destroyed and in its place is an all-consuming pessimism and acknowledgement that bad things can, and do, happen. Monahon (1993) describes a temporary loss of the ‘sense of immunity to danger’. This leads to defensive retreat in order to control the fear of trauma being repeated (Monahon, 1993).

Emotional trauma has a significant impact upon our functioning and coping ability, yet the details of the emotional trauma are often unknown and may be difficult to understand or even cause others emotional trauma in their attempts to empathise. As professionals it is therefore important for us to:

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle - Ian Maclaren (1897)

I feel this does not imply understanding but acceptance that we may never truly understand. I have developed a deeper sense of professional empathy and have a deeper sense of professional empathy. I can appreciate a level of emotional pain I had never before understood and no longer seek to understand but instead accept that their experiences will have affected them in similar ways and will also have changed their lives, therefore making their experience important and significant in
ways I had previously never considered. I do not feel this previously made me a ‘bad practitioner’, instead I have a humility and empathy I didn’t in the past.

5.3 - Conclusion

As a result of my own personal experience of emotional trauma the direction of this thesis changed. The choice to include this chapter here was influenced by the timing of this experience as it was in the weeks before I engaged in the process of data collection that Adam died. Following his death as I continued with this research my perceptions and feelings towards the significance of the topic, domestic violence, had changed. I felt a stronger emotional connection to the children and their families I found a new sense of empathy for their pain and torment. I had been changed to the core and my narrative of this research had also significantly changed. Emotional trauma had become a core narrative to this research and I reconstructed my narratives of domestic violence from the perspective of emotional trauma.

The following chapter will present the findings from the analysis of the group interviews and reflective logs. A thematic map of the narratives which are identified is presented and the analysis is further enriched by the inclusion of my own reflections. This facilitates the production of personal and professional narratives of emotional trauma as a reflection on domestic violence.
6 - Findings

Within this chapter the findings of the data analysis are described. The first section in this chapter provides a reflective pen-portrait of each participant and their participation in the research. This is relevant to the context of the research as it affected the data collection process and the construction of my narratives. Throughout this chapter the participants will be referred to as teachers and identified individually as teacher one, two and three. The second section presents a reflection on each of the group interview sessions and explores my narrative of the sessions. Again this is relevant to the context of the research as it influences the construction of my narratives. The third section of this chapter presents the data according to the thematic analysis. The data is presented theme by theme and each code relating to the theme is discussed in turn. A selection of quotes is included to illustrate the codes and themes. The references are in brackets following the quote e.g. interview one, lines two to three will be referenced as ‘(1: 2-3)’, and reflective log two, lines four to six as ‘(RL2: 4-6)’. The quotes which are selected are considered to be more pertinent or provide clarification of the codes and themes.

6.1 - Pen-Portrait of the Participants

I will now present a brief pen portrait of each of the participants and my narrative of each of the participants.

6.1.1 - Teacher One

Teacher one attended the first and third sessions but was unable to attend the second due to an unforeseen medical appointment. In addition she left 21m 20s into the first session due to other commitments. Due to teacher one not attending session two an inordinate amount of time at the beginning of session three was dedicated to recapping session two to facilitate teacher one’s participation in session three as effectively as realistically possible.

Teacher one presented as confident in her practice but wanted to do more for the children who have been exposed to domestic violence. She presented as having
more to give and wanting to gain experience and ideas to support the children she teaches. She appeared to feel she was unsupported by support staff in the classroom and the school overall. Initially she wasn’t taken seriously by senior staff. Teacher one appeared to believe the lack of support from senior staff the children’s difficulties persisted until they became unmanageable within the classroom. Teacher one seemed to feel that by this time, due to the level of difficulty the children now presented with, the senior staff found it difficult to find time, and resources, to respond and support the children. Classroom based staff became fearful and refused to work with children meaning she wasn’t able to support the children as effectively as she felt could be achieved. There was also an overall negative impact upon the whole class as she was not able to teach and complete the role of the support staff simultaneously.

6.1.2 - Teacher Two

Teacher two attended all three sessions.

Teacher two was unclear on the differences between domestic violence and family abuse or child abuse. She often presented scenarios of sibling on sibling violence or parent on child violence. Any obvious reflections on violence which did not fit the definition of domestic violence applied to this research were ignored during the analysis. The second session began with the Home Office definition of domestic violence (appendix two, page iii) however confusions still arose during the session. At the start of the third session the home office definition of domestic violence was shared again along with the NSPCC definition of child abuse (appendix nine, page xxxii). Teacher two did not complete the reading given at the end of session one and had this been completed this may have helped to alleviate the confusion relating to differing types of violence.

Teacher two presented as a confident classroom practitioner but found suggestions of speaking to parents and directly addressing issues at home very uncomfortable due to concerns parents would worry other agencies, such as Social Care, would become involved. As a consequence she seemed to reflect on her role within the
constraints of the classroom. She appeared to find policy and practice took up an inordinate amount of time, which negatively impacted her ability to teach.

Teacher two was more receptive to new ideas and improving practice within the third session, perhaps as the definition of domestic violence had been clarified.

6.1.3 - Teacher Three

Teacher three attended all three sessions although she arrived at 12m57s during the first session due to unforeseen circumstances.

Teacher three was keen to participate from the outset and very keen to disseminate practice back in school. She was able to consider a class teacher perspective and whole school perspective simultaneously. Teacher three was quick to reflect on personal improvements she could make and areas of weakness as well as those of the school as a whole.

She was an active and positive participant throughout the sessions who was keen to try new ideas and take responsibility.

6.2 - Reflection on the Sessions

The narratives are socially constructed within the sessions and as such are representations of that interaction and that moment in time. Meaning is constructed through the process of social interaction which occurs within the group interview; it is this process which allows the sessions to be an intervention. The construction of knowledge and meaning are able to provide the catalyst for social action and consequently social change.

I will now present my own narrative reflection on each of the sessions.

6.2.1 - Session One

In the first session the participants seemed nervous but spoke openly. It quickly became apparent the approaches used in the classroom were good practice
behaviour management strategies. It was apparent any external professional support had been from a family support perspective and aimed at parenting. The teachers did not appear to have received any school based support to address children’s emotional and social difficulties.

Many of the issues reflected in the literature were highlighted within this session.

As the session progressed I was concerned participants may be confusing child abuse with domestic violence and I planned to share the definition of domestic violence in the next session to resolve this difficulty.

The teachers described situations in which they had not known the children had been exposed to domestic violence until it was disclosed unexpectedly by parent or child. They suspect teachers generally don’t know that domestic violence is occurring in a child’s home. I felt this lack of awareness may explain the low response rate to participate in the research as teachers are simply unaware of the prevalence and the extent of the impact of exposure to domestic violence.

The extrinsic behavioural presentation of children appeared to be the main concern for teachers and the schools in general.

6.2.2 - Session Two

One participant was not able to attend at the last minute. I wondered whether this demonstrated a lack of commitment or not understanding the importance of the issue.

Overall the session went well as both teachers had lots to say. This was evident as they were very animated and at times spoke over one another.

Despite providing a definition of domestic violence I feel there is still confusion understanding the differences between child abuse and domestic violence. I felt it was necessary to revisit the definition of domestic violence and define child abuse in the next session. I was now quite worried that I had underestimated their
understanding and knowledge of domestic violence. I was not confident we would be able to develop a set of resources or strategies for other teachers within the third session without me heavily leading and facilitating the session. The strategies so far had been related to general behaviour management and were not used with evidence of a theoretical basis.

The teachers viewed domestic violence as a sensitive subject and were wary of parents losing trust or worrying about being reported to Social Care. Teacher two had feelings of unease in relation to the type of strategies that would be recommended or developed in the third session. These feelings were not shared by teacher three. Hopefully clarification of the differences between child abuse and domestic violence will alleviate some of these difficulties.

The teachers had reflected on their own practice to a limited extent and had begun to reflect on the experiences of parents and empathise with the difficulties they faced.

The planning for session three needed to reflect the non-attendance of teacher one at this session, therefore a comprehensive recap would be required at the beginning of the next session.

6.2.3 - Session Three

Due to concerns regarding the participants’ ability to engage in the construction of strategies and next steps A3 paper with headings written in the centre, based on previous discussions, and post-it notes were provided for the teachers to encourage participation. Overall the strategy did not facilitate the teachers actively engaging with the session.

Presenting the definitions of domestic violence and child abuse lead teacher two to acknowledge the child she was thinking of didn’t necessarily fit the scope of domestic violence but there is family violence.

It was difficult to stimulate discussion despite a comprehensive recap and I felt teacher one had less to contribute.
As I had feared the discussion did continue to focus on problems more than solutions. However future ideas and strategies were suggested. The session focused more on how I can directly and indirectly support teachers in the future, e.g. through the provision of resources and further training.

The teachers appeared to have benefited from the sessions. There was more reflection on the children and their experiences but concerns still remain in relation to teaching and the behavioural challenges presented by children exposed to domestic violence.

I felt I had talked too much; however I felt I needed to encourage teacher two to engage in the session. It seemed important to manage her apprehension in relation to talking to parents as this was a key narrative identified for the final session. I was aware that if teacher two dissented the whole session may be unsuccessful with the teachers being unwilling to share ideas. Despite concerns about teacher two’s willingness to participate she was the first to offer a question for parents.

I felt the session lacked direction although it was difficult to plan as it was unknown territory. As a result this research would have benefited from a pilot study to explore teacher awareness of domestic violence which would have facilitated more targeted questions. However one of the aims of the research was to explore teacher narratives of domestic violence and from a social constructionist perspective the meaning is constructed within the sessions meaning a pilot study would only provide an alternative view and could not be assumed to inform any future social interaction. Finally it would have been particularly difficult to conduct a pilot study due to time constraints and difficulties recruiting participants.

Having completed all three sessions I feel areas for further research have been identified as a result of their input and discussion. Overall the sessions were successful as an intervention for those involved and to inform more effective educational psychology support in the future.
6.3 - Analysis of the Themes

The group interviews were listened to three times in the process of transcription. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The thematic analysis involved reading each data item and making notes. A list of 83 initial codes was developed (see appendix twenty, page cxxxii). The data set was re-read, reviewed and refined through the process of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Ultimately a list of 23 final codes was produced (see appendix twenty-one, page cxxxv) and four themes were identified. The development of each theme, from the initial codes to final codes and then the overall theme, is presented in a table before the discussion of each theme.

Below is an extract from table 3. This extract shows how the final code ‘expectations of the children’ was developed from six initial codes (expectations of the children, aspirations for the children, impact of trauma, learned behaviour, resilience, uncertainty). The code ‘expectations of the children’ is one of the codes represented by the theme one ‘narratives of the impact on the class teacher’.

Extract from table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial codes</th>
<th>Final codes</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Expectations of the children</td>
<td>Expectations of the children</td>
<td>Narratives of the impact on the class teacher (theme one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aspirations for the children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impact of trauma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learned behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resilience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uncertainty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See appendix twenty for a full list of the initial codes)  (See appendix twenty-one for a full list of the final codes)  (See figure 1 for an overview of all the themes and corresponding codes)

The final thematic map is presented on the next page (figure 1):
Figure 1 – Thematic Map

Theme One: Narratives of the Impact on the Class Teacher
- Teacher resilience
- Role of the class teacher
- Skills of the class teacher
- Expectations of the children

Theme Two: Narratives of Individual Differences in Coping
- Age and Gender
- Parental support
- Feelings of power / control
- Feelings / management of fear

Theme Three: Narratives of Systemic Challenges
- Lack of information
- Next steps
- External support
- Safety
- Policies, procedures and protocols
- Parenting
- A taboo subject

Theme Four: Narratives of Developmental Impact
- Social skills
- Academic performance
- Ability to develop / use coping strategies
- Resilience
- Emotion regulation
- Perception of normality
- Parenting
The thematic map (figure 1) illustrates the themes (in the grey boxes) with the corresponding codes surrounding each theme (in white boxes). The thematic map (figure 1) illustrates one code ‘academic performance’ is applicable to both ‘theme two – narratives of individual differences in coping’ and ‘theme four – narratives of developmental impact’.

The development of each theme is described and analysed below theme by theme. The research questions will be indirectly answered through the themes identified in the data. The research questions will be critically considered in the next chapter.

6.3.1 - Theme One: Narratives of the Impact on the Class Teacher

This theme represents the factors influencing the class teacher’s ability to support children who have experienced trauma.
All of the teachers were keen for the children in their care to do well. One of the teachers felt it was particularly important to maintain high expectations and saw education as having the potential to break the cycle of learned violent behaviour:

_T3: I don’t know how to phrase this without being judgemental, but to get out of the situation that you know they’re,_{mmmm}_ so they don’t perpetuate it if you like. So it’s, so it’s/ around giving them the best, for a start, education._
Teacher three begins by implying children have a choice about how they are affected by domestic violence. I feel this demonstrates a lack of understanding of the impact of traumatic experiences. Whilst she recognises agency here rather than pathologising all children choice can also be used to pathologise. There is an acknowledgement of the trauma which has been experienced and recognition that this is difficult to understand or comprehend but the primary focus is on providing an education with a suggestion those who are educated are better equipped to choose how life experiences affect them. She suggests there is empathy for their experience but again it is not an excuse for children not to engage. Based on my own reflections it is like watching the world happen around you and feeling very disconnected. I remember feeling frustrated my friends were talking about mundane everyday things and wanted them to talk about my trauma, even though I didn’t really want to talk about it. As a result I felt like an observer and couldn’t participate as my thoughts were elsewhere. I am fortunate to be able to understand my friends had the best of intentions in trying to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. I can imagine it would be very difficult for a child to process these feelings and recognise their need to engage, or disengage. It would have been very easy for me to express my frustrations rather than be passive. Perhaps children display undesirable behaviour as a consequence of trauma due to frustration and feelings they are unable to articulate or understand. I feel this extract therefore suggests the teacher lacks theoretical knowledge of the impact of trauma and its impact.

The class teachers also reflected on the impact of exposure to domestic violence on young children. Initially they seemed to feel the children were too young to be affected, or not all children are affected. As they talk you can sense they begin to question themselves and the uncertainty is evident in what is left unsaid.

T2: Although he still hasn’t seen the worst of Dad.
T3: No he hasn’t seen the worst of Dad, [or he can’t remember seeing the worst of Dad.
T2: [or mum/ no, no
T2: Or you know.
T3: He can't have seen the worst of Dad can he as he wasn't consciously old enough.
T2: no.

(1: 579-586)

T2: you don’t necessarily have to be damaged by what
F: mmm
T3: has gone on.
T2: Although,
T3: Although,
[ which
T2: [ you can
T2: get the cycle
[ repeating itself
T3: [ well I know

(2: 938-948)

T3: because it was when he was so small that he’s not, as far as we know,
suffered anything

(2: 1126-1127)

• Skills of the class teacher

The teachers spoke of the challenging behaviour presented within the classroom and the majority of the strategies they mentioned are standard classroom management techniques used with all children such as diversionary tactics, calm and safe environment, rewards, praise, routines, consequences and communication:

T2: Yeah, and he, he, he loves his treat so if he doesn't get it - it's just worked that you know, he tends to, like Pavlov’s dogs I suppose, he wants it so he tries to remember not to hurt people.

(1: 608-610)

Whilst these are all valuable skills the teachers did not articulate why particular approaches were used or one strategy was considered more appropriate than another. Whilst the constraints of the classroom environment prevent a specific intervention taking place inside the classroom consideration needs to be given to the causes of the behaviour, and then consideration of how the causes can be addressed. The above techniques alone are not going to be effective in supporting a child who has experienced trauma. This said the teachers do recognise the need for rapport and, social and emotional support. This will be addressed later in this chapter.
The teachers were frustrated with the support from classroom staff and the wider school staff:

**T1:** because he got my full attention or he got the TAs and you got to a point where the TAs were like ‘right I don’t want to handle this anymore’ and

**F:** Mmm and how does that make you feel, and if you’re nodding as well, when you’ve got your support staff saying to you I, I don’t want to, how do you feel?

**T1:** It makes you feel, it made me feel like I wasn’t doing the right thing in a sense cos I’m like if they don’t want to do it then there’s going to be me with this child

**T2:** yeah

(1: 230-239)

**T1:** Well we got to a point, sorry [to T2], we got to a point where we were taking him to the headteacher and she was a bit like, she just took him somewhere else, to somebody else, cos I think, she got to a point where she was like well I don’t really know what else to do with him

**F:** mmm

**T1:** in a sense. And then you’ve got calmed down and brought back to you within minutes

(1: 266-273)

**T2:** well cos ours was sent to the headteacher sometimes he’d trash the headteacher’s classroom erm but and, and she [laughs], she used to do things to calm him down like sit him on her knee and read a book which, so in the end he used to want

**F:** mmm-hmm

**T2:** to go to her room cos it wasn’t punishment and, and then you’ve lost control haven’t you?

**F:** mmm

**T2:** He’s, he’s, you’ve got no sanctions because they’re kind of… calling all the shots.

(1: 288-297)

The first quote demonstrates the reliance on support staff and that class teachers feel unable to manage without the support of these extra adults. The lack of engagement and fear of support staff described by the teachers implies the children are labelled as ‘naughty’ by support staff and the fact this behaviour continues leads them to perceive the behaviour is not being taken seriously and managed properly. With more empathy and understanding of the children’s behaviour it is my feeling support staff may approach and respond to the children very differently, therefore providing more effective classroom based support.
The second two quotes indicate the teachers would like to have more input into a coordinated response to supporting and managing the behaviour of these children; and at the very least have a discussion to make a plan for these children.

- Role of the class teacher

The teachers present as feeling conflicted about their role. The following extract highlights the challenge a class teacher faces in prioritising the need to teach the whole class and each individual. There is also conflict between the focus on academic skills and personal and social skills. In this extract the two teachers are challenging one another but there is also a sense of agreement suggesting the role is unclear:

T2: Our role is not necessarily academic is it? It's kind of coping strategies, so the personal and social.

T3: Yeah, no, both isn’t it? Cos you still want, you don’t want to say well they’ve been subjected to that so they’ve got that excuse. You want to say that but we still need to// teach them, I don’t know that’s - well that’s our role at the end of the day isn’t it?

T2: yeah, but you’ve got a responsibility to the rest of the class as well.

T3: oh yeah, yeah, yeah. No absolutely. That’s what I’m saying so not giving them, you can maybe understand or empathise with it but not giving them the excuse that

T2: mmm

T3: oh well they’ve seen that terrible thing so they don’t have to do that work today or they can behave like this today. Which, I don’t know/ I do think there was some of that maybe, or that, you know that there can be a tendency for that if you’re not careful.

(1: 792-806)

Early on in this quote teacher three says ‘you don’t want to say…’, leading you to wonder what is unsaid, what is she thinking?

The traumatic experience is beyond words. Without acknowledging and processing, the ‘excuse’ as she calls it, is she able to empathise with these children and understand the difficulties they face?

The pressure of accountability felt by teachers is demonstrated as teacher three speaks of not giving excuses and teacher two highlights the responsibility to the
whole class. Teacher three is also sure there is more than just academic responsibility in her role:

T3: well I think we’ve got a role as teachers to build resilience

(2: 1292)

Teacher three recognises the pressures she faces and the diversity of the role. She states lack of time is a major factor affecting her skill as a class teacher:

T3: Thinking about what was discussed – I need to give more time to PSE – as a job share I spend a lot of time focussed on the teaching and PSE isn’t in my half of the week – do I know what is happening in some children’s lives? Time!

(R3: 09-19)

She appears to wonder if she has missed the bigger picture and you sense her beginning to wonder if she has somehow failed the children:

T3: and I’ve concentrated on that loads this year but I think at the expensive sometimes of giving space to children to just / talk
F: mmm-hmm.
T2: mmm.
T3: you know I’ve been so focussed on getting them
T2: [ yeah
T3: moving forward academically. I know with this class, although I’ve got a reasonably good relationship with them I don’t, maybe know as much about them as maybe with other classes because I know for a fact I, I just don’t, I’m just like next thing, next thing, next.

(2: 105-115)

At times the class teachers were very frustrated by the behaviour of a few children and the impact it had on the role – to teach. However the teachers quickly move on to other aspects of their role about which they feel equally passionate.

The teachers clearly recognise the multiplicity of their role in relation to academic performance and, social and emotional development. The teachers also expressed that rapport and a trusting relationship are important elements of their role.
Teacher resilience

The teachers describe the children as presenting with challenging behaviour and this has been difficult for them to manage emotionally:

T2: we were absolutely wrecked [laughs]  
(1: 197)

The lack of support from other staff led to teacher one feeling alone and defeated:

T1: well why is there nothing else going in place to support this child and we’re putting everything into him but what else do you need to make sure that you have that something there for him?  
T2: yeah.  
F: Yeah. Does that make you feel less able to cope, if people are then saying I don’t want to be a part of that?  
T1: In a way it does cos then you’re left by yourself to cope with this child.  
(1: 240-247)

Teacher one is left asking ‘why’ and feeling alone and helpless; in much the same way I have felt in my own darkest moments. These moments can help us to empathise with the helplessness others feel and the emotions which arise in trying to overcome the adversity. As professionals we can draw on our own experiences, however big or small, to empathise with children and others who have experienced trauma.

Teacher two describes her feelings in response to a child in her class who left the school:

T2: and I felt, you know, that, maybe yeah I could have done more  
F: Ok.  
T2: Or a bit, a bit, like I failed him really.  
(1: 26-28)

Teacher three reflects on the same child:

T3: cos he was, well he did abscond once and it was just like – [sighs] and then he’s at [another local mainstream school] now,  
(1: 690-691)

Teacher one reflects on having to exclude a child from the class:
T1: cos you’ve got to think of the other children but you’ve got to think of your safety as well and when you did take them out you, I felt awful when I came back to class. It was an awful feeling, I’ve had to just remove a child from my class and he’s five years old.

(1: 223-226)

All three teachers express a sense of defeat and a desire to have done more but not knowing what they could have done. The sigh of the third teacher implies more than the words; there is too much to say but nothing to say.

- Classroom management

The teachers found classroom management very challenging:

T2: and that had a bad effect on the rest of the children, because all our time was taken with managing his behaviour and that took, that was three of us on a morning.

F: Mmm

T2: and sometimes you just, sometimes he’d just crowd surfed onto the rest of the children in the class and you couldn’t, you couldn’t possibly teach. You know he’d swipe things off the tables and, you couldn’t possibly teach properly

(1: 203-206)

The overall impact of the conflicting roles, the skills of the class teacher, the expectations of the children, the diversity of the role of the class teacher and their resilience combine to have an impact on general classroom management as highlighted within this theme. This is further compromised from the perspective of the class teacher according to the effectiveness of the support from other staff members in the classroom and across the school as a whole.

6.3.2 - Theme Two: Narratives of Individual Differences in Coping

This theme represents factors influencing children’s individual differences in their ability to cope with trauma.
Table 4 - Development of theme two: narratives of Individual differences in coping, illustrated by initial codes forming final codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial codes</th>
<th>Final codes</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fear</td>
<td>Feelings / Management of fear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seeking control</td>
<td>Feelings of power / control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seeking power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resilience</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Narratives of individual differences in coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parental academic ability</td>
<td>Parental support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ineffective parenting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Parental support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age and Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Desire to be liked / praised</td>
<td>Ability to develop / use coping strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coping strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moral reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic performance</td>
<td>Academic performance*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Also represented in theme four - areas of development affected by trauma

- Feelings / Management of fear

The teachers provided many narratives of the children’s fear:

**T1:**  *deep down he is probably genuinely scared and just knows that way of acting cos he’s seen it.*

(1: 135-136)

**T2:**  *yeah, that made Steven really erm unsettled and a little bit unsure because things were out of control.*

(1: 144-145)

**T2:**  *(&)*  *to talk about that and when you got close to it. He, you could see he, he became really uncomfortable.*

(2: 124-125)

**T1:**  *Refused to go home with mums partner one day. Then told SENCo it was because she was scared.*

(R1: 29-31)

The children referred to in these narratives are expressing fear and their levels of anxiety and ability to manage the feelings of fear are linked to the circumstances of the situation.
Teacher two suggests there may be a time when it is more appropriate to talk and feels a child needs time before they are ready to talk.

\begin{quote}
T2: you wouldn't have got anything about his home life really out  
F: mmm  
T2: I don't think he was ready  
[ to (&)  
T3: [ no  
T2: (&) to talk about that
\end{quote}

(2: 121-124)

- Feelings of power / control

The teacher narrative suggested exposure to domestic violence affects children's perceptions of power or control; and that it is sought using violence.

\begin{quote}
T2: If you, if he, got his control taken away he would  
F: mmm  
T2: really get violent towards us. The other one towards the other children and that was, it was almost like a power thing really.  
\end{quote}

(1: 111-115)

Teacher two described how one child’s behaviour was not a cause for concern whilst he was in control.

\begin{quote}
T2: but it was all about control with him and  
F: Mmm  
T2: he needed to have control so if it was free choice play he wasn't a problem.  
\end{quote}

(1: 181-184)

The following extract was discussed in relation to skills of the teacher but the narrative of teacher one is of the child seeking control and how the power resides with the child once they are in control.

\begin{quote}
T2: Well power in a way  
T1: Mmm  
T2: well cos ours was sent to the headteacher sometimes he'd trash the headteacher's classroom erm but and, and she [laughs], she used to do things to calm him down like sit him on her knee and read a book which, so in the end he used to want  
F: mmm-hmm  
T2: to go to her room cos it wasn't punishment and, and then you've lost control haven't you?
\end{quote}
F: mmm
T2: He’s, he’s, you’ve got no sanctions because they’re kind of… calling all the shots.

(1: 286-297)

- Resilience

The teachers recognise a child’s level of resilience influences how well they are able to cope. Whilst talking about self-esteem teacher three constructs a narrative that all children are likely to be affected at some level regardless of their level of resilience. As she constructs this narrative she immediately begins to question it; perhaps realising the impact of what she is saying.

T3: Cos I think whether you like it or not // and / you try to say it’s not your fault you’d certainly feel // maybe some way responsible wouldn’t you?
T2: mmm.
T3: I don’t know. You might.
   /
T2: mmm
T3: Perhaps.

(2: 685-692)

Teachers one and two co-constructed a narrative that some children do experience success at school despite experiencing trauma.

T3: I think they’re very resilient.
T2: [laughs] I was just going to say exactly the same really.
T3: [laughs]
T2: Yeah. They sometimes do good despite all that don’t they?
T3: yeah.

(2: 881-885)

Teachers two and three describe how the school aims to foster perseverance and challenge, however teacher two was not convinced the children they were thinking of were resilient enough to engage with this type of learning.

F: yeah and do they have the resilience to engage in that?
   /
T2: hmm. I’m not sure

(2: 1384-1386)
• Parental support

The teachers constructed a narrative relating to the effectiveness of parental support impacting on children’s ability to cope with trauma.

The day to day practical challenges of parenting are recognised to be difficult:

T2: *His mum had to virtually shove him through the door and right from the beginning you know it was just a really bad start to the day because she couldn’t get them up and she couldn’t get them in*
T2: [and then,]
F: [Mmm]
T2: *you know, it just had a knock on effect didn’t it [looks to T3].*

(1: 325-331)

T3: *And also, I mean if you’re going back to just generally about domestic abuse and if that’s happening, then that’s taking the / emphasis away from the child isn’t it? So in terms of support for homework, reading*
T3: *and then general school stuff (&)*
T2: *mmm.*
F: *mmm*
T3: *(&)* *then they’re not getting that either are they? so that becomes a bit of a // a barrier, or you know, it’s a*
F: *mmm.*
T3: *a problem they have to*
T2: *mmm*
T3: *then overcome that other children don’t necessarily have to.*

(2: 799-811)

Teacher three has constructed a narrative that children exposed to domestic violence are at a disadvantage in comparison to other children purely in relation to parental support, regardless of any other factors.

In addition the emotional demands of parenting were perceived to be higher. This demonstrates that children exposed to domestic violence are somehow seen as ‘other’ and constructed as different from the general population:

T3: *or made to feel good about themselves. Cos if you, Cos it’s hard [ to do (&)*
T2: *[mmm.]*
T3: *(&)* *that if you’re not feeling good about yourself as an adult isn’t it? It’s very hard to pass that on [ to the child.*

(2: 819-825)
• Age and Gender

A thin narrative that girls are more able to cope in comparison to boys emerged. Boys were considered to engage in more boisterous play, whereas girls’ self-esteem was considered to be more negatively affected than that of boys. Consequently girls are constructed as more able to cope due to internalising their feelings:

T3: *I’m thinking of two girls and they seemed more able to cope*  

(1: 369)

F: [recap from previous sessions] *Their play is quite rough, they can be crashing and banging.*

T3: I think that tends to be more boys doesn’t it?

T2: mmm.

T1: mmm.

T3: When we were talking about that it was the boys we were thinking about.

T2: yeah.

(3: 264-271)

T3: *[that self-esteem one yeah]*

T3: I’m just thinking about, particularly girls that I’ve had. That is, that’s a huge/part of their problems.

T2: mmm

T3: Maybe the boys, we were talking last week weren’t we

T2: yeah

T3: it’s the same but with girls I do think it’s emotional

T1: emotional yeah their self-esteem’s even

(3: 970-978)

The narrative of age was not very well explored or particularly definitive. The teachers suggested younger children were more open, although this wasn’t always the case. Older children were perhaps thought to be more affected due to having a more developed sense of moral reasoning and therefore a better understanding of why domestic violence is wrong.

T2: *[laughs] That’s easier in reception because they’re so open about it although the little boy that left us wasn’t.*

(2: 116-117)

• Ability to develop / use coping strategies

Narratives relating to the children seeking positive affirmation through praise and the social approval of their peers were constructed.
Sometimes he just comes up for hugs. Both, both the boys that have been in that class and if I think of [another family] they were quite loving kids

(2: 618-620)

One particular narrative of a coping strategy was constructed in relation to getting things right. At home it was perceived this may be an important strategy for maintaining physical safety. It is particularly interesting that teacher three says ‘I would imagine’, there is an implication she has never considered how children would behave at home. Yet what she imagines of their behaviour is very contradictory to constructions of behaviour within school.

if violence is directed generally, is a norm in the family or whatever you’d minimise the risk to yourself wouldn’t you, I would imagine. Erm so in that case you would be trying to do things right wouldn’t you?

(2: 1442-1445)

Within school this was constructed a maladaptive strategy as it results in disengagement in learning which creates a fear of failure, affecting academic performance and self-esteem.

saying that’s not right, that’s a big issue isn’t it?

yeah.

[ and I think I do that to my class, no

cos it’s not a pleasant feeling is it?

(2: 1453-1456)

you take the safe option every time, because like you said. Someone tell me what to do and I’ll just do it like that every time.

[laughs]

yeah, mmm, yeah or I’ll copy it, or I’ll just not do it.

yeah, yeah, or I’ll copy it because I know the person next to me is probably going to get it right

(2: 1487-1493)

This disengagement indicates a lack of resilience or a very well developed coping strategy. A flow-chart was created for use in session three to reflect this narrative and to facilitate further discussion (see appendix eleven, page xxxv).

A narrative around trust was constructed in relation to conflicting messages coming from significant adults about violence which may lead to confusion and impact upon a child’s ability to cope.
The lack of trust presents a potential barrier to the teacher and child developing rapport which will also impact upon the skills of the class teacher in relation to their ability to support the child.

- Academic performance (also represented in theme four - narratives of developmental impact)

A narrative relating to academic performance as a mediating factor was constructed by the teachers. The academic performance of a child affects their ability to cope with trauma indirectly due to the sense of achievement, which directly affects self-esteem and self-worth. This, in turn, then has a cyclical impact as tolerance of failure and subsequent engagement in learning is affected.
6.3.3 - Theme Three: Narratives of Systemic Challenges

This theme represents factors within the wider system which affect how teachers are able to support children who have experienced trauma and more specifically domestic violence.

**Table 5 - Development of theme three: narratives of systemic challenges, illustrated by initial codes forming final codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial codes</th>
<th>Final codes</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Policy</td>
<td>Policies, procedures and protocols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Procedure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role of the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child Protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attachment theory</td>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>Narratives of systemic challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fear of parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perpetrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Victims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not talked about</td>
<td>A taboo subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time to talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extreme behaviour</td>
<td>Behaviour management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Impact on class/ learning/ teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Safety</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role of the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• External support</td>
<td>External support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Social Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Educational Psychologist</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family Support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Local Area Support Team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Parent question</td>
<td>Next steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policy development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher role</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of information</td>
<td>Lack of Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficult to recognise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information sharing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Policies, procedures and protocols

A strong narrative emerged around keeping records and following procedures. The teachers were clear information should be recorded although they seemed unsure of what purpose this served, beyond providing evidence.

T3: *Erm if we need to we keep a record, although we’re only keeping a record of what the child’s, or if, you know if somebody turns up that shouldn’t,*

(1: 725-737)

One teacher reflected domestic violence was talked about every day due to having to write up incidents. She constructs a narrative about it being an inconvenience and there is no perceived benefit from the task.

F: *And what about within school among staff members or/ [To T2] I mean you were saying you have support staff was it something that you talked about?*

T2: *Yeah everyday*

All: *[laughing]*

T2: *was taken up because we were spending so long having to write all the incidents up and so we talked about it a lot and then you know we talked to [T3] and [the headteacher] about it.*

(1: 488-495)

There was a nervousness about following the right procedures and protocols in response to allowing children space to talk or discussing domestic violence with children.

T3: *is it appropriate then to talk about domestic violence*

T2: *mmm*

T3: *and give them that opportunity to then say*

F: *mmm*

T2: *you need to know what the process has to be*

[yeah (&)]

T3: *[yeah]*

T2: *(&)* *somebody*

[discloses something (&)]

F: *[you’re probably]*

T3: *(&)* *that you have to tell somebody about.*
The narrative demonstrated the teachers clearly believed it was important to follow policies and procedures but this had no perceived beneficial impact within the classroom.

• Parenting

The teachers reflected on the background of the children’s families and reflected on the type of parenting these children receive.

The teachers suggested the children experience a number of difficulties at home:

T2: they come from families, that, er, have had lot’s of problems.

(1: 20-21).

However the teachers didn’t feel this meant children were unloved:

T3: I don’t necessarily think just because it, they’re in a home where this is domestic violence they don’t get that either. Because, yeah, because they get it off (&)
T2: yeah. Steven’s mum is very loving towards him.
T3: (&) you know, even if they don’t get it off both parents
T2: yeah.
T3: they might be getting it off one
T2: yeah.
T3: so I don’t necessarily think that it’s because they’re not getting that.

(2: 623-631)

They recognised that parents may be reluctant to ask for support or may be worried about the involvement of professionals:

T2: She was, kind of, trying to cover it up cos she was scared of losing the kids

(2: 1042-1043)

The parents were also perceived as defensive and unwilling to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children.

The trauma faced by parents was acknowledged:
T1: I think for some parents though just admitting to themselves
T3: yeah
T1: that they’re in a domestic relationship or have been
T3: Because, because the breakdown of any sort of relationship’s hard isn’t it
T1: [ mmm, mmm you don’t want to admit that, yeah
T3: [ so it’s not like that’s going to change
T2: I mean they might not want to be out of the relationship might they
T1: mmm
T3: Well that’s true too.
T2: They might / want to stay in it [laughs]
T3: yes.

(3: 901-912)

There is also recognition of the conflicting feelings which may arise towards a
partner and the difficulties of acknowledging an abusive relationship and openly
talking about it.

Overall no particular traits or patterns were identified in relation to perpetrators or
victims; neither were considered more needy of teacher or school support. There
were, however, some stereotyped views about violent relationships:

T3: It’s how my Dad’s behaving, cos it has a tendency to be Dad’s.
(1: 588-589)

T3: Respect is lacking in domestic abuse
(R3: 34-37)

• A taboo subject

The teachers reflected on the children knowing not to talk about what happens at
home, although some of the children clearly wanted to talk. The teachers reflected
they don’t provide opportunities for children to talk:

T3: But you don’t always leave the way open for the children to be able to talk
about something and, and its going back to saying about if that’s the norm
and it’s only maybe as they get older they realise that it’s not the norm.
(2: 97-100)

One of the teachers was reluctant to discuss domestic violence with parents:

T3: cos you can’t ever be specific about a family in those sort of situations can
you?
(2: 1827-1828)
This teacher was positive in considering discussing domestic violence but provided a caveat which would permit the topic not being raised for fear of making assumptions about a family.

When discussing the traumatic impact a violent relationship can have on parents it was apparent there was a pre-existing construct of domestic violence as a social taboo. This was evident as it was assumed emotional trauma would be caused when a partner chooses to stay in a violent relationship. This would also be difficult for professionals to understand and the teachers recognise these conflicts as maintaining the social taboo of talking about domestic violence and offering support.

- Behaviour management

The severity of the negative behaviour portrayed by the children was a recurring issue:

*T1:* Yeah. *They’re, they are a lot more difficult to handle in the sense of behaviour.*

(1: 96)

*T2:* and that had a bad effect on the rest of the children, because all our time was taken with managing his behaviour and that took, that was three of us on a morning.

(1: 199-201)

*T2:* It made me cross that, you know at first I was saying, you know this is happening it’s not acceptable in my class and no, none of the rest of the teaching staff seemed that bothered cos it didn’t affect them.

(1: 254-257)

*T3:* With him he was an extreme case in terms his behaviour

(1: 496)

The implication which came across from the teachers was the severity of the behaviour was inappropriate or unmanageable within their school (a mainstream setting).
• Safety

A narrative around safety was constructed in relation to the child and parental contact, other children and staff members.

T1: It was the same really. You had the two people trying to get them out and everything
F: right
T1: cos you’ve got to think of the other children but you’ve got to think of your safety as well and when you did take them out you, I felt awful when I came back to class.

(1: 220-225)

A narrative was constructed in relation to school providing a safe haven due to the consistency and routine.

T2: because it’s stable for him and you know, it’s always the same and it’s something kind of steady.

(1: 382-383)

The narrative constructed around safety demonstrated the teachers believed there are times when concerns for safety go beyond their role and even the role of the school.

T1: you got to a point where the TAs were like ‘right I don’t want to handle this anymore’

(1: 231-232)

T2: In my old school we had fisticuffs in the playground and we’ve had to call the police to sort that out and they’ve been, they had like a court order that [laughs] they’re not allowed in the playground so they, they had to stay a certain distance away from the school.

(1: 406-410)

• External support

There was a narrative of wanting to access external support but when there had been external support there was uncertainty around what the intervention had entailed.

F: and who has that been from?
T2: I’m not sure.
T3: well it’s the family support team
T2: oh right.
In the instance above teacher three is able to clarify in her role as SENCo.

*F:* ok, and the educational psychologist, you said you had group meetings?
*T2:* To be honest that was more with Nathan and he left us
*F:* Right, yeah.
*T2:* so I couldn’t really say but erm/ she is, she’s really good.

*T3:* It started at nursery for Steven
[because of the history of the family
*T2:* [Yeah. It was all set up
so I’m not sure what they did you know with mum and the family but it did seem to
*T3:* well they did, they did a lot around mum’s parenting role/ and

A narrative in relation to external support being difficult to obtain and in short supply also emerged:

*T2:* Yeah there’s difficulty sometimes if that child comes into your setting in the time that it takes
*F:* mmm
*T2:* to kind of get some, some extra help.
*F:* mmm.
*T2:* You know all the red tape that you have to jump through and I suppose you have to don’t you but
*T3:* Yep.
*T2:* It does make things difficult
*T3:* You do nowadays cos there’s a lot less support there.
*T2:* Exactly.

- **Next steps**

This code arose mainly within the third session as discussion focused on future steps. The teachers were able to identify areas for development and their own lack of knowledge and information was seen as an area to be addressed. Teachers wanted to know more to facilitate more effective classroom based behaviour management. In addition they wanted to respond, as human beings, to the suffering of children exposed to domestic violence. This leads to teachers being torn between the demands of their role and a human response:
Parental involvement was a major consideration in relation to next steps and relates directly to the perception of domestic violence as a taboo subject. The teachers recognised domestic violence needed to be acknowledged and talked around what would them to work more effectively with parents. Much of the discussion then focused on the types of questions that could be asked of parents, building rapport with parents and how information could be shared more effectively:

T2:   do you ever feel unsafe in your own home
      [ maybe kind of thing?

T3:   [laughs] I was going to be a bit more open ended and like are there any factors that might affect your child settling in at school

T1:   You’d probably start by asking about the actual child. What they perceive of them like how they’ve got on what they think about how they get on at school and then go on to the factors that might be / like, what’s the word, erm affecting it

T2:   And that communication includes / the parents especially I think cos once you’ve, like, lost them you’ve/
      [ you’ve kind of had it.
T3:   [ It’s working I’d say more than communication. Working with the parents isn’t it or a parent.
T2:   [ yeah getting them on side really so they feel (&)
      /
T3:   that they can trust you.
T2:   [ (&) safe.
The teachers recognise the sensitivity of the topic and how important it is to build an effective relationship with the parents. From my perspective this appeared to be uncharted territory with the teachers not having considered these factors and/or applying them to previous relationships and interactions; despite perhaps having the knowledge already.

- Lack of Information

A rich narrative about the lack of information about children’s backgrounds was constructed. Teachers often felt they knew something wasn’t right. A narrative of concern and worry creating a dilemma for the teachers is evident.

T3: I don’t think we don’t know half of it actually.
T2: I don’t either.
T3: I think you find out about the extreme cases or the cases where it’s got worse.
T2: Yeah
T3: and it’s escalated into, you know,
T2: mmm
T3: into that they’ve got a court order,

(1: 419-426)

There is also a further indication of imagining what goes on at home and not knowing, or being unable to imagine or empathise:

T3: and we expect them to come to school on time [laughs]
T2: mmm
T3: with the right stuff and having [laughs] done their homework / and we’re putting pressure on them to do that and then learn [laughs]
T2: mmm.
T3: while they’re here and, and you know, they are dealing with and coping with all that and then maybe going home and we don’t really know to what and that’s what I say you know. You’re thinking about some children and you know there’s something that’s not necessarily quite right

(2: 900-909)

T3: like I say a lot of the children you know there’s something and but you just don’t know what it is cos it’s very much a taboo isn’t it subject erm

(2: 1701-1703)

The teachers perceived more information would allow them to more effectively support children.
T2: I agree about the information cos with Steven we could do some really
good transition with him because we had the information from nursery.
(2: 1634-1636)

T2: [ we
T3: [ until
T2: didn’t know there were problems until social services contacted us at
Christmas
T3: and that, by then it was too late because
[ everything
T2: [ he
T3: had kicked off hadn’t it?
T2: yeah, yeah.
T3: we were dealing with, with this / behaviour
T2: mmm
T3: that we didn’t know where it was coming from
T2: yeah.
T3: we thought it was a reaction to school, or well we didn’t know did we. We
put all sorts in place.
F: which can be the case can’t it
T2: yeah
F: but I suppose if there’s information to be had
T2: [ so yeah better communication really and that includes mum as well.
(2: 1638-1657)

It is clear from these extracts the teachers felt information came too late and they
could have done more, or different, interventions were they aware domestic violence
was taking place in the home.

Communication with parents in relation to having background information about
children was also considered central to this narrative.

T2: And that communication includes / the parents especially I think cos once
you’ve, like, lost them you’ve/
[ you’ve kind of had it.
T3: [ It’s working I’d say
more than communication. Working with the parents
[ isn’t it or a parent.
T2: [ yeah getting
them on side really so they feel (&)
/
T3: that they can
[ trust you.
T2: [ (&) safe.
(3: 454-465)
This particular narrative, relating to lack of information, highlighted to me that teachers and schools do not have knowledge of families where domestic violence is taking place. In addition there is a systemic failure as class teachers are not knowledgeable regarding the contribution they make to recordkeeping, which facilitates access to external support (e.g. meeting criteria for involvement) nor are they aware of the support provided by external services, which would motivate record keeping.

T2: so and he’d taken all that [laughs] in his stride really.
F: mmm
T2: But you wouldn’t have ever known that had happened.  

(1: 446-448)

This was also evident from teacher three who expected more participants in the study. The lack of interest in participating perhaps highlights teachers are unaware of how common or extensive the impact of exposure domestic violence is upon children.

T3: Surprised more people didn’t take part.

(R3: 03-04)
6.3.4 - Theme Four: Narratives of Developmental Impact

This theme represents the impact of trauma upon children’s development.

Table 6 – Development of theme four: narratives of developmental impact, illustrated by initial codes forming final codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial codes</th>
<th>Final codes</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Peer relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Social skills</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>Narratives of developmental impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Behaviour</td>
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<td>• Morals</td>
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<td>• Impulsive</td>
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<td>• Negative role model</td>
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<td>• Peer perceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Extreme behaviour</td>
<td>Emotion regulation</td>
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<td>• Low self-esteem</td>
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<td>• Emotion regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Norm</td>
<td>Perception of normality</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conflicting messages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic performance</td>
<td>Academic performance*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Also represented in theme two - individual differences in coping.

- Social skills

The teachers constructed a narrative around the social skills of children exposed to domestic violence through stories describing social role models and difficulties with social interaction.

Teachers perceived children to copy behaviour they see modelled at home:

\[ T2: \text{Well, I think mainly the children’s, it’s kind of modelled for them, that’s set and then they act it out in my experience they act it out in some way} \]

\[ F: \text{Mmm} \]

\[ T2: \text{at school. So if they’ve seen it, or had it done to them, they will either act it out to us, other children or to the staff.} \]

\[(1: 72-77)\]
The teachers constructed the children’s exposure to violence at home as having a negative impact on their behaviour in school and children constructing violence as an appropriate form of social interaction.

The teachers considered how violence starts:

T2: *Which I suppose is where the cycle starts with a vulnerable person who needs lots of loving and gets taken advantage of, I don’t know.*
T3: *yeah.*

(2: 613-616)

Overall there is an implication individuals are predisposed to become victims due to a need to be loved and that children will inevitably copy the behaviour of their parents.

Teacher two describes how peers are frightened of one particular child:

T2: *I think they’d find it very scary having him without an adult supervising because it, it, he, he just manages to*
T3: *mmm*

(2: 194-196)

He is so scary she is unable to put it into words, making her narrative all the more poignant.

The difficulties with social interaction were articulated in teacher two’s narrative about one child:

T3: *(& he’s hideous Steven, I mean he’s really violent and can be anyway,)*

(2: 236-237)

It is clear the description ‘hideous’ is more of a reference to the level of difficulty she perceives in his social interaction skills rather than the child and his behaviour. This is evident from her clarification about his behaviour.

The narrative of social skills included moral reasoning. Teachers described the superficial understanding children had of solving social problems; using physical violence and being unable to empathise with the emotional pain caused by their
intimidation. The children knew hurting others was wrong and their understanding of this was very black and white. Coercive behaviour was identified by the teachers; however the children were only able to consider their behaviour in terms of physically hurting others. The children therefore developed a behavioural coping strategy of not hurting others and this was impacting on their peer relationships:

T2: he’s kind of understands that he doesn’t hurt people and he’s kind of erm / not in a clever way but he will intimidate without actually hurting
F: mmm.
T2: but you can see him, like/ getting up to the other children and like in their face and he, he will be very intimidating in how he / approaches them

(2: 142-148)

T3: That’s the first thing that comes out of his mouth. I agree. Mmm. When you go and see him ‘but I didn’t hurt them’.

(2: 174-175)

T3: all he could say was ‘well why is the new Kyle saying that, because I haven’t hurt him’.
F: mmm
T2: yeah
T3: Erm and he couldn’t, he wouldn’t, ‘well no everybody’s saying it Alfie cos they don’t like your general behaviour
[ and the (&)
T2: [ mmm
T3: (&) way you / try and control or bully or’, and I use it in the loosest term, but you know try and intimidate or coerce, and ‘Kyle, even though he’s only been in a school a couple of weeks
[ can (&)
T2: [ mmm
T3: (&) feel that aswell’
[ erm
T2: [ yeah
T3: and the, but Alfie’s ‘well I haven’t hurt him so why is he saying anything’ can’t pick up on the general /
[ but this is the message that (&)
F: [ social cues and interpersonal, yeah.
T3: (&) everybody’s giving you.

(2:1226-1246)

These behaviours are all reflected within the Home Office (2012) definition of domestic violence and this narrative constructs children exposed to domestic violence displaying the same behaviours in their social interactions.

- Emotion regulation
The teachers constructed a narrative of children who are exposed to domestic violence finding it difficult to manage their emotions.

As has already been highlighted in previous sections the teachers constructed a narrative which describes the children as violent. This narrative constructs difficulties with emotion regulation, e.g. frustration and being unable to recognise their feelings as leading to violent behaviour.

*T2:* His play is very rough. Even if he’s not speaking it’s all smashing things together, really noisy, you know

*T3:* Crashing and banging.

(1: 592-594)

Overall a narrative of physical violence being a common behavioural presentation of children exposed to domestic violence was constructed, which could be due to frustration and learned behaviour. The teachers also constructed a narrative relating to the children crying often or easily.

*T1:* Very emotional. Would often cry for periods of time.

(R1: 22-23)

*T2:* Cries out of all proportion at “injustice” of someone hurting him.

(R2: 11-12)

It is apparent the teachers maintain high expectations but this is done by minimising traumatic experiences and ignoring their impact.

*T3:* I don’t know how to phrase this without being judgemental, but to get out of the situation that you know they’re,

F: mmm

*T3:* so they don’t perpetuate it if you like. So it’s, so it’s/ around giving them the best, for a start, education.

F: Mmm

*T3:* erm and although they might have seen things and you know, that we don’t know the half of, erm, it’s not that giving that an excuse then for them to behave like that, but to try and break that cycle.

(1: 783-788)

It is evident the teachers have the best of intentions for the children and want the children to succeed, however life experiences cannot be ignored. I have coped by being involved in decision making and being able to articulate the challenges certain
situations present and strategies I have found successful. I have suffered with anxiety and mild panic attacks, particularly related to public places. Through speaking to friends and colleagues I recognised anxiety is a common consequence of trauma and I am fortunately able to recognise my anxiety. As soon as I recognised I was suffering from anxiety I have been able to manage it more effectively; despite finding it difficult to acknowledge as I have always been a confident social person. This has demonstrated to me that trauma can have a very deep cutting impact and it doesn’t necessarily hit your weaknesses, as might be expected. This can have hidden disadvantages as people who know me well would have no expectation I would be suffering from anxiety which, in turn, has made it easy for me to hide it from them. Children suffering from trauma are unlikely to be able to identify their feelings then process their emotions and label them as anxiety; although this could present additional difficulties in consideration of what is meant by anxiety as this could be seen as pathologisation.

- Perception of normality

The teachers constructed a narrative relating to the children’s perceptions of normality. Some children were unaware their family dynamics are controversial and others were secretive or covered up what happens within the home.

\[T2: \text{he just said, as part of the news, ‘oh and my dad used to hit, hit my dog so we had to send the dog away and then he used to hit me and my mum so we had to send Daddy away’}
\]
\[(1: 441-444)\]

\[T1: \text{Once spoke about two black eyes her mum had when I was marking her work. Mum denied everything.}
\]
\[(R1: 55-57)\]

\[T1: \text{Would often miss days of school. When asked why he wasn’t in, would think of an answer to give as if he was making it up OR it was rehearsed.}
\]
\[(R1: 06-10)\]

Teachers believed that some of the children’s perceptions of normality in relation to their family dynamics are naïve, or innocent. Other children are aware of the differences between their family and other families and this is likely to directly impact upon the effectiveness of their coping strategies, such as the development and application of moral reasoning, and lead them to question their trust of adults who
are delivering conflicting messages. All of these factors have been discussed earlier.
• Academic performance (also represented in theme two - narratives of individual differences in coping)

The narrative of academic performance has already been discussed in relation to individual differences in coping. In the previous narrative academic performance was seen as a mediating factor for those who have experienced trauma. This narrative constructs exposure to domestic violence as affecting academic performance. The narratives constructed in relation to theme four have demonstrated the wide ranging impact of domestic violence. It is the combination of all of these factors which can have a negative impact upon the academic performance of children exposed to trauma.

Derealisation is an emotional coping strategy in response to trauma (PTSD diagnostic criteria, refer to appendix three, page iv). Narratives of disengagement, attention and concentration difficulties and social withdrawal are indicative of derealisation:

\[ T1: \quad \text{Very tired often / dazed.} \quad (R1: 24) \]

\[ T1: \quad \text{Struggled to make friendships} \\
\quad \text{Would often seem like she was thinking of something else} \quad (R1: 36-38) \]

\[ T1: \quad \text{very quiet.} \\
\quad \text{Mind often elsewhere} \quad (R1: 40-41) \]

\[ T2: \quad \text{Switches off a lot more quickly, yeah.} \]
\[ T3: \quad \text{or go into a} \\
\quad \text{[ you know (&) \]} \]
\[ T2: \quad \text{[ yeah \]} \]
\[ T3: \quad \text{(&) a bit of a zone, or} \]
\[ F: \quad \text{would you} \]
\[ T3: \quad \text{lacking the focus.} \quad (2: 470-476) \]

In particular these responses to trauma will negatively impact upon academic performance.
6.4 - Conclusion

The first section in this chapter presented a personal reflection on the participants and the sessions. Following these reflections the data is presented from the thematic analysis. Four themes were identified and the codes which codes relating to each theme were presented; the inclusion of my personal narratives allows for professional narratives of emotional trauma to be considered and constructed through reflection on domestic violence.

The next chapter includes a brief reflection on the research questions. The key outcomes from the data analysis are then critically considered according to each theme identified by the thematic analysis. In the following section the conclusions of the research are presented in relation to the research questions. The final section of the following chapter then considers the limitations and future applications of this research project.
**7 - Discussion**

Within this final chapter the outcomes and implications of the research project are discussed. The first section provides a brief reflection on the research questions. The second section then critically discusses each theme in turn and considers the relevance of the literature and research present in the literature review (chapter two). The following section presents a conclusion to the research by returning to the research questions and discussing the relevance of the themes to the research questions. The final section of the chapter then discusses the implications of this research for schools and educational and child psychologists; and the limitations of this research project are then considered before finally presenting the application of the outcomes of this research project.

**7.1 - Reflections on the Research Questions**

The purpose of this thesis is to consider the following research questions:

1. What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

2. What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?

3. What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

I will now give my reflections on each research question following the data analysis.

**7.1.1 - Research Question One: What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?**

The narratives constructed in relation to support mechanisms were not overly positive; with teachers describing how they felt overwhelmed and under supported.
The narrative constructed around support mechanisms described behaviour management, and extrinsic behaviours in particular. The narrative of behaviour management described managing physical violence, social interactions and non-compliance within the classroom on a day to day basis. The behaviour was constructed as affecting the other children in the class, the teachers and other staff members, both within the classroom and beyond. The children were constructed as presenting a challenge to the school system as a whole; and this narrative influenced the teachers’ construction of their own coping ability. The teacher narrative described a requirement for more effective support staff in the classroom and more effective systemic school support structures. The teachers constructed improved, and more open, communication with parents as necessary to provide more effective support for children exposed to domestic violence.

Interestingly there is limited reflection within the teacher narrative on the children’s emotional distress or emotional well-being. The teachers focus on the impact of the behaviour on everyone other than the child themselves; perhaps because it is too painful as such violence goes against normative assumptions about childhood. The reflections on emotional impact are biased towards themselves and other members of staff. This is of particular interest given emotional trauma is central to my reflection. I feel my own experience of emotional trauma heightens my sensitivity to its impact and therefore affects how I construct the children and their experiences, whereas the teacher narrative constructs young children as unaffected by exposure to domestic violence.

Initial analysis indicates the following themes address research question one:

- Theme One: Narratives of the Impact on the Class Teacher
- Theme Three: Narratives of Systemic Challenges

The themes will be discussed in depth in the next section.
7.1.2 - Research Question Two: What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?

Narratives describing impact of exposure to domestic violence were varied, similarly to previous research in this area. Narratives described the impact as extensive with almost all conceivable aspects of development and schooling directly affected. Interestingly narratives of resilience were also constructed.

Given the focus of this research is educational it is particularly interesting that academic performance features within two of the four themes. The narrative of academic performance described it as a pre-existing mediating factor which is either protective or maladaptive based on individual differences. Academic performance is also constructed as being directly affected by exposure to domestic violence. This is of particular importance as narratives of academic performance may inform support packages and interventions.

A strong narrative describing the adverse impact on social and emotional development was constructed. This narrative described exposure to domestic violence as having an adverse impact on social and emotional skills. In addition this narrative, co-constructed by the teachers, described social and emotional skills as core values within education similarly to previous research presented in the literature review. It is of particular interest that the teacher narrative recognises the impact on social and emotional development without considering, in depth, the emotional well-being and distress underlying the children’s presentations.

Overall a narrative was constructed about the impact on class teachers. A causational relationship was constructed by the teachers describing the needs of the child then the greater the demands placed upon the class teacher and the school system. This narrative described how demands on the teacher, and other staff, indirectly impacts upon the class as a whole, yet there is limited reflection on the impact on the child themselves.
Initial analysis indicates the following themes address research question two:

- Theme One: Narratives of Individual Differences in Coping
- Theme Three: Narratives of Developmental Impact

The themes will be discussed in depth in the next section.

7.1.3 - Research Question Three: What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

From the teachers’ narratives it was apparent, there is scope for educational and child psychologist support to be offered in relation to each of the themes identified from the data analysis. This may be through direct work with children and families or systemic work with schools or the local authority.

Based on teacher narratives of domestic violence direct work to raise awareness and develop understanding of the impact of trauma and domestic violence would be needed. Based on my initial reflections I feel this would be necessary prior to engaging at a multi-agency level and looking at support packages beyond the classroom environment; which, coincidentally, are not the remit of this research. The aim was to explore day to day classroom based support rather than targeted intervention programmes.

Initial analysis indicates all four themes address research question three:

- Theme One: Narratives of the Impact on the Class Teacher
- Theme Two: Narratives of Individual Differences in Coping
- Theme Three: Narratives of Systemic Challenges
- Theme Four: Narratives of Developmental Impact

The themes will be discussed in depth in the next section.

7.2 - Discussion of the Research Outcomes

This section provides a detailed discussion of the themes identified in chapter six. The following themes were identified as a result of the data analysis (figure 1 – thematic map, page 143):
Each theme will now be discussed in turn; and reviewed in relation to the literature review (presented in chapter one) and the methodology (presented in chapter two). Within this section the research questions will be answered indirectly through the themes identified from the data analysis. The research questions will therefore be revisited in the following section.

7.2.1 - Theme One: Narratives of the Impact on the Class Teacher

This theme represents the factors impacting on the class teacher’s ability to support children who have experienced emotional trauma. Teacher narratives in relation to theme one highlight the range of factors affecting the class teacher in supporting the learning and functioning of all children within the classroom. Furthermore there is a complex relationship between these narratives; this highlights the complexity of both education and domestic violence.

- Expectations of the children

The teacher narrative of children exposed to domestic violence constructs them as too young to understand and consequently be adversely affected. This narrative is not supported by research into domestic violence (Miller, Howell and Graham-Bermann, 2012; Tailor and Letourneau, 2012; Howell, 2011; Bogat et al. 2006; Whitaker, Orzol and Kahn, 2006; Lehmann, 1997; Fantuzzo et al, 1991) and would have been challenged by the reading material provided at the end of the first session (refer to Table 1, page 124, for details). However, within the first session, as the narrative developed the teachers began to question themselves and a narrative of the impact on young children being unthinkable began to emerge.
This was quickly rejected returning to the original, safer and more palatable narrative of these children being too young to understand.

Similarly the following quote highlights rejection of a narrative which acknowledges the impact of trauma:

T3: Cos you still want, you don’t want to say well they’ve been subjected to that so they’ve got that excuse.

(1: 794-795)

The short phrase ‘you don’t want to say’ raises may questions; what don’t you want to say, why, and what is implied in what is unsaid?

Unfortunately research shows that we need to say ‘yes they do have an excuse’. The literature review indicates the breadth and depth of the impact exposure to domestic violence can have on children, particularly young children.

The narrative ‘young children experience emotional trauma as a result of exposure to domestic violence’ would need to be accepted to enable a narrative detailing the impact of exposure to domestic violence on young children. Ironically this was too emotionally challenging for the teachers to accept. Therefore the original narrative constructing the children as too young to understand is maintained for the purposes of protecting the teachers from the alternative, emotionally challenging, narrative this would necessitate.

The acknowledgement of the impact of my own traumatic experiences, particularly when at work, firstly relieved some of the pressure I felt as my difficulties and anxieties were acknowledged and supported. Secondly this offer of support then facilitated me in articulating situations which were difficult and being allowed, or supported, to find ways to manage these difficulties facilitated my coping. As I described earlier, recognising my own feelings, such as anxiety and triggers, e.g. groups of people, parties, busy public places, facilitated the
development of coping strategies. According to Goleman (2004) these are qualities of emotional intelligence and I would construct a narrative of myself as emotionally intelligent. However this is in contrast to young children whose development may have been affected by traumatic experiences therefore they are unable to develop, and apply, coping strategies independently. I would also argue I did not independently cope at work and I wouldn’t underestimate the support, formally and informally, provided by my colleagues. I can readily create a narrative of returning to work without the support systems in place and the ultimate impact this would have had upon my coping and the service (which we can liken to the impact on the teacher of class).

Teacher three implied children have a choice about how they are affected by domestic violence.

T3: I don’t know how to phrase this without being judgemental, but to get out of the situation that you know they’re,
F: mmm
T3: so they don’t perpetuate it if you like. So it’s, so it’s/ around giving them the best, for a start, education.
F: Mmm
T3: erm and although they might have seen things and you know, that we don’t know the half of, erm, it’s not that giving that an excuse then for them to behave like that, but to try and break that cycle.

(1: 783-788)

Whilst children may not have a choice, in simplistic black and white terms, regarding whether or not domestic violence affects them, their emotional literacy, resilience social problem solving skills and emotion regulation are all indicated to influence, or mediate, the impact of exposure to domestic violence. As White (2012) stated, democratic individuals require more than knowledge. A strong narrative of the teachers having high expectations for all the children in their care, and wanting them to do well, was evident. This narrative included a narrative of education as beneficial and influential in determining a child’s future prospects; a narrative similar to Gove’s (2012) philosophy risky behaviour can be prevented by education in academic subjects. Both of these narratives suggest education can fix all ills. Theories relating to the impact of domestic violence on children presented in the literature review would not support this narrative.
Within this narrative the influence of a politically constructed, ethnographic, stereotype emerges – intelligent people don’t have violent relationships. However domestic violence is not predictable according to characteristics such as intelligence and can affect anyone (Cho, 2012).

My narrative constructs the teachers as underestimating the impact of emotional trauma, in addition the teachers constructed a narrative of children exposed to domestic violence as displaying challenging behaviour. The teacher narrative of high expectations is affected by both of these narratives leading to a cyclical effect, see figure 2 below:

Figure 2 - The teacher narrative of high expectations and its impact upon the class teacher

As a result of the teachers’ narrative for high expectations despite adversity (reinforced by the educational and political ethnographic demands of accountability) and my narrative which constructs teachers as underestimating the impact of emotional trauma, a cyclical effect occurs. As shown in figure 2 teacher expectations and limited understandings of trauma together increase the
pressure experienced by traumatised children in school; this is then likely to lead to a stress response (Sylwester, 1994), which further contributes to the challenging behaviours exhibited in response to emotional trauma. These behaviours then significantly impact upon the teachers within the classroom and the cycle continues with teachers continuing to have high expectations of the children. This is not to say teachers should not have high expectations of the children, however a greater understanding of emotional trauma may lead to teachers adjusting their expectations and responding differently to the challenging behaviour. The alternative narrative of the challenging behaviour may then have a positive impact upon the children’s behaviour due to the stresses associated with the high expectations being reduced.

Based on the narrative I constructed around the importance of acknowledging trauma and the provision of support structures, it is unsurprising children exposed to domestic violence, or other traumatic experiences, find it extremely difficult to cope; nor is the impact of children’s maladaptive coping on the class teacher surprising. Coping strategies will be further explored in relation to theme two (narrative of individual differences in the development and use of coping strategies).

- Skills of the class teacher

The narrative of classroom based support systems outlined the use of good practice techniques such as diversionary tactics, a calm and safe environment, rewards, praise, routines, consequences and communication. The teachers applied behaviourist principles to behaviour modification, and recognised them as such:

\[T2: \text{Yeah, and he, he, he loves his treat so if he doesn’t get it - it’s just worked that you know, he tends to, like Pavlov’s dogs I suppose, he wants it so he tries to remember not to hurt people.}\]

(1: 608-610)

Behaviourist approaches can be critiqued for not addressing the causes of behaviour and in this instance, as I have already outlined, my narrative focuses on trauma theories and therefore involves acknowledging the cause of
behaviour. Based on a trauma theory perspective my narrative constructs the generalised good practice behaviour management techniques used by the teachers as ineffective for addressing the challenging behaviour. Monahon (1993) advises against behaviourist approaches to managing challenging behaviour arising as a result of trauma.

There is a danger that a child who feels guilty and bad about himself as a result of a trauma may become locked into a pattern of provoking the very punishment he fears he deserves. (Monahon, 1993; p.112).

The class teachers constructed a strong narrative of feeling unsupported by classroom staff and school systems. Within their narrative they construct themselves as alone, undermined, questioning their own abilities and dependent upon wider support structures. The teacher narrative also constructs the children as being labelled ‘naughty’ by support staff. Consideration can be given to how this narrative affects both the teachers and the children. The teachers constructed a narrative depicting themselves as questioning their own practice and the effectiveness of school systems. In my opinion challenging the constructs of children exposed to domestic violence may lead support staff to be more understanding and utilise more appropriate methods of support within the classroom. In addition school systems and policies, which take into consideration the impact of emotional trauma, rather than being underpinned by behaviourist theory, are more likely to address the needs of traumatised children. This then influences how the children are constructed which directly impacts upon the skills of the class teacher, as the teacher is not de-skilled and is supported to draw on a range of skills and experience in the classroom.

- Role of the class teacher

The construction of a narrative describing teacher role was the source of greatest conflict. The literature review highlights social constructions of the role of the teacher as varied and the subject of significant debate. The conflict experienced in constructing a narrative directly relates to the wider ethnographic political debate regarding the purpose of education as discussed in the literature review. The teachers constructed the teacher role as teaching the curriculum.
The role of the teacher was also constructed as facilitating the development of social and emotional skills, and building resilience. The conflict arose in the construction of a narrative to describe the significance and hierarchy of these roles:

T2: Our role is not necessarily academic is it? It’s kind of coping strategies, so the personal and social.
T3: Yeah, no, both isn’t it? Cos you still want, you don’t want to say well they’ve been subjected to that so they’ve got that excuse. You want to say that but we still need to/ teach them, I don’t know that’s - well that’s our role at the end of the day isn’t it?

(1: 792-797)

This quote highlights how the teacher constructs a narrative of the teacher role as being something other than academic whereas teacher three constructs the teacher’s role as teaching the curriculum i.e. the pursuit of academia.

The difficulties in constructing a narrative of teacher role are evident in the conflicts regarding expectations, or management, of the children.

T3: oh well they’ve seen that terrible thing so they don’t have to do that work today or they can behave like this today. Which, I don’t know/ I do think there was some of that maybe, or that, you know that there can be a tendency for that if you’re not careful.

(1: 801-805)

Teacher three is clearly not wanting to make allowances, or excuses, for trauma, but acknowledges allowances can and should be made, but with careful consideration. The conflict within this narrative relates to what constitutes an appropriate allowance and on what basis consideration should be made. Teacher constructs of behaviour are influenced by (social) constructions of the role of the teacher and the decision to make allowances is undoubtedly influenced by existing ethnographic constructions which value standards and attainment. Additionally my narrative constructs the teachers as responding to (social) constructions of challenging behaviour and having a limited understanding of domestic violence and its impact. It is my opinion challenging the teachers’ constructs of the children and the impact of domestic violence would facilitate the application of more appropriate strategies and approaches.
Additionally increased theoretical knowledge would inform decision making when considering how a child can be supported to learn having experienced trauma. The extent to which it is the teacher’s role to facilitate learning returns to the debate regarding the purpose of education. Aside from this debate my narrative constructs the teachers’ lack of theoretical understanding as preventing their narrative from exploring reasons why expectations of a traumatised child could be differentiated; without being able to answer why the teacher constructs any form of differentiation as inappropriate.

The teacher narrative describes rapport and a trusting relationship as good practice components of the teacher role. However this narrative is undeveloped and doesn’t explore why these factors are also good practice in relation to supporting children exposed to domestic violence, they are simply accepted as features of good practice. As I have mentioned earlier the teacher narrative does not explore the emotional impact on children of exposure to domestic violence; consequently the emotional significance of rapport and a trusting relationship are not explored.

- Teacher resilience

The narrative constructed of teacher resilience in relation to providing support for children exposed to domestic violence on a day to day basis is not positive. Teachers constructed themselves as alone, defeated and unsupported emotionally and physically. The teachers also constructed systemic support as ineffective. In addition the teacher narrative constructs other members of staff as being unaware of the challenges they are facing, as there is no mention of any acknowledgement beyond the classroom, other than through implementation of behaviour policies. Further developing the teacher narrative, I construct teachers as lacking supervision and emotional support. As highlighted in the literature review supervision is not a component of professional support for teachers. Perhaps supervision not being a professional requirement of teachers indicates the management of emotionally challenging situations, and children, is not considered a core component of teaching. I suspect many teachers would disagree and argue teaching is emotionally challenging and stress inducing on a
day to day basis. If this is the case perhaps supervision, or more informal emotional support structures, are required to contribute to the well-being and resilience of teachers.

The many conflicting responsibilities of the teacher may also affect the resilience of a teacher. Consider the following quote:

T1:  *cos you’ve got to think of the other children but you’ve got to think of your safety as well and when you did take them out you, I felt awful when I came back to class. It was an awful feeling, I’ve had to just remove a child from my class and he’s five years old.*

(1: 223-226)

The teacher describes having to think of the safety of other children and herself. In addition she has to consider the safety of other adults in the class and the child. Safety has both physical and emotional components; whilst the physical components were probably paramount to decision making in this example that does not detract from the potential for emotional harm. The teacher describes feeling awful, an emotional response, but the cause of the ‘awfulness’ can be multiple; concern for the child, the physical and emotional impact of removing him, the emotional impact on the other children, the emotional connotations of having excluded the child from the class, and not to mention he is five years old… the teacher is defeated by a five year old, or at the very least, this is her narrative. The narrative of teacher one constructs an inability to cope and this is reinforced by the age of the child. This is of particular importance as (social) constructions of a child of five do not describe them as unmanageable. The narrative of teacher one focuses on the negative consequences associated with removing the child from the classroom. Constructing removing the child as undesirable has a negative impact on the resilience of this teacher next time she is faced with this scenario. The resilience of the teacher continues to be adversely affected as the construct of being unable to cope is reinforced. The teacher construct of not coping facilitates the construction of the behaviour of children exposed to domestic violence as unmanageable, which then acts as a protective factor as the teacher is no longer personally responsible or unable to cope. In contrast, rather than constructing my inability to cope as a failing, I
construct myself as having empathy and recognise my coping difficulties highlight my own, or other peoples, maladaptive coping strategies.

Within my narrative I describe my resilience as providing empathy. Using our own experiences we can draw upon moments of isolation, defeat, helplessness or other feelings and emotions, to empathise with others. This is not to say we should ‘get on with it’, but to try and use our experiences in a positive way. We can’t change our experiences as they make us who we are; however we can use them to positively affect the future for ourselves and others. We can therefore construct an alternative more positive narrative, in teacher one’s case, a narrative of the benefits of removing the child from class rather than the consequences.

- Classroom management

The narratives of impact on the class teacher in relation to teacher expectations, teacher role, skills of the class teacher and resilience, all contribute to a narrative describing the impact on the class teacher to engage in effective classroom management. The teachers’ narrative constructs the challenges as beyond the control of the class teacher, in particular the severity of the behaviour is constructed as out of control and beyond the scope of the mainstream school system and structures in place in the classroom. The construction of the challenges as beyond the class teacher provides protection for the class teacher as it places responsibility and control beyond the teacher. The teachers’ narrative is therefore one of an adaptive coping strategy contributing to the resilience of the teachers.

7.2.2 - Theme Two: Narratives of Individual Differences in Coping

This theme represents factors influencing children’s individual differences in their ability to cope with emotional trauma.

Overall the teachers constructed a strong narrative of individual differences in children’s coping ability. A range of individual differences contributed to the narrative
and the teacher narrative constructed coping strategies as having a mediating effect which can be either adaptive or maladaptive.

- Feelings / Management of fear

Narratives describing domestic violence as trauma were constructed by the teachers and the victims of domestic violence were constructed as traumatised, although the construct of who is traumatised did not necessarily extend to children exposed to domestic violence. The narratives that teachers constructed of children’s emotional trauma are thin given the physical impact of violence is constructed as inducing emotional trauma for victims; yet the emotional impact on children of exposure to domestic violence is not explored.

The teachers constructed a narrative of ‘fearful children’ (the teachers didn’t label the children as traumatised). Trauma is evidenced by avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma (according to PTSD diagnostic criteria, refer to appendix three, page iv). Whilst the teachers described the children as fearful, they are unlikely to specifically label symptoms of trauma due to being unfamiliar with trauma theories; nor should teachers be expected to diagnose trauma. In addition teachers may also want to resist labelling as trauma is increasingly medicalised and can become a label which stays for life (MacLure et al, 2008). However the teachers’ recognition and human responses to behaviour which communicates emotional distress and fear are not ineffective. The narrative of fear constructed by the teachers acknowledges the importance of providing time for the children to talk but a need to recognise when the child is ready to talk. There is also recognition in this narrative that different children will have different needs. This narrative constructs the teachers as emotional responsive and attuned to the needs of the individual children; which facilitates recovery (Monahon, 1993). The children’s behaviours indicate a need for emotional support to enable them to manage their emotional responses. Behaviour can indicate a need for further professional support, which may be safeguarding and / or therapeutic in nature. The teacher narrative strongly recognised the professional responsibility for safeguarding but little consideration was given to the emotional impact and consciously supporting these needs.
Power and control

The teachers constructed children exposed to domestic violence as seeking power and control. The children were constructed as calm when engaging in child-led activities, whereas adult-led activities result in the child seeking to maintain power and control. My narrative based on a trauma theory perspective constructs the children as possibly fearful of the consequences of an adult making demands or requests. For example children exposed to domestic violence may fear a violent outcome if the adult’s demands are unmet; this fear may lead to children seeking to maintain power and control to avoid the adult making demands or requests.

Resilience

A child’s resilience is constructed within this research as influencing their coping in response to emotional trauma, such as exposure to domestic violence.

The teachers’ narrative constructed resilience as varying across the children. They constructed a number of reasons to account for differences in resilience, such as self-blame and management of unexpected failure. The teacher narrative constructed some children as more resilient than others and being relatively unaffected by exposure to domestic violence. This narrative is supported by domestic violence research which shows not all children display adverse effects as a result of exposure to domestic violence and the severity of adverse effects is also variable (Renner, 2012; Lamers-Winkleman, Willeman and Vissela, 2012; Bogat et al. 2009; Graham-Bermann et al. 2009).

The teachers constructed a narrative of schools as actively working to build resilience. However consideration of the vulnerability of children exposed to domestic violence led the teachers to question whether children were resilient enough to engage with activities, or tasks, which are targeted at building resilience. Problem solving tasks which are beyond the resilience of traumatised
children will further deplete their levels of resilience by increasing the stress response (Sylwester, 1994). The group interviews, by providing an opportunity for reflection, enabled the teachers to create a narrative describing the impact of problem solving, or resilience building activities on children with low levels of resilience. The teacher narrative acknowledged these activities, aimed at supporting these children may in fact have a negative impact. Trauma theorists would argue these types of activity may re-create feelings associated with the trauma response therefore re-traumatising the child.

- Parental support

The teachers developed a narrative constructing domestic violence as reducing parental capacity; this is supported by research into parenting capacity (Levendosky et al., 2006; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000; Erel and Burman, 1995; Holden and Ritchie, 1991). The teacher narrative constructed children exposed to domestic violence as disadvantaged due to reduced parenting capacity. The narrative described parental conflict as detracting from the needs of the children, e.g. support with homework and children were disadvantaged due to having a barrier to overcome which was not present for all children. Additionally the teacher narrative described reduced parenting capacity as negatively affecting daily routine which, in turn, has a negative impact on academic performance e.g. regularly arriving to school late or without the correct resources.

The research describes parental support as a mediating factor which can be adaptive or maladaptive (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013; Graham-Bermann et al. 2009, Levendosky et al. 2006; Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2001; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000; Henning et al. 1997; Erel and Burman, 1995; Fantuzzo et al. 1991; Holden and Ritchie, 1991; Grych and Fincham, 1990), within this research the teacher narrative constructed domestic violence as having a maladaptive impact on parenting and consequently an indirect maladaptive impact on children. Parents involved in an abusive relationship were constructed as inadequate and requiring support.
• **Age and Gender**

The teachers constructed a thin narrative of the influence of gender differences in relation to coping strategies. Boys were briefly constructed as displaying more externalising behaviours, whereas girls were constructed as displaying more internalising behaviours. This narrative replicates the findings of Fantuzzo and Lindquist's (1989) literature review.

• **Ability to develop / use coping strategies**

The teacher narrative constructed individual differences in the development and application coping strategies. Children are described as seeking positive affirmation through praise and social approval. Trauma theories would describe this as seeking comfort and reassurance (Monahon, 1993).

Interestingly the teacher narrative recognises and labels effective coping strategies whereas ineffective coping is identified but is not constructed as such; instead it is constructed as challenging behaviour. According to Gergen (1985) negotiated understanding informs social action, for this reason the way in which behaviour is understood affects the response. Behaviourist approaches advocate extinguishing unwanted behaviour by sanctions, whereas in contrast interpreting violent behaviour as indicative of emotional distress would warrant a very different approach.

The teacher narrative constructed the effectiveness of coping strategies as varying across different environments. A well-developed coping strategy may be adaptive for one context, such as home, but maladaptive and potentially affecting resilience in another context such as education; although at first it may appear adaptive. Carlson (1994) suggested a coping strategy which lessens the physiological response is physiologically adaptive and this would lead to repetition. Margolin (2005) also highlighted a coping strategy which may be resilient in one situation can be maladaptive in another; for example withdrawing can be protective in response to domestic violence but leads to vulnerability in a
school environment. The variability in the effectiveness of coping strategies could provide significant challenge to school staff, particularly when a coping strategy which is adaptive in one environment is maladaptive in another (especially when the maladaptive environment is school).

A narrative regarding the universality of coping strategies emerged in the construction of ‘the need to get things right’ as a coping strategy. This was constructed as an effective coping strategy at home but a maladaptive coping strategy in the school environment, see figure 3 below. This narrative highlights the complexity in coping with trauma in different areas of life.
Figure 3 - A coping strategy which is both adaptive and maladaptive

Coping Strategy: Needing to 'get things right'

Home Environment:
- Promotes safety
- Maintains harmony

Physiological stress response is reduced/avoided. Strategy is likely to be applied again (and to other situations/environments).

School Environment:
- Copy from peers
- Wait for help/guidance

School Environment - Contributes to a fear of failure characterised by:
- Disengagement
- Reduced Praise
- Lower academic performance
- Low self-esteem

Key:

Adaptive Outcomes

Maladaptive Outcomes
The coping strategy of needing to get things right, illustrated in figure 3, is as an effective coping strategy both at home and school in the short term as it has adaptive outcomes (as shown by the green boxes in figure 3). However in the longer term, this coping strategy could lead to maladaptive outcomes within school (as shown by the red box in figure 3), manifesting as a fear of failure which would result in the child becoming disengaged with education, and lacking the motivation and self-esteem to engage in challenges presented by learning.

This narrative illustrates the importance of education as a context for development (Vygotsky, 1986) or representation of society (Dewey, 1897) as different coping strategies are appropriate to different contexts. Education therefore has an important role to play in the development of a range of coping strategies, in particular those which are adaptive and successful for life in a democratic society.

Trust was described in the teacher narrative in relation to coping strategies. The children’s coping, according to this narrative, is constructed as dependent upon their ability to trust adults. Psychodynamic theorists would argue adults can provide containment and safety in a trusting relationship. If children are not able to develop trust in adults this is likely to act as a barrier to the development of rapport which will affect the teacher’s ability to provide containment and safety within a trusting relationship.

This is a complex narrative which constructs children’s resilience as being dependent upon their ability to develop and apply adaptive coping strategies.

- Academic performance

The teachers constructed a narrative of academic performance acting as a mediating factor for the impact of exposure to domestic violence. Academic performance was considered to have an indirect impact on coping as those who are higher achieving will receive more positive affirmation and have a greater experience of success which positively impacts upon their self-esteem. The teacher narrative constructed academic success as increasing resilience as
these children naturally received more positive affirmation within the school system. In contrast those who experienced failure were constructed as likely to disengage (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007).

This narrative of academic performance is of particular interest as it relates directly to education. As I highlighted in the literature review Gove’s philosophies and the approach of the coalition government advocate a return to traditional education methods which favour academia and there is an increased pressure for attainment targets. Undoubtedly this leads to increased pressure on pupils to meet government imposed targets further affecting children’s feelings of success or failure. The emotional impact of failure is huge, and whilst it could be argued this is part of education and life, education increasingly needs to enable individuals to effectively respond to and manage these eventualities. This is particularly important with a government advocating an education system based on traditional methods and increased standards.

It is evident the teachers constructed a rich narrative of individual differences influencing coping ability. Whilst the components of the narrative are at times thin they contribute to the creation of a rich narrative which presents the impact of exposure to domestic violence as complex, wide ranging and variable in severity. This narrative echoes the findings of previous domestic violence research regarding the wide range and variable severity of the impact of exposure to domestic violence (Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Baldry, 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Margolin, 2005; Kitzmann et al. 2003; Smith and Landreth, 2003; Wolfe et al. 2003; Tyndall-Lind, Landreth and Giordano (2001); Mohr et al. 2000; Kolbo, Blakely and Engleman, 1996; McCloskey, Figueredo and Koss, 1995).

7.2.3 - Theme Three: Narratives of Systemic Challenges

This theme represents factors within the wider school system which affect teachers’ ability to support children who have experienced emotional trauma, such as domestic violence. The teacher narratives in relation to theme three demonstrate the influence of school systems on effective day to day support for children exposed
to domestic violence. A detailed narrative was created about systemic support and its impact upon day to day classroom management.

- Policies, procedures and protocols

  The teacher narrative constructed safeguarding policies, procedures and protocols as being extremely important and compliance with these was implicit. The teachers constructed a narrative of creating records for the purpose of recording information; not to inform their own practices. The teacher narrative described record keeping as a daily task which was time consuming and not utilised to inform classroom practice.

  Teachers were concerned with reporting disclosures to the designated member of staff (according to child protection procedures) when considering providing children with space to talk. It is clear the teachers recognise the serious nature of domestic violence as a child protection concern and in relation to safeguarding procedures (Education Act 2002). Yet the narrative constructed by the teachers did not link these concerns to informing classroom based practice, or consider how the significance of such a disclosure may affect their planning and delivery for the child concerned. The teacher narrative constructs the usefulness of record keeping as limited to safeguarding procedures, whereas records and logs could also be used to inform practice by identifying changes in behaviour, or for monitoring the effectiveness of strategies and interventions over time. In addition they can be used to inform planning. The teachers construct record keeping as time consuming and laborious and lacking in any personal benefit. Once again this narrative focuses on the teacher perspective and does not explore the importance of record keeping from the child’s perspective.

- Parenting

  There was a strong narrative constructed around parenting which arose in all three sessions.
The social construction of men as the perpetrators of domestic violence was evident in the teacher narratives. Influenced by this social construction, the teachers constructed a narrative of violence as a method of power and control; evidenced by domestic violence being described as lacking respect. Whilst this narrative may indicate teachers have not considered alternative explanations of why domestic violence may occur, it is representative of the feminist paradigm, which, as I outlined in the literature review, is the current political narrative of domestic violence. Regardless of whether or not the feminist paradigm is adopted social constructions of domestic violence influence narratives of domestic violence, the family and parenting.

Teachers constructed victims of domestic violence as distracted and fearful. Victims were perceived to consciously choose to stay in a violent relationship; as a result parents were constructed as choosing to expose their children to domestic violence. This narrative assumes control on the part of the victim and fails to acknowledge the complex nature of domestic violence. Victims are (socially) constructed as vulnerable, yet within the teachers’ narrative there is recognition of free-will and ability to make decisions regarding the continuity of the relationship. This leads me to create an alternative narrative suggesting there is a limited understanding regarding the impact of the emotional trauma associated with experiencing domestic violence, and the impact on making decisions and initiating change. In my own experience there is an emotional numbness, and detachment in addition to preoccupied thoughts which adversely affect decision making, and initiation of any activity. These experiences are similar to the symptoms of emotional trauma identified in the literature review (Horowitz and Reidbord, 1992; Ellis and Ashbrook, 1988), additionally they are described as symptoms of derealisation in PTSD diagnostic criteria (refer to appendix three, page iv). I feel the teachers’ narrative of emotional trauma was thin and indicates a limited understanding of how deeply trauma can affect an individual. This is particularly important from an educational perspective as the literature review demonstrates emotional trauma can have a significant impact on learning (Sylwester, 1994; Ellis and Ashbrook, 1988). Therefore my own narrative is one of concern; as without an understanding of trauma, emotions,
and the link to learning, teachers and school systems are not going to be providing effective support to children who have experienced emotional trauma.

The teacher narrative constructed parents as having reduced coping capacity or not fulfilling expectations. This narrative would support family systems theories of domestic violence which consider the coping of the family unit as a whole. The outcomes of this thesis are similar to those of researchers who have suggested domestic violence impacts upon parenting capacity (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013; Levendosky et al. 2006; Margolin, 2005; Huth-Bocks, Levendosky and Semel, 2001). Within the teachers’ narrative parents were constructed as loving their children, and whilst the parent-child relationship was not specifically discussed, the narrative did not provide support for attachment theory by suggesting the parent-child relationship was adversely affected. However it is important for us to be aware the quality of the parent-child relationship is unlikely to be observed by the teachers in such a way that allows them to draw conclusions regarding its quality. Whereas observations of the child’s peer relationships and behaviour may be more indicative of the quality of attachment relationships and teachers are well-placed to undertake these observations. Peer relationships will be considered in relation to theme four (narratives of developmental impact).

The teachers constructed the children as modelling violence they have seen at home. This narrative constructs children exposed to domestic violence as violent and predisposed to becoming violent adults. This construct impacts on the narrative of the parents as not fulfilling expectations e.g. provision of a good role model for managing emotions, solving social problems and healthy relationships. The construction of children exposed to violence as being violent and becoming perpetrators of violence as adults is consistent with the modelling hypothesis, intergenerational transmission theory and social learning theory (Weldon and Gilchrist, 2012; Dutton, 2008; Tyndall-Lind, Landreth and Giordano, 2001; Moffitt and Caspi, 1998). As has already been highlighted an overall narrative constructed within the research is of challenging externalising behaviour, which includes physical violence. The teacher narrative constructs externalising behaviour, such as violence, to be very demanding of the teachers’
time and more easily observed than fear and anxiety. In addition a strong narrative of not knowing what goes on at home was constructed; yet parents are constructed as ineffective, or inferior, by continuing to expose their children to violence; and by exposing their children to violence they are constructed as responsible for their children’s behaviour. The parents are therefore constructed as ‘other’ and different to other parents. Perhaps it is easy for teachers, when they are aware violence occurs in the home, to theorise a simple cause and effect relationship can explain children’s violent behaviour. Similarly the criticisms of social learning theory are directed at its simplicity; including an inability to account for children exposed to violence who do not go on to display violent behaviour (Babcock et al, 1993; Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998).

When considering the construct of ineffective parenting it is apparent the teacher’s constructs of domestic violence influence the development of this particular narrative. Pre-existing social constructions, and the constructions developed in the teacher narratives, lead to the development of a narrative which describes involvement in a violent relationship as causing inadequate parenting. Constructions of perpetrators as poor role models and victims as needing loving, defensive, secretive and reluctant pathologise the effectiveness of parenting. These qualities are in contrast to the constructions of effective parenting; the provision of a safe home environment (as opposed to choosing to stay in a violent relationship), information sharing (as opposed to not disclosing domestic violence), provision of routine and consistency (as opposed to arriving late to school and not completing homework). These contrasts, implied but unspoken in the teacher’s narratives, further distinguish between parents reinforcing the teacher narrative of the parents, of children exposed to domestic violence, as ‘other’. Feminist ethnographic social constructions of domestic violence influence gender role constructs which form the basis of teacher narratives describing the cause of children’s violent behaviour. Perhaps for this reason other causes of violent behaviour are over-looked.

The narrative of parenting highlights the influence of (social) constructions of domestic violence and the also the influence of historical and cultural specificity.
• A taboo subject

It was clear the teacher narrative constructed domestic violence as a taboo subject and this was apparent in the narratives they created when discussing the difficulties they experienced when speaking to children, parents and other professionals. The teachers recognised their own reluctance to provide a space for children to talk; the social constructions of domestic violence meant safeguarding procedures were a prevalent feature in the teacher narratives and this directly impacted on their willingness and confidence to provide, or engage in conversations with children.

Whilst the teacher narratives reflected the influence of social constructions of domestic violence the teacher narrative also demonstrated awareness of the dangers of making assumptions. Ironically this provided a reason for not engaging or asking questions as it would mean constructing a narrative of the family involving domestic violence which would be based upon assumptions.

The teachers’ reluctance to talk about domestic violence echoes the findings of previous research into domestic violence and has also been highlighted in the literature review as a key concern in domestic violence policy and practice (Starmer, 2011). In my opinion one of the main factors influencing the taboo is the inherently paradoxical phenomenon of the loving relationship and safe haven of the family created by domestic violence (Godbout et al. 2009; Tolan et al. 2006; American Psychological Association, 1996).

• Behaviour management

One of the strongest narratives was in relation to the severity of the negative behaviour displayed by children exposed to domestic violence. Research identifies children exposed to domestic violence as displaying challenging behaviour (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; Renner, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2012; Kitzmann et al, 2003; Davies and Cummings,
This narrative was constructed particularly in session one and then underpinned many of the other narratives presented across the three sessions. The teachers’ narrative described the demands on staffing to manage the behaviour, and apathy from staff that are not directly affected. The narrative of the severity of the children’s behaviour constructed the children as being inappropriately placed in a mainstream setting. The teachers constructed this narrative on the basis of their own difficulties, and of school systems, in meeting the needs of these children. As a result of the severity of these difficulties the children’s behaviour is constructed as unmanageable. It is evident (social) constructions of severe behaviour and its implications have influenced the teacher narrative; a social constructionist perspective advocates consideration of how we speak of children (Billington, 2006) and (social) constructions of severe behaviour. The teacher narrative constructed challenging behaviour as learned, as described by social learning theory. This narrative also constructs the children’s behaviour as learned without acknowledging the influence of emotions. In contrast I constructed my narrative on the basis of trauma theory (Suleiman, 2008; Monahon, 1993; Herman, 1992; Terr, 1990) and therefore my narrative describes the children’s emotional needs being unmet, as evidenced by the children’s behavioural presentation.

- Safety

Within the teacher narrative other children in the class are central to the concerns of the staff, in accordance with legislation to ‘[safeguard] and [promote] the welfare of children and young people’ under the Education Act 2002 (p.114). This legislation can be applied in respect of physical and emotional welfare. As discussed earlier, in regard of other children, such legislation can be very influential when making decisions to remove a child from a class. The teacher narrative of safety constructs schools as able to provide safety and security through consistency and routine, which the teachers construct as missing, or inconsistent, for children who are exposed to domestic violence. The need for consistency and routine is supported by trauma theory (Monahon, 1993).
The narrative constructed of safety identified a fine line between the responsibility of the staff and school to maintain safety and when it is no longer their role. Teaching assistants were cited as deciding they no longer wanted to support particular children; similarly schools’ need to make decisions in relation to requesting external support, such as the police, to intervene and maintain the safety of children and staff. Social constructions of the school’s response have implications for children and their families:

- how are the adults constructed?
- how is the child and their family constructed?
- how is the school constructed?
- How is the child and families privacy constructed?

The adults involved in a violent relationship, in this scenario, may no longer feel supported by the school and socially ostracised. Similarly there may be an implication their problems are so serious the school is unable to cope, alternatively a zero-tolerance mentality may be presented. However the response in this scenario is constructed it is unlikely to facilitate home-school relations.

- External support

The teachers constructed a narrative of wanting external support but not always being sure what this entailed (teacher three was distinct in respect of this narrative due to her position as SENCo, as a result she had job specific knowledge which was not shared by teacher one or two). The group did, however, construct a narrative which described classroom practitioners as being uninvolved in systemic or external support procedures. The teacher narrative also constructed external support as increasingly difficult to access. The teachers made reference to current political influences, such as austerity measures, which have resulted in a reduction in the availability of external support e.g. children’s services, which includes educational and child psychology services.
Next steps

Pre-existing social constructions of domestic violence had an influence on the narratives teachers constructed of victims. Victims were constructed as vulnerable, in need of loving, defensive and secretive resulting in reluctance to seek support, despite support being unavailable in school. The secrecy can be considered in an ethnographic context as domestic violence is perceived as socially unacceptable. It is therefore understandable families would worry about the impact of personal problems becoming public as this can lead to police and social care involvement; both of which could have significant implications for the family unit.

T2: she was scared of losing the kids

The teachers’ knowledge and experiences of domestic violence and emotional trauma influences the narratives they develop. The teachers constructed victims as needing loving which pathologises the victims therefore further reinforcing the (social) construction of ‘victim’. Whilst support for this narrative is provided by theories of developmental psychopathology and attachment theory, both of these theories tend to focus on the behaviour of the perpetrator rather than the victim. The teachers’ narrative of victims is therefore more likely to have been influenced by social constructions of domestic violence and victims by the very fact those who experience domestic violence are referred to as ‘victims’. This alone reinforces the feminist ethnographic political agenda; which constructs the victim as being in need of support.

Reflexive Box
As I stated earlier my narrative is strongly influenced by my positionality, therefore my narrative was strongly focused on emotional trauma, a factor which the participants were unaware. Consequently my narrative was very critical and constructs professionals as unable to empathise with emotional trauma. However the participants were not asked to reflect on emotional trauma in relation to this research therefore the initial positionality of their narrative is different from mine.
The narratives developed in relation to the code next steps are further developed in section ‘7.4 - Implications for future research’ as they directly contribute to this area of the research.

- Information and communication

The previous narrative of external support touches on communication and support as the teachers construct themselves as being uninvolved and unaware of systemic, or external, support systems which are in place; or classroom practice when they are not in class. Interestingly the teacher narrative describes schools as being able to provide consistency and routine, however I interpret this narrative as describing schools as inconsistent.

The teachers construct pertinent information regarding children’s backgrounds as becoming available at a crisis point or when disclosure cannot be avoided e.g. due to a court order. In contrast to my earlier narrative of teachers lacking empathy the teacher narrative of information and communication recognises expectations regarding day to day tasks, e.g. arriving at school on time, does not take into consideration the day to day reality of children and families affected by domestic violence. The teacher narrative constructs the teachers as being able to be emotionally responsive and empathetic when they are aware of the individual child’s home circumstances. The teachers constructed a narrative of being able to put effective strategies in place when background information is available. The teacher narrative of information and communication constructs themselves as recognising the limitations of an intervention which is not fully informed e.g. ‘we thought it was a reaction to school’ (2: 1651). The teachers’ narrative of information and communication constructs information as coming too late, in addition the teachers construct themselves as wanting to do more but being restricted due to a lack of information.

Similarly to the narrative of classroom management described in theme one (impact on the class teacher) the teacher narrative of information and communication also places responsibility as lying beyond the teacher. My
narrative regarding teacher’s use of generalised good practice strategies without theoretical application is challenged by the teachers’ narrative describing a lack of information and communication. Whilst the teachers construct themselves as using background information my narrative constructs the teachers as applying behaviourist theories without considering the causes for unwanted behaviour. Therefore the application of information may make little difference in choosing whether or not to apply behaviourist methods and the use of alternative methods is not specifically articulated in the teacher narrative.

The teachers constructed a narrative of being able to develop an effective home school relationship. This narrative was based upon the teachers providing more opportunities for parents to disclose and the perception rapport building with parents would facilitate more effective information sharing. The teachers constructed themselves as experienced in working with parents, yet despite this a narrative of uncertainty was constructed around how to provide opportunities for information sharing. Once this narrative was facilitated by the researcher the teachers were quickly able to construct a narrative of themselves as facilitating information sharing and building rapport with parents. The initial reluctance to develop this narrative may have been affected by social constructions of domestic violence. Once teachers reflected on the type of questions posed to parents the narrative of facilitating information sharing and building rapport with parents was readily constructed and positively held.

The teachers’ narrative of information and communication constructs background information and effective home-school relationships as being essential to the success of interventions to support the functioning of children exposed to domestic violence. The teachers construct trust, working together and being supportive as key components of effective communication with parents.

7.2.4 - Theme Four: Narratives of Developmental Impact

This theme represents the impact of emotional trauma upon children’s development.
Social skills

The teachers constructed a narrative of domestic violence adversely affecting social skills. Overall the children were constructed as having a very black and white understanding of right and wrong. Similarly to the Home Office (2012) definition of domestic violence, which identifies coercion as a component of domestic violence, the children exposed to domestic violence were constructed as displaying coercive behaviour. The children were constructed as considering their behaviour in simplistic terms of whether or not they had hit another child. If the child had not hit anybody their behaviour was constructed as morally acceptable. The children were therefore constructed, by the teachers, as being unable to recognise, or understand, coercive, or intimidating, behaviour. The teachers also described the children as unable to empathise with other children who disliked their behaviour. Within this narrative children exposed to domestic violence are constructed as using violence to solve social problems. Research has shown exposure to domestic violence can affect social skills (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2012; Howell, 2011; Wolfe et al. 2003; Fantuzzo et al. 1991). The modelling hypothesis in particular offers an explanation for increased incidences of aggression towards peers (Grych and Fincham, 1990).

The teacher narrative constructs the deficits in social skills as particularly significant with one child’s peer relationships being described as hideous. The teacher narrative of the children’s social skills is one of concern. The teachers describe the children’s social skills as adversely affecting their peer relationships. The children’s peer relationships and social problem-solving thickened the teacher narrative of challenging behaviour. The children’s difficulties in peer relationships provides support for attachment theory as other relationships are believed to be indicative of parent child relationships; additionally poor peer relationships also provides support for the modelling hypothesis.
• Emotion regulation

The teacher narrative constructs the children as having difficulties with emotion regulation with their responses being described as inappropriate and disproportionate. The children were also described as crying inappropriately e.g. for long periods or disproportionately. In addition boys' play is described as crashing and banging. The teachers construct externalising behaviour displayed by children exposed to domestic violence as difficult to ignore and this narrative affirms the teacher constructions of the children having challenging behaviour.

The impact of domestic violence on emotion regulation is well documented in domestic violence research (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2012; Howell, 2011; Bogat et al. 2006; Kitzmann et al. 2003; Wolfe et al. 2003; Davies and Cummings, 1994; Fantuzzo et al. 1991). Dutton (2008) found men convicted of wife-assault were found to have significantly lower emotional intelligence than the general population. Goleman (2004) strongly argues for intervention in childhood through specific teaching of skills associated with emotional intelligence to prevent problems developing in later life. However this could be a circular logic that overlooks societal issues. Children exposed to domestic violence are identified, within this thesis and previous research, as having difficulties managing their emotions, solving social problems and developing positive peer relationships. These difficulties provide support for trauma theory explanations of the impact of exposure to domestic violence (Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2001).

• Perceptions of normality

The teacher narrative of children’s perceptions of normality constructs children exposed to domestic violence as having differing perceptions of normality from their peers in relation to the acceptability of violence. Interestingly, as MacLure et al. (2008) warn, children exposed to domestic violence are constructed as beyond the norm on the basis of constructs resulting from their life experiences. This was evident from the narrative teachers constructed of the children’s
openness about violence at home. The narrative described the children as very matter of fact in their descriptions of violence which occurred at home. The following quote provided a good example:

*T2: he just said, as part of the news, ‘oh and my dad used to hit, hit my dog so we had to send the dog away and then he used to hit me and my mum so we had to send Daddy away’*

(1: 441-444)

The child in this scenario is constructed as accepting of the violence and see’s nothing unusual in what has happened and the need to send his daddy away. These outcomes are supported by research; Graham-Bermann and Brescoll (2000) argued children's cognitive belief systems are affected by exposure to violence. In contrast other children were aware of the differences in their home circumstances and the teacher narrative describes them as covering up what happens at home. Buckley, Holt and Whelan (2007) state secrecy around domestic violence is not uncommon in children. The secrecy identified in the teacher narrative may exist as a result of being told by their parents not to talk about what happens at home, alternatively it may be indicative of the child’s moral reasoning, children who do not want to talk may have developed their knowledge of violence. According to the social constructionist perspective children would develop this knowledge through social processes, and until children are aware of the language of domestic violence and the categories and concepts associated with it, they will have no knowledge of it (figure 4). Once the child develops knowledge, which is a pre-condition of thought (Burr 2003), then social action is influenced, as Gergen (1985) describes, knowledge and social action go together (figure 5). At this point the child is likely to become secretive about violence at home. I construct this development of knowledge as particularly important as it will affect children’s constructions of adults and directly impact upon their relationships with adults. Consequently I construct the quality of relationships and rapport with adults, such as teachers, as directly influencing the coping abilities of children exposed to domestic violence.
Figure 4 – Constructs of children exposed to domestic violence prior to developing knowledge of domestic violence through social processes

- Home is normal
- Violence is acceptable
- Fear
- Constructs prior to knowledge of domestic violence
- All adults are role models
• Academic performance

The teacher narrative constructs academic performance as adversely affected by exposure to domestic violence, children were described as distracted, tired, disengaged, socially withdrawn and having difficulties with attention and concentration. As I highlighted within chapter two (methodology) teachers are particularly well placed to consider the impact of domestic violence on academic performance and to make comparisons with peers. Many of the difficulties highlighted in the teacher narrative are indicative of derealisation which is an emotional coping strategy. The links between emotions and learning were explored in the literature review with research indicating emotional arousal can have an adverse effect on learning (Sylwester, 1994; Horowitz and Reidbord, 1992; Ellis and Ashbrook, 1988; Bower, 1981). My narrative constructs academic performance as adversely affected by exposure to domestic violence due to emotional trauma and the teacher narrative describes behaviours which
are symptomatic of emotional trauma. Additionally I am personally able to identify with these behaviours as a result of my own experiences. These symptoms will have an adverse impact on learning and teachers are well-placed to identify these difficulties and implement strategies to support children’s learning.

7.3 - Conclusion

The overall aim of this research study was to demonstrate how domestic violence, as an example of emotional trauma, is relevant within education and therefore of significant importance within the field of educational and child psychology. This research study explored teacher narratives of domestic violence and support mechanisms within the classroom and wider school environment.

The specific aims of this research were to explore teacher narratives of domestic violence and support mechanisms within the classroom and wider school environment. Recommendations already exist within domestic violence literature regarding therapeutic support and family interventions, whereas there is limited research into domestic violence in an educational context. Consequently the aim of this research was to consider the impact of exposure to domestic violence within the educational context, from the perspective of teachers and consider the needs of children exposed to domestic violence. To address these aims this research study elicited teacher narratives through group interviews and reflective logs as part of a three session narrative approach (Billington, 2012). Three teachers from two primary schools participated in the research project. The data was analysed using thematic analysis.
The research questions will now be considered for a final time in relation to the discussion of the outcomes from the research project.

7.3.1 - Research Question One: What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

This thesis identifies the narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence as:

- Knowledge and understanding of emotional trauma

The teacher narrative highlighted teachers do not have a strong knowledge and understanding of emotional trauma and how it affects children. It was apparent this impacted on the teachers’ constructions of the children and the strategies and interventions implemented to address the teachers concerns. The teacher narrative focused on the difficulties experienced by the teachers rather than children’s experiences and the impact this had on their development.

Reflexive Box

At this point it seems pertinent to reflect on my disappointment in relation to the reflective logs. Overall their use was unsuccessful and therefore they made no additional contribution to the research. The participants did not engage with them and recorded minimal information. The information was generally factual and in some cases hurriedly written pre or post group interview. On reflection it was perhaps unclear to the participants what type of information to include. I had hoped for emotional reflections on their experiences however the teachers appeared not to have a frame of reference for the type of reflection I was seeking. In hindsight I had my own experiences of emotional trauma which enabled me to create and develop narratives of emotional trauma. Without explanation or specific examples it is apparent the teachers were unable to develop these types of narratives. On reflection this area of the research could have been much more successful and the reflective logs could have added richer and more personal narratives to the data set.
Consequently strategies tended to be based on behaviourist principles and were based upon good practice classroom strategies.

Ironically the teacher narrative constructed background information to be of great importance in informing the development of strategies and their associated success. However the teacher narrative did not construct their knowledge of the impact of the children’s experiences and how this affects children and implementing appropriate strategies as having a significant impact on the child’s development. Yet it is evident the teachers have chosen to participate in the research in the hope of deepening their knowledge base.

- Realistic expectations

The teacher narrative was well developed in relation to expectations of the children. The teachers defined having high expectations of the children as central to their role. In addition to this they interpreted children’s achievements as having a mediating impact upon the impact of exposure to domestic violence, suggesting this will ‘break the cycle’. This narrative constructs domestic violence as affecting particular demographic groups. Again pre-existing social constructions of domestic violence influence the teachers approach to supporting children exposed to domestic violence. Additionally this social construction validates the teacher pursuing her role as educator which is (socially) constructed as valuing attainment and achieving prescribed standards.

- Teacher role

The teacher narrative identifies the children having difficulties managing their emotions, developing peer relationships and solving social problems. The teacher narrative constructs these difficulties as challenging behaviour and describes them as learned from exposure to domestic violence. The teacher narrative strongly considers the development of these skills as encompassed within the role of the teacher, however, similarly to the differing approaches to
education presented in the literature review, the teachers disagreed regarding the epistemological priorities of education.

The teacher narrative constructed rapport as particularly important in supporting children and families. The teacher narrative identified having rapport with as helping to reduce the severity of challenging behaviour, in addition they felt children were more likely to confide in them which would could create greater opportunities for them to support the children. Additionally within the teacher narrative, teacher’s providing support to improve day to day parenting capacity, such as homework completion and maintaining daily routine, was identified as beneficial for children and families exposed to domestic violence. Within the teacher narrative good home-school relationships are identified as providing effective day to day support. An effective home-school relationship was characterised as trusting, supportive and facilitating working together. Home-school relationships were constructed as affecting the quality of support provided to children based upon the availability of information regarding home circumstances. Better relationships were considered to facilitate improved information sharing.

The teacher narratives of support mechanisms do not construct teachers as directly responsible for supporting children exposed to domestic violence beyond the usual support structures provided for all children within the class. The teacher narrative highlights their lack of awareness of the impact they can have on children’s coping. The scope for teachers, as a significant adult in children’s lives, to impact upon the impact of exposure to domestic violence is extensive. James (1899) and Dewey (1902) both described the role of the teacher as being important in shaping development and facilitating children in making sense of their experiences.

7.3.2 - Research Question Two: What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?

This thesis has identified a number of features associated with emotional trauma, such as exposure to domestic violence (N.B. not all features would be present):
The impact of emotional trauma on learning and functioning is extensive, perhaps due to the variability of symptoms (see figure 6). The following aspects of the classroom and wider school environment were identified as being affected by exposure to domestic violence or emotional trauma in general:

- Parenting capacity

Similarly to children, adults who are or have been in a violent relationship may experience emotional trauma as a result. This construct is undoubtedly
influenced by social constructions of domestic violence and primary caregivers, e.g. women are the victims of domestic violence and women are the primary caregivers. Whilst some research outlined in the literature review identified women as more likely to be victims of domestic violence there is no consensus across domestic violence research as a whole and extensive methodological criticisms are also cited in domestic violence research. Therefore it is not possible to draw conclusions regarding the prevalence of domestic violence according to gender. In addition family systems theories of domestic violence would construct the parenting capacity of both the victim and the perpetrator to be adversely affected. For these reasons the teacher narrative of parental support is not constructed as gender specific or specific to victims or perpetrators.

Parenting was a recurring narrative within the group interviews and parents (or adults in the home) were constructed as significant adults in the children’s lives. The parenting was constructed by the teachers as adversely affected by domestic violence. The parents were viewed as ‘other’ and constructed as ineffective and requiring support. There was a frequent negative perception of parents who are victims of domestic violence within the teacher narrative. This appeared to be influenced by social constructions of victims and of domestic violence. The teachers were critical of parents for remaining in violent relationships and exposing their children to violence. Social constructions of the parental role (to protect children and keep them safe from harm) also contributed to perceiving parents who are victims of domestic violence as ‘other’.

The teacher narrative identifies parental capacity as influencing learning and functioning within the classroom. Teachers described parental capacity for supporting children’s learning through tasks such as homework and reading practice as negatively affected. In addition parents were reported to find it difficult to maintain daily routines, e.g. punctuality which teachers identified as having an impact upon the child’s coping throughout the school day.
• Demands on staff time and resources

The teacher narrative describes exposure to domestic violence as impacting on the class teacher and support staff on a daily basis. Teachers are faced with extensive record keeping in accordance with safeguarding procedures which can take up significant proportions of time on a daily basis and the time taken by record keeping directly impacts upon time available for planning and preparation duties. Teachers describe behaviour as requiring a large number of staff to facilitate behaviour management. This was also described as impacting on learning and functioning as the teacher, and teaching, is disrupted. Additionally the class teacher may also spend disproportionate amounts of time managing behaviour. The teacher narrative constructs support staff as being unwilling to support children with challenging behaviour. This further impacts upon teaching and learning as the class teacher is required to respond to the behaviour.

• Teacher resilience

The resilience of teachers is identified within this thesis to be negatively affected. The teachers’ narrative constructed teachers as unsupported both within the classroom and by the wider school systems, policies and procedures. Due to feeling unsupported class teachers perceive themselves as coping alone and begin to question their own judgements and abilities. The resilience of the teacher affects their ability within the classroom and therefore the teacher will not be working at the best of their abilities which indirectly affects the learning and functioning on day to day basis. The resilience of the teacher is dependent upon the wider support structures such as support staff, systems, policies and procedures. There is also a need for recognition and emotional support either informally or formally, such as supervision.

• Systemic impact

Maintaining the day to day safety of staff and pupils is identified as placing a strain on the class teacher and the school systems. As I described earlier the
social constructions of decisions which are made, e.g. removing a child from class, calling the police to manage parental conflict on the playground has a far reaching impact which undoubtedly affects learning and functioning. The teacher narrative constructs day to day management of children exposed to domestic violence as detracting from teaching and learning. However there are also longer term implications as a result of (social) constructions of domestic violence, children exposed to domestic violence and behaviour.

Domestic violence is constructed as having a significant impact on learning and functioning for the children exposed to domestic violence and their peers. Domestic violence is therefore of significant importance within the field of education.

7.3.3 - Research Question Three: What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

This research identifies a number of implications for the role of the educational psychologist. It became evident through the data collection phase of this thesis that teachers’ awareness of domestic violence was minimal, and much more so than I had originally anticipated. This in itself has an implication for Educational Psychologists working to facilitate the support of children and families exposed to domestic violence. This leads to the development of teachers’ understanding of emotional trauma and its impact being a particularly pertinent implication for Educational Psychologists. This and other implications for educational psychologists are discussed below:

- Understanding of emotional trauma and its impact

This research has highlighted teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the impact of emotional trauma affects the success of strategies, approaches and interventions used within the classroom and the wider school context. Educational Psychologists are well placed to facilitate the development of teachers’, support staff, and other professionals’ theoretical knowledge and understanding of the impact of exposure to domestic violence, and emotional
trauma more generally, on children and families. This can be done through the provision of training courses, information packs and school based work such as involvement in consultations and the development of interventions.

Through the development and application of theoretical knowledge an understanding of the impact of exposure to emotional trauma and appropriate support mechanisms will be facilitated. Additionally this will help to address issues of disengagement from support staff as they will have an understanding of the causes of behaviour, appropriate support strategies and empathy for the child. Consequently classroom based support is likely to more effective and meet the needs of children who are emotionally traumatised. With a greater knowledge and understanding teachers will be able to make informed decisions regarding differentiation (e.g. when and why it may be appropriate to excuse a child from a task) and avoid retraumatisation as a result of expectations being too high. Having theoretical knowledge of emotional trauma will also enable teachers to recognise behavioural symptoms of emotional trauma and respond appropriately. The appropriate management and support of children exposed to emotional trauma should reduce the impact of the emotional trauma which will in turn led to a reduction in behaviours which are symptomatic of emotional trauma. The provision of factual information relating to domestic violence will also help to address historically and culturally specific constructions associated with domestic violence, such as intelligent people don’t have violent relationships and it doesn’t affect young children. Finally teacher and wider school support, based on knowledge and understanding of emotional trauma, will promote the development of resilience and coping strategies (with the support of adults and peers) as the child’s experiences and needs will be understood and supported more appropriately.

- Social constructions of domestic violence

This research has highlighted how social constructions of domestic violence can adversely affect support mechanisms, relationships and decision making. Educational Psychologists are in a good position to challenge social constructions of domestic violence and present an alternative perspective. The
provision of training and information packs, as already identified, will also facilitate the development of alternative perspectives through increased knowledge. Educational Psychologists are well placed to provide challenge to schools through their day to day work and this should involve raising awareness of social constructions such as ‘victim’ and ‘domestic violence’ and how this then affects relationships and interactions.

- Support systems for teachers

This research has identified teachers as feeling unsupported and finding the behaviours of children exposed to domestic violence challenging to manage. Educational Psychologists are well placed to facilitate the implementation of support systems to empower teachers in the provision of support for children and families who have experienced emotional trauma. Finally Educational Psychologists are also able to provide support in relation the behaviour of individual children.

- Systemic support

The teacher narrative identifies systemic challenges posed by domestic violence. Educational Psychologists are able to provide support at a systemic level in relation to systemic practice and policy development. This research study identified record keeping completed in accordance with policy and procedure, however it was not be used to inform classroom practice. Educational Psychologists have research skills and are therefore well placed to consider effective record keeping and more importantly the use of records as a research tool which can then be used to inform practice. This thesis identified a narrative of discomfort in relation working with parents to create a narrative of the child and their experiences. Teachers constructed themselves as constrained by the social constructions of domestic violence as socially unacceptable and presenting safeguarding concerns, teachers were therefore reluctant to become involved and ask questions as they didn’t want to risk damaging home-school relationships. Educational psychologists regularly work with families in need and
have skills in mediation and supportive questioning. Educational psychologists promote joined up working and the engagement of all stakeholders, e.g. parents, teachers, support staff, other professionals and the child. These skills can be used in building rapport with families and gathering relevant background information.

There are a number of implications identified for Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate support for children and families exposed to domestic violence. Educational Psychologists are also equally well placed to become involved in the delivery of targeted interventions which may be with the individual child or a small group, however as I outlined at the beginning of this chapter intervention packages were not the remit of this thesis therefore this section does not focus on the content of interventions.

7.4 – Implications for Future Research and Practice

7.4.1 - Implications for schools

A summary of the outcomes from this thesis will be shared with the teachers who participated in the research. This thesis will also be available to the participants should they wish to read it in full. Additionally a pack of resources will be created for the participants based on the outcomes of the study.

This research demonstrates schools and teachers are well placed to support children and families exposed to emotional trauma such as domestic violence. However within this research the teachers did not have a good understanding of the impact of exposure domestic violence, or emotional trauma in general. The teachers were keen to support the children in their class, and did so to the best of their abilities and knowledge, but the lack of knowledge impacts upon the effectiveness of strategies put in place.

Epistemological debate regarding what to teach has been of significant political interest throughout the history of education. I would argue the impact of emotional trauma as an adverse life experience and the importance of emotions in learning and
development demonstrate the relevance and significance of domestic violence within the field of education. This is highlighted by figure 7 below.

Figure 7 – Emotions and the role of education

Figure 7 demonstrates the influence of life experiences on knowledge based on constructivist views (Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner). Constructionists argue education facilitates the construction of meaning. Education will therefore influence those constructions, e.g. constructions of domestic violence. Emotions affect functioning and adverse life experiences in particular which result in emotional trauma will cause strong emotional reactions and according to Sylwester (1994) emotional reactions trigger a stress response and influence our behaviour. Within the literature it is accepted emotions affect functioning such as memory and learning (Billington, 2013; Uttl, Siegenthaler and Ohta, 2006; Bower, 1981; Sylwester, 1994). Whilst emotions exist it is not easy to change or learn emotions (Sylwester, 1994), Goleman (2004) however argues emotional intelligence can be taught. Goleman
(2004) describes teaching emotional literacy (impulse control, anger management and social problem solving) promotes emotional intelligence. I perceive philosophical education (which promotes and includes the factors Goleman (2004) described as central to emotional literacy) is therefore of significant epistemological importance as it presents an arena for the construction of meaning and consideration of life experiences. Mintz (2009) describes philosophical education as allowing children to challenge experiences. Smeyers, Smith and Standish (2007) argue education, therapy and philosophy should help individuals cope with the feelings of uncertainty. Philosophical education therefore promotes the development of emotional intelligence which will have an impact on learning and the construction of knowledge and meaning. The construction of meaning will also influence the emotional response and finally as Goleman (2004) argues, success in life appears to be dependent upon emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is indicative of resilience and effective coping strategies influencing knowledge construction which, in my experience is essential for coming to terms with emotional trauma and managing the associated emotions.

Philosophical education is important in relation to domestic violence as it can help prevent future generations from engaging in maladaptive relationships. It is not enough as Gove (2012) suggests to assume risky behaviour, or the impact of adverse life experiences, can be alleviated through academia. In order to challenge and address the adverse life experiences of children which constructionists, such as Dewey, Vygotsky and Bruner, argue are central to learning, critical thinking must be encouraged. This will enable children and young people to critically consider their experiences and facilitate the development of individuals who are able to contribute to democratic society. Vygotsky (1986) describes school as a context for development and similarly Dewey (1897) argues school is a social institution and education is a social process. Therefore both Vygotsky and Dewey would argue education needs to encompass more than acquisition of knowledge, which alone cannot challenge the impact of adverse life experiences.

Whilst statistics show domestic violence can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity or educational background, research evidence indicates emotional intelligence may be related to difficulties in adulthood
(Goleman, 2004) including domestic violence (Dutton, 2008). Given the teacher narrative constructs children exposed to domestic violence as having difficulties with social problem solving and emotion regulation added support is provided to the argument for teaching critical skills, or emotional literacy, and further highlighting the importance of considering domestic violence in the field of educational research.

Based on this research the following recommendations are made to schools:

- Recognise and respond to the symptoms of emotional trauma as indicated in figure 6.

- Daily planning should provide opportunities to teach, and practice, skills associated with emotional intelligence (impulse control, managing anger and finding creative solutions to predicaments). These skills will benefit all children but in particular will support children who have experienced emotional trauma.

- The use of good practice techniques such as the provision of a calm safe environment, social approval, routines, consistency, rewards and praise will aid feelings of comfort, reassurance and security and address the need for a stable routine and consistency. Changes of routine should be discussed with the child in advance and planned for with the child.

- Policies should be written and reviewed to take account of the needs of emotionally traumatised children. Trauma theories recommend against behaviourist approaches to managing challenging behaviour (such as the implementation of consequences) as this may lead to the child seeking the punishment they feel they deserve leading to a continuing (downward) cycle of undesirable behaviour.

- Consider introducing, or reviewing, PSHE policies. The purpose of policy review should be to consider whole school approaches to discrete teaching of social and emotional skills and day to day cross-curricular teaching of social and emotional skills. Schools should consider long-term planning around the development of
social and emotional skills. This could be in relation to PSHE plans or as a discrete subject such as ‘emotional literacy’.

- Consideration should be given to the provision of supervision, or informal emotional support, for class teachers supporting children who have experienced emotional trauma. Schools should recognise the emotional stresses and strains placed upon a class teacher to provide day to day support for traumatised children. Supervision techniques should focus on creating a narrative of success and analyse the benefits of decisions, strategies or approaches applied within the classroom, particularly in relation to the traumatised child.

- Teachers should draw on the existing emotional intelligence of the child to facilitate them in articulating their own coping strategies and identification of areas of difficulty. This will help promote feelings of control and emotion regulation through the recognition and management of their own feelings and emotions.

- Ensure children who have experienced emotional trauma (or display symptoms of emotional trauma as indicated in figure 6) are emotionally supported when completing tasks which they may be unable to successfully complete.

- Ensure regular opportunities for children to achieve success.

- Recognise the needs of emotionally traumatised children will change over time, particularly when the trauma is no longer ongoing, or was a one-off experience.

- Adult-child relationships should be characterised by a trusting relationship and good rapport; this will positively affect feelings of containment and safety.

- Adults should provide time for a child to talk, if and when they want to talk.

- Recognise times of distress and provide reassurance, comfort and safety to manage the source of distress and remove the child from the source of distress if required or appropriate.
• Consider specific teaching around healthy relationships including raising awareness of domestic violence.

• Be able to signpost families to agencies who can provide support to those affected by domestic violence e.g. Women’s Aid.

7.4.2 - Implications for Educational Psychologists

The implications for Educational Psychologists have already been considered in the previous section in relation to support for children and families who have experienced domestic violence. Overall the outcomes from this thesis demonstrate the teachers’ limited understandings of domestic violence as emotional trauma and its impact on children. Whilst these constructs are specific to the context of the research, the themes identified in this thesis echo those identified in the literature review in relation to the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children. Given the prevalence of domestic violence it is likely to be a feature of an educational psychologist’s caseload. Furthermore there is limited research into domestic violence in the context of education. This research is therefore of relevance to practising educational psychologists.

Based on this research the following recommendations are made to Educational Psychologists:

• Raise awareness of the impact of emotional trauma and help schools to recognise the symptoms (see figure 6) and respond appropriately, e.g. provision of training courses, information packs and school based work such as involvement in consultations and the development of interventions.

• Provide factual information relating to domestic violence to address historically and culturally specific constructions associated with domestic violence, such as intelligent people don’t have violent relationships and it doesn’t affect young children.

• Challenge social constructions of domestic violence and present an alternative perspective. The provision of training and information packs, as already
identified, will also facilitate the development of alternative perspectives through increased knowledge.

- Provide challenge to schools through day to day interactions; this should involve raising awareness of social constructions such as ‘victim’ and ‘domestic violence’ and how this then affects relationships and interactions.

- Provide support systems for teachers e.g. the development of peer supervision and narrative approaches to enable teachers to story their experiences and construct narratives of benefits rather than blame, the development of problem solving groups to provide emotional support for staff and generate solutions or the provision of professional supervision to support adults who require more a formal support structure.

- Provide consultation and support in relation to emotional trauma and domestic violence to meet the needs of individual children and families.

- Provide systemic support to develop and review policies and practice relating to emotional trauma including domestic violence.

- Facilitate the development of rapport between all stakeholders through mediation and supportive questioning.

- Provide targeted interventions to address the symptoms of emotional trauma (identified in figure 6).

- Provide consultation and support to families affected by emotional trauma and domestic violence.

- Promote, and engage in, multi-agency consultations involving all stakeholders.

7.4.3 - Limitations

It is acknowledged there are a number of limitations to this research study. The narratives of three teachers, in one area of an outer-city suburb/township consisting mainly of council estate housing, covering an extensive area, were obtained. It is
accepted these views may not be shared by other teachers, or representative of other areas of the city, or local authorities. In addition the participants were self-selecting and their motivations for participating may suggest they have differing views to other teachers who did not volunteer.

It is recognised that, due to the research being static in its nature, there is no information about the children’s functioning prior to the experience of domestic violence. Additionally Grych and Fincham (1990) report teachers are more reliable raters of externalising behaviour than internalising behaviour. Therefore the insights into the behavioural presentation of the children cannot be considered as representative of the children generally.

Many of the methodological concerns raised in chapter two (methodology) relating to definitions of domestic violence and determining exposure and severity of domestic violence are not addressed within this study (Holt et al. 2008; Holden, 2003; Prinz and Feerick, 2003). Consequently the narratives are not generalisable, however given this research is conducted from a social constructionist perspective the narratives are only considered to be representative of that particular interaction.

7.4.4 - Application of outcomes

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, direct work to raise awareness and develop understanding of the impact of emotional trauma and domestic violence is required. I remain of the opinion this would be necessary prior to work at a multi-agency level as these understandings are, in my opinion, pre-requisites to engaging in multi-agency work.

All of the theories presented in the literature review indicate potential deficits in social and emotional skills, and without these deficits being addressed, directly or indirectly, they are likely to persist into adulthood. The teaching of grammar rules and mathematical principles will not address these deficits, however I do accept the approach to teaching, and the skills modelled and used in relation to learning grammar rules, for example, may have an impact. I would however argue that if these skills are not specifically considered in the planning and delivery of lessons
this is more likely to be consequential learning rather than a targeted area of learning, as such skill deficits are unlikely to be adequately addressed. I have already identified good practice alone is not enough to address the needs of emotionally traumatised children.

Education which raises awareness of domestic violence is important in preventing domestic violence in future generations given there is potential for those who have been exposed to domestic violence to become involved in violent relationships in later life (Brown and Bzostek, 2003; Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998). However the reasons for this continuing cycle are not addressed within education policy, either through preventative strategies or interventions aimed at developing social and emotional skills. Further discussion of the teaching of critical skills, and specific domestic violence education is required.

This research has presented professional narratives of emotional trauma through reflection on domestic violence and is also intended to promote the development of the reader’s own professional narratives around emotional trauma through reflections on domestic violence. Finally in conclusion I feel the constructs of emotional trauma which have been developed through reflection on domestic violence, as an example of emotional trauma, are applicable to other examples of emotional trauma.
8 - Epilogue

It seems only fair to finish my story. The post-mortem results found a problem with the placenta. According to the consultant we were unlucky, a rare complication had occurred but we were at no greater risk of experiencing the same outcome. It could happen to anyone and unfortunately it had happened to us. We had become a statistic. Although medically we were at no greater risk than anyone else we were terrified of losing another baby. Neither of us felt we had the emotional capacity to go through the pain of stillbirth again, however I knew I couldn’t let the experience affect the rest of my life. I needed to try again and my partner buried his head in the sand.

Five months after Adam died I was lucky to fall pregnant again. It was a long and bumpy journey which consisted mainly of denial as all other options were emotionally draining and far too painful to consider.

Fourteen months after giving birth to Adam, on 2nd May 2014 we had a little girl, Olivia Charlotte Rose. Our whole family was delighted. She is extremely special to us and represents what I can only describe as a therapeutic addition to the family. We lived life in limbo for fourteen months but now we are moving on and enjoying the next chapter in life. I have learned we can be resilient to emotional trauma and whilst it is particularly hard in the time immediately after and, although the emotional pain remains with us for the rest of our lives, we can learn to manage it, find happiness and move forwards.
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Appendices
Appendix One - Ethical Approval

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S10 2JA

25 March 2013

Dear Helen

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER
Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the early years (aged 0 - 8 years).

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved.

We recommend you refer to the reviewers’ additional comments (please see attached). You should discuss how you are going to respond to these comments with your supervisor BEFORE you proceed with your research.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]
Professor Dan Goodley
Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

cc Professor Tom Billington
Enc Ethical Review Feedback Sheet(s)
## ETHICS REVIEWER’S COMMENTS FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Name of Ethics Reviewer:</th>
<th>Dr David Hyatt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Research Project Title:</td>
<td>Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the early years (aged 0 - 8 years).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. Principal Investigator (and name of Tutor/Supervisor in the case of student applications): | Supervisor – Tom Billington  
Student – Helen Dixon |
| 4. Academic Department / School: | Education |
| 5. I confirm that I do not have a conflict of interest with the project application | |

### 6. I confirm that, in my judgment, the application should:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Be approved:</th>
<th>Be approved with suggested amendments in ‘7’ below:</th>
<th>Be approved providing requirements specified in ‘8’ below are met:</th>
<th>NOT be approved for the reason(s) given in ‘9’ below:</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### 7. Approved with the following suggested, optional amendments (i.e. it is left to the discretion of the applicant whether or not to accept the amendments and, if accepted, the ethics reviewers do not need to see the amendments):

- Letter to Unselected Participants needs proof-reading
- Tick box in A4 indicating anonymity of data

### 8. Approved providing the following, compulsory requirements are met (i.e. the ethics reviewers need to see the required changes):

### 9. Not approved for the following reason(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. Date of Ethics Review:</th>
<th>22/3/2013</th>
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</table>
Appendix Two - Home Office Definition of Domestic Violence

Effective from March 2013

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

* This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

(The Home Office, 2012).
Appendix Three - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Diagnostic Criteria

DSM-IV criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

1. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present-:
   - The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others
   - The person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror

2. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways-:
   - Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, and perceptions
   - Recurrent distressing dreams of the event
   - Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring
   - Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
   - Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event

3. Avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following-:
   - Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma
   - Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma
   - Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
   - Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
   - Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
   - Restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)
   - Sense of foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or a normal life span)

4. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma) as indicated by two (or more) of the following-:
   - Difficulty falling or staying asleep
   - Irritability or outbursts of anger
   - Difficulty concentrating
• Hypervigilance
• Exaggerated startle response

5. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in criteria 2, 3 and 4) is more than 1 month.

6. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Amended June 2008


DSM-V criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The following criteria apply to adults, adolescents, and children older than six. Pre-school criteria is listed below.

A. Exposure to actual or threatened a) death, b) serious injury, or c) sexual violation, in one or more of the following ways:
   1. directly experiencing the traumatic event(s)
   2. witnessing, in person, the traumatic event(s) as they occurred to others
   3. learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend; cases of actual or threatened death must have been violent or accidental
   4. experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse); this does not apply to exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures, unless this exposure is work-related.

B. Presence of one or more of the following intrusion symptoms associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred:
   1. spontaneous or cued recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s) (Note: In children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the traumatic event(s) are expressed.)
   2. recurrent distressing dreams in which the content or affect of the dream is related to the event(s) (Note: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content.)
   3. dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) in which the individual feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) are recurring (such reactions may occur on a continuum, with the most extreme expression being a complete loss of awareness of present surroundings. (Note: In children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur in play.)
4. intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s)
5. marked physiological reactions to reminders of the traumatic event(s)

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by avoidance or efforts to avoid one or more of the following:
   1. distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about or closely associated with the traumatic event(s)
   2. external reminders (i.e., people, places, conversations, activities, objects, situations) that arouse distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about, or that are closely associated with, the traumatic event(s)

D. Negative alterations in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning or worsening after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by two or more of the following:
   1. inability to remember an important aspect of the traumatic event(s) (typically due to dissociative amnesia that is not due to head injury, alcohol, or drugs)
   2. persistent and exaggerated negative beliefs or expectations about oneself, others, or the world (e.g., “I am bad,” “No one can be trusted,” “The world is completely dangerous”). (Alternatively, this might be expressed as, e.g., “I've lost my soul forever,” or “My whole nervous system is permanently ruined”).
   3. persistent, distorted blame of self or others about the cause or consequences of the traumatic event(s)
   4. persistent negative emotional state (e.g., fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame)
   5. markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
   6. feelings of detachment or estrangement from others
   7. persistent inability to experience positive emotions (e.g., unable to have loving feelings, psychic numbing)

E. Marked alterations in arousal and reactivity associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning or worsening after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by two or more of the following:
   1. irritable or aggressive behaviour
   2. reckless or self-destructive behaviour
   3. hypervigilance
   4. exaggerated startle response
   5. problems with concentration
   6. sleep disturbance (e.g., difficulty falling or staying asleep or restless sleep)

F. Duration of the disturbance (Criteria B, C, D, and E) is more than 1 month.

G. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
H. The disturbance is not attributed to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., medication, drugs, or alcohol) or another medical condition (e.g. traumatic brain injury).

Specify if:

With Delayed Expression: if the diagnostic threshold is not exceeded until at least 6 months after the event (although the onset and expression of some symptoms may be immediate).

Subtype: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Preschool Children

A. In children (less than age 6 years), exposure to one or more of the following events: death or threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violation, in one or more of the following ways:
   1. directly experiencing the event(s)
   2. witnessing, in person, the event(s) as they occurred to others, especially primary caregivers (Note: Witnessing does not include events that are witnessed only in electronic media, television, movies or pictures.)
   3. learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a parent or caregiving figure;

B. Presence of one or more intrusion symptoms associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred:
   1. spontaneous or cued recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s) (Note: spontaneous and intrusive memories may not necessarily appear distressing and may be expressed as play re-enactment.)
   2. recurrent distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream is related to the traumatic event(s) (Note: it may not be possible to ascertain that the frightening content is related to the traumatic event.)
   3. dissociative reactions in which the child feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) were recurring, (such reactions may occur on a continuum with the most extreme expression being a complete loss of awareness of present surroundings). Such trauma-specific re-enactment may occur in play.
   4. intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s)
   5. marked physiological reactions to reminders of the traumatic event(s)

One item from criterion C or D below:

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event, beginning after the traumatic event occurred, as evidenced by avoidance or efforts to avoid:
   1. activities, places, or physical reminders that arouse recollections of the traumatic event
   2. people, conversations, or interpersonal situations that arouse recollections of the traumatic event.
D. Negative alterations in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event, beginning or worsening after the traumatic event occurred, as evidenced by one or more of the following:
   1. markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities, including constriction of play
   2. socially withdrawn behaviour
   3. persistent reduction in expression of positive emotions

E. Alterations in arousal and reactivity associated with the traumatic event, beginning or worsening after the traumatic event occurred, as evidenced by two or more of the following:
   1. irritable, angry, or aggressive behavior, including extreme temper tantrums
   2. hypervigilance
   3. exaggerated startle response
   4. problems with concentration
   5. sleep disturbance (e.g., difficulty falling or staying asleep or restless sleep)

F. Duration of the disturbance (Criteria B, C, D and E) is more than 1 month.

G. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in relationships with parents, siblings, peers, or other caregivers or with school behavior.

H. The disturbance is not attributable to another medical condition.

Note: An individual can be diagnosed with both the Preschool and Dissociative Subtypes if criteria for both are met.

Subtype: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder – With Prominent Dissociative (Depersonalization/Derealization) Symptoms

The individual meets the diagnostic criteria for PTSD and in addition experiences persistent or recurrent symptoms of A1, A2, or both:

A1. Depersonalization: Experiences of feeling detached from, and as if one is an outside observer of, one’s mental processes or body (e.g., feeling as though one is in a dream, sense of unreality of self or body, or time moving slowly.

A2. Derealization: Experiences of unreality of one’s surroundings (e.g., world around the person is experienced as unreal, dreamlike, distant, or distorted)

B. The disturbance is not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., blackouts, or behavior during alcohol intoxication), or another medical condition (e.g., complex partial seizures).

Note: The Dissociative and Preschool Subtypes are not mutually exclusive.

Available online at: https://www.myptsd.com/c/threads/wow-the-apa-really-got-the-new-ptsd-diagnosis-right.27151/ [Accessed 08/01/14]
ICD-10 criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

F43.1 Post-traumatic stress disorder

This arises as a delayed and/or protracted response to a stressful event or situation (either short- or long-lasting) of an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature, which is likely to cause pervasive distress in almost anyone (e.g. natural or man-made disaster, combat, serious accident, witnessing the violent death of others, or being the victim of torture, terrorism, rape, or other crime). Predisposing factors such as personality traits (e.g. compulsive, asthenic) or previous history of neurotic illness may lower the threshold for the development of the syndrome or aggravate its course, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain its occurrence.

Typical symptoms include episodes of repeated reliving of the trauma in intrusive memories (“flashbacks”) or dreams, occurring against the persisting background of a sense of “numbness” and emotional blunting, detachment from other people, unresponsiveness to surroundings, anhedonia, and avoidance of activities and situations reminiscent of the trauma. Commonly there is fear and avoidance of cues that remind the sufferer of the original trauma. Rarely, there may be dramatic, acute bursts of fear, panic or aggression, triggered by stimuli arousing a sudden recollection and/or re-enactment of the trauma or of the original reaction to it.

There is usually a state of autonomic hyperarousal with hypervigilance, an enhanced startle reaction, and insomnia. Anxiety and depression are commonly associated with the above symptoms and signs, and suicidal ideation is not infrequent. Excessive use of alcohol or drugs may be a complicating factor.

The onset follows the trauma with a latency period which may range from a few weeks to months (but rarely exceeds 6 months). The course is fluctuating but recovery can be expected in the majority of cases. In a small proportion of patients the condition may show a chronic course over many years and a transition to an enduring personality change (see F62.0).

Diagnostic guidelines

This disorder should not generally be diagnosed unless there is evidence that it arose within 6 months of a traumatic event of exceptional severity. A "probable" diagnosis might still be possible if the delay between the event and the onset was longer than 6 months, provided that the clinical manifestations are typical and no alternative identification of the disorder (e.g. as an anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorder or depressive episode) is plausible. In addition to evidence of trauma, there must be a repetitive, intrusive recollection or re-enactment of the event in memories, daytime imagery, or dreams. Conspicuous emotional detachment, numbing of feeling, and avoidance of stimuli that might arouse recollection of the trauma are often present but are not essential for the
diagnosis. The autonomic disturbances, mood disorder, and behavioural abnormalities all contribute to the diagnosis but are not of prime importance.

The late chronic sequelae of devastating stress, i.e. those manifest decades after the stressful experience, should be classified under F62.0.

*Includes:* traumatic neurosis

Initial Letter to Headteachers/ SENCos

Dear Contact,

Re: Domestic Violence Research

I am writing to you with an outline of my proposed research project in the hope teaching staff in your setting may agree to participate.

I am an Educational Psychologist working for the local authority and studying for an Educational Psychology Doctorate at the University of Sheffield. This research project will form the thesis for my doctoral studies.

The title of the research project is ‘Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years)’. The aim of this research is to explore teacher narratives of the impact of domestic violence on young children and effective day to day support mechanisms within the classroom and wider school environment.

There is very little research exploring teacher perceptions of domestic violence and I am keen to contribute the knowledge and experience of teachers and their good practice to this field of research with a view to further developing good practice and sharing the knowledge and experience of teachers. It is hoped this will further develop the skills and practice of staff who participate which will in turn benefit the whole school.

To research teacher narratives I would like conduct a series of group interviews, over a period of three to four weeks with teachers who, in the last three years, have taught a child, aged 0 - 11 years old, who has experienced domestic violence. Participants would need to attend all three group interviews.

The first group interview will involve information sharing regarding narrative methods and be an initial scoping session to discuss the issues of domestic violence. The agenda of the second session will be developed from initial analysis of the content of the first session. It is likely to involve presentation of some narratives outlined in the first session. Participants will be expected to bring some ideas for classroom practice and intervention which will then be discussed. The third session is hoped to lead to a more detailed narrative of domestic violence, discussion of further reading and practices/interventions that have been implemented. Participants will be encouraged to keep written notes, such as a diary, which details their thoughts and experiences over the period of the research.

I am then planning to analyse and compare responses to address the research objectives:
i. To outline teacher narratives of effective day to day support mechanisms for children and their families who have experienced domestic violence.

ii. To identify the day to day impact of witnessing domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment.

iii. To consider implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have experienced domestic violence.

Should you or any other members of staff be interested in participating I would be happy to share the findings from my research with you when it is completed.

Due to my project being intervention research I aim to provide an opportunity for continuing professional development. Participants would develop their understanding of narrative approaches, domestic violence and strategies to support the needs of children who have experienced domestic violence.

The timing of the group interviews is likely to be 4 – 5pm and involve 6 - 8 teachers from a range of schools. A central location will therefore be chosen for the group interviews. Each group interview will take around an hour.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. It will not be possible to identify individual responses, or schools, nor will participants be named.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on telephone number or by email at address.

If you would be interested in participating in the project please could you circulate the attached letter and questionnaire to teaching staff in your setting.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon
Educational Psychologist
Initial Letter to Participants

Dear Contact,

Re: Domestic Violence Research

I am writing to you with an outline of my proposed research project in the hope you may agree to participate.

I am an Educational Psychologist working for the local authority and studying for an Educational Psychology Doctorate at the University of Sheffield. This research project will form the thesis for my doctoral studies.

The title of the research project is ‘Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years)’. The aim of this research is to explore teacher narratives of the impact of domestic violence on young children and effective day to day support mechanisms within the classroom and wider school environment.

There is very little research exploring teacher perceptions of domestic violence and I am keen to contribute the knowledge and experience of teachers and their good practice to this field of research with a view to further developing good practice and sharing the knowledge and experience of teachers. It is hoped this will further develop the skills and practice of staff who participate which will in turn benefit the whole school.

To research teacher narratives I would like conduct a series of three group interviews, over a period of three to four weeks with teachers who, in the last three years, have taught a child, aged 3 - 11 years old, who has experienced domestic violence. Participants would need to attend all three group interviews.

The first group interview will involve information sharing regarding narrative methods and be an initial scoping session to discuss the issues of domestic violence. The agenda of the second session will be developed from initial analysis of the content of the first session. It is likely to involve presentation of some narratives outlined in the first session. Participants will be expected to bring some ideas for classroom practice and intervention which will then be discussed. The third session is hoped to lead to a more detailed narrative of domestic violence, discussion of further reading and practices/interventions that have been implemented. Participants will be encouraged to keep written notes, such as a diary, which details their thoughts and experiences over the period of the research.

I am then planning to analyse and compare responses to:

iv. outline teacher narratives of effective day to day support mechanisms for children and their families who have experienced domestic violence.

v. identify the day to day impact of witnessing domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment.
vi. consider implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have experienced domestic violence.

Should you be interested in participating I would be happy to share the findings from my research with you when it is completed.

Due to my project being intervention research I aim to provide an opportunity for continuing professional development. Participants would develop their understanding of narrative approaches, domestic violence and strategies to support the needs of children who have experienced domestic violence.

The timing of the group interviews is likely to be 4 - 5 pm and involve 6 - 8 teachers from a range of schools. A central location will therefore be chosen for the group interviews. Each group interviews will take around an hour.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. It will not be possible to identify individual responses, or schools, nor will participants be named.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on telephone number or by email at address.

If you would be interested in participating in the project please could you complete the attached questionnaire and post it to address, alternatively you can email it to email address.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon
Educational Psychologist
Letter to Unselected Participants

Date

Dear Participant,

Re: Domestic Violence Research

I would like to thank you for completing the information gathering sheet. I am writing to inform you I will not be inviting you to participate in a group interview due to having already obtained a sufficient number of participants.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on telephone number or by email at address.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon
Educational Psychologist
Dear Participant,

Re: Domestic Violence Research

Thank you for completing the information gathering sheet. I would like to invite you to participate in group interviews on:

**Session One:** Date, Location, 4pm – 5pm

**Session Two:** Date, Location, 4pm – 5pm

**Session Three:** Date, Location, 4pm – 5pm

If you are unable to participate in any of the groups please could you notify me as soon as possible so I can invite another person to ensure a suitable group size. Unfortunately inability to attend any of the sessions would end your involvement in the project.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on telephone number or by email at address.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon
Educational Psychologist
Appendix Five - Information Gathering Sheet

Title of Project: Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the early years (aged 0 - 8 years).

Name of Researcher: Helen Dixon

1. I would be interested in participating in the group interviews

2. a) I currently teach a child (aged 3 – 11) who is/has experienced domestic violence.

or

b) In the last three years I have taught a child (aged 3 – 11) who has experienced domestic violence.

3. Please indicate the age of the child you teach/taught

4. In the last three years I have not taught a child who has experienced domestic violence.

5. I am available to participate in a group interviews between 4 and 5 pm on:
   - Mondays
   - Tuesdays
   - Wednesdays
   - Thursdays
   - Fridays

6. I would be unavailable on the following dates (e.g. prior commitments, parents evenings): __________________________________________________________

7. Please provide an email address for further correspondence; including the date and time of group interviews: __________________________________________________________

Thank you for your participation.
Please return your completed questionnaire to email address or postal address
Appendix Six - Participant Information Sheet

1. Research Project Title

Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years).

2. Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?

The aim of this research is to explore teachers narratives of the impact of experiencing domestic violence on children in the primary years (3 – 11 years old).

There has been extensive research into the impact of domestic violence and appropriate therapeutic interventions. However there is very limited research exploring teacher’s narratives. In particular I am interested in perceptions of necessary day to day support mechanisms with the classroom and wider school environment.

The research project will take approximately two years to complete (your involvement will be three to four weeks in total).

4. Why have I been chosen?

A letter and initial questionnaire was sent to primary schools in pre-selected clusters in the city asking for volunteers to take part in this project. You have been selected to participate in this research on the basis of the information you provided on the information gathering sheet, the main purpose being to have a representative group of individuals. There will be three group interviews. All participants will be required to attend all three group interviews.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be involved in three group interviews which will take up to one hour each. The research project will take approximately two years to complete.
The group interviews will take place in a school considered to be central for all participants. The group interviews will take place outside of school time (e.g. 4pm-5pm). You will be required to participate in a group discussion around the topic outlined above. Questions or themes will be presented to stimulate discussion.

The discussion will be tape-recorded for the purpose of interpretation and analysis.

The content of the group interviews will be analysed and themes identified in order to address the research aims.

7. **What do I have to do?**

You will be required to participate in a group discussion with other teachers lasting approximately one hour around the topic outlined above.

The first group interviews will involve information sharing regarding narrative methods and be an initial scoping session to discuss the issues of domestic violence. The agenda of the second session will be developed from initial analysis of the content of the first session. It is likely to involve presentation of some narratives outlined in the first session. Participants will be expected to bring some ideas for classroom practice and intervention which will then be discussed. The third session is hoped to lead to a more detailed narrative of domestic violence, discussion of further reading and practices/interventions that have been implemented. Participants will be encouraged to keep written notes, such as a diary, which details their thoughts and experiences over the period of the research.

8. **Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?**

The audio recordings of the group interviews discussions made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

9. **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no identifiable disadvantages or risks to taking part. All data will be confidential.

10. **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Due to my project being intervention research I aim to provide an opportunity for continuing professional development. Participants would develop their understanding of narrative approaches, domestic violence and strategies to support the needs of children who have experienced domestic violence.

Following completion of the research it is hoped that this work will inform future strategies, training and recommendations for teachers to support children and their families who have experienced domestic violence.
11. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

If the research is discontinued due to unforeseen circumstances you will be notified as soon as practically possible and informed of the reasons for the research ending.

12. What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to raise a complaint in relation to the content or procedures used in this research please contact the research supervisor:

Research Supervisor,
School of Education
University of Sheffield
Email: email address
Telephone: telephone number

If you feel your complaint has not been handled to a satisfactory level you can contact the University’s Registrar and Secretary:

Contact Name
Office of the Registrar and Secretary
University of Sheffield
Firth Court
Western Bank
Sheffield
S10 2TN
Email: email address
Telephone: telephone number
Fax: fax number

www.shef.ac.uk/registrar

13. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

Personally identifiable information such as full names and places of work will not be audio recorded. All names the in transcripts will be pseudonyms. Consent forms will be kept in a locked draw and destroyed once the research is completed.

14. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the research will form a doctoral thesis for Educational Psychology at the University of Sheffield. The research project will be available at the University and may be submitted for publication in a relevant journal when the research is complete. Individuals will not be identified in any report or publication.
15. Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is self-funded by the researcher. The research is organised by the researcher and supervised by the research supervisor Professor Tom Billington in relation to doctoral studies in Educational Psychology.

16. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This research has been ethically reviewed by The School of Education Ethical Review Committee, University of Sheffield.

17. Contact for further information

Helen Dixon
Email: email address
Telephone: telephone number

Tom Billington
Email: email address
Telephone: telephone number

You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and a copy of a signed consent form if you agree to participate in the group interviews.

Thank you for reading and participating in this research.
Appendix Seven - Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years).

Name of Researcher: Helen Dixon

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated July 2013 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. Contact number: telephone number

3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis.
   I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.

4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

_________________________ ________________         ____________________
Name of Participant Date Signature
(or legal representative)

N/A                                             ________________         ____________________
Name of person taking consent Date Signature
(if different from lead researcher)
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Helen Dixon                                   ________________         ____________________
Lead Researcher Date Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:  
Participant
Researcher

You will also have a copy of the information sheet and any other written information provided to participants. A copy of this signed and dated consent form will be placed in the project’s main record (e.g. site file), which is kept in a secure location.
Appendix Eight - Group Interview Introduction and Themes/Questions

Session One

First could I introduce myself and then ask you just to go round and say who you are and your role or job title. (Introductions). This is a discussion on the impact of DV on children. I will introduce a number of broad questions for discussion. I hope you don't mind that I am tape-recording this session. We have some ground rules. They are that only one person speaks at a time, there are no right or wrong answers, and the purpose of this research is to hear your perspectives, views and experiences. Could I emphasize again that there are no right or wrong answers? I am interested in your experiences and the sense that you have made of them; we are not looking for group consensus. I will not lead or guide the discussion, though I may try to steer it back if I feel it has gone too much off course. I will be introducing the questions or themes, and some possible follow-up questions. The discussion is confidential in the sense that I will not attribute any remarks to identifiable individuals or schools. If I do use any verbatim quotes in my write-ups, they will be attributed to 'a teacher'.

Why did you say yes to participating in this research?

What is it that you are doing?

I am not looking to teach you about domestic violence. I want to use your ideas and allow us to listen to each others ideas.

As I have already stated the aim of this research is to explore teachers narratives of the impact of experiencing domestic violence on children in the primary years (3 – 11 years old).

There has been extensive research into the impact of domestic violence and appropriate therapeutic interventions. However there is very limited research exploring teacher’s narratives. In particular I am interested in perceptions of necessary day to day support mechanisms with the classroom and wider school environment.

Using a narrative approach I would like us to explore DV and the impact upon children. Narrative practice assumes we create a story to interpret and explain all experiences. I am interested in the narratives around DV and education from the perspective of teachers.

By participation in this group a narrative of DV will be created and developed. This will then enable us to consider future directions and possibly develop a set of resources within the final session. What these will look like entirely depends upon the contents of the discussion that takes place.

Initially we will consider issues more generally relating to DV and education. At the end of the session I will give you a couple of articles to read in preparation for the next session when we will consider personal experiences in more depth. To aid your
reflections I will provide you with a notebook to enable you to keep a reflective log over the next two weeks. I will discuss this further towards the end of the session.

I would like to share the Home Office Definition of domestic violence with you.

Why is DV of importance to you?

Do the children you have taught who have experienced DV present differently?

How do children exposed to DV present?

What is their impact upon the class?

Are you able to cope?

Is the child able to cope?

Are there problems at the gate?

Are there problems in the community?
   Do the parents/couples meet?

Do you go through child protection procedures?

Are you supposed to know?
   School perspective
   Child perspective
   Parent perspective

How is the violence talked about, and by who?

Strategies used and their impact.

Sources of support and their impact.

Social Care involvement and their impact.

How do you view your role as the child’s teacher?

What is the school’s role in relation to DV and education?

Prompts

To encourage more discussion / check that it is ok to move on to the next question.

Does anybody want to follow on from that?

Would anybody like to agree or disagree with that?

Is there anything anybody would like to add to that?

xxiv
General prompts to show interest and keep discussing flowing:

ok,

mmm,

uh-huh,

yeah,

[nods],

[eye contact],

Session Two

Welcome and reminder of ground rules:
   i. only one person speaks at a time
   ii. there are no right or wrong answers
   iii. and I am particularly interested in your own perspectives, views and experiences of these issues

Recap of previous session:

- extremely violent behaviour
- challenge to manage
- TAs who are not necessarily wanting to handle the children
- head teachers attempting to support but often ineffective
- violent behaviour being copied from home and being the norm within a family,
- children as covering for adults and wanting to share information but not doing so.
- Other children copy the behaviour displayed by the children who've experienced domestic violence.
- children seek control or feel out of control.
- Strategies included sticker charts, rewards or treats and verbal reminders not to hurt other children.
- difficult to teach properly
- concerns for safety within the classroom,
- left alone to cope
- difficult to access support in school and outside school.
- formal procedures such as child protection and police involvement have been needed to manage problems at the gate.
- time’s taken up talking about incidents and writing them up.
- different messages these children receive - observing violence in the home then being told in school not to hurt people.
- play being very rough with lots of crashing and banging
- experiences of external support were focused on parenting
- role as a teacher:
- educate them in order to prevent a cycle of violent behaviour continuing
- offer support and stability to talk if they needed to
- giving clear guidelines.

- school’s role
  - minimise the impact
  - have systems in place
  - keep records
  - maintain their safety
  - good communication
  - smooth transitions.

- personal, social skills were important but that expectations should be high and their experiences shouldn’t be used as an excuse.

Questions framed around:
- How do we think of children exposed to DV?
- How do we speak of children exposed to DV?
- How do we speak to children exposed to DV?
- How do we listen to children exposed to DV?
- (Billington, 2006, p.8)

What has stuck in your mind this week, what is your key thought or reflection?

How would you describe the children who you have taught (that have experienced DV)?
- Peer relationships
- Problem solving

How would their peers describe them?

How would they describe themselves?

What difficulties do you feel these children have?

What are their strengths?

How would you describe your relationship with their parents/carers?
- Is there a power relationship?
- Sensitive topic?

How do the children speak about their parents, or the adults at home?
- To adults or peers?
- Recognition of difference?
- Is there a need to talk?

How would you describe their play?

Do you think all children who have experienced DV present with the same difficulties?

What do you identify as key areas of need/ deficit/ difficulty for these children?

How do you teach children about appropriate behaviour?
What classroom strategies have been effective in supporting the children you’ve taught?

What would be your ideal scenario within the classroom to support them?

What doesn’t work?

The article that I gave you last week talked about emotion regulation and the development of prosocial skills. I was wondering what your reflections were on those areas of development:

- parental attachment helps to develop emotion regulation
- pro-social skills:
  - the success of a person in meeting societal expectations
  - attend to social cues
  - solve interpersonal problems

The family is discussed in relation to resilience. What role is there for teachers and schools, and how important is school in relation to the development of resilience?

What would have helped you?

What would have helped them?

Diaries

Persistent recollections
  E.g. key events in shaping your views, reasons for participating

Observations

Feelings evoked

Your response – reflections/reasons for your response

(Billington, 2006. p.17)

Prompts

To encourage more discussion / check that it is ok to move on to the next question.

Does anybody want to follow on from that?

Would anybody like to agree or disagree with that?

Is there anything anybody would like to add to that?

General prompts to show interest and keep discussing flowing:
ok,

mmm,

uh-huh,

yeah,

[nods],

[eye contact],

Session Three

Ground Rules:

- only one person speaks at a time
- no right or wrong answers (purpose of this research is to hear your perspectives, views and experiences).

Recap:

- Definition of D.V.
- Definition of Child Abuse

Overlap between D.V. and child abuse.

Department of Health (2002)
Nearly three quarters of children on the “at risk” register live in households where domestic violence occurs.

Sternberg et al. (2006)
Completed a ‘mega-analysis’ of family violence and within their sample 58% (1870 participants) of the children were victims of child abuse and witnesses of family violence.

Recap of last session:

We didn’t always know and then giving the children that / that space to talk – focus is often on academic attainment

Know not to hurt and intimidate without hurting. Not able to recognise why this behaviour is wrong. (Coercive)

In your experience children who have experienced DV are of lower academic ability. Reasons included lack of parental input e.g. reading and homework.

Social skills are not as developed.
Tend to get frustrated (violent)

Poor attention and concentration.

Not sure how DV, academic ability, attention and concentration, behaviour and social skills are linked and which influences another. ‘Switching off’ could be a coping strategy. ‘Vicious circle as one triggers the other’.

You felt that their peers generally view them as likeable.

You felt they were loving and cry out for nurturing – although they experience DV this doesn’t mean they are not loved.

Have low self-esteem

Perhaps due to feeling, in some way, responsible for the violence.

Difficulties making sense of everything

Conflicting messages

Realisation it is not the norm at home.

Trust

I understood that you were saying these factors impact on the development of their morals – is that correct?

Concerned with safety whether their own, parents or siblings

Described them as resilient – feel they have developed coping strategies

As teachers you know something is wrong but can’t put your finger on it – to all intents and purposes the child is coping.

No key themes relating to relationships with parents, some are needy, some are aggressive. No pattern re those who are abused and those who abuse or in relation to gender and their presentation.

Re emotion regulation

Lash out

Can’t wait

Re social cues

Not able to see how their behaviour affects others (coercive)

- Not true of all the children

Is this because they were older or because they were girls?

Parents don’t take responsibility for the behaviour of their children – make excuses

Parents don’t make/keep appointments

Teachers role – to build resilience
Promote challenge as good – not sure if these children have the resilience to engage.

Tendency not to try or give up

Coping strategies include avoidance and/or seeking very clear instructions or guidance

Find failure difficult to manage if it is something they expect to succeed in e.g. if are good at sports it is difficult to manage sporting failures.

Change of mindset re what is difficult and re giving praise (e.g. praising areas they don’t have difficulty with)

Want more background information about the children from parents and professionals (recognise the challenge of gaining information from parents and children)

Need to consider opportunities for teaching and talking in P.S.E.

Not teacher’s role to say ‘sit down and tell me everything’

you just have to stay one step ahead all the time

Similar symptoms to attachment disorder (need for control or that getting really frantic when something doesn’t go their way)

Topics which arose to discuss or explore further were:

Items for me to work on:
  - General information e.g. stats
  - Involvement of Social Care
  - Teaching Resources
  - Websites/ Resources for support for victims

Discussion areas for this session:
  - Q’s for parents
  - Classroom strategies
  - Resilience
  - Self-esteem
  - Behaviour management
  - How to talk to children

What have you been doing differently?

What has changed in your classroom?

How have the children changed?

What have you reflected on this week?

xxx
What has been the biggest change in your thinking or perceptions?

What have you learnt?

What would you like to know more about?

Collect diaries and thank participants

Prompts

To encourage more discussion / check that it is ok to move on to the next question.

* Does anybody want to follow on from that?

* Would anybody like to agree or disagree with that?

* Is there anything anybody would like to add to that?

General prompts to show interest and keep discussing flowing:

* ok,

* mmm,

* uh-huh,

* yeah,

* [nods],

* [eye contact],
Appendix Nine - NSPCC Definition of Child Abuse

In civil law, child welfare is the responsibility of local authorities and family courts. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities are charged with the “duty to investigate … if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm”.

Harm, under section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 is defined as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development". Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 added to this definition: "… including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another". To decide whether harm is significant, the health and development of the child is "compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child" (Children Act 1989).

In criminal law it is the police and the criminal courts who prosecute offenders and protect the public, including children. Home Office Circular 16/2005 lists criminal offences against children. It includes the offence of cruelty to children, which was first established in section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933:

“If any person who has attained the age of sixteen years and has the custody, charge, or care of any child or young person under that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned, or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health…that person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour…”.

NSPCC factsheet September 2012

Appendix Ten - Summary of Discussion from Session One and Session Two

• Presentation of the children
  o Cognitive
    ▪ Lower ability
    ▪ Poor attention and concentration
    ▪ Fear of failure
    ▪ Avoidance strategies
    ▪ Tendency not to try or give up
    ▪ Seek clear guidance/ instructions / coaxing / adult support
  o Behaviour
    ▪ Violent / get frustrated
    ▪ learned behaviour - from home and modelled in school
    ▪ play is rough (crashing and banging)
      *N.B. Rough play was clarified in session three by participants to be more typical of boys.*
  o Social/emotional
    ▪ coercive (unaware)
    ▪ poor social skills (for some)
    ▪ loving and seek loving
    ▪ seek control / feel out of control
    ▪ peers tend to perceive them as likeable
    ▪ low self-esteem
    ▪ Difficulties making sense of their experiences
    ▪ Resilient
    ▪ Lash out
    ▪ Can’t wait
    ▪ Difficulties managing failure when it is not expected
    ▪ conflicting messages re behaviour from home and school

*These factors were not true of all children (may have some or none of the above)*

• Needs of the children
  Development of personal and social skills
  Change of mindset

• Strategies
  o Within class – sticker charts, rewards, treats, verbal reminders, distraction (i.e. removal from known difficult times such as tidying up)
  o External support – Family support: focused on parenting strategies and targeted daily routine

• Issues for teachers
  o difficult to teach the class as a whole
  o unintentional lack of support/ misguided support (HTs/ TAs)
  o safety
  o time taken recording incidents
  o lack of background information
• focus on academic attainment - difficulty providing space/time to talk
  o often know something is not right but difficulties pin-pointing what or why
  o change of mindset e.g. praise

• Class teacher’s role
  o Educate to prevent cycle of learned behaviour continuing
  o Offer support and stability
  o Clear expectations
  o Build resilience

• School’s role
  o Minimise impact
  o To have systems in place
  o Keep records
  o Maintain the child’s safety
  o Good communication
  o Smooth transitions

• Parents
  o No common presentation – some are needy whilst others are aggressive
  o Tendency not to make or keep appointments
  o May struggle with supporting school work e.g. homework, reading
  o Difficult to hear about their child’s negative behaviour, make excuses or gloss over it.
Appendix Eleven - Illustration of a coping strategy ‘needing to be right’

The need for things to be right was identified as an effective coping strategy within the home as it helps to maintain harmony. However within the school environment this is ineffective and negatively impacts upon academic achievement and attainment within the school environment.
Appendix Twelve - Transcript Information

Transcript Conventions

Edwards and Mercer (1987)

(...)

Words undeciphered

.

Omitted conversation

.

irrelevant to the issue

.

being discussed

.

Sequence starts or ends within a speaker's turn

/

Pause of less than two seconds

//

Pause of greater than two seconds

Bold type

Emphatic speech

[

Simultaneous or interrupted speech

Example:

SPEAKER 1: …that’s very [ interesting isn’t it?
SPEAKER 2: [ say if the string’s…

(&)

Continuing speech, separated in the transcript by an interrupting speaker.

Example: speaker 1 continues without a pause, despite interruption:

SPEAKER 1: You think if you stuck a ton on
[ it would make any difference a ton?
[ (&)

SPEAKER 2: [ No/ no/ not even a ton.
SPEAKER 1: (&) it would still be about ten seconds…

Confidentiality

All names in the transcripts are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.
Appendix Thirteen - Transcript of Group Interview One

4pm on 02/07/13 33 minutes 05 seconds

Facilitator (F) and three teachers (T) (T3 arrived late and T1 had to leave early)

F: Right ok, erm, so firstly I just wanted to ask why you said yes to participating in the research?

T1 & T2: [Nervous laughter]

T1: Er, sorry. I said yes because I’m really interested in learning about, more about, domestic violence myself and having children that come into my class that have it I’d like to know how to help and support them.

F: Ok.

T2: Mmm, me too really. Erm/ I’ve taught for quite a long time, but this year there was one particular child, well two children, that have, erm, their behaviour’s very difficult.

F: Mmm-hmm.

T2: Erm, and they come from families, that, er, have had lot’s of problems. There are other children in there that actually are probably suffering as well but those two are really extreme and, erm, as a staff we’ve found it really difficult to manage them, and I, and one of them left

F: Mmm

T2: and I felt, you know, that, maybe yeah I could have done more

F: Ok.

T2: Or a bit, a bit, like I failed him really.

F: Right.

T2: The one that stayed behaviour has improved a lot, erm, ‘cos they kind of bounced off each other.

F: Mmm

T2: but when [T3] said you were doing this group, so if there’s anything I could get out of it as well as you then

F: Mmm

T2: I thought it would be a good idea really.

F: Ok. Excellent, erm, so as I said I’m not looking to teach you, necessarily, about domestic violence. I want to use your ideas and then it will allow us to listen to each other’s ideas. Erm, and as I said there’s been extensive research already into the impact of domestic violence. But there’s very limited, erm, research into teacher narratives and I’m interested in the perceptions of necessary day to day support mechanisms within the classroom and then, sort of, within the wider school environment so it’s that ‘what do we do day to day?’.
It might be that there’s therapeutic intervention that happens once a week for an hour?

But actually what happens the rest of the time when they’re with you [laugh] that’s the bit that I’m really interested in! Erm so we’re going to use a narrative approach to that and I’d like us to sort of explore, erm, domestic violence and it’s impact upon the children, and narrative practice assumes that we create a story to interpret and explain all experiences, erm, and I’m interested in the narratives that we have around domestic violence and education, from the perspectives of teachers, so, what, how you how see it. Erm, and by participation in the group we’re going to create our own narrative of domestic violence and that will hopefully help us to consider what the future directions will be, possibly develop a set of resources within the final session. Erm, as I say, that kind of depends on where the scope of the discussion takes us, err. So this, this session, we’re going do, sort of, the initial erm questions, themes around domestic violence and then, as I said, I’ve given you the articles to think about and the diaries. And then next week we’ll sort of think more about personal experiences and you’ll have had time to think about that a bit more as well. Erm, and we can think, obviously you’ve got your log as well, erm and then the final session we’ll see where we go with that one - where we get to.

T1: Mmm-hmm

F: Ok, so, erm, I think you might have already answered this one but incase there’s anything else you want to add why is domestic violence of importance to you?

T2: Well, I think mainly the children’s, it’s kind of modelled for them, that’s set and then they act it out in some way

F: Mmm

T2: at school. So if they’ve seen it, or had it done to them, they will either act it out to us, other children or to the staff.

F: Mmm

T2: in that, in the one’s we’ve had this year.

F: Ok. So behaviourally I think [you’re saying aren’t you?]

T2: [yeah behaviourally, violent behaviour

F: Yeah.

T2: Yeah.

F: Anything you want to add or would you say different or…?

T1: No it’s mainly same. The behaviour and providing those coping strategies for them really, so no…

F: Ok. So would you say that the children who, who you’ve taught, erm who’ve experienced domestic violence present differently to the other children that you’ve taught?

T1: Yeah. They’re, they are a lot more difficult to handle in the sense of behaviour.
T1: I mean the child that I had last year he lied a lot to cover for his parents.
F: Right.
T1: Err, his sister’s in year 1 now but she’s in the other class and she’s exactly the same. She did a lot of the covering.
F: Mmm
T1: she’s not here a day and I’ll say why were you not here and she’ll, you can tell she get’s nervous when she wants to tell you why.
F: Mmm
T1: But, erm yeah but the other one that I had was mainly behaviour.
F: Mmm, ok.
T2: Yeah I’d say that as well.
F: Yeah.
T2: Yeah, one of ours to the staff, wasn’t violent to the other children but to the staff
F: Mmm
T2: almost like a control thing. If you, if he, got his control taken away he would
F: mmm
T2: really get violent towards us. The other one towards the other children and that was, it was almost like a power thing really.
F: Yeah
T2: Err asserting himself but in the past we’ve had children that just get, really, really, they haven’t shown/ erm aggressive behaviour to other children but when it’s home time they just start getting really fearful and agitated and
F: Mmm
T2: scared I suppose, about going home.
F: mmm, ok
T2: But that was mainly to, when it was directed at them
F: Yeah
T2: rather than another person in the family.
F: yeah. Ok. Erm what would you say was the impact of that child, or children, on the other children in the class?
T1: They see it as being ok them acting that way.
F: Mmm.
T1: They think that what they’re doing is ok and then they/ like bounce off him,
F: mmm.
T1: well they’re doing that so I can do that. They don’t understand that deep down he is probably genuinely scared and just knows that way of acting cos he’s seen it.
F: Mmm.
T2: Yeah the child, the child that left our, our setting erm, whose behaviour was extreme, the other child within the setting, I think when he kicked out of control that made/
yeah, that made Steven really unsettled and a little bit unsure because things were out of control. So they just bounced off each other, like you say. The effect on the rest of the children they were really protective of me so if he was throwing things at me or, or showing aggression towards me they got really upset about it and it gelled them all together so that when he went they’re actually a really close knit class now but they used to say things like ‘[intake of breath] that could’ve hit you in the eye [Teacher’s name]’

Erm which was really sweet, but that, his aggression was directed at the staff whereas Steven tends to, at, his is to err, other children if he can’t express himself or he wants something and he can’t have it, he’ll just you know he, he’d just have a massive wobbler so we’d try to do things a little bit before we started tidying up and, and move him out of the class, kind of cajole him out of the class and we did like a little time, you know a visual timetable and things like that but it was all about control with him and he needed to have control so if it was free choice play he wasn’t a problem. And it was just certain times when he, he felt like he somebody else was taking control off him, that he, he, he would get really violent. And those were the times that were difficult for you then?
T2: Yeah. Yeah and the rest of the staff. You could see the, the
teaching assistants, I mean I’ve, I had three teaching assistants on
a morning and two on an afternoon. One for Steven, who was the
other child, erm but he absolutely ground us down.

F: mmm

T2: He was there from October half term till erm/ was it February half
term? And for that term, even though, you know he had a lovely side to
him, we were absolutely wrecked [laughs]

F: Mmm

T2: and that had a bad effect on the rest of the children, because all
our time was taken with managing his behaviour and that took, that
was three of us on a morning.

F: Mmm

T2: and sometimes you just, sometimes he’d just crowd surfed onto the
rest of the children in the class and you couldn’t, you couldn’t
possibly teach. You know he’d swipe things off the tables and, you
couldn’t possibly teach properly

F: Mmm

T2: because he took all your time to kind of/ all your energy was in
managing, his, his behaviour really, erm so yeah massive, he a
massive effect on the class and because the other child was
difficult too and together it was, it made things really awkward.

F: yeah.

T2: Since he’s gone Steven conforms much more because there’s no-
one to kick off with him

F: mmm

T2: so he likes to be like everybody else really,

F: Yeah.

T2: so he’s been much easier to handle.

F: and what about for you?

T1: It was the same really. You had the two people trying to get them
out and everything

F: right

T1: cos you’ve got to think of the other children but you’ve got to think
of your safety as well and when you did take them out you, I felt
awful when I came back to class. It was an awful feeling, I’ve had
to just remove a child from my class and he’s five years old.

F: Mmm

T1: erm but the other class like you say they just ignored half the time

F: Mmm

T1: because he got my full attention or he got the TAs and you got to a
point where the TAs were like ‘right I don’t want to handle this
anymore’ and

F: Mmm and how does that make you feel, and if you’re nodding as
well, when you’ve got your support staff saying to you I, I don’t want
to, how do you feel?
T1: It makes you feel, it made me feel like I wasn’t doing the right thing in a sense cos I’m like if they don’t want to do it then there’s going to be me with this child

T2: yeah

T1: well why is there nothing else going in place to support this child and we’re putting everything into him but what else do you need to make sure that you have that something there for him?

T2: yeah.

F: Yeah. Does that make you feel less able to cope, if people are then saying I don’t want to be a part of that?

T1: In a way it does cos then you’re left by yourself to cope with this child.

T2: mmm.

F: Mmm.

T2: I felt sorry for them a little bit

T1: mmm

T2: cos I knew how hard it was, erm and how little they get paid.

F: mmm

T2: It made me cross that, you know at first I was saying, you know this is happening it’s not acceptable in my class and no, none of the rest of the teaching staff seemed that bothered cos it didn’t affect them.

F: mmm. yeah. And do you think the school is then able to cope at that point or/ was it still challenging would you say?

T1: Well we got to a point, sorry [to T2], we got to a point where we were taking him to the headteacher and she was a bit like, she just took him somewhere else, to somebody else, cos I think, she got to a point where she was like well I don’t really know what else to do with him

F: mmm

T1: in a sense. And then you’ve got calmed down and brought back to you within minutes

F: [Mmm

T2: [mmm

T1: or they’d go to another teacher and they can’t and then it’d be the same. It was like a really vicious circle

F: Mmm

T1: that just kept going cos then like an hour later they’d kick off again and you’d to get them out again go to the headteacher and they’d be come brought to you again two minutes or so

F: [And what impact
do you see on the child through that cycle, sort of as they go
through the day would you, what would you see?
T2: Well power in a way
T1: Mmm
T2: well cos ours was sent to the headteacher sometimes he’d trash
the headteacher’s classroom erm but and, and she [laughs], she
used to do things to calm him down like sit him on her knee and
read a book which, so in the end he used to want
F: mmm-hmm
T2: to go to her room cos it wasn’t punishment and, and then you’ve
lost control haven’t you?
F: mmm
T2: He’s, he’s, you’ve got no sanctions because they’re kind of…
calling all the shots.
F: Mmm
T2: so
[T3 arrives]
F: I’ve just been through some sort of general questions about why is
domestic violence of importance to you, erm, do the children who
you taught, erm, present differently, erm and how do they impact on
the class and basically I think we’re hearing that there behaviour is
obviously quite challenging it’s difficult to manage in the classroom,
difficult for the adults. They get sent out, cycle round the school
perhaps and then move back again and that becomes something,
children that you were saying [looking towards T2] children enjoy.
T3: Mmm
F: and I’m just going to move on to a sort of different little area in a
way so you’ve probably picked a good point to join us [laughs].
T1: [laughs]
F: So I was then going to say, and we’ve asked whether you feel able
to cope as well and you’re both saying that it’s very challenging erm
in that sense. Are there problems at the school gate, cos obviously
we’re talking about domestic violence and then, sort of – obviously,
that will likely be between two partners, so does, is that something
you see an impact of at the school gate, and you’re nodding
T2: yes
F: so I’m going to go to you.
T2: Yes. We had problems at the school gate just getting, because/ he
was, Nathan was late coming into school so that impacted. His
mum had to virtually shove him through the door and right from the
beginning you know it was just a really bad start to the day because
she couldn’t get them up and she couldn’t get them in
F: [and then,
[laughs]
T2: you know, it just had a knock on effect didn’t it [looks to T3].
It did with him. I mean it depends cos there’s different children cos, the girl that I’m thinking of [laughs] less problem in terms of behaviour as well and less problem at the gate but more problem like between dad and mum so.

F: yeah and that’s the same

T3: same kind of question

T3: [you know so not the child being a problem but the but the potential of the conflict in terms of/ them meeting.

F: Mmm

T3: or dad turning up, most of the

F: mmm

T3: cos you know, cos dad wasn’t supposed to see them and blah, b-blah and turning up and or you know/ school being phoned and saying keep them here we don’t want them

F: [mmm

T2: [mmm

T3: to go with the other partner.

F: [to T1] yeah and do you, did you?

T1: That’s what ours was like. It was no problem getting him into school.

F: mmm

T1: He, like, relished the thought of coming to school but it was the ‘you can’t send them home with this parent

T3: mmm

T1: and they’d turn up and you’ve got to as school protect the child cos they’re not supposed to go with that parent

F: mmm

T1: and then the mum would turn up and there’d just be an almighty row

F: mmm

T1: that type of thing.

F: Ok. Would, would you say that the child was able to cope// or the children?

T3: I suppose they do don’t they?

T2: Mmm

T3: I’m thinking of two girls and they seemed more able to cope than maybe well/ with Nathan he certainly didn’t seem able to cope.

T2: No, but he’d seen violence towards his brother so erm I think he wanted to stay with mum. That was her problem getting him in, because he’d and plus she disappeared off and he didn’t know whether she was always going to be there

T3: [no that’s definitely true

T2: [so I think that’s
definitely why she couldn’t get him in through the door. I think with Steven he probably/ quite likes it when he gets there.

F: mmm

T2: because it’s stable for him and you know, it’s always the same and it’s something kind of steady.

T3: The same with the girl I’m thinking of. Being in school isn’t an issue is it?

Er, it, it was more

F: Mmm, and was she older, when you?

T3: Older than the other one.

F: Yeah.

T3: Yeah

F: Yeah. Ok erm, so when we’re saying, we’ve answered this a little bit, that there are problems in the community and there can be problems when, when parents or couples meet, erm, so you, you were alluding to this a little bit, so what do you have to do at that point, do you go through child protection procedures or erm is it more informal processes within school, when you, you have these difficulties, what do you have to do?

T1: We go through the child protection. We’ll go see [designated teacher for CP]

All: Mmm.

T1: and [designated teacher for CP] will go through everything with the child protection and sort it all that way. Yeah.

F: [to T2 and T3] Same?

T2: Well in the past I’m not really sure about our school cos I haven’t really experienced that. But in my old school we had fisticuffs in the playground and we’ve had to call the police to sort that out and they’ve been, they had like a court order that [laughs] they’re not allowed in the playground so they, they had to stay a certain distance away from the school.

F: Yeah.

T3: Mmm we had.

F: So it’s very much formal procedures then isn’t it?

T3: Yeah

F: Yeah. Ok erm then the other question, erm, thinking about all the children, I suppose, that you have worked with who’ve experienced domestic violence, would you, are you supposed to know that they’re victims of domestic violence?

T3: I don’t think we don’t know half of it actually.

T2: I don’t either.

T3: I think you find out about the extreme cases or the cases where it’s got worse.

T2: Yeah

T3: and it’s escalated into, you know,

T2: mmm

T3: into that they’ve got a court order, or, you know, it’s so bad that
And, and I// but
[and you are supposed to know because it's a legal matter.
But I think there's a lot, the girl who I'm thinking about who's now
left, but it was two years ago and I didn't know until mum just
happened to just mention at a parents evening it had been going on
for ages.
Right/ But you wouldn't say there are families that you know about
who don't think you know for example?
Erm I think
Cos sometimes you find things out don't you.
Yeah, yeah.
With younger children they just say it as a matter of course so lots
of, well not lots of children but the new child came into our class in
the last term and he just said, as part of the news, 'oh and my dad
used to hit, hit my dog so we had to send the dog away and then
he used to hit me and my mum so we had to send Daddy away'
and that's you know what had happened between his mum and dad
so and he'd taken all that [laughs] in his stride really.
so on the whole you are expected to know when you do know?
Mmm
But you wouldn't have ever known that had happened.
so on the whole you are expected to know when you do know?
Mmm
Erm, ok. Do the children know that you know?// [laughs] sounds a
bit cryptic doesn't it?
Don't think so. Cos I had a little girl, that was, I was marking her
book a couple of months ago and she went 'my dad punched my
mum last night'
and I had no idea looking at this child and knowing the child you
would not think it
so then I was a bit shocked [laughs] she just came out with that, so
no I don't think so.
Mmm. [to T2 and T3] And would you say that the children you've
worked with know that you know?
I think some of them would want to tell you and some of them
wouldn't want tell you
mmm
and we probably, like you say, don't know some of the ones that do
have stuff at home.
Mmm
that do, because sometimes as well that's just what happens in
your family so it's not out of the ordinary so you don't bother saying
anything
yeah.
T3: erm/ and er you’re right some would want you to know and then, then they say don’t they?
All: Mmm
T2: mmm.

F: Erm so how would you say erm that the violence is talked about and by who?

T2: Erm/ I don’t think in Nathan’s family it was talked about. (…)
T3: not very often with the children.
F: And what about within school among staff members or/ [To T2] I mean you were saying you have support staff was it something that you talked about?
T2: Yeah everyday
All: [laughing]
T2: was taken up because we were spending so long having to write all the incidents up and so we talked about it a lot and then you know we talked to [T3] and [the headteacher] about it.
T3: With him he was an extreme case in terms his behaviour
T2: yeah
T3: as well though wasn’t he? with a lot of other children that don’t present quite so
T2: Hmm, T3: I mean he really T2: yeah
T3: I don’t know whether there’s other issues with him as well but he presented in a really
T2: yeah
T3: challenging
T2: [He didn’t talk about it. His brother used to talk about it in his school cos I think was kind of offloaded stuff
F: Mmm
T2: With Steven we more, we talked to him more about his behaviour kind of reminded him he’d not to hurt other people
T3: Mmm
T2: cos it’s kind of a target of his
F: mmm
T2: but his understanding isn’t really at, at
F: So would that be something that you talked about in terms of the violence, would you, did you talk about his violence and then
T2: yeah
F: just sort of the physicalness of that?
T2: yeah, yeah.
F: yeah, ok.
T3: but not the violence he’d experienced
T2: no
F: [not the violence he’d experienced
T3: just, just the way he expresses himself.
T2: yeah
F: mmm. and I guess that was possibly, as you were saying, was something that you reflected on as adults then what he’d experienced, and then that, that?
T2: yeah, although actually coming to think of it, he has said, cos I thought it must seem really strange that we keep saying Steven you don’t hurt people
F: mmm
T2: and he said ‘oh my brother’, he’s, he’s commented that his brother has almost hurt, almost hurt him as an excuse you know
F: Mmm
T2: He’s said.
T2: You know, well it must seem really strange to him that Elliot does that [laughs] but we’re saying [you don’t hurt people
T3: [I think, I think that’s it because that’s where the difference is maybe if the children are slightly older
T3: [laughs] so-and-so hurt so-and-so, so so-and-so hurt so-and-so
T2: Yeah.
T3: or, girls. Cos I do, I do think it makes a difference. With Steven that’s his, been his life hasn’t it? [to T2]
T2: Mmm.
T3: so-and-so hurt so-and-so, so so-and-so hurt so-and-so
T2: Yes definitely.
T3: and it just, it went down the line. Dad hurt mum
T2: yeah
T3: and older brother hurts mum
T2: sister hurts mum [laughs]
T3: sister hurts mum
T2: [laughs]
T3: [laughs] and, and sister hurts the younger brother [laughs]
T2: yeah, knock on effect.
T3: younger brother hurts Steven
T2: [and it’s an ongoing effect younger brother hurts Steven so Steven would probably kick the dog if they had one, you know what I mean. It goes down
T2: yeah
T3: but with him that’s all but with some other children that’s not quite that pronounced is it?
T2: Mmm
F: mmm. Was he the youngest?
T2: Yes.
T3: Mmm.
F: Mmm.
T3: I mean he's lived with it/ through
T2: Mmm.
F: Mmm.
T2: Although he still hasn't seen the worst of Dad.
T3: No he hasn't seen the worst of Dad,
F: [or he can't remember seeing the worst of Dad.
T2: [or mum/ no, no
T2: Or you know.
T3: He can't have seen the worst of Dad can he as he wasn't
T2: consciously old enough.
T3: But with, but with some of the others/ it's, they know, not, maybe
not how everybody behaves. It's how my Dad's behaving, cos it
has a tendency to be Dad's.
T2: Yeah.
T3: Even if
T2: His play is very rough. Even if he's not speaking it's all smashing
things together, really noisy, you know
T3: Crashing and banging.
T2: Yeah.
T3: Yeah.
F: So what strategies have been used to support the children and
what sort of impact have they had?
T2: Erm, well with Steven, kind of he's got a personal target with, with
rewards for it so
F: Mmm.
T3: and he's got a very, he's got somebody who works with him almost
[one to one.
T2: [and he has got
T2: a one to one. Yeah, so
T3: And that's working well.
T2: Yeah, and he, he, he loves his treat so if he doesn't get it - it's just
worked that you know, he tends to, like Pavlov's dogs I suppose, he
wants it so he tries to remember not to hurt people.
F: Mmm, mmm.
T2: Erm and he knows when he's, when he has - and why he's done it.
F: mmm.
T2: He knows what's right and what's wrong now. He just really can't
stop himself sometimes.
F: Mmm
T2: you know it's almost like a/
[кnee-jerk reaction.

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T3: He’s loads better.
T2: He is loads better since Nathan’s gone.
F: Yeah.
T3: and since Nathan’s gone, with the two of them together it was
T2: Yeah, yeah.
T3: Erm, with Nathan it was one step forward and two steps back a lot
of the time and I think him and Steven together was just like
F: mmm.
T2: It was power. It’s a lot, all power really wasn’t it?
T3: Yeah.
F: Mmm and were there any other sources of support other than
things, perhaps that you offered in school/ any external support.
T2: Well the educational psychologist was great when she came and
there was like group meetings about them
F: mmm-hmm.
T3: yeah.
T2: Because it was quite like erm [pause] dangerous situation I
suppose at, at the time.
T3: Mmm.
T2: so erm…
T3: and somebody in my class who it’s not strictly domestic violence at
the moment but it’s more dad, hits mum, erm well it’s alcohol
syndrome, alcohol abuse then he’s been taken away and there’s
Alfie looked after by his Auntie and her husband, erm but we’re
accessing [area based external support] for them.
F: Mmm.
T3: so some counselling.
F: Mmm. Right.
T2: and Steven has had kind of family support.
T3: family support yeah.
F: and who has that been from?
T2: I’m not sure.
T3: well it’s the family support team
T2: oh right.
T3: it’s linked with the [area based external support] wasn’t it and [the
cluster].
F: and what, what’s that involved – the family support?
T2: Well I think they worked with the family
T3: They did, yeah.
T2: about well just getting them up in the morning.
T3: well they’ve gone round everyday.
T2: yeah
T3: going round everyday to help
F: so parenting support?
T3: yeah to help mum get them out.
F: right.
T3: to school.
T2: cos they were all not attending school really.
F: And what sort of impact have these strategies had, you mentioned the educational psychologist and obviously you've had the [area based external support] so how effective would you say those things [have been?
T2: [Well they've been, attendance improved and…
T3: For Steven it's certainly having an effect.
T2: Yeah, yeah.
F: ok, and the educational psychologist, you said you had group meetings?
T2: To be honest that was more with Nathan and he left us
F: Right, yeah.
T2: so I couldn't really say but erm/ she is, she’s really good.
F: Mmm
T2: so for Nathan it’s more difficult to say
T3: for Nathan it’s much more a containment at that point wasn’t it?
T2: yeah
T3: cos he was, well he did abscond once and it was just like – [sighs] and then he’s at [another local mainstream school] now,
F: mmm.
T3: erm because they have more of a unit there anyway
F: mmm
T3: and also better. We’ve changed our entry system now, but better// He just legged it didn’t he?
T2: [Well yeah.
F: [oh right
T2: Well at the meeting they were discussing, all the parties were discussing what role they were/ going to be playing
F: mmm
T2: and that, it sounded really good. For Steven I’m not sure what other things apart from
T3: that’d all happened before we got Steven.
T2: yeah
T3: It started at nursery for Steven
T2: [because of the history of the family
T2: [Yeah. It was all set up
T2: so I’m not sure what they did you know with mum and the family but it did seem to
T3: well they did, they did a lot around mum’s parenting role/ and
F: Ok. So how do you view your role as these children’s teachers?
T2: [laughs]
T3: for those where it’s less, of the impact on their behaviour, or
whatever, it’s more support and stability isn’t it
T2: Mmm.
T3: and keeping things the same and if they want to talk you’re there to
talk and things like that
F: Mmm-hmm
T2: Yeah somebody they can trust and giving them stability I think.
F: Mmm
T2: Yeah. And clear guidelines.
T3: Yeah.
T2: And Steven likes to know exactly what happens if you do that and
he’s fairly treated and
F: Mmm.
T2: mmm just
F: And what would you say that the school’s role is?
T3: I think it’s/ in terms of, well trying to minimise the impact for a start
and then making sure the systems are in place for if then they need
to access to all of the other things.
F: Mmm
T3: Erm if we need to we keep a record, although we’re only keeping a
record of what the child’s, or if, you know if somebody turns up that
shouldn’t,
F: mmm.
T3: but it’s making sure those things and the child’s safe I suppose
T2: yeah
T3: and you know who they leave with or
T2: Good communication and smooth transition as they’re moving
through school I suppose.
F: mmm
T2: and that everybody/ is aware of their needs and/
[laughs]
F: [Ok. Is there anything
else that possibly you feel you want to mention at this point or that
links to anything else that we’ve said?
[laughs]
T3: I don’t know where you’re up to so
T2: [laughs]
T3: [laughs]
F: Just based on what we’ve talked about that’s all. So/ just anything
that’s you know come to mind and you haven’t had chance to say it/
no?
T2: No.
T3: What, are you looking at the impact on school, you know their?
F: Erm I’m interested in the impact on children, but on, from the
teacher’s perspective. Cos what I’m, sort of, interested in is what
you see as the necessary sort of day to day support cos obviously
we’re saying we’ve got things like the [area based external support]
or weekly interventions but I’m, sort of, interested in what happens
in the classroom, what do you have to do as teachers and the
school to support that child the rest of the time alongside the
professionals or other interventions that day to day,

T3: [mmm
T2: [mmm yeah
F: you know getting from the morning to the end of school what is it
that you need and what does it feel like, how does it work, how
does it feel for the child, what do you think need, how do you think
they feel
T3: mmm

F: and you know, that really! The story around that [laughs].
T3: I suppose at the end of the day our role is there, is to teach the
child so and, and by teaching them you’re giving them the best
chance to not
F: mmm

T3: I don’t know how to phrase this without being judgemental, but to
get out of the situation that you know they’re,
F: mmm
T3: so they don’t perpetuate it if you like. So it’s, so it’s/ around giving
them the best, for a start, education.
F: Mmm
T3: erm and although they might have seen things and you know, that
we don’t know the half of, erm, it’s not that giving that an excuse
then for them to behave like that, but to try and break that cycle.
F: Mmm
T2: [Yes.
T3: [Erm, I think.
T2: Our role is not necessarily academic is it? It’s kind of coping
strategies, so the personal and social.
T3: Yeah, no, both isn’t it? Cos you still want, you don’t want to say
well they’ve been subjected to that so they’ve got that excuse. You
want to say that but we still need to/ teach them, I don’t know that’s
- well that’s our role at the end of the day isn’t it?
T2: yeah, but you’ve got a responsibility to the rest of the class as well.
T3: oh yeah, yeah, yeah. No absolutely. That’s what I’m saying so not
giving them, you can maybe understand or empathise with it but not
giving them the excuse that
T3: mmm
T2: [Yes.
T3: oh well they’ve seen that terrible thing so they don’t have to do that
work today or they can behave like this today. Which, I don’t know/
I do think there was some of that maybe, or that, you know that
there can be a tendency for that if you’re not careful.
T2: Yeah.
T3: I find myself doing it sometimes with Alfie [laughs] but
F: mmm
T2: Yeah there’s difficulty sometimes if that child comes into your
setting in the time that it takes
F: mmm
T2: to kind of get some, some extra help.
F: mmm.
T2: You know all the red tape that you have to jump through and I
suppose you have to don’t you but
T3: Yep.
T2: It does make things difficult
T3: You do nowadays cos there’s a lot less support there.
T2: Exactly.
F: Mmm.
. .
Appendix Fourteen - Transcript of Group interview Two

4pm on 10/07/13 1 hour 9 minutes 37 seconds

Facilitator (F) and two teachers (T) (T1 was unable to attend this session)

F: Ok, so I wanted to start with erm sharing with you the erm definition, which The Home Office introduced in March 2013. You probably saw in the news that they were introducing a new definition of domestic violence and I thought just given that we / sort of were / er very vague and and left it open for us to sort of talk about what we wanted last week I thought well I'll give us a definition this week just so that I have presented that to you, T3: mmm
F: erm so the definition that was introduced in March 2013 was any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. Which, er, this can encompass, but is not limited to, / the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. / Erm and they clarify saying controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. And coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern // of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. / Erm and this definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and is clear / and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group and that was / devised by The Home Office in 2012. // Ok?
T2: mmm-hmm.
F: So / in terms of then what we talked about last week and to give us a brief recap erm / in summary this is what I feel you were telling me so if you think I'm not reflecting it accurately let me know, so that's fine erm we talked about there being extremely violent behaviour which is a challenge to manage and you've got TAs who are not necessarily wanting to handle the children, head teachers attempting to, to support but that often can be ineffective erm you
talked about the violent behaviour being copied from home and being the norm within a family, you described the children as covering for adults and perhaps wanting to share information but not doing so. Other children in the class copy the behaviour displayed by the children who’ve experienced domestic violence. There was some suggestion that these children seek control or feel out of control. Strategies included sticker charts, rewards or treats and verbal reminders not to hurt other children. Erm, it’s difficult to teach properly, you’ve got concerns for safety within the classroom, you feel left alone to cope and it’s difficult to access support in school and outside school. In your experiences formal procedures such as child protection and police involvement have been needed to manage problems at the gate. Within school a lot to time’s taken up talking about incidents and writing them up. You commented on the different messages these children receive, so for example observing violence in the home then being told in school not to hurt people. Er, there was a description of play being very rough with lots of crashing and banging and your experiences of external support were focused on parenting so/ daily routing, coming to school, getting up, that kind of thing. Erm, you describe the role as a teacher as being to educate them in order to prevent a cycle of violent behaviour continuing to offer support and stability to talk if they needed to giving clear guidelines. You felt that the school’s role is to minimise the impact, to have systems in place, keep records, maintain their safety, good communication and smooth transitions. Erm, and you felt that personal, social skills were important but that expectations should be high and their experiences shouldn’t be used as an excuse. / Does that sound ok?

F: Erm, ok so erm what has stuck in your mind this week, so what’s your key thought or reflection been?

T3: I know what mine is but that’s because it’s older children

T2: mmm

T3: so I’ll talk from that point of view. It’s, it’s going back to thinking about us saying about we didn’t always know and then giving the children that / that space to talk. That’s what I’ve put down in that book [refers to reflective log].
and I was thinking that we don’t as part of PSHE we talk a lot about, you know, and, and they’ve got a right to say no and all this sort of thing and that they shouldn’t and all the messages about violence and everything. But you don’t always leave the way open for the children to be able to talk about something and, and its going back to saying about if that’s the norm and it’s only maybe as they get older they realise that it’s not the norm. Where’s the, gap, where’s the opportunity to talk about it. I’m, I’m really, I really went back and had a think about me in my classroom thinking you know, I know that I’m moving them on [laughs] academically and I’ve concentrated on that loads this year but I think at the expensive sometimes of giving space to children to just / talk you know I’ve been so focussed on [getting them] moving forward academically. I know with this class, although I’ve got a reasonably good relationship with them I don’t, maybe know as much about them as maybe with other classes because I know for a fact I, I just don’t, I’m just like next thing, next thing, next. [laughs] That’s easier in reception because they’re so open about it although the little boy that left us wasn’t I don’t think he was ready [ to (&) no] to talk about that and when you got close to it. He, you could see he, he became really uncomfortable. mmm but erm, but with the one that’s in there at the moment he would, he’ll just tell [ you everything (&] [ anything (&) about it. In fact sometimes you have to, kind of curb what he says if it’s in a new situation because you don’t really want the other children to hear/ the things that he’s saying. You kind of feel as if you’re protecting the other children because it’s not something you would want them to know about mmm. erm but yeah. They tend to be really open don’t they? yeah. sometimes in reception. So what would be your key thoughts and reflections?
Erm well my key thoughts at the moment with the little boy that’s in there is that he’s kind of understands that he doesn’t hurt people and he’s kind of erm / not in a clever way but he will intimidate without actually hurting

but you can see him, like/ getting up to the other children and like in their face and he, he will be very intimidating in how he /

approaches them

[ but he’s not hurting them (&)

I agree with you, I agree with you

(&) so he’s learnt how to do that, you know but get round, get round the

[ target (&)

so we’ve just got to stay one step ahead of him [laughs] really.

Does that, I suppose reflecting a little bit on the definition we just said about coercive behaviour

[ do (&)

(&) do you think he’s behaving coercively, even though he’s so young would you describe it a bit, like that?

Maybe not knowingly,

although I don’t know actually. Mmm. Could be.

[ mmm. / I don’t know. It is almost actually that

Yeah.

because he’s either, he’s even said

‘but I’ve not hurt anybody’.

‘oh I’ve not hurt anybody’

That’s the first thing that comes out of his mouth. I agree. Mmm. When you go and see him ‘but I didn’t hurt them’.

Yeah.

No but they’re cowering [laughs].

yeah. And the kids are really, kids just go like that [demonstrates leaning away]. They kind of don’t give him eye contact and he’s like muscling up to them.

[ They’ll (&)

[ mmm.

(&) they’ll get more and more wide eyed, like this [ [leans away again with wide eyes]

[laughs]

until you step in, you know and you see it
but erm, but yeah, cos there was a thought that he would come back independently I think, erm, the teacher next year said ‘oh and can I send him through’ and I said ‘don't send him without a person’ because out of all the children that need to come back he’s very intimidating to smaller children.

F: mmm.
T2: I think they’d find it very scary having him
T3: mmm
T2: without an adult supervising because it, it, he, he just manages to
T3: Although we don’t know what he’s like with smaller children do we? cos
T2: no.
T3: I’m just thinking of
.
.
.
T3: because Alfie, for example, although I don’t know whether he’s experienced domestic violence where he is now
T2: yeah.
T3: but his mum erm, I think I mentioned a little bit last week actually that he, his mum, he was taken away, erm from his mum because of her abuse of alcohol and
T2: mmm.
T3: his sister suffers from foetal alcohol syndrome although he doesn’t externally, he hasn’t got any of the features of it, but he’s certainly been affected by what’s gone on
F: mmm
T3: when he was very, very small and he now lives with his Auntie
F: mmm-hmm.
T3: but he’s very intimidating to other children
T2: mmm.
T3: incredibly, when you say they turn away
[ and (&)
T2: [ yeah, yeah [laughs]
T3: (&) and they’re like this [leans in] and he says that,
[ that’s his thing ‘but I haven’t hurt them, I haven’t hurt them
T2: [ it’s like a dog being submissive isn’t it.
T3: (&) I’ve leaned over them but I haven’t hurt them
T2: yeah.
T3: but with younger children, and when we send him round to reception, he’s absolutely lovely isn’t he?
T2: yeah.
T3: so we don’t know what Steven’s gonna be like with/
T2: no,
[ we don’t
T3: [ his peer group (&)
T2: but
(&) he’s hideous Steven, I mean he’s really violent and can be anyway, erm but with younger children
[ he’s (&)
T2: [ mmm.
T3: (&) he’s really caring,
T2: Yeah, I don’t think there’s enough distance between those age groups yet.
(...)
T3: no, yeah.
[ But maybe when
T2: [ for him
to be kind of you know
T3: play that nurturing role.
T2: yeah.
F: I suppose it’s kind of
[ it’s like
T2: [ I would
be interesting
T3: it would be to see him in that
F: [ yeah, it’s
T2: [ mmm
like you say is it conscious or unconscious
[ is it coercive (&)
T3: [ mmm. Yeah.
F: (&) and intimidating, is it power, or is it purely / just it’s black and white you know
a bit of a
T2: yeah.
F: I didn’t touch them
T2: yeah, yeah.
F: and that’s what you told me not to
[ do (&)
T3: [ yeah.
F: (&) not in a, ummm, you know particularly / intentional, I don’t know
T2: [ yeah
T3: [ but is it,
but when Steven does it // what’s the context, cos then you know whether he’s being deliberately coercive. He often does it around football doesn’t he?
T2: yeah
T3: [ and if someone’s got.
T2: [ he just, mmm.
T3: That’s when I saw him doing it the other day. In the playground when I was on playground duty.
T2: yeah. Even just lining up it’s almost for a reaction.
[ He’ll do it. (&)
F: [ mmm.
(&) like lining up and they don’t, they’re really good at not reacting
that class. And maybe that makes him do it even more because he
wants them either to talk to him or / but thinking about new ones
coming in he will be on the same development band
[ or even lower still (&)
[ yeah he will.
(&) than some of them won’t he so / it’d be interesting to see how
he interacts with them
[ really.
[ mmm.
Actually when you read that description I did think about a little boy
that we had who was, I suppose you’d call it stopped from growing
up, you know, the little boy that went to lots of different schools
[ and (&)
[ yes
she never let him play out or you know
yes
she kept him inside or didn’t let him really // do anything
[ she (&)
[ yes.
(&) she basically stopped him from growing up to the point that it
was really quite cruel.
mmm.
erm but I don’t know where, but that’s not really domestic violence.
no.
no.
but you know / I suppose it’s kind of abuse though
yes.
in a way
mmm.

But, but it might be linked with that because we don’t know what
history that family had
[ really (&)
[ mmm
(&) but we do know
[ that what (&)
[ previously, yeah
(&) Grandma had done to mum was the same thing and then it
was, it was being then passed on down but we don’t know what
went on in terms of the partners
[ as far as we (&)
[ No that’s true
(&) know it’s only grandma and mum, we don’t know what had
happened
T2: yeah

T3: previously to that do we?

T2: no, no.

F: ok. So, how would you describe the children that you’ve taught that have experienced domestic violence, as in their / skills if you like, I suppose?

T2: err

F: If you were to describe them, to me, as a professional, how would you talk about them?

T3: I think the one’s that I absolutely know have been less (&)

F: [ yeah

T3: (&) have been in the // lower ability band

T2: [ yeah I’d agree with that

T3: [ the one’s that I actually know

F: [ academically or cognitively say the

T3: yeah

T2: mmm

T3: but that doesn’t mean every child that experiences that is, that’s the problem but the one’s that I’m thinking of that’s come into my head (&)

F: [ but that’s what I’m saying The children that you work with tended to be the ones that are academically lower [ for a start.

T2: [ I agree.

T2: Definitely, and their social skills are probably not as developed

T3: [ although there was a couple where

T2: yeah

T3: that have been

T2: Oliver, he’s alright, I know he did like, there was a bit of fisticuffs but he blended in alright with kids didn’t they?

T3: yeah and Holly

T2: yeah.

F: mmm

T3: but / just trying to think.

F: How did they get on with their peers then?

T2: It varied really Steven’s a bit different because he’s like on a, he’s got global delay so he’s almost like having a younger,
much younger child in the classroom and I don’t know whether, you know, I don’t know whether that’s to do with // just like / mental ability anyway or whether that’s connected

T2: with what we’re talking about so he’s, he’s a little bit of a funny one but I’ve one’s that have been fine. Erm Nathan / wasn’t that he didn’t interact he almost, the ones that were better at social skills were very subtle at involving him and letting him think that he was actually controlling the play but they subtly controlled it,

F: mmm.

T2: almost like, treating him like a younger child as well

F: mmm.

T2: erm / but yeah sometimes they get really frustrated if they can’t /

T3: mmm.

T2: get what they want like Steven. / But you don’t know whether because that’s how it’s dealt with at home

F: mmm.

T2: or because he is

F: [ kind of (&)

T2: (&) developmentally

[ much / further behind or are, or are (&)

T3: [ Yeah it’s difficult to separate.

T2: (&) is one a reaction to

T3: [ the other (&)

T3: [ yes, yes.

T2: (&) I don’t know.

F: mmm.

T2: erm

F: What about their problem solving skills?

T2: Well his are fairly low down I would say / because he, yeah.

T3: and Alfie’s are.

F: How would, how would they generally go about solving problems would you say?

T2: I think Steven would get really

T3: [ frustrated (&)

T2: [ frustrated.

T2: (&) or he’d come and ask you to help him.

F: mmm.

T2: but he would get frustrated

T2: [ yeah and Nathan (&)

T3: [ mmm Alfie as well.

T2: (&) would have kicked of massively / I think.

F: and what

T3: Depends what it was

T2: actually yeah if it was something he personally was trying

T2: [ to do he might not / yeah
[yeah because he would sit for a while

doing like / when, when he wasn’t going out on a lunchtime he

came round on a lunchtime he can round and we were doing

games and stuff. He was

yeah

he’d sit and do that.

was it problem solving? I can’t think of an example of problem

solving other than. He did flit around quite a bit. He looked. He liked

books but he wasn’t really / and he loved drawing.

yeah and he liked /

[ he liked 1:1 so it’s (&)

[ looking at, working out how to get.

(&) difficult to to say

[ with some of them because (&)

[ Yeah. He was good at working out a route

(&) Steven is the same after school. well yeah Steven is the same

because he’s got a lot of 1:1

[ or 1 to very small groups so // (&)

[ yeah // mmm

(&) it’s stepping back /

[ isn’t it? (&)

[ yeah

mmm

(&) and erm maybe looking at them.

he works at, you know like P.E. schemes

mmm

if he wants to play football

[ he’d (&)

[ mmm

(&) he’d work and stick at that, to do/ to do something so yeah

and what would you say about attention, concentration skills?

[ think that’s, that’s poorer (&)

[ I think that’s yeah

[ yeah

(&) and I’m thinking about

[ you know (&)

[ yeah

(&) about a few different children and

[ I think that’s definitely true.

[ I’d agree, yeah

mmm.

definitely yeah.

Switches off a lot more quickly, yeah.

or go into a

[ you know (&)

[ yeah

(&) a bit of a zone, or
would you lacking the focus. It’s probably a big question, but where would you feel that that possibly stems from, is it more to do with the cognitive ability or perhaps more to do with the emotional needs or a bit of a mixture of both?

It’s hard to say that isn’t it? Yeah. It’s ever so hard to answer a question like that isn’t it. Because it, because not only that it could be that because of the situation at home they don’t have the same

[ input (&)

yeah

mmm.

(&) the other children of

[ of, (&)

True

(&) that their peer group gets though it could be like a whole triangulation

[ of stuff (&)

yeah

absolutely.

(&) couldn’t it, because it’s their own cognitive ability plus, you know,

mmm

what’s, that they’ve learnt to cope with by switching

[ off (&)

yeah

mmm.

(&) getting themselves out of it. Plus they haven’t got the attention.

I think it’s probably a bit of both

mmm.

yeah.

mmm.

yeah. // Vicious circle.

well yeah.

yeah.

well yeah, because one triggers the other, triggers the other,

[ triggers the other

yeah

mmm.

but

yeah.

ok. Erm, how would their peers describe them?

//

Do you know that’d be really interesting wouldn’t it. Well I’ll tell you what was really interesting in our class, and it’s never happened
before. We had to, we had to vote for who was going to be the
school counsellors and nearly everybody’d voted for Steven.

T3: really!
T2: Yeah!
T3: Really?
T2: Yeah. And we’ve never had that. We didn’t pick him [laughs] there
just wouldn’t have been any point so I’m sorry we didn’t but we just
pretended we’d put them in a hat and but nearly everybody voted
for him / which I thought was really strange.

F: mmm? Why do you think that was?
T2: I don’t know. They do, they do kind of // know he’s different but they
do Abbie but they don’t baby her as much.
T3: Abbie’s more / sociable.
T2: Abbie’s much bigger
though isn’t she.

T3: She’s much bigger and // I think socially he’s more fun to be with
than her, you know she’s got and set thing and she kind of goes
yeah
T2: she does play with other children but I think he, he interacts better
probably, erm, and he, and / they enjoy being with him. I think
they’re quite fond of him really.

F: so did he nominate himself then, is that how they /
T2: [ no, he didn’t.
T2: No they all had a vote. We kind of just go round and we have like a
tally chart so everybody just chooses somebody in the class and
we just kind of add up the tally charts.

F: right.
T2: but we kind of did it on a board, but erm yeah he got by far the most
votes
T3: did other, did other people hear
T2: yeah they did.
T3: then copied? So

[ it could be that as well? because one person said Steven and
then the next person
T2: [ I don’t know. yeah. It’s funny though. because we talked, we
yeah. we always talked to them about who would be good at
speaking so if you’re really shy it probably wouldn’t, or if your
friend’s really shy and not to just pick your friend because, you
know, that might not be the best person so think about somebody
who’s quite confident and who can / you know say, they’re brave
enough to say things
[ and they’ll listen.
T3: [ well he’d certainly
be brave enough to say things.
T2: yeah that’s true! [laughs]
T3: so then going on that definition!
T2: so yeah.
F: so what do you think they would say about him then?
T2: I don’t know, I might ask some of them! I might ask some of them next time I’m in class.
F: mmm.
T2: Erm. // Do you know I really don’t know!
F: mmm.
T2: I think it’d be different depending on who it was. I think some of them would say
T3: I think they would say ‘he likes playing football”
T2: yeah. Yeah
F: mmm
T2: erm and I think they might say he’s sometimes naughty.
T2: er
T3: [ and he, and he, but they might say that of a few people! [laughs]
T2: I think they’d probably say, the people I’m thinking of, that they liked them.
F: mmm.
T2: [ and I think that’s true of the person I’m thinking of in mine.
T3: that’s what I say, I think that’s true of the person in mine.
F: mmm.
T2: they’d probably say, the people I’m thinking of, that they liked them.
F: mmm.
T2: yeah.
T3: [ I think they’d probably say that, they’d probably say that about
T2: Steven as well. Yeah. Mmm.
T3: [ well enough liked, even though we’ve said about can be
T2: intimidating and can be this and can be that.
F: mmm.
T2: Yeah.
T3: Never short of people
T2: Yeah. I think they wouldn’t not want him in the class.
T3: Mmm.
F: yeah. So on the whole they’re quite likeable children as far as the other children are concerned.
T3: All the people I’m thinking of have been. Yeah.
T2: Yeah. Because of the one’s I can think of they’re really quite loving as well
T3: Yes.
T2: they’ve got a side to them, even thought they might hurt people, they’ve got a lovely side under it that’s crying out to be loved and nurtured really.
F: mmm.
T2: Which I suppose is where is where the cycle starts with a vulnerable person who needs lots of loving and
T3: yeah.
T2: gets taken advantage of, I don’t know. But.
F: Do they, where do they seek that loving then do you think then?
Sometimes he just comes up for hugs. Both, both the boys that have been in that class and if I think of [another family] they were quite loving kids.

mrm

wern’t they? And

I don’t necessarily think just because it, they’re in a home where there is domestic violence they don’t get that either. Because, yeah, because they get it off (&)

Yeah. Steven’s mum is very loving towards him.

(&) you know, even if they don’t get it off both parents

yeah.

they might be getting it off one

[ yeah.

so I don’t necessarily think that it’s because they’re not getting that.

Mmm, and it’s not always violence directed at them is it?

[ It’s (&)

No.

(&) violence that they’ve seen directed at somebody else so

yeah.

mmm.

Yeah, I mean that’s the irony of domestic violence is that it happens within a context or the framework of the family who’s supposed to have a loving relationship

[ between (&)

mmm.

(&) two partners

[ who are (&)

mmm.

(&) supposed to have and intimate loving relationship so it’s very ironic in

[ that sense (&)

yeah

(&) erm, which, so yeah you can quite easily see the contrast within the family

yeah.

so they may well have two very loving parents, or adults

[ whether (&)

yeah.

(&) they’re a parent or not

Yes, yes, cos it’s not necessarily one of

yeah

their parents is it?

mmm. Yeah.

Ok. How would they describe themselves?

//

Oh gosh.

But I don’t think he’d rate himself very highly.

No. I don’t either.

And I don’t think Nathan would either.

No. I don’t think Alfie would either.

No.

They maybe don’t like themselves

Self-esteem wise I think the children and Holly had very low self-esteem that was one of the barriers

yeah
till we sort of / solved it for her.

mmm. Erm // I don’t think, I think that was maybe where / you can see a pattern.

Yeah.

mmm.

I don’t know. You might.

mmm.

Perhaps.

So that’d be your suggestion of why they don’t like themselves perhaps then?

It might have something to do with it, yeah.

mmm.

I don’t know, I mean I’m no // I haven’t got any answers here [laughs] but it’s just / I imagine if, and I’m just thinking of

I think Alfie you might be right

yeah.

yeah.

it’s my fault.

blames himself / yeah. Not [ I wasn’t good enough or I was, yeah, yeah but (&)

[ Not, not necessarily consciously but certainly

(&) what was wrong with me kind of thing

mmm

yeah. I’m not sure Steven would think like that. Cos I don’t know whether he’s got the

Mmm.

I think he

[ just see’s himself as not being (&)

[ Cognitive ability
T2: (&) quite as good as everybody else, because he's kind of [ but that yeah but that's low self-esteem isn't it? T2: yeah T3: that he's yeah // although maybe not for football but kind of in an academic way he knows that he can't write as well as the others. Well I think he does// and he, he must, he must do by now. I think as the years gone on he can see that he's, he's kind of different work wise to what they can do and what he does. T2: mmm. I think he is, can probably get that by now yeah. T3: and like I say all the children at various time, not necessarily in the last ten years, but just various times I think that's definitely got to be one. T2: and making sense of everything I think [laughs] T3: mmm. And, and what you picked up on earlier, earlier when you said about the conflict between the messages that you're getting (&) T2: yeah. T3: (&) and that's if the messages that I'm getting there are conflicting truth, or not. You know what I mean, so then school / you've got to trust haven't you basically [ me the (&) [ to (&) F: [ yeah T2: [ mmm. T3: (&) and if you haven't got that for whatever reason that's going to be hard. T2: mmm
F: Do you think that’s possibly what they’re starting to create their narratives around as to what is right and what is wrong

[ and then (&)

T2: [ I think so
definitely, in their

F: (&) the, the conflicting information that they have // to put together and like if you’ve got parents who love each other but yet at the same time they hurt each other and how they make sense of all this.

T3: [ yeah

T3: I mean that must be, that conflicting thing, must be.

T2: yeah. And older brothers that you know, you know you love your older brother and your sister but they still you know, knock seven bells [laughs] out of you when you get home [ or if you (&)

T3: [ yeah

T2: (&) touch their stuff. And I think, I think Steven has found that hard [ cos (&)

T3: [ Yes

T2: (&) he’s sometimes [ said (&)

T3: [ yeah

F: [ mmm

T2: (&) but you know my brother does so-and-so (&)

T3: yeah.

T2: yeah. And, so we’ve even said sometimes ‘well you know you tell Elliot that he shouldn’t do that and hurt you’ [laughs]

T3: yeah

F: mmm. Cos obviously you’ve got, you know, an influential adult saying one particular thing and someone else who’s possibly equally influential [ saying (&)

T2: [ mmm.

F: (&) or doing

T3: [ something very different.

T2: [ or doing, yeah, yeah

T2: Yeah.

T3: And also, I mean if you’re going back to just generally about domestic abuse and if that’s happening, then that’s taking the / emphasis away from the child isn’t it? So in terms of support for homework, reading

T3: and then general school stuff (&)

T2: mmm.

F: mmm

T3: (&) then they’re not getting that either are they? so that becomes a bit of a // a, a barrier, or you know, it’s a

F: mmm.
T3: a problem they have to
T2: mmm
T3: then overcome that other children don’t necessarily have to.
F: Mmm. So how do you think that would impact on them then?
T3: Well in terms of support, I mean, well, we can actually prove that
[laughs] it’s the children who get more support from home, are the
T2: yeah.
T3: one’s that do better. Cos they have a better start don’t they?
T2: and they build on that and build on that and build on that and the
T3: one’s that are getting somewhere quiet to do their homework or
T2: yeah.
T3: getting support with their homework, or made to feel good about
T2: and then the low self-esteem because, nobody’s bigging you up
T3: because they haven’t got time in themselves, I don’t know. I mean
F: and you’ve
T3: this all sort of position now cos we’re not a fly on the wall but
F: absolutely
T3: It becomes a
T2: or they’re tied up in their own problems
T3: [ so much that they’re just
F: [ yeah, that’s what I mean it’s hard to
T2: [ yeah, yeah
F: (&) attention, concentration, yeah, hmm.
T3: Yeah so I’ve got some homework or I’ve got this to do well
F: How easy is it
T3: [ how easy is it to do that
F: Do they feel safe? I don’t know. // You know, if they do, do they /
T3: worry that their parent isn’t safe?
T2: Well that is exactly the case, not, not the parent but that his brother
T3: mmm. exactly
T2: wasn’t safe, cos he saw horrible things going on but and he never
T3: knew whether, that if he was naughty that he was going to get
T2: [laughs] shipped off to Africa.
That was the threat all the time. So his behaviour was definitely due to not feeling safe.

And that was why he didn’t want to come to school. Because he didn’t, I think he was scared his mum wasn’t going to be there, or not pick him up. So I think, yeah.

F: mmm.

And so emotionally up and down.

F: So do you think they are concerned for the safety of their parent who is being abused?

Yeah and in his case it was mum who was abusing brother so he’s, he saw that. I mean I don’t think he was bothered about his own safety but I think it made him feel unsafe because he didn’t know. His life was so unstable.

F: ok. So what do you think the strengths of these children are?

I think they’re very resilient.

[sighs] coping strategies I suppose.

What do you think makes them resilient? What are those qualities, what is, what is that?

[sighs] coping strategies don’t they? And overcoming the difficulties that they’ve got I suppose.

And there’s, in a, like we said, like we were talking about last week really, even, we probably don’t know half of what’s going on in some children’s lives.

F: mmm.

T2: and we expect them to come to school on time [laughs]

T3: mmm

T2: with the right stuff and having [laughs] done their homework, and then learn [laughs].
while they’re here and, and you know, they are dealing with and
coping with all that and then maybe going home and we don’t really
know to what and that’s what I say you know. You’re thinking about
some children and you know there’s something that’s not
necessarily quite right

but till they tell you or until there’s evidence coming from elsewhere
or it’s directed at them or their family and, you know, in terms of
domestic violence and you can, you can say I know

I know there’s soemthing

and yet they’re coming into school, and to all intents and purposes
they’re coping aren’t they?

and then they’re growing up like Holly, and her mum’s got a new
partner and everything you know, it all blew up and then you know
mum sort of said right, enough’s enough I’m not having it and got a
new partner and a new baby and everything and it’s all / completely
lovely and Holly did really well

in Key Stage 2 SATs and at high school

and that’s all / so she’s got through that

[ and (&)

(&) so she’s got through that and she had the back up of her mum
and her sister and everything

but that’s, and, and so there’s that there that it doesn’t
damage you

is maybe the word I’m looking for, that you don’t necessarily have
to be damaged by what

has gone on.

Although,

Although,

[ which

[ you can

get the cycle

[ repeating itself

[ well I know

I know and that’s what I’m just thinking about, and yet then I’m
going on to clarify that and yet some children you feel that, that
could happen.

yeah, yeah
unless something’s done to help them and then that’s fine isn’t it.

F: How would you describe your relationships with the parents or
carers of these children?

T2: mmm. I think it depends on who it is really we’ve had mum’s with
who the relationship isn’t brilliant, and then with Steven’s mum
she’s very needy so you know she would she’ll tell you everything

F: mmm

T2: but almost make it like an excuse. She knows that / it’s her
problem.

T3: yeah

T2: but almost she won’t take responsibility for it

T3: [ it’s hard isn’t it?

T2: She’s a real case

T2: yeah, erm and you can just see that cycle because the children, her
older children don’t have respect

T3: he does. He loves his mum

T2: yeah

T2: yeah, but his older, his older siblings kind of don’t have respect for
her, so / you’ve got lots of people telling him what to do and I don’t
think he, he kind of has one of them that is the set person who
controls the household. But then erm,

T3: But we have got a dialogue with her haven’t we?

T2: yeah.

T3: It’s not that we

T2: yeah

T3: and she

T2: [staff member] goes out to see her everyday and tells her how he’s
been and everything, no. so I’d say generally we’ve got quite a
good relationship

T3: [ yeah

F: [ mmm.

T2: with her she wouldn’t, I don’t think I’d believe everything she said

T3: no [laughs]

T2: but erm and I think, a lot of the time, it’s, it’s about her problems

T3: [ so (&)

T3: [ yes

T2: (&) she wants to make you feel sorry for her.

T3: yeah

T2: erm but in a lot, a lot of times you do, don’t you. Because some of
these parents have got such massive problems. Steven’s mum
had got, you just felt so sorry for her trying to cope with no family
and I could see, you know, how she’d get really frustrated and you
do want to help. It’s just sometimes so difficult isn’t it to get
F: mmm.
T2: Cos your main focus when you’re a teacher is the child that’s
coming in and the problem’s that you’ve got with it. So / it’s
T3: yes some of the parents are quite needy.
T2: mmm
T3: I’m just thinking
T2: mmm
t3: generally.
T2: yes, although the Wilkinsons, he just was very aggressive, wasn’t
he?
T3: [ he was very aggressive. yeah
T2: [ once he kicked off, yeah
F: mmm
T2: He was very controlled, very // but then you know if you crossed
him you’d, he’d get quite stroppy
F: so is that perhaps, one way or the other do you think? And is that a
gender difference there, in that the women erm perhaps, or if they
are the partner that’s being abused, the one that is more needy and
they see you as a source of support and the men, if they are the
abuser, are they the one’s that are more controlling? I don’t know.
T2: Maybe. // mmm. You see I suppose in the situation we’ve got, one
of the mum’s was the abuser, one of the mum’s was the abused
and then the dad was the abuser wasn’t he?
T3: mmm
T2: so it’s difficult I suppose it depends on that particular family and
those particular dynamics doesn’t it.
F: mmm so do you think they see you as somebody to be supportive
or somebody to // who
T2: [ I think
T3: [ I think
T2: it depends how you handle it really. I think, I think in Steven’s case
she’s probably willing to accept help from anybody that would give
it wouldn’t she?
T3: yes, yes.
T2: cos she’s very needy. With Nathan’s mum she pretended that
everything was fine and it was only when we, kind of, gained her
trust that she / she opened up to, to being needy
T3: yeah, yeah
T2: needy of help. She was, kind of, trying to cover it up cos she was
scared of losing the kids, but then [laughs] wanted to didn’t she a
bit of space.
T3: yes it was difficult wasn’t it.
T2: erm
F: so a bit of mix then really
T2: yeah

lxxvi
with the Wilkinsons I don’t know, cos you know I don’t know whether he actually wanted them or not it was hard to tell wasn’t it.
yeah it was. Very difficult. / and then Lucy we’ve got haven’t we who dad and mum aren’t together
but then she, it was a family that came to, well last year, no two years ago, from [another local school] erm and they, the dad of one family of girls and the mum of another family of girls had got together and then they had a son together and then at Christmas it all blew up and he went mad
And the mum moved out, didn’t she after she put all the pictures on Facebook of being beaten up.
yeah, but the girls from his family are still living with him
and he’s a strange mix. He’s got custody of the girls but the mum turned up at sports day.
[ but she’s not a needy mum is she but she’s not a needy mum is she? I wouldn’t say she’s a needy mum.
No. No.
and she left straight away as well actually.
[ Yeah so he did it once
[ mmm. and I think that was it. Although I don’t know what history he’d had before because yeah
Lucy’s mum had left hadn’t she?
mmm. Yeah.
so I don’t know, but he’s / he’s not needy is as much as he hardly comes to school but when he does come to school he’s needy.
[ Right
T2: [That’s interesting, yeah.
T3: [Like at parents evenings and things.
F: Ok.
T3: We’re not being very helpful!

T3: We’re not being very helpful!

F: Ok.
T3: We’re not being very helpful!

F: Ok.

F: Ok.

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F: Ok.

F: Ok.

F: Ok.

F: Ok.

F: Ok.
and to solve social problems, and they were saying that’s an area
of difficulty erm/ Any thoughts on that?

T3: It wasn’t true of Holly.
F: mmm
T3: then again, like I say, she was older
F: mmm
T3: and she was, very, I suppose it depends a little bit doesn’t it on
personality type as well.
[ It’s so hard isn’t it this type of thing
F: [ yeah and they weren’t saying
F: They weren’t saying all kids suffer either were they?
T3: No.
F: and I think what they were saying is that from those that do these
are perhaps key things
[ that they picked out.
T3: [ Yes, True.
T3: because it depends, doesn’t it on so many other factors and how //
how it’s / cos everybody is an individual anyway and it’s, how you
handle it isn’t it?
[ One of
T2: [ so what’s,
what kind of things were you saying?
F: They were talking about erm, emotion regulation, so for example
managing their anger
[ and they (&)
T2: [ yeah, yeah
F: (&) were saying that is something that very much develops from the
attachment in a parent relationship.
T2: Right
F: so through that parenting relationship you help your children to
regulate their emotions
T2: Right, mmm
F: Through your general parenting techniques. So if that relationship
as a parent isn’t there with the children
T2: yeah
F: then they won’t develop
T3: mmm
T2: mmm
F: the emotion regulation skills and the same with pro-social skills,
they’re saying that, that is measured if you like, in a person meeting
societal expectations, so being able to attend to social cues and
solve
T2: yeah
F: interpersonal problems
T2: well I’d say with both of those mums they don’t make appointments
and things like, you know they miss things that they’re supposed to
take their children to.
T3: No but
T2: what?
T3: Yeah but in terms of the children
F: yeah
T3: they don’t pick up cues as much [ do they?
T2: [ no
T2: No they don’t.
T3: Because I know Alfie says ‘what have I done?’
T2: mmm.
... .
T3: and Steven is similar
T2: mmm.
F: mmm.
T3: He’ll cry when you take the ball off him ‘[imitates a moan] my ball’
T2: yeah
T3: well what have you done Steven? ‘Nothing
T2: [ I didn’t do anything’ (&)
T3: [ [laughs]
T2: [ [laughs]
T3: (&) well no actually you did. But very quick to
T2: yeah
T3: and Alfie is the same.
T2: yeah
T3: you know very quick to not
T2: mmm
T3: or not // I know Alfie the other day, he’d really upset lots of children
T2: and erm / they had, at lunch time they had a discussion about how
T3: they didn’t want him to be doing that anymore
T2: mmm-hmm.
//
T3: and all he could say, I wasn’t there but [the adult] told me
T2: afterwards, and all he could say was ‘well why is the new Kyle
T3: saying that, because I haven’t hurt him’.
F: mmm
T2: yeah
T3: Erm and he couldn’t, he wouldn’t, ‘well no everybody’s saying it
T3: Alfie cos they don’t like your general behaviour
T2: [ and the (&)
T2: [ mmm
T3: (&) way you / try and control or bully or’, and I use it in the loosest
term, but you know try and intimidate or coerce, and ‘Kyle, even
though he’s only been in a school a couple of weeks
T2: [ can (&)
T2: [ mmm
T3: (&) feel that aswell’
and the, but Alfie’s ‘well I haven’t hurt him so why is he saying anything’ can’t pick up on the general /
but this is the message that (&)
[ social cues and interpersonal, yeah.
(&) everybody’s giving you.
Yeah, yeah
But you won’t take that advice,
[ or accept (&)
[ yeah
(&) that, you’ll just say ‘oh but not him’.
yeah. Mmm.
which we thought was quite
yeah
the parents don’t take responsibility
no
either though do they?
a lot.
so you know if Steven has had a bad day mum’s, you know, quite,
can be quite protective, well you knew, you knew he had a problem
when he came here, that’s why he’s got one to one, well we’re not
saying that but you know
[so it’s all uh-uh (&)
[ yes, yes
(&) and then
[ and Nathan’s was exactly. Yeah. Nathan’s was the same.
Yeah.and he’s not, yeah
[ And that’s with Alfie’s auntie even, and you know he’s got a
problem but, yeah, that doesn’t mean he can hit other children
and it’s not that nice to hear things about
[ your (&)
[ no
(&) own kids is it?
no.
but yeah almost like a responsibility though and then you wonder
why they won’t take responsibility either [laughs]
Yeah.
And I think they were saying weren’t they that those were key
components of resilience in the children so, in the, in the article
they’re saying the family is discussed in relation to resilience so I
was wondering what role you felt there was for teachers in schools,
and how important is school in relation to the development of
resilience, cos obviously I’m looking as I said about us in the
classroom as educators, teachers and a lot of the research is
around families and parenting and I want to take that
take it back out
F: into schools, cos clearly they spend a lot of time in school and it is an issue within the classroom I think that it clear given how much discussion we've already had so I'm sort of wondering whether, you know, whether resilience is one of the key things, what role do you feel you have as teachers?

T3: well I think we've got a role as teachers to build resilience anyway. Cos I think that’s / generally, just moving away from the domestic violence thing, is children, we put that down if they have got resilience to tackle things in a different way or come at it from a different point of view or take that responsibility and move on cos a lot of children they get really stuck don’t they if they can’t do something. 'I can’t do the first one' well / and, and then Alfie’s very like that

F: mmm

T3: I couldn’t do that one so I’m not

T2: yeah

T3: And that he’s one

F: mmm and does that

T3: and I think that’s true of some but other children as well you know building that resilience to say well I couldn’t do that but I maybe could do the next one or I could look at it in a different way and I could go for help somewhere else or so I think it’s our. I think there’s a lot to look at it generally about building that,

T2: [mmm]

F: [mmm]

T3: not just for them but for

F: Do you think that

T3: everybody

F: Do you think that links then to the academic success

T3: mmm.

F: and then if we’re saying that these children, perhaps,

[ I have not

T3: [ I think

you definitely could, yeah

F: erm achieving their potential perhaps if we put it that way,

T2: yeah

F: is resilience the first barrier

T3: mmm

F: to not achieving their academic potential

T2: [intake of breath] ooh hmmm.

T3: I do think for some of them, I do think that is it. That it’s easier to not do it

[ or to give up

T2: [ yeah to give up

T3: than to tackle it

T2: yeah
and I think that’s, of the children that I’m thinking of, that we’re talking about, that’s definitely a trait. But I think it’s true of a lot of other children as well. [T2: yes, I agree] T3: so it’s not [only a (&)] F: [no absolutely]. T3: (&) trait for those children and I do think it is a barrier because if you, immediately your first reaction if you can’t do something is to do this [lies down on table] [laughs] ‘I’m not doing it’ T2: yeah T3: erm then you don’t move on do you? F: [cos] T2: [no] F: and I’m not saying that, [absolutely, you know, it is specifically linked,] T3: [I don’t think it’d solve every problem] F: no. T3: and I’m not saying it’s specifically linked. But I think it’s something (&) F: [but is it] T3: (&) we could do better F: yeah T2: yeah T3: you know F: and is that perhaps something we could focus on then as teachers or within education to look at building resilience, which if, as you say if it’s not purely them, is it going to benefit others as well? T2: What kind of things would you, are you thinking you’d focus on? F: I don’t know, in the sense of looking at resilience and thinking this is what we think is an issue and their social skills and their emotion regulation those sorts of things, we’re thinking about, T2: yeah F: is that a key thing? T2: It’s massive, it’s huge isn’t it really, but I suppose we do quite, we do try and foster like a, that a challenge is good, T3: yeah T2: and to work F: mmm T2: you know at something you learn more by getting it wrong and by persevering than by, you know, giving up straight away, but
T3: mmm and that’s all liked with mindset stuff
F: yeah, yeah
T2: it’s almost like
F: yeah and do they have the resilience to engage in that?
T2: hmm. I’m not sure.
T3: I think it’s certainly a message we could think of generally for school anyway.
T2: yeah
T3: I think, I mean it’s something we were talking about anyway about mindset and about changing the way you look at failing
T2: yeah and that’s
T3: because if you
T2: important for us aswell I think.
T3: yeah, no I agree. In fact I think that’s exactly what
T2: In fact I think we need to do it with us
T3: yeah
T2: before we do it with the kids!
T3: yeah
T2: Honestly I think you just want to get things right don’t you
T3: yeah
T2: and you don’t want
[criticism
T3: [and failing’s ok
yeah
T2: and I think we need to have it.
F: Is, is that a societal or cultural kind of thing
[ that we
T3: [ I think it is yeah
T2: yeah and I think / women in particular don’t like that
F: mmm
cos they want to do it right and they want to be told how to do it a lot of the time don’t they.
T3: yeah
T2: They want somebody to say just how you do it and I’ll do it like that, cos we’re quite biddable yeah
T3: that’s right yeah, yeah
T2: and we just want / to, to do it the right way and we’re not very good at taking criticism
T3: [laughs] no
T2: and I’m not!
T3: no, no I agree I’m not either!
T2: I’ll beat myself up cos I want to get it right
F: mmm
T2: but really I should be thinking well actually
T3: If I get it wrong
T2: yeah
T3: I can get it right next time
T2: or
T3: this is what we need to be saying to the kids don’t we
T2: yeah or cos when you do get that / criticism, even if it’s not always
constructive you might go home and boo [laughs] about it for a
while but actually you do learn loads more from that, than just
getting it right all the time don’t you? And thinking you’re doing
everything great, when actually there might be little things that you
could do that would improve it hugely.
T3: I mean that links back to children
T2: mmm
T3: that are maybe in that situation cos you’re minimising / the risk
aren’t you almost, or I imagine
T2: mmm
T3: that is one of the things you could do so if violence is directed
generally, is a norm in the family or whatever you’d minimise the
risk to yourself wouldn’t you, I would imagine. Erm so in that case
you would be trying to do things right wouldn’t you?
T2: yeah
T3: And that would be the way
[ so when somebody
T2: [ as a coping strategy
T3: as a coping strategy
[ so when somebody’s
T2: [ yeah, mmm
T3: saying that’s not right, that’s a big issue isn’t it?
T2: yeah.
T3: [ and I think I do that to my class, no
T2: [cos it’s not a pleasant feeling is it?
T3: no.
T3: and I think I do that to my class ‘and that’s not right’ [laughs]
T2: [laughs]
F: mmm
T3: I don’t use those terms, I say ‘you need to try, let’s think’ but, erm
[laughs]
F: but there are many things I suppose when you’re in school that, I
mean mathematically, it’s either right or it’s wrong there’s no
shades of grey when you’re doing maths, and things like lining up
for example, I mean I’ve often come into schools as an observer
and lining up – generally it’s either right or it’s wrong!
T3: yes, yeah [laughs]
T2: mmm. yeah
F: and we can think of the times where we’ve said ‘no I want you to do
that again’ and the implication is clear that there was a problem
T3: yes
T2: mmm
F: with the line
T3: yes
F: in the first place,
T2: yeah
F: so yeah, like you say, if that’s if, if doing something wrong is a
trigger for violence then perhaps there is a need to do things right
and get things right
T3: yeah
T2: mmm
F: and then if they get in wrong do you just not do it in the first place
[ and then you don’t get it wrong, I don’t know
T3: [ exactly, exactly that’s my point
T2: mmm.
T3: and then, or you take the safe option every time, because like you
said. Someone tell me what to do and I’ll just do it like that every
time.
T3: [laughs]
T2: yeah, mmm, yeah or I’ll copy it, or I’ll just not do it.
T3: yeah, yeah, or I’ll copy it because I know the person next to me is
probably going to get it right
T2: yeah
T3: so that’s your other thing isn’t it
F: so based on that would you say that erm the children that you work
with perhaps seek more direction from you or wait until there’s
further direction or they like very clear instructions or, do they copy?
T3: with Holly it was definitely I’m not going to do it unless I know I’m
going to get it right.
T2: yeah.
T3: That was definitely true, I mean I don’t know whether that was
linked with that, or her personality or whatever
[ but
T2: mine would just tend to avoid. The one’s I’m thinking of just tend to
avoid it completely
T3: yeah
T2: and not even try
T3: and Alfie’s the same
T2: mmm
F: and do you think that in itself is a coping strategy then?
T2: yeah, yeah I do // because then you tend to leave that, those till the
last and then give them 1:1 to do it and coax them
T3: yeah exactly and coax them, how many times
T2: yeah. [Sighs]
F: mmm. And how do they, how do they respond to getting things
right?
[ //
T2: Erm, mmm
T3: well most children like it don’t they, same as most children, whether
or not it’s linked to
T2: mmm.
F: but I suppose, I suppose it’s
Steven didn’t like praise when he first came
he didn’t like being praised,
Didn’t he?
no. He quite does now, he, he likes it if he if I go and really praise
him, yeah I think he quite enjoys if he’s achieving something
I think intrinsically most people do.
[ Are they surprised
to get things right?

hmm. I think we’re more surprised!
[laughter]

[ I don’t know. I don’t know.
[ I just wondered what is their
experience of success and failure?
I don’t know, whther they do seem surprised or are they used to
failing?
I suppose again, I suppose it would depend what it is

yeah

like Alfie he wouldn’t, he’s very erm / gifted physically so in terms of
football and running things like that so he’d be annoyed with
himself or shocked, or you know, he, he gets things right a lot of the
time in that, in P.E.

so he’d find failure difficult?
so he’d find failure there difficult. In fact he does find failure there
very difficult because erm he, he erm, he doesn’t like being beaten
or you know that’s a major trigger for him in terms of behaviour isn’t
it?

mmm.
At lunchtime
mmm. So he’s quite competitive in that way?
oh God yeah. But then in terms of his maths or whatever he, he’s
used to getting it wrong a lot.
right. so it’s not that he has an issue with failure as a whole
[ just
[ but then
he doesn’t necessarily. He, he doesn’t necessarily like it, he just
avoids, or he’ll say I can’t do it.
Right.
so would you say he does have a problem with failure then or
getting things wrong?
I think probably, yes because of his maths he likes when he gets it
right
m

Yeah.

Ermm, he does like it when he get's it right.

When you (...) him and praise him and things like that but if he can't do it or he's decided he can't do it, even if he can, like he wrote in his book the other day, I found this easy once I started doing it, well yes so why didn't you start doing it half an hour ago?

[laughs]

Instead of at [laughs] five to twelve.

[laughter]

But yes, so yes he does find things they do, do right and I suppose then

Yeah

They really, really excel more at those things.

Yeah

Rather than the things they're not doing.

And that's sort of changing the mindset isn't it?

Yeah

Cos we should be praising the things that they don't have any challenge with.

[ because then that's the things that's the things they want to keep wanting to do cos they're getting praise, so that's all changing mindsets.

Mmm.

And that is building up resilience isn't it. And that's where I think as a school // is that mindset thing.

I'd like to ask two more questions, I think before we finish, and I'm wondering overall and thinking about domestic violence again, cos we are talking generally as well erm what would have helped you do you think, if you're sort of reflecting back

Mmm

On this year or previous experiences what would have helped you with this year/ or in the past

Mmm

I think having the information more, in terms of the older ones.

Because it sort of came, you know like with Lucy and with Holly it's slipped out by accident sort of thing.

Mmm.

And knowing how you can help, erm

What do you mean by how you can help?
T3: well coming back to this isn’t it and thinking of ways, cos you don’t want to sit down and tell me everything and you can get it off your chest
F: mmm
T3: that’s not our role is it really
F: no.
T3: if they want to and like you say in reception they just say it anyway don’t they?
T2: mmm.
T3: so it’s not that role, but it’s more like you say so this has been, so how has it affected you and what can we do to overcome that so I don’t really know what I’m saying in a way
F: [laughs]
T3: because
T2: I agree about the information cos with Steven we could do some really good transition with him because we had the information from nursery. Nathan just appeared and we didn’t know anything about him
T3: [ we
T2: [ until
T3: didn’t know there were problems until social services contacted us at Christmas
T3: and that, by then it was too late because [ everything
T2: [ he
T3: had kicked off hadn’t it?
T2: yeah, yeah.
T3: we were dealing with, with this / behaviour
T2: mmm
T3: that we didn’t know where it was coming from
T2: yeah.
T3: we thought it was a reaction to school, or well we didn’t know did we. We put all sorts in place.
F: which can be the case can’t it
T2: yeah
F: but I suppose if there’s information to be had
T2: [ so yeah better communication really and that includes mum as well.
T3: [ so with Steven we were ready weren’t we
T2: yeah
T3: and we couldn’t have prepared
T2: we couldn’t have prepared any better for Steven
T3: no.
T2: in a way.
T3: [ We knew his eating habits
T2: [ Steven was a
T2: we’d spoken to the nursery. We’d made allowances for him to come and he didn’t come to all of them but he did come to one
yeah and then I went to see him in his nursery
didn’t I and then
and I did erm
and also
[ and we met the woman who
[ and we met mum we did a
home visit.
the woman who’d been helping the family came didn’t she?
yep
and did two transition visits
from the nursery
one to talk to you and then one to observe him
yeah / yeah
erm
but with Nathan we didn’t even, he just appeared. The school that
he’d been at didn’t give us any information really apart from ‘oh
god, poor you’ kind of thing and you know and mum wasn’t very
forthcoming either so.
and how do you thing we can get that information?
/ 
erm / I don’t know cos we didn’t even know he’d been to school
until I met them on a course and they realised who he was and
so it might be thinking about however you meet with that parent
mightn’t it?
mmm
and the questions that are asked of a parent
yeah
and to provide arena for them to share
yep that’s definitely to
and I think as a general thing having domestic abuse talked about
more because it’s something that’s very, very hidden isn’t it.
yeah.
like I say a lot of the children you know there’s something and but
you just don’t know what it is cos it’s very much a taboo isn’t it
subject erm
yeah
so we could think about couldn’t we, what sort of questions might
be asked to parents
what I said to you at the very beginning as well that opening / that’s
something around P.S.E. and opening that
yeah what questions we ask the children
you know what, how we make, how we do it without labelling or you
know or pointing fingers, you know it is
[ something around that
[ yeah you know what’s
tricky about that though
the Jones, that Dad admitted to like smacking the kids and they got put on the child protection register

and you know, that’s why there’s a taboo cos parents don’t want that

when they’re discipling their kids how they see’s fit do they.

and that’s the difficulty of asking children

yes

direct questions

to know

but in talking to parents that’s a different issue isn’t it something we could maybe give some thought to in terms of erm you know, visiting parents in a home visiting scenario and what that interview looks like,

certainly

[ cos the earlier you know

[ and the types of questions we can ask

[ and at that stage cos the earlier you know looks like,

[ cos the earlier you know

and even then in the role of when you do have a role of meeting in school about issues, again what that general information gathering process might look like,

[ asking parents about how they discipline their children though isn’t it.

[ absolutely, absolutely yeah

and that maybe that’s something we could think about within the next session what could we ask, how could we ask and what questions will allow us to uncover some of the answers [ that perhaps

[ yeah

[ yeah

we want to be more supportive way, would that be helpful?

I think it would

[ because (&)

[ yeah, I do. I do

[ yeah?

(&) we’ve even had, we had, now who was it I spoke to on the phone who said as soon as a child says, discloses that they were smacked by a parent you should phone social services, well I’m sorry but if we did that every time a child said they’d been smacked we’d be on the phone / five times a week, ten times a week. If you said that every time a child said they’d been disciplined or my dad’ll
smack me if I’ve done this or cos nearly all of them are. / so I don’t
know / I’m a bit unclear about that really.

T2: I think most parents would chastise their kids to get them to do you
know what they want.

T3: around questions around, you see I don’t know whether people
would open up.

F: mmm

T2: I’m not sure they would knowing what they know
F: yeah

T2: about Social Services
F: yeah

T2: coming round
F: and it’s providing them with that forum I suppose isn’t it and how
you do it perhaps.

T2: yeah.

F: [ and it’s something we could think about isn’t it?
T3: [ it’s definitely something to,
yeah

T2: [ mmm.
F: [ erm
T3: [and then
how to support the children if you do know.

F: yeah

T3: Like I say you’re not there as their shoulder to cry on, you’re their
teacher and if they want to open up to you that’s fine you give them
some space to do that
[ but it’s
F: [so is
that something you feel would have helped you then? How to help
them?

T3: yeah
F: How to, so I’m thinking in terms of the next session so if we want to
put something together as a group to
mmm
T2: to share and what that’s going to look like. I think we talked a little
bit about information gathering, possibly resilience building,
mmm-hmm
T3: how to talk to children. / What else do you think might have helped,
you were saying almost knowing, I don’t know whether you were
saying knowing facts perhaps about the children and the families or
is it about knowing the facts about domestic violence or information
about domestic violence / so, I mean I have some of that
information in terms of, I don’t know what does it look like or
T3: yeah I think that would generally
T2: yeah I think that would be useful as well.
F: yeah almost general information
T3: yeah
F: so cos we could look at doing that couldn’t we, what are the key
facts about domestic violence, you know the common statistics and
some of the common themes or common issues that come out as a
general factsheet
T3: factsheet yeah
F: erm cos
T3: with the sort of caveat that this is general
[ and not (&)
F: yeah absolutely
T2: mmm.
T3: (&) cos you can’t ever be specific about a family in those sort of
situations can you?
[ Yes but something like that
F: but does it make you more
confident having some knowledge?
T3: yes
T2: yeah
T3: it’s got to hasn’t it?
T2: yeah and I think what would have been helpful with Nathan would
have been to find help for mum quicker,
T3: yeah
T2: finding a way of getting her some help more quickly.
F: yes.
T2: and I know some places do like a parent group, don’t they, to
discuss
[ like behaviour and stuff.
T3: well we can access that
through the [area based external support] but
F: yeah and
T3: then again it’s knowing isn’t it
F: but / yeah and again that’s knowing isn’t it. Intervention isn’t outside
the classroom but maybe what we could look at having is a list of
websites or resources or erm support agencies that you as staff
could have
T3: mmm-hmm
T2: mmm
F: so you’ve got somewhere to gain further information and also then
as here you are this is where you can go and you can get support
or information.
T2: mmm
T3: yeah, yeah.
F: would that be?
T2: yeah that would be good, yeah.
T3: yeah
F: ok, is there anything else you think that might be / cos obviously I
can start to bring things
T3: mmm
F: and we can start to have more of a discussion next session and we
can start to pull together
T2: mmm.
F: some of these ideas and things and I'll pull together obviously what
we've talked about as well and try and pick out any common
themes and ideas
T2: the only thing we could have done with, and no you couldn’t put it in
a policy, is, is a space to put somebody away from everybody else.
We found that really difficult didn’t we?
T3: having a room, yeah
T2: a room that’s not got anything in it where you can just contain
[ until they calm down
T3: [I think that’s generally
in school we need that somehow
F: mmm
T2: mmm
T3: I don’t know how // but yeah
T2: yeah containing somebody in the cloakroom [laughs], or they’re
trashing the cloakroom and you’re holding the door shut like this
[mimes holding a door closed]
F: [laughs]
T2: not ideal really [laughs]
F: [ and that’s
T3: [ but that was a specific child
T2: yeah
T3: it is true as well of other children, you know like Alfie that a calm
T2: yeah a calming down place they do have that at [another local
mainstream school]
F: we can come back to some of that can’t we and thinking about well
is that the general behaviour management that applies to all of
these children and if you’re thinking of calming and how you
manage them are there particular classroom based strategies that
work better than others, like when we’re talking about their success
or failure,
T2: mmm
F: how you manage that in a classroom so that then avoids, what we
were saying about the emotion regulation [ cos if that’s (&)
T2: [ mmm
T3: [ yes
F: (&) the trigger and we’re perhaps identifying that that’s the trigger
by knowing that that’s the trigger does that help us to stop them
getting to that point,
T3: yeah
you know as in thinking about yourself before you’ve done what
you’ve done now
T2: mmm
F: and the work that you’ve done would it have helped to have known
that?
T3: and I know, I know that and I don’t always handle it right
T2: no, well you just have to stay one step ahead all the time. Well we
used to take Nathan out before everybody started tidying up
because he couldn’t cope but you still, it was over any directions so
you just couldn’t always
F: and that might be particular to him
T2: yeah, you see Steven is not like that is he really?
T3: No.
F: No. I suppose it’s
[ thinking around (&)
T3: [ but then
F: if we’ve got more general ideas around resilience and if we know
what that looks like and thinking about how
T2: mmm
F: how does that present within the classroom suggest more
generalised ways of supporting that is that something that’s then
useful for another teacher
T2: mmm
F: so here you are these
T3: mmm
F: are some of the general ideas
T3: mmm
F: or principles that you might want to work on that will help them?
T2: mmm
T3: I mean there’s that / thing about attachment disorder isn’t there
F: mm-hmm
T3: and talking like we’ve been talking and you’re thinking actually a lot
of it, there’s similar symptoms isn’t it, that need for control or that
getting really frantic when something doesn’t go their way
F: mmm
T3: but then you think well it might be something to do with that cos
F: mmm
T3: they are detached from one or the other parent
T3: aren’t they
F: [ as it suggests
in saying that if that parent isn’t there to provide parenting
relationship and yeah there’s a lot of attachment theory linked in
yeah
F: to domestic violence, cos if that parent then hasn’t got the mental
capacity to engage
T3: mmm
F: and to parent and it affects their parenting
[ ability that has effects (&)

1955 T3: [ whether it’s the abuse

1956 or the abuser either way round

1957 F: (&) yeah that effects the attachment relationship

1958 T2: mmm

1959 F: hence you would, the child would present with attachment
difficulties, yeah

1961 T3: yeah

1962 F: so yes it does, yeah they do fit together, absolutely / so yeah those
ideas and principles would, would be applicable wouldn’t they

1964 T3: mmm

1965 F: if that’s what we’re suggesting is a, you know, a consequence for
these children, there is difficulties, if you like, that present in them,
then having that relationship with the parent, which impacts on all
the things

1969 [ that we’ve already mentioned

1970 T3: [ yeah all the other things

1971 T2: yeah

1972 F: erm I mean, we have haven’t we, we mentioned their academic
skills so is there something there that we’d think about in terms of
well how do we look at that. I mean well we were suggesting
weren’t we that possibly there’s opportunities at home that are
missed, how can we counterbalance that but also if we’re saying
that well actually it likes to resilience and the ability to fail, how do
we tap into that as well

1979 T2: mmm

1980 F: so I think there’s possibly lots that we can talk about

1981 T3: yeah, no I agree

1982 F: even if we don’t have any specific answers there’s certainly
thoughts

1984 T3: to raise, to pass on

1985 F: yeah to have discussion around.

1986 .

1987 .


1989 F: is that ok if we stop there then

1990 T3: yeah

1991 T2: mmm, yeah

1992 F: and I’m sure that gives us lots to reflect on before the next session
doesn’t it.
Appendix Fifteen - Transcript of Group interview Three

4pm on 18/07/13 51 minutes 49 seconds
Facilitator (F) and three teachers (T)

F: Ok so I’m just going to do a quick reminder of the ground rules. So we said that if we could try and have one person speaking at a time so that [laughs] it helps me with the transcribing afterwards. Erm there’s no right or wrong answers so it’s purely so I can hear your perspectives, your views and experiences. So anything at all that you say or want to say is absolutely is valid and I’m interested in all of it. Erm so just to recap, erm, one of the things I shared last week was the definition of domestic violence// [hard copies of the Home Office (2013) definition of domestic violence distributed, appendix 2] which I think stimulated some of our discussion last week as well didn’t it?

T2: [ mmm.
T3: [ mmm.

F: so erm just briefly it was saying ‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional. Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim’. And that was the Home Office definition which is effective from March 2013. Ok.

T3: mmm-hmm.

F: One of the other things which overlapped a little, er, [hard copies of the NSPCC definition of child abuse distributed, appendix 9] was child abuse, er, and I thought I’d share this with you, erm, so that, cos there’s quite a lot of overlap and also so that we can be clear, in some ways, of the difference. So the paragraph at the bottom, erm and this is taken from an NSPCC factsheet, erm, September 2012 ‘If a person who has attained the age of sixteen years and has the custody, charge, or care of any child or young person under that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated,
neglected, abandoned, or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health… that person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour…’. So the children possibly you could say are victims of child abuse perhaps under that definition but what we’re thinking about is the domestic violence which would occur generally between adults. We wouldn’t be thinking of adults abusing children, we’re thinking of adults abusing other adults but there is some overlap/erm, so for example The Department of Health Department of Health in 2002 said nearly three quarters of children on the ‘at risk’ register, erm, live in households where domestic violence occurs. So that was three quarters of those on the ‘at risk’ register would live in a household where domestic violence occurs. Sternberg et al. in 2006, got a slightly different figure. They completed a mega-analysis of family violence and within their sample 58% of the children were victims of child abuse and witnesses of family violence. Ok?

T2: yeah I was going to say you can have a lot of family violence with people who are younger than sixteen [ can’t you if (&)
F: [ mmm yeah, yes
T2: (&) that’s, the definition is you have to be sixteen then
F: yeah
T2: it cut’s a few people out doesn’t it?
F: [laughs] I mean, I think they’re thinking I suppose, and I’m thinking, within my research, of between people who’ve been intimate partners so you can have children who abuse their parents, which is also classed as family violence
T2: mmm
F: but I’m thinking more of the interpersonal violence or domestic violence
T3: [ in the sense of between partners, mmm
T2: [ mmm
T2: [ yeah I’m thinking of older brothers (&)
T2: (&) and sisters, which is in my case and (&)
F: [ yeah, yeah.
T2: (&) they’re not sixteen
F: So / Ok so in terms of then, erm a brief recap of how far we’ve got, erm, so last session, and again as I said last time, if there’s anything that I say, erm, that doesn’t reflect the discussion then let me know.
T2: mmm.
F: [to T1] and obviously this’ll help you
T1: mmm-hmm.
F: because you weren’t able to join us. So last session we said we didn’t always know and then giving the children, erm, that space, and, and that we wanted to give children that space to talk but often
the focus is often on academic attainment so that’s not always possible. Erm, the children know not to hurt and they can intimidate without hurting, but they weren’t able to recognise why that behaviour is wrong and we talked about that behaviour being coercive.

F: in terms of the definition we’d looked at. Erm in your experience children who have experienced DV, sorry domestic violence, are of lower academic ability, erm and you felt that reasons for this could include a lack of parental input such as helping with their reading or their homework. You felt their social skills were not as developed. They can tend, they have a tendency to get frustrated or violent. They have poor attention and concentration. Erm we’re not sure how domestic violence, academic ability, attention and concentration and behaviour and social skills are linked. And which influences another. Switching off could be a coping strategy and it’s a vicious circle as one triggers the other. Erm, you felt that their peers generally view them as likeable. You felt they were loving and crying out for nurturing. Although they experience domestic violence this doesn’t mean they are not loved at home. They have low self-esteem, perhaps, in some way, due to feeling responsible for the violence. Difficulties making sense of everything, so for example conflicting messages, realisation that what happens at home isn’t the norm. Difficulties with trust. Erm, and I understood that you were saying these factors impact on the development of their morals and I just wondered whether that was correct or not. Yeah?

T2: I think so.

F: Yeah?

T2: Yeah, in my experience.

F: Ok. Erm you felt they might be concerned with safety whether that was their own, their parents or siblings. You described them as being resilient and feel that they have developed coping strategies, although they might not necessarily be effective ones [laughs]. Erm as teachers you might know that there’s something wrong but you can’t put your finger on it. To all intents and purposes you’re saying the child is coping. Erm, there weren’t really any themes relating to relationships that you have with the parents, some of them are needy, some of them are aggressive. There wasn’t necessarily a pattern either between those who are abused or those who abuse in relation to gender or their presentation. Ok. Erm, in terms of emotion regulation we talked about the fact that they can lash out, they struggle to wait. Erm with social cues they’re not necessarily able to see how their behaviour affects others in terms when we’re talking about them being coercive. And this is not necessarily true of all the children! [laughs]

T3: mmm.

F: A huge caveat there.
T3: yes, absolutely.
F: and I wondered as well, that was another question, if you felt, that,
that not necessarily being true of all the children might be because
they were older or some of them were girls?
T3: Yeah, we said that didn’t we.
F: Yeah. And I wondered if that was something you feel does make a
difference overall whether they’re older or whether they’re female in
terms of how they cope
[ or how they present?
T2: [ I don’t know.
F: mmm
T1: Both probably.
F: I’m not going to ask you how and why. It’s a big field. We might
come back to that. Erm parents, you said, don’t necessarily take
responsibility for the behaviour of their children and can make
excuses, erm, or gloss over it. So they’ll say things like ‘well you
knew that they were,
T3: mmm,
F: that they struggled’.
T3: mmm.
F: Erm, the parents don’t necessarily make or keep appointments.
Erm, you felt the teachers role was to build resilience, to promote,
you promote challenge as good but you weren’t sure if these
children have the resilience to engage in that. They sometimes
have a tendency not to try or to give up. Coping strategies included
avoidance and or seeking very clear instructions, or guidance.
They find failure difficult to manage if it is something they expect to
succeed in, so for example if they were good at sports it’s difficult to
manage a sporting failure. Erm we talked about change of mindset.
So for example what is, regarding what is difficult and, perhaps,
giving praise. So you talked about the idea of giving praise, erm, in
areas where they don’t have a difficulty. Erm you said that you
wanted more background information about the children from
parents and professionals but you recognise the challenge of
gaining that information [laughs] from parents and the children.
Erm we talked about considering opportunities for teaching and
talking in P.S.E. Erm, you felt it wasn’t the teacher’s role to say ‘sit
down and tell me everything’. Erm you felt you have to stay one
step ahead all the time all the time. There’s similar symptoms to
attachment disorder, so for example a need to control or getting
really frantic when something doesn’t go their way. And topics
which arose to discuss or explore further erm, were in terms of
things for me, general information, so statistics, erm the
involvement of Social Care, when, where, how. Teaching
resources and then websites or resources as support for support
for victims so you could point people to that. And then discussion
areas that we possibly thought about, for this session, were
questions we could ask parents so for example if you’re home
visiting or in meetings. Erm, classroom strategies, resilience, self-esteem, behaviour management and how to talk to children. And we’ll leave that bit there for now and I’ve put together // [hard copies of the general themes discussed in session one and two distributed, appendix 10] an overview of some of the themes based on the discussion from / session one and session two. And the other thing that I’ve done, or tried to do, [hard copies of an Illustration of an interconnected theme identified in session two distributed, appendix 11] to help us a little bit with some of this, is to highlight, for example some of the discussion that we were saying these things link together and we weren’t sure which influenced another

F: mmm was in terms of the fear of failure so in terms of, at the bottom I’ve said erm, we talked about domestic violence and a coping strategy of needing to be right / and we felt that this, while this can be a good coping strategy, or needing to do things right, for example, which could work very well in the home because it doesn’t necessarily get you into trouble [ and (&)

T3: [ [laughs]

T2: [ mmm

F: (&) keeps things, erm, calm. It impacts quite strongly on academic achievement and attainment within the school environment. So for example at the top you’ve got the fear of failure, erm, which leads them to needing to be right. Which then, erm, from that they will wait for help so that they can do it exactly as requested, they may copy from their peers or they may disengage, which could be that they don’t try or they stop trying, at some point - they opt out. The consequences of those things is that they don’t get as much praise because they’re not doing the work [ or they’re not engaging (&)

T3: [ yeah (…)

F: (&) they also don’t meet their academic potential because they’re not challenging themselves so hence their attainment suffers and then their experience of success…

T3: [ yeah, that makes sense.

F: (&) that [ self-esteem. (&)

T2: [ mmm.

T1: [ mmm.
F: (&) Does that make sense?

T2: [ yeah.

T1: [ yeah.

T3: [ yeah.

that makes sense.

F: Yeah? Ok, so that was part of the discussion, I think, that came out so that was what I put together.

T3: Yeah it looks good.

...

F: Erm then the other sheet then [referring to the hard copies of the general themes discussed in session one and two distributed earlier, appendix 10], then, so in terms of what’s come out. This is how I’ve, kind of, put it together. I’m this will help us then to reflect on the next stage of our erm activity and discussion. So in terms of presentation of the children again feel free to add, disagree, erm, or agree, as we go along that’s fine. So in terms of how they present cognitively erm, we said they possibly will be lower ability, have poor attention and concentration, have a fear of failure, fear of failure, erm engage in avoidance strategies, have a tendency not to try, or give up, and seek clear guidance, instructions, coaxing or adult support. In terms of their behaviour they might be violent in terms of getting frustrated. We see learned behaviour - from home, which is then modelled in school and other children then copy that as well, you were talking about that [to T?]. Their play is quite rough, they can be crashing and banging.

T3: I think that tends to be more boys doesn’t it?

T2: mmm.

T1: mmm.

T3: When we were talking about that it was the boys we were thinking about.

T2: yeah.

F: That’s fine I’ll add that in. In terms of social – emotional, we talked about the fact that they can be coercive but that, that they were unaware that this was what they were doing and that, that was a [ negative (&)

T1: [ mmm-hmm.

F: (&) behaviour. Some of them have poor social skills. They can be very loving and seek loving. Erm we perceive that they may seek control or feel out of control. We suggest that their peers tend to perceive them as likeable. They have low self-esteem, difficulties making sense of their experiences, erm, so for example/ the ideas of trust and like we said before that what happens at home isn’t necessarily the norm. Erm we described them as, they are actually quite resilient – some of them. They can lash out. They can’t wait, They have difficulties managing failure when it’s not expected and
they’ll get conflicting messages re behaviour from home and school. And also as we said [laughs] (&)

T3: [laughs]

F: (&) the huge caveat there - These factors are not true of all children, they may have some or none of the above...

. . .

. .

F: ...then the needs of the children that you identified. They need to develop of personal and emotional, sorry personal and social skills and have a change of mindset, you talked about. Erm strategies that you’d suggested that you use, erm within the class were sticker charts, rewards, treats, verbal reminders, distraction – so things like removing them from difficult times such as tidy up time. External support – we had family support that was mentioned and that generally focused on parenting strategies which were targeted at daily routine, so it was about getting up and coming to school.

T3: mmm.

F: Erm, the issues that you identified for yourselves as teachers were, that it’s, it’s difficult to teach the class as a whole. Erm, there can be a lack of support/ erm from head teachers, so not necessarily that they don’t want to support just perhaps using strategies that you felt weren’t helpful. TAs, then, feeling, erm, that they don’t want to help with the handling and managing so you felt very much on your own in that sense. Erm safety was an issue for yourselves, your staff and the other children. It takes a lot of time to record all the incidents. You have a lack of background information about the children. You’ve got a focus on academic attainment which then is a difficulty providing space and time to talk. You often know something is not right but difficult pinpointing what or why. Erm, and you talked about change of mindset, so again when you praise the children. In terms of your role you felt it was to educate and prevent the cycle of learned behaviour continuing, offer support and stability, erm give clear expectations and build resilience. You felt the school’s role was to minimise the impact, to have systems in place, to keep records, to maintain the child’s safety, have good communication and smooth transitions. In terms of parents we talked about there being no common presentation. Some are needy whilst others are aggressive. There’s a tendency to make, not to make or keep appointments. They may struggle with supporting school work so for example homework and reading. And it’s difficult to hear about their child’s negative behaviour and they make excuses or gloss over it. And again that wouldn’t necessarily apply to everybody would it?

T3: No.

T1: mmm-hmm.

F: Ok so those are the things that we picked out, so what I thought that we would try and do now [laughs]/ is to have a look, cos we’re ciii
obviously, have a think about developing, er, some ideas of what we can recommend that people do within the classroom. So thinking of themselves as the class teacher in the classroom. So I've picked out, I hope, some of the themes, and we'll start with these few, so I've jotted some of the key things that I think you mentioned onto these pieces of paper…

F: …So what I've written down is resilience, er the role of the teacher or classroom staff, self-esteem and behaviour management [appendix 22]. And I'm going to give you some yellow ones, you some green ones and I'll give you some orange ones. So, and I will write some things as well, as your discussing if you mention something I might write down the key word or phrase you've used and stick it on and also you can do the same. So what we're going to try and do is thinking about these things [reference to the sheets of paper on the table] and this is where I'm hoping that our bullet pointed list [appendix 10] might help us to prompt us with some ideas. If we're thinking about for example, let's start with this one ‘the role of the teacher or classroom staff’, if you've got any ideas or recommendations or factors so it doesn't have to be a thing, it could be a, you know an idea, like you for example you mentioned attachment didn't you [to T3].

[ so (&) ]

T3: mmm

F: (&) it might be that you say some knowledge in that area might be useful so you might want to add that on there, or you might think actually that goes with resilience. I don't know. So you could put that down as a phrase, or you might say as your role as the classroom teacher might be, something like/ I don't know looking at the timetable cos you were saying about [ the, sort of (&) ]

T2: [ visual timetable oh, mmm

F: (&) distraction

[ and (&) ]

T2: [ yeah

F: (&) taking them out before the activity happens, but yeah again that could be something that we would use, or self-esteem and we were talking about praise for example. That might fit down mightn't it, when you were saying we'll praise them for the things that we know that they get right. Yeah?

T3: [ mmm.

T2: [ mmm.

F: so it can be anything like that and we're just going to start adding them on and I will make sense of it all afterwards [laughs] so don't worry about it having to make sense. erm, and I don't, I think I don't necessarily want to say let's do this one, then this one, then this

civ
I think if you just generally talk your ideas and then they can bounce off each other and we can add bits as we go. I know that sounds a bit scary.

F: but I think we'll be ok. So does anyone want to follow on from any of the examples perhaps that I've just given, think about, perhaps, if you're thinking of telling other teachers, so your children are moving on now aren't they?

T2: [ mmm
T3: [ mmm
F: it's summer. What are they key messages, perhaps, that you might pass on to the next teacher and where, which heading might they go under perhaps. / That might be a good way to start.

T3: yeah.
T2: I think these two.
F: Ok.
T2: Just how to manage those children
F: mmm.
T2: really and little things that set them off or
F: mmm.
T2: little things to help
/  / 
F: mmm
T2: manage their behaviour and to [ maintain (&)
F: [ ok
T2: (&) a calm environment.
. .
T3: so it's communication.
F: I'm going to write down visual timetable cos you mentioned that.
. .
T1: For behaviour management would you give them something that they're interested in? Like at the minute I've got that, a little boy and he has a chart that's Toy Story
F: mmm-hmm yeah.
T1: cos he's really into Toy Story [laughs]
F: ok // ok.
. .
T1: safety of
yeah so that safety would go on there wouldn’t it // so if we’re thinking about safety then erm / how are we going to do that, what would you need to promote their safety?

Good control I’d say.
mmm. Routines
Yeah.
mmm-hmm.
Clear routines
so control, you said routines [to T1]. One of the other things I was thinking about was if / you’re thinking about particular training, handling that sort of thing.

T1: [ mmm. yeah
T3: [ we’ve had safe handling
T2: [ mmm. Yeah.
F: Yeah?
T2: Yeah.

Do you think that’s something that’s important?

Yes. It was with one of
[ two of ours
[ with, yeah, yeah
T2: Yes definitely.

Just given what you were saying about TAs and such as well

yeah, yeah.

Ok // [writing]

ok
And that communication includes / the parents especially I think cos once you’ve, like, lost them you’ve/

[ you’ve kind of had it.
[ It’s working I’d say
more than communication. Working with the parents
[ isn’t it or a parent.

yeah getting them on side really so they feel (&)

that they can

[ trust you.
[ (&) safe.

For behaviour management would you focus more on the positives rather than the negatives. But they still need to know then that there is a consequence for their actions.

Ok. / If we think back to self-esteem as well. I’m just looking at that one purely because we’ve not stuck anything on it yet. What things would you say that you do within the classroom that help promote self-esteem. I’m thinking particularly of the lovely little cycle that I’ve put together for us.

[laughs]
F: or some things that you might think well actually we can combat
that by – any thoughts on that one?
T2: personal and social targets and team points.
F: Is that something you do have already?
T2: yep.
F: yeah.
T2: yeah.

//

T3: It’s coming back to that resilience I suppose in a way, or self-
esteeze, I don’t know, whichever but it’s that not necessarily getting
it right but
F: ok.
T3: trying to get it right./ Praising them for trying rather than just
praising them for getting it right.
F: ok
T2: Being responsible for their actions. Like you said before really.
T3: mmm.

//

T2: And that’s the parents as well
T3: yeah.
F: ok. // I mean I think they do, absolutely they link together don’t they.
T2: mmm.
F: that’s why I put these four out [referring to the headings self-
esteeze, resilience, behaviour management, role of the class
teacher/ classroom staff]. In that they kind of, it’s complicated, like
this [referring to Illustration of an interconnected theme - appendix
11] but there are links between all these four themes, erm / and I
think it’s / we’re starting to understand perhaps how they link aren’t
we
T2: yeah
F: we’re thinking about it
T2: I think these two / it’s kind of feeling safe to get things wrong isn’t it
which
F: mmm.
T2: is kind of why we’re praising them for trying,
[ we’re trying to add (&)
T3: [ yes, yeah
T2: (&) isn’t it. But so that, you know, they’re not laughed at or, it’s good
that they’ll
T3: learn from their mistakes
T2: yeah.
T3: [laughs]
F: I
[ think (&)
T3: [ but
F: (&) that’s a huge one isn’t it. And that (...) is feeling safe
[ and (&)
T2: [ yeah
F: (&) being able to get things wrong.

T3: and it’s working with the peer group as well isn’t it, to sort of /

T2: boost them

T3: yeah / so that / they, they feed off each other don’t they so if, if one

child, and it can quite often happen with children, you know sort of
domestic problems, whether or not it’s actual violence but just the
whole neglect thing they often as a child, that you know / is
ostracised a little bit, you know, not always but it can do can’t it you
know the one who aren’t clean or / there’s other things going on at
home isn’t there

F: mmm

T3: so it’s that sort of trying to get that, the peer group working
together.

T2: mmm

F: Do you think that would then fit on here

[ as well?

T3: [ yeah I do

//

T3: and that comes back to P.S.E. doesn’t it?

T2: yeah and circle time and stuff,

T3: yeah

T2: we do lots of work in circle time don’t we.

T3: yeah

T2: I suppose we do it for behaviour management as well

T3: [laughs]

(...)

T3: and P.S.E. it doesn’t have to be circle time does it, it can just be
P.S.E. generally.

T2: yeah.

//

T3: erm

T2: what about communication (....) it’s with the children as well just
talking to them about what

[ they don’t like about behaviour

T3: [ you see what, cos I was wondering

that around what you’ve, what we said last week about how much
should we be thinking about making it something you can talk
about.

F: mmm // we’re going to come to that I’ve got

[ something that talks about questions for children

T3: [ do you know what I mean it cos we have things about like you

know

T3: we do things on you know, death and /

F: mmm

T3: divorce and things like that. I’ve never seen anywhere about. I
mean we always say if you’ve got any issues you can talk to me
after but we? But we don’t actually name it /

F: no
whereas we can quite / often name other things
[ but (&)
F: [ yeah
T3: (&) we don’t name any form of
sexual abuse, do we, we don’t name any (&)
F: [ I think there are, yeah// no
T3: (&) form of violence I mean I’m not necessarily saying we should
[ but it’s something to think about.
F: [ No, I think there are some teaching resources.
And that’ll be one of the things I’m going to try and find as well so I
can send you any links to that kind of thing there’s definitely some
for secondary but I imagine that, that starts to be developed in key
stage two as well at primary.
T3: well I suppose I’m thinking a bit more at that end aren’t I cos
F: Yeah. Yeah that’s one of the things on my list to, to look into.
T3: Cos I mean it might not be appropriate but then it might give
children that might never have said it the opportunity to say
something.
F: mmm.
T3: cos once you start talking about death they’ll talk very openly
[ about death (&)
T2: [ yeah they will
T3: (&) and about you know, because they do and, and is it appropriate
then to talk about domestic violence
T2: mmm
T3: and give them that opportunity to then say
F: mmm
T2: you need to know what the process has to be
[ when (&)
T3: [ yeah
T2: (&) somebody
[ discloses something (&)
F: [ you’re probably
T3: (&) that you have to tell somebody about.
yeah, yeah.
you’re probably starting with things about relationships and
friendships and
mmm
F: what a respectful relationship looks like aren’t you.
T1: mmm
F: You might not necessarily be saying
[ or it might be (&)
T3: [ No, yeah.
F: (&) that you have those conversations and then when somebody
mentions it you can give it that label
and
T3: yeah
say well that’s what this would be known as.
F: so, yeah.
T2: I keep thinking of teachers where that’s concerned [points to resilience]
F: mmm
T2: cos sometimes
F: yeah
T2: you have to kind of / build yourself up
T3: yes, yes.
T2: like when somebody’s worn you down and
F: [ no today (&)
T2: (&) is a new day [laughs] and it might not be that bad
F: no, yeah.
T2: they might not kick me today. [laughs]
F: so what, what would help there to build the resilience of teachers?
T2: Oh god! [laughs]
T2: erm support from higher up in a way
T1: yeah other teachers.
T3: so I suppose that, coming back to it that knowledge of resources
goes there doesn’t it
T2: [ Yeah
F: [ yep
T3: cos it’s knowing how you can support if there’s anything
T2: mmm
T1: mmm
T3: I suppose here it’s just / following school, or child, you know what I mean
[ so that they build up their
T2: [ There is a policy isn’t there on around
behaviour management. We have like a set thing on behaviour
don’t we?
T3: Yes but it’s what you said as well it’s the routines and if it comes
back to that
T1: mmm,
T3: what you’re saying
T1: Mmm, especially if it changes
T3: yes
cos then you’ll need to explain to them cos everything will just, and
then you’re trying to explain to them the change in the routine
otherwise

mmm
that could kick up a fuss [laughs]

//
ok.
//
and working with the whole (...) it has in the two cases we’ve had
this year
mmm that’s true
(... that class didn’t even scratch the surface/ not as bad as that
but.
ok.

 (...) that could go into that as well couldn’t it [laughs] [discussing overlap
of themes placed on sheets]
mmm
or should I have put it roles of teachers [questioning placement of a
post-it]

Now one of the things we talked about erm / was that idea of
gathering more background information wasn’t it and we talked a
little bit about how we might ask the parents

yeah
or what questions we might ask parents, which were just touching
on then as well / erm and then as you also said, how to talk to or
support the children. Now I did do two. I think it’s quite possible
that they would overlap but I thought there might be differences for
reception and key stage one and key stage two

mmm
so I’ve put those on two sheets just in case there were differences,
and then the other one that I’ve put down was the questions for the
professionals, simply because you were also talking about
handover information and transition. So I don’t know that we might
necessarily have, lots to put on there but these one some of the
other ones that I thought this is more the talking, sort of themes
isn’t it

mmm
mmm
on these. Erm, so cos yeah we talked about this didn’t we. We
were saying it might be really difficult to get somebody to open up
and we saying perhaps it’s about providing that supportive,
environment to give them the opportunity to ask the questions and
actually a lot of research focuses in this area, quite interestingly,
particularly within the health care services, erm in terms of there
are actually standard questions sometimes, particularly in maternity
care and erm health visitor sort of care that parents are asked as a
matter of course if there are any difficulties or violent relationships
perhaps going on and they provide that arena, or they try
to give people that opportunity to open up so they ask quite direct
questions whereas obviously you can ask things that perhaps are
more general so I suppose it’s perhaps you know we can almost
imagine the other side, can’t we? If somebody asked us that
question, how we might feel about it, and whether that would be
problematic or wouldn’t be problematic so if we think of a question
/ or you have a question or how you might want to phrase it to a
parent write it down and stick it on. It doesn’t necessarily mean
we’d ask it and we can certainly then think about the wording of it
but it’s a prompt for developing something further isn’t it. And as I
say there’s no right or wrong answers at all.
T2: Like do you ever feel unsafe in your own home
[ maybe kind of thing?
F: [ yeah.
F: yeah. I’ll write that one down.
T3: [laughs] I was going to be a bit more open ended and like are there
any factors that might affect your child settling in at school
[and if you’re (&)
F: [ yeah
T1: [ mmm
T3: (&) doing it cos you’re obviously doing home visits [to T2]
T2: Mmm
T3: are you doing home visits? [to T1]
T1: No, no.
T1: You’d probably start by asking about the actual child. What they
perceive of them like how they’ve got on what they think about how
they get on at school and then go on to the factors that might be /
like, what’s the word, erm affecting it
T3: mmm
T1: in a way.

I suppose if they’re, if they were older or you know and you weren’t
doing the home visits / it would be if there was an issue wouldn’t it?
F: mmm
T3: that you’d be seeing the parents
T2: mmm
T3: or at parents evening
F: mmm
T3: but you’d be raising things like this if you
F: mmm,
T3: thought there was an issue.
F: mmm
T3: so then you’d probably
F: and that probably would still be
[ yeah an applicable type of question wouldn’t it mmm.
T3: [ phrase it in terms of that any factors that are
stopping you know affecting the way your child’s behaving which
you do ask actually don’t you, you know. Are there any things that
you know of, but then that’s not necessarily drilling down enough to
sort of
T1: mmm
F: so what might you ask as a follow up then, or examples might you
give?
F: I mean you mentioned death didn’t you
T3: yeah
F: so that could be one, like you say, then that possibly is a big thing
to ask but actually it’s generally something that people have
experienced you know people, parents or grandparents or you
know
T2: your pet
F: family pet yeah absolutely
T2: mmm, yeah.
T3: It is. It’s a big
F: so, you could say e.g. we might have a list mightn’t we?
T3: yeah
T1: mmm
F: and then people will just say no
T2: yeah
F: or they’ll say yes.
T3: yeah / and could you, would you include then / some sort of feeling
unsafe or / cos unsafe
F: could do yeah
T3: doesn’t necessarily mean partner spats would it. Bit like a child the
other day of ours who’s came in and burnt their shed and turned
the garden over
T2: oh nice
F: so you could say traumatic experiences couldn’t you
T3: yeah
T2: yeah
//
F: and something else you might ask, like we’ve said death, safety
concerns, traumatic experiences, you might say erm, breakdown of
relationships
T3: mmm
F: which could be divorce
T3: mmm
F: or you know separations
T3: mmm
//

cxiii
T3: you've pretty much covered the whole gamut there [laughs]
F: yeah
[ and it's up to (&)
T3: [ but I suppose
F: (&) you've provided that arena perhaps and it's up to people how much
T3: yeah
F: they do or don't say.
T2: [ yeah
T1: [ yeah
F: so would that feel comfortable do you think?
T3: I think it would if like you say you
T2: mmm
T3: were starting like you say with the child.
T1: mmm
I think that's a good point.
T1: mmm //
F: Yeah? ok //
T3: and if they did say yes there was, it's what you then do
F: [ mmm
T2: [ mmm
T3: cos then the next question if you like almost, cos it's then do you want to talk about it [laughs] I suppose is / I don't know
F: ok well, you might say what support have you had around that
T3: yeah
F: or who's involved in that, then you can go ahhh [laughs] when they say oh well Social Services have been involved
F: [ or (&)
T3: [ yeah
F: (&) you know err
T3: [ but then if they have (&)
T2: [ or they might lie
T3: (&) they might want Social Workers get in touch with us or would they I mean that's /
F: If they're going to lie would them answer the question in the first place?
T2: ummm
T3: No
T2: well if it's really,
F: they might just say no mightn't they?
T2: yeah, yeah. With Nathan they've got a social worker, they said no and they obviously have had one, but I suppose that wasn't a lie was it? she hadn't got one at the time!
T3: but that means she was taking you completely literally
F: [ or (&)
T2: ummm
T3: No
F: they might just say no mightn't they?
T2: yeah, yeah. With Nathan they've got a social worker, they said no and they obviously have had one, but I suppose that wasn't a lie was it? she hadn't got one at the time!
T3: but that means she was taking you completely literally
F: It's fine isn't it? we can acknowledge that can't we?
T3: yeah, yeah.
T1: They'd probably get defensive as well
T3: maybe
F: yeah.

F: How might you manage it if they are defensive then?

T2: I think sometimes if you talk about them and ask them about, take it from helping them. You see it from like their point of view they sometimes [ cos is all about them that/ yeah, yeah (&)
T3: [ What you say like it must be really difficult for you
T2: (&) kind of empathise with
T3: mmm
F: so supportive ethos put there. Cos absolutely you're there about the child aren't you
T1: mmm-hmm
F: and supporting them
T3: yeah you could put it like that then couldn’t you
T2: yeah
T3: you could say you know that must be really difficult but, but we're here as a school to try and help your child and that we think you know doing something like that blah-blah-blah
T2: mmm. I think so yes.

T2: (...)

T2: she was more open to it. // Cos I think automatically some people think that their kids might be taken away don't they.
T3: I think that's true actually I do think that's true.
T2: there's a lot of scary stories about / you know people
T3: well yeah
T2: [ well absolutely
T2: [ it happens doesn't it
to people who are put on the child protection register for smacking /
their kids.
T1: I think for some parents though just admitting to themselves
T3: yeah
T1: that they're in a domestic relationship or have been
T3: Because, because the breakdown of any sort of relationship's hard isn't it
T1: [ mmm, mmm you don’t want to admit that, yeah
T3: [ so it’s not like that’s going to change
T2: I mean they might not want to be out of the relationship might they
T1: mmm
T3: Well that’s true too.
T2: They might / want to stay in it [laughs]
T3: yes.

F: Ok. I thought we’d have lots on this one.

T3: I think the questions for professionals is if they have got a Social
Worker isn’t it. So you’d almost want to ask the parents if they said
yes to that to get in touch, could we get in touch with them
T1: mmm
F: yep
T3: or could you ask them to get in touch with us and then you’d have
to have the // discussion around that really and mean there’s no
direct questions is there
F: mmm-hmm
T3: I mean there’s just having a dialogue with them / how do they see
it.

F: ok

T3: [Referring to supporting KS2 children in comparison to KS1
children] For this it’d be stories as well wouldn’t it really
T2: yeah.
T3: This one you start off with what a good one looks like. Like what a
good relationship looks like I think
F: mmm-hmm
T3: and then
T2: circle time as well I suppose
T3: yeah

T1: and just giving that time out really
T3: mmm
T1: Cos I have a little boy at the minute that just likes time out to be
with me and then he will talk, start talking
T2: 1:1?
yeah.

[referring to post-it ‘1:1 time attention’] does that apply to both?

yeah

yeah cos I think all children crave the attention of

ok. Let’s just have a quick look back at the other ones [referring to first four themes presented]

Is there anything else we want to add to these or any more thoughts that we’ve got?

I think in terms of the child themselves, that’s, it is quite often, the one’s I’m thinking of that is a massive deal [points to self-esteem].

[ And handling what they say
[ that self-esteem one yeah

I’m just thinking about, particularly girls that I’ve had. That is, that’s a huge/ part of their problems.

mmm

Maybe the boys, we were talking last week weren’t we

yeah

it’s the same but with girls I do think it’s emotional

emotional yeah their self-esteem’s even

sometimes you need to over compensate for that because if you model being really / nice and praising them the kids kind of

yes

look after them almost. Don’t they as well?

yeah, yeah.

But you don’t want them to take advantage of that either do you?

which some will yeah it’s hard isn’t it.

mmm

ok

the better that [points to self-esteem] is then the better that [points to resilience] becomes

mmm

//

ok I’m going to ask you, a last few questions then // so if I can just have some brief answers I think to these erm // mmm, what do you think has been the biggest change in your thinking or perceptions since the first session that we’ve done?

Mine’s making me reflect when I, how I react to things

mmm / I agree

me too

and the time thing, that you were saying, I really think I don’t
F: taking time?

T3: take enough time to see

T2: They probably need more time

[ than the (&)

T3: [ yeah

T2: (&) than the other children in the class. Who, you need to over

T2: compensate what they lacked.

F: mmm //

[ what

T3: [ and

F: just a bit more aware about it from what you’ve brought really

T3: partly that and partly talking about it and things

F: what would you like to know more about? / or what would you like

to do more of?

//

T3: I suppose a bit more about the questioning and the resources and

the

T1: yeah it's resources for me

F: mmm. In terms of teaching or in terms of resources / for yourself?

T3: A bit of both really

T1: yeah

T2: I quite like to know more about the cause and effect

F: mmm-hmm

T2: and what makes them behave how they do

F: so the diagram that I did

T2: yeah

F: and the sort of relationships, that kind of yeah

T2: yeah

F: Ok / it's a bit of everything really then isn't it!

T3: yeah [laughs].


//

T3: yeah more but I dunno it's got to be more sort of specific as well

doesn’t it.

F: mmm

T3: so when we started talking about attachment disorder

T2: yeah

T3: and things like that / how to handle that but within the confines of

the behaviour management. cos I think that’s what we’ve

T2: mmm

T3: well I know I’ve struggled with

T2: Yeah

F: mmm

T3: that you’re trying to do this over compensating [laughs] and trying

T2: yeah

T3: to and then that affects the behaviour management
because then it becomes an unfair system because you're sort of /
so and then, then, and I dunno and then that becomes the role of
the teacher doesn't it and then knowing how to handle it better and
what things are directly impacting on it.
and when you've got more than one in a class then all
mmm
(...) up
so I need to think more about these things link together then so we
can explore that a bit more
mmm
ok
it's chicken and egg
it's keeping this tight [points to behaviour management] but then
being able to do this [points to self-esteem and resilience]
yes keeping this tight but then giving
yeah
I think they like that really clear boundaries they don't like it
when it's woolly.
mmm
They need like really
mmm
clear boundaries for behaviour // Otherwise they feel a bit unsafe.
erm
Erm what have you been doing differently do you think since we
started this?
nothing cos it's just been a nightmare term [laughs]
that's fine. There's no wrong answer! What would you like to do
differently?
I think I'm repeating myself here but the time thing and the finding
out more and the
mmm-hmm
maybe asking the questions of parents a bit more where
ok
cos obviously we're getting our new classes aren't we and you
know
mmm
I think I've praised him more than
T1: yeah
T2: I would of for just / doing really basic things that the others are doing but because he's changed so much
F: mmm
T2: I've kind of forgotten
F: mmm
T2: to keep praising him for it and does react so much better to praise he didn't used to like it
F: mmm
T2: if you praised something he'd done a picture or something he just used to tear it up but now he does like it.
F: mmm
T2: so, doing that more I think.
F: and how has he changed in response to that?
T2: erm he wants to fit in
[ so he wants to conform (&)
T3: [ Mmm he does definitely
T2: (&) with and be like the rest
[ of the class (&)
T3: [ mmm he does
T2: (&) so whereas he didn't before
F: so even in a short space of time would you say you've seen a change?
T2: I think the / most change was when we lost the other child
F: yeah
T2: we had because I think he feels much safer in the environment
[ (...)
T3: [ I agree he has done
T2: I mean he's changed over the year hasn't he?
F: yeah
T3: mmm but there's definitely the praise
T1: well ours have moved up already so I've got a new child for the past two weeks I've had him now. But I just try and focus more on positives than just and try not to focus on negatives cos you do get to a point that it's consistent
T3: [ yeah
T2: [ yeah
T1: focus on the negatives but erm it used to be everyday in foundation there was something you could always see him being restrained
T1: but we've only had one in two weeks
T3: [ yeah
T2: [ yeah
T1: cos he is beginning to / settle down a lot more
F: right
and he wants to be like the other children

so yeah.

and he’s had to and he’s changed classes?

yeah

that’s really good then isn’t it.

do you have a two week transition then?

yeah we’ve been trialling it. But I think as well like they get to a

point where/ like you get, and I don’t know you get irritated in a

sense by the children you’ve got they’re ready to move up. I think

he was ready to move up and get more of a structure in year one

and I think the relationship with his teacher then got strained so

he’s got a new teacher

I think we said that didn’t we the resilience of the teacher

or the staff

we put that on here [points to resilience]

yeah, yeah

and you do get into a negative cycle

yeah can do

mmm yeah

you start to dread it don’t you

mmm

but now it’s just trying to get the other teachers in the year group to

try not to be as negative

mmm

cos you obviously hear things about what they’ve been like

mmm

so it’s trying to make sure they’ve not got that perception of him.

yeah.

ok well I think we’ll stop there if that’s ok.

mmm

so thank you very much for participating it’s been really, really

interestingly and can I take your diaries from you?
Appendix Sixteen - Reflective Log Instructions

Note down any:
- Persistent recollections (e.g. key events in shaping your views, reasons for participating)
- Observations
- Feelings evoked
- Your response(s)
- Reflections (e.g. further thoughts, reasons for your response)

You can write as much or as little as you like, as regularly as you feel is appropriate, have something to add, or perhaps why you don’t!

Thank you for participating.
Appendix Seventeen - Teacher One Reflective Log (R1)

Child A:

- Very quiet child
- Very bright. Went into Year 2 at a 2c - (1/2 points above age related expectations)
- Would often miss days of school.
- When asked why he wasn’t in, would think of an answer to give as if he was making it up or it was rehearsed.
- Very protective of his younger brother and sister.
- Parents came across as polite, wanting to ‘push’ their child. Mum worked nights or would often come to school hungover (later admitted she had a drunk problem)
- Child A can react by hitting, if provoked.
20 Child B:

21 - Sister to child A
22 - Very emotional. Would often cry for
23 periods of time.
24 - Very tired often/dazed
25 - Reached expected levels (la-)
26 - Became very quiet during mums
27 turbulent relationship.
28 - Witnessed violence
29 - Refused to go home with mums partner
30 one day. Then told Sense it was
31 because she was scared.
32 - Made teachers feel upset for her.
33 1st reaction is to protect the child
34 and follow up on her accusation / what
35 she is entrusting in you.
36 - Struggled to make friendships
37 - Would often seem like she was
38 thinking about something else.
Child C:

- Very quiet
- Mind often elsewhere
- Above age related expectations (2c/13)
- Dad went to prison in Reception and she struggled to gain a relationship with him when he returned home in May.
- Seemed unhappy when dad picked her up from school.
- Couldn’t accept praise – didn’t know how to react.
- Very sly
- Would hurt children for a reaction, like a slight nipping.
- Would steal things.
- Once spoke about the two black eyes her mum had when I was marking her work. Mum denied everything.
Appendix Eighteen - Teacher Two Reflective Log (R2)

01 James has been very minimising.
02 Pressing face into other faces.
03 Touching them by putting hands on shoulder etc.

05 Makes me feel very protective of
06 the other children.
07 Strangely,
08 This feeling is also evoked by
09 James also, when he is hurt by
10 someone else.
11 Cries out of all proportion at
12 "injustice" of someone hurting him.
13 (Think he does this at home to be
14 "babied" by mum - but genuine
15 feelings)
Appendix Nineteen - Teacher Three Reflective Log (R3)

01 Very interesting first meeting
02 despite being late
03 supposed more people didn't
04 take part.

05 Think there should be
06 opportunities like this
07 for more dialogue between
08 professionals and teachers.
Thinking about what was discussed - I need to give more time to PSE - as a job share I spend a lot of time focused on the teaching and PSE isn't in my half of week - do I know what is happening in some children's lives?

True!

CT
I feel a lot of children are probably in a household where some domestic abuse is taking place. There are children who demonstrate an attitude to women staff that would be a role model at home.
29 Sometimes feel I would need
30 to look at my own attitudes
31 and delve further in terms of
32 understanding the effect adult
33 relationships have on children
34 - respect is lacking in
35 domestic abuse & lack of
36 repair for others could be
37 a consequence.
Would be a useful model for other voices - has been good to meet and explore prospects.
### Appendix Twenty - Alphabetical List of Initial Codes

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Appendix Twenty-One - Alphabetical List of Final Codes

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Appendix Twenty-Two - Visual Representations Created in Group Interview

Three

Teacher one  Yellow
Teacher two  Green
Teacher three  Orange
All/ general/ facilitator  Pink

Behaviour Management
Questions for Parents

- Do you ever feel enough in your own home?
- Realisation to help avoid may open up.
- May lie.
- May not want to end relationship.
- What support have you had? do you have? what's been taken away?
- Fear of Social care.
- Expensive.
- Supportive others.
- Communication between professionals.
- Fear of admitting failure (parents).
- Questions for Professionals

Questions for Professionals

- Contact professionals - permission from parent.
Resilience

Role of the Teacher / Classroom Staff
Self-esteem

How to talk to / support children (Reception – Key Stage One)
How to talk to / support children (Key Stage Two)