"The fluff that comes with a psychologist" - Understanding EP reflections on their interactions with parents, a psychosocial approach using Collaborative Inquiry.

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Abstract

Developing positive relationships with parents is a key concern of educational policy. However, conceptualising what successful partnership looks like remains problematic. Research in this area highlights the pressure upon parents to conform to professional's expectations to avoid being seen as 'difficult'. This leads to a power imbalance which undermines the true nature of 'partnership working' defined by mutual respect, opportunities for collaboration, negotiation, and a willingness to learn from each other. Despite legislation that highlights the need for education staff to be empathic towards parents as well as children, little attention has been paid to the interpersonal relationships between parents and professionals and the role of empathy in partnership working.

This research explores Educational Psychologists (EPs) responses to parents from a psychoanalytic perspective. In particular, how unconscious defences against anxiety, such as splitting, transference and projection might influence our interactions with parents. I chose a Collaborative Inquiry approach that used a group reflective tool, The Reflecting Team Model, to allow for the co-production of knowledge and to enable EPs to reflect upon what may be happening subconsciously, 'beneath the surface'.

I suggest that a psychoanalytic approach to EP reflective practice can deepen our understanding of our interactions with parents and have a positive impact upon partnership working. Theorising participants as defended subjects can facilitate a level of reflexivity that can assist EPs to consider the role that psychoanalytic concepts such as splitting, projection and transference can play in their day-to-day interactions with parents.

Key terms: Educational Psychologist (EP), Parent partnership, Psychoanalytic, Reflective practice, Reflecting Teams, Collaborative Inquiry, Defended Subject, Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI)

Contents

Focus of this study

The role of an Educational Psychologist (EP) involves supporting children, families, and schools to understand and manage complex, and sometimes confusing, emotional situations.   EPs draw upon a range of problem-solving frameworks to help them apply psychological theory within educational settings. Researchers have highlighted a range of theories and paradigms that inform EP practice including consultative and solution focused approaches (Frederickson & Cline 2002; Frederickson, Miller & Cline, 2008; Kelly, Woolfson, Boyle, 2008; Long, 2000). Pelligrini (2010) argues that these approaches assist EPs to analyse 'problems' from a cognitive standpoint. He advocates that EPs could also benefit from employing a psychodynamic, also referred to as a psychoanalytic perspective to problem solving; being sensitive to their own feelings in social interactions with clients to help them understand more about their experiences and help them make sense of these. The focus of this study is an attempt to explore EPs' responses to parents from a psychoanalytic perspective. In particular, how unconscious defences against anxiety such as splitting, transference and projection might influence the emotional interactions we have with parents in our work. Appreciating and being able to draw upon a psychoanalytic understanding of mind may be potentially helpful and offer additional ways for EPs to reflect upon their practice. It may also improve how EPs (and other helping professionals more generally) understand their responses to parents so they can work in partnership more successfully.

Chapter One: Introduction

My interest in this research topic has evolved over several years, both from a professional and personal perspective. Prior to becoming a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I worked as a Social Worker in Children's services, firstly in a Local Authority Child Protection Team and then for the NSPCC (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children). My role as a Social Worker involved working with parents who were, more often than not, parenting in difficult circumstances. Whilst being empathetic to the difficulties families were facing, my role required gathering assessment information and making decisions around levels of risk to children. In some circumstances, this involved court applications and the subsequent removal of children from their families. These kinds of decisions, are of course, never taken lightly and require evidence to meet legal thresholds. Subsequently, there is a high level of stress that is being managed across social work offices around the country. During my time as a Social Worker, the narratives used to describe parents (when they themselves were

not present) were often very negative and inflammatory. Despite my understanding of the complex social injustices experienced by families, at times, I found myself colluding with some of the discourses around "difficult" and "undeserving" parents. This is perhaps not surprising as most of us would find it difficult to understand why anyone would harm a child, however, these conversations were not limited to the most difficult cases but would often be precipitated by a telephone call to a parent, a missed appointment or even new referral information. Negative discourses about parents were sometimes challenged but were, in my experience, considered by staff, a necessary strategy to 'survive' the job and prevent burnout.

When I began working as an Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP), I wondered if I would witness similar unhelpful narratives regarding parents and parenting or whether they would remain purely attached to the 'safeguarding world'. My early understanding of the Educational Psychologists (EP) role was to support school staff and parents in meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of children. I therefore anticipated that the positioning of parents within this context would allow for a more collaborative and less punitive approach than I had previously encountered and that more positive narratives relating to parents would reflect this shift. Having worked in the same Educational Psychology Service (EPS) as an AEP and Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), I have had the opportunity to experience the breadth of work that the EPS is involved in and how parents are included and spoken about in this work. It is both interesting and disappointing that some of the negative discourses when speaking about parents have been echoed in my discussions with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO's) in schools, staff working in the LA Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team and within the EPS itself.

My interest and curiosity in how parents are spoken about is not only stirred by my professional history but also my own personal experiences of being a parent to children both with and without additional needs.   Despite assuming that I would be treated with a similar level of empathy to that which I try and demonstrate myself, I have been positioned as an 'overanxious' and 'difficult parent' during times of disagreement and challenge but also times when I have sought information and support.

Having experienced first-hand the impact of negative discourses as a parent, and the number of years I have been a 'reflective practitioner' in my professional work roles, I hope that the way in which I speak about parents is fair, non-judgemental, and empathic. It has been a long time since my naïve beginnings as a social worker, eager to fit in and

be liked by my team. However, despite these experiences, I sometimes still respond in a way that feels disproportionate and unfair, colluding with the negative way in which parents are spoken about. Having discussed this with colleagues in the EPS, this feeling is not uncommon. There are times when our interactions with parents feel like they cannot be unpicked in a rational way leaving us with feelings that are disproportionate to the situation, often immobilising our capacity to provide appropriate support.   It is these moments that are the focus of this research project.   Having the opportunity to explore these interactions on a deeper level I hope, will provide valuable insights into improving our partnership working with parents.

Research in the Covid-19 pandemic

It is important to note that the ideas, original design of this research and its progression were interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic that began in March 2020. Government led restrictions on everyday human interaction continue to remain in place and have meant that University research has had to adapt accordingly to promote the health and safety of everyone. Whilst the overall concept of this research has remained true to its original purpose, there have been elements of the research design that have been restricted and subsequently adapted. These are discussed in the main body of the thesis as appropriate.

Overview of this thesis
- In Chapter One, I introduce my interest in the topic and the context of the research.
- In Chapter Two, I critically review a wide range of literature relating to partnership with parents, empathy and emotional labour and the relationship between psychoanalysis and educational psychology.   My research questions are then presented.
- In Chapter Three, I outline my positionality and present my methodology and research procedures.
- In Chapter Four, I present the analysis of the data through the interweaving processes of analysis, interpretation and reflection and the findings are then

discussed in relation to relevant literature. Implications for EP practice are also considered.

- In Chapter Five, I consider the strengths and limitations of the research, thoughts about future research and a final reflection.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

This chapter outlines my engagement with relevant research by employing a narrative literature review that prioritises thinking and interpretation over mechanistic search criteria. The concept of parent-partnership is considered within legislative and theoretical frameworks. Barriers to successful partnership working are explored relating to the concepts of empathy and emotional labour. This search highlighted for me a theoretical gap in the conceptualisation of parent-professional relationships which led me to a consideration of psychoanalytic literature. The relationship to reflective practice is then discussed with particular reference to critical reflective practice. My analysis of the literature review concludes with the formulation of my research questions.

Towards a deeper understanding

Given that my research is exploratory in nature, I did not envisage a narrowly focused research question and therefore the application of explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria to summarise data did not feel appropriate. Greenhalgh et al. (2018) challenge historical assumptions that systemic reviews are synonymous with superior quality and that narrative reviews are somehow inferior. They argue that;

 "This implicit evidence of hierarchy (or pyramid) elevates the mechanistic processes of exhaustive search, wide exclusion and mathematical averaging over the thoughtful, in-depth, critically reflective processes of engagement with ideas" (pg 3)

It was this 'engagement with ideas' that I was most interested in with an emphasis on thinking and interpretation. Greenhalgh et al (2018) refer to this as an 'evidence informed' rather than 'evidence based' review. A criticism of narrative reviews guards against 'cherry picking' evidence to strengthen a particular perspective. The literature reviewed below, I hope, is purposeful and relevant to a genuine desire to improve partnerships with parents.

Partnership with parents

Developing positive relationships with parents is a key concern of educational policy in England (DfE 2015) due to the widely publicised benefits of effective home-school relationships for pupils, parents and schools (Harris & Goodall 2007; Reynolds 2005). Research highlights that some parents experience difficulties when developing

relationships with schools, including parents who have children with special educational needs (O'Connor 2008; Whitaker 2007; Hess et al 2006).

Studies that have explored the barriers to successful home-school relationships, have often looked at practical issues such as parental satisfaction with home-school communication and support (Parsons et al 2009) and there has been less focus on socio-emotional issues (Broomhead 2013).   The term 'partnership' makes particular assumptions regarding the nature of any relationship; it implies mutual respect, opportunities for collaboration and negotiation and a willingness to learn from each other (Armstrong 1995). It is this definition of the term 'partnership' that this study uses to understand parent partnership; that it involves practitioners developing responsive and reciprocal relationships in which power is shared.   However, researchers argue that this is not the reality and that parent-professional relationships remain problematic (Tett 2010; Hodge & Runswick-Cole 2008; Miller 1999). Meehan & Meehan (2018) discuss the ways in which schools and education have been constructed as a function of society. They propose that the positioning of parents as primary agents of socialisation alongside the positioning of education staff as the experts, causes shifts in power and knowledge between home and school, undermining the true nature of a partnership with equal power. Tett (2010) argues that the parent-professional relationship takes place on the professional's terms, conceptualised through professional ideology and language which further creates barriers for parents. Azzopardi (2000) highlights the pressure parents are under to conform to professional's expectations to avoid being seen as 'difficult' and Todd & Jones (2003) highlight the polarisation or 'splitting' of parents and professionals as 'good' and 'bad'.   Hodge & Runswick-Cole (2008) highlight that both parents and professionals remain confused about the nature of their roles due to lack of clarity in educational policy. This confusion is then negotiated by the individuals within that partnership meaning that it is at the level of individual interactions that barriers are created and maintained.

Several theoretical models have been proposed to improve parental involvement and partnership (Sattes 1994; Leuder 2000; Christenson & Sheridan 2001; Hornby 2000). Hornby & Lafaele (2011) conceptualise the barriers to partnership as the differences between what is said and what is done which are influenced by a number of factors. These factors are highlighted in Epstein's (2001) framework of overlapping spheres of influence; at the level of the individual parent and family, at the level of the individual child, the level of parent-teacher factors and wider societal factors. Epstein's model

provides a framework for understanding the complex dynamics between individual and societal factors that may act as barriers to partnership.   I was particularly interested in the parent-teacher factors which include consideration of teacher attitudes; that teachers and parents both bring personal attitudes that are rooted within their own historical, economical, educational, class and gendered experiences. Meehan & Meehan (2018) researched trainee teachers' perceptions about characteristics that create barriers to positive relationships with parents. Characteristics that were felt to be supportive of a positive relationship were: a parent that is approachable, calm and communicates clearly and well. This seemed to me to be a high expectation placed upon parents.

My literature search highlighted that less attention has been given to whether similar characteristics are typical of professional practice. Many authors argue that this is due to the fact that parents are blamed for a wealth of societal problems, including falling school standards as a result of the UK's governmental focus on 'parental determinism' (eg Runswick-Cole 2007; Peters 2011). However, I felt that this was a key consideration in exploring the potential difficulties within EP interactions with parents.   Broomhead (2013) highlights that one area in particular that has received limited consideration is empathy. This is despite the fact that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2009) state that teachers must be empathic towards parents as well as children. The BPS Code of Ethics (2018) also highlights the importance of compassionate care, including empathy, sympathy, generosity, openness, distress, commitment and courage. An understanding of 'empathy' was therefore important to explore further.

The emotional demands of 'people-work' - empathy and emotional labour
'People-work' is a term used to define those occupations where interactions with people outside of the organisation, e.g., service users and patients, are the focus of the job (Brotheridge & Grandey 2002). Indisputably, the work of EPs can be described as 'people-work' as it is grounded in a genuine desire to care for the children and families that we support. Whilst some organisations prescribe formal and informal expectations of how emotions should be displayed when they are unrelated to a person's true feelings (display rules), within the teaching and EP professions, emotions are seen as an important part of the job role.   Mann (2004) refers to these as more internalised 'feeling rules'. Gair (2012) highlights that;

"Empathy is a very familiar term in the 'helping' literature (social work, psychology, medicine, nursing) where most often it is understood to be an indispensable ingredient in perceiving the lived experience of another person" (pg 134).

Empathy is seen as an important human characteristic but there has been little consensus among theorists about a formal definition. Psychologically, empathy is generally regarded as an ability to understand others' emotions and perspectives or situations and, often, to resonate with or experience the other's emotional state. A distinction has been made between two components of empathy – cognitive and affective empathy. The cognitive component of empathy is the ability to accurately infer what others are thinking or feeling. Walter (2012) argues cognitive empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of others without necessarily feeling a similar affective state themselves. For example, one can have cognitive understanding that someone is sad, without any personal emotional effect. Cognitive empathy is therefore the ability to accurately perceive and appropriately respond to the thoughts and feelings of another person. Eisenberg and colleagues (Eisenberg et al. 1994; Hoffman 1982, 2000) define affective empathy as a response that arises from recognising another's emotional state; being attuned to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel. As such, it is "*an observer reacting emotionally because he perceives that another is experiencing or is about to experience an emotion*" (Stotland 1969, p.272).

Zahavi & Overgaard's (2012) definition of empathy is;

"to experience the embodied mind of the other, that is, (it) simply refers to our ability to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioural expressions" (p.10)

This accords with Davis et al.'s view of empathy (1996) as "*a set of constructs having to do with the responses of one individual to the experiences of another*" (p.12). The response of the observer may be cognitive, affective, and/or behavioural. A highly empathic person is therefore skilled at decoding and inferring another's thoughts, feelings or behaviour and this ability can improve with familiarity and learning. It is this conceptualisation of empathy that I felt would be most helpful to understand and explore EPs' responses to parents.

However, there may be times when the emotions that an EP wishes to display are not the same as those that they genuinely feel. Hochschild (1983) refers to this as 'emotional labour' in her exploration of the frequent tension between our private feelings and emotions and the expectations of the job role. Weaver & Allen's (2017) definition of emotional labour clarifies this as;

"The work of managing one's emotions and emotional expressions so as to align to the expectations of the job or profession" (p276)

It is this definition that Grandey (2000) identifies that while many situations require regulation of our emotions, emotional labour is distinct in that this type of emotional regulation is considered part of the job. Hochschild (1983) highlights the thoughts of a worker "*even when people are paid to be nice, it's hard for them to be nice at all times*" (p118). Similarly, Leavitt & Bahrami (1988) argue that "*we are likely to find many cases of emotional turmoil on the inside coupled with the appearance of orderly control on the outside*" (p27).

Hochschild (1983) proposed that emotional labour is performed through either 'surface acting' or 'deep acting'. Surface acting involves managing emotional expressions revealed to others without attempting to change any underlying feelings i.e., pretending to feel something you don't. Deep acting involves working to manage our own feelings in accordance with our external expression. For example, this involves thinking of a sad situation and being able to appreciate how another person might be feeling in order to appear genuinely concerned. Surface acting focuses directly on outward behaviour whereas deep acting focuses more on an inner feeling.

Weaver and Allen (2017) suggest that emotional labour is an important aspect of the work of EPs and therefore it is critical that we are prepared to deal with the emotional aspects of the job that may lead to burnout and potential difficulties in staff retention in the profession. They highlight accumulating evidence that as the emotional demands of a job increase, so does burnout and stress (Grandey et al. 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013). Indeed, a recent DECP and BPS membership survey (Morrison-Coulthard 2019) found that EPs are among the most likely to report signs of stress and burnout and nearly half of respondents who work as EPs say they are emotionally exhausted. Weaver and Allen's (2017) study with school psychologists supports previous research indicating that high levels of surface acting lead to higher levels of emotional exhaustion.

This is consistent with Weiss & Cropanzano (1996) who emphasize the impact that affective arousal can have on emotion regulation processes such as empathy. Whilst criticisms of Hochschild's (1983) work relate to her focus on traditional service industry jobs (e.g., flight attendants), Weaver & Allen's research extends its applicability and relevance to the role of the EP.

Returning to the gaps in the literature highlighted previously, it felt appropriate to consider that levels of surface and deep acting may be of relevance in the debate around the barriers to parent partnership. Weaver and Allen (2017) encourage EPs to acknowledge their own authentic emotions (deep acting), rather than trying to 'fake' our responses as this leads to better outcomes for pupils and parents and could be, in itself, an act of self-care at work. Acknowledging our own emotions during our interactions with parents makes a clear link between the experience of emotion and the relational context i.e. it is not just 'work' to understand another's perspective, it is necessary to examine your own position, and to be aware of the various social and historical forces which shape the relationship which is the context of this labour. Gibbs (2001) describes this as 'contagious feelings',

"Bodies can catch feelings as easily as catch fire: affect leaps from one body to another, evoking tenderness, inciting shame, igniting rage, exciting fear – in short, communicable affect can inflame nerves and muscles in a conflagration of every conceivable kind of passion" (2001).

A model of affective contagion has been further explored in Ahmed's (2004) 'Affect Theory'. Ahmed (2004) argues that it is important to make a distinction between thinking about emotions as property, for example, something one has and then passes on, but to consider how the objects of emotion circulate. As Ahmed suggests;

"Even when we feel we have the same feeling, we don't necessarily have the same relationship to the feeling" (2004 p10).

Ahmed (2004) states that emotions are not simply something "I" or "we" have, rather it is through emotions, or how we respond to others, that boundaries are made. As such, bodies/individuals are given value through emotion and "others" are created by aligning some bodies with each other inside a community and marginalizing other bodies. Emotions, therefore, have affective power and can lead to collective politics and social alliances. The language employed to name or perform emotion becomes relevant to social justice issues as it can join some people together whilst separating others.   Ahmed's (2004) theory is

highly relevant to the work of EPs within the context of social justice and the language we use to understand and interpret the emotions of others.

The literature on emotional labour and affective theory led me to wonder whether unconscious processes might have some impact upon surface and deep acting i.e., is there something happening that we are not consciously aware of that makes it difficult to engage in more deep acting and acknowledge our emotions during our interactions with parents? Previous research such as Weaver & Allen's (2017) study relied upon psychologists self-reporting on Likert scales. Whilst this study highlighted a need for psychologists to understand and reflect upon the impact of emotional labour on their practice, it did not explore unconscious communication and possible subconscious barriers to 'deep acting'.   Subsequently, my search shifted towards a more psychoanalytic perspective.

A brief theoretical overview of psychoanalytic thinking

Despite my interest in how psychoanalytic thinking can inform EP practice, it is unarguably, theoretically complex. The language and terminology I have often found impermeable and obscure, but perhaps this is to be expected in describing mental processes outside of our conscious, day to day awareness. I am not a trained psychoanalyst, but a practitioner interested in applying psychoanalytic concepts to EP practice, and therefore I hope that my own understanding from the literature provides a useful starting point for EPs and other professionals with a similar interest.

There are many different 'schools' of psychoanalysis which can be presented as a 'family tree', with some schools more affiliated to each other than others (see Diagram 1.1 below).

S. Freud

American Ego Psychology (Erikson, Hartmann)	**Anna Freud** — Contemporary Freudians (Fonagy) — Attachment Theory (Bowlby) — **Independents-Object Relations Theorists** (Fairbaim, Winnicot) — **Klein** — **Lacan**

Relational Group — (Ogden)

Post Kleinians (Bion, Segal)
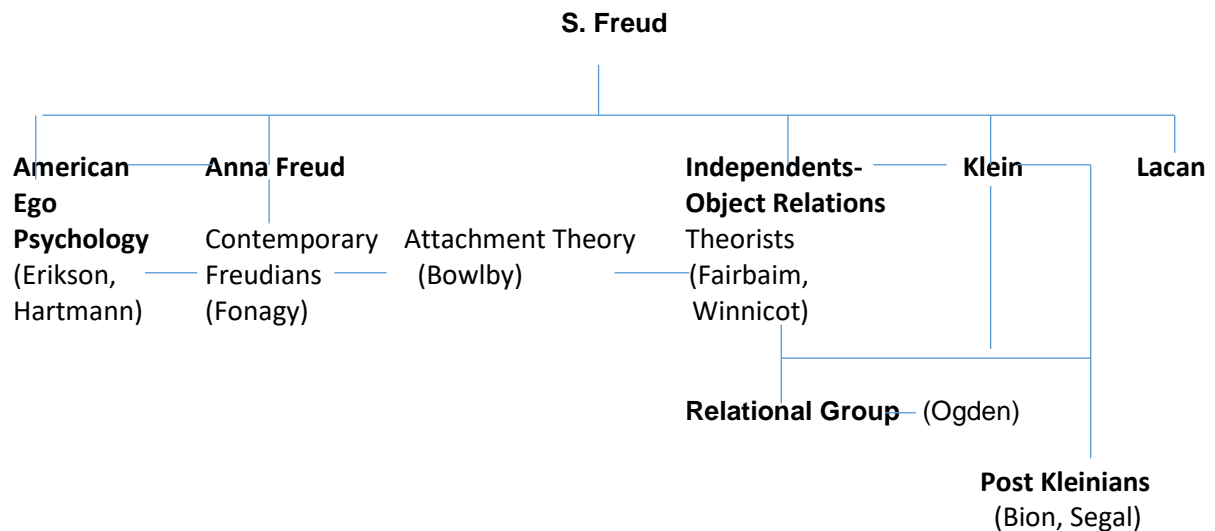
(Figure 1.1 Schools of psychoanalysis. Adapted from Frosh (2012) p25)

Psychanalysis began with Freud's 'discovery' of the unconscious and through his work as a neurologist he proposed, over time, a three-part model of the mind incorporating the id, ego and super-ego, suggesting that a significant amount of what a person feels is not in their conscious awareness. These three different parts of our 'psyche' have different agendas and relations to the outside world which, Freud suggested, might lead to conflict. The unconscious is the repository for difficult and painful experiences but whilst these are consciously forgotten, these experiences continue to influence our feelings and behaviour (Arnold et al 2021). Ego psychology (dominant in the USA post Second World War) concentrated on understanding the workings of the Ego (or 'I'), the part of the mind that mediates between the demands of the unconscious and the outside world. Central to Freud's theory of the unconscious was the concept of defence mechanisms, and this was further expanded by the work of Anna Freud (1936) and her categorisation of defences. Defence mechanisms are psychological processes that defend against painful material, blocking it from being held in our conscious mind by returning it to our unconscious. Freud (1900a) proposed that the way in which this unconscious information could be retrieved in symbolic form was through dream analysis and free association.

Building on from Freud's thinking, Melanie Klein (1959) developed ideas about how the external world is interpreted and symbolised through internal 'objects. These are not explicitly a mother, father or carer, but "*caricatures passed through the lens of felt experience*" (Arnold et al 2021 p8).

Waddell (1998) states that;

"as such experiences are repeated, the baby will feel that he has a source of goodness within, which he feels to be some kind of concrete presence, one which is part of him and not only something which is offered to him from without. He has a good relationship with a good object" (p14).

Drawing on her clinical work with children through their play, Klein (1935, 1946) evidenced emotions such as envy, fear, love, care, and aggression. Klein highlighted that the response of an adult to these needs will influence a child's emotional development. Over time, with 'good enough' care a child can develop the capacity to separate from the mother without feeling distressed. Through repeated separation from, and return to, the mother, the child develops a sense of 'otherness', that they are dependent but also separate. The child sees the mother as a whole being, knowing that the 'good' (providing) and the 'bad', (when absent), are integrated. The mother is referred to as a whole object that the child is able to relate to; 'object relations'. The close relationship of Klein's work to Bowlby's Attachment Theory becomes apparent, along with the ideas of Winnicot (1971) that suggests the mother as a *"facilitating environment in which the child's inner potential to develop a true self can unfold"* (Frosh 2012 p110).

Klein refers to two developmental positions that emerge; the 'paranoid-schizoid' position where internal and external objects are split rather than integrated, i.e., the 'good' present caregiver and the 'bad' absent/denying caregiver, and the 'depressive' position when the child's mind can recognise their hateful feelings towards the absent caregiver in the context that they can be both present and absent (good and bad). Whilst these two positions are referred to as developmental, there is an acceptance that all of us at different stages in our life alternate between the two. The relationship with an attuned, thoughtful, and caring 'other' makes this fluctuation more tolerable. Klein proposes that these two positions have a central task in managing anxiety and therefore defence mechanisms are employed to prevent anxious feelings being subsumed into consciousness. These central defences from the paranoid-schizoid position are described as the processes of splitting, projection, and projective identification. This entails separating (splitting) uncomfortable feelings that might be painful to recognise in ourselves, onto another person (projection). The linking of two people in this way forms a relationship between the projector and projectee which Ogden (1982) describes as projective identification. He describes this as a form of communication as the recipient

experiences part of the emotional state of the projector. Given that these functions have a central task in managing anxiety, when under pressure, it is perhaps more likely that we might adopt a paranoid-schizoid position as our first response. These psychoanalytic concepts become relevant to the EP role in their potential to give meaning to the often-powerful emotions which we experience when working with children, families and schools. They may also help us to understand the differing perceptions of a situation when, what is said, does not feel congruent to what is felt.

The terms transference and countertransference (Klein 1959) can also help to conceptualise these relationships. Our own feelings can be shaped by the feelings that are transferred onto us from another person's unconscious. This differs from 'projection' in that specific feelings that are associated with a past relationship are transferred onto the person in the present. In this sense it is important to remain aware of how we are being related to, particularly when it does not seem to fit or align with our role in a particular situation. Countertransference describes the emotional reactions aroused in the other person as a result of the transference. The descriptions of these defences are purposefully simplified, in part, due to the word constraints of this thesis, but also to give the reader who, may, like me have perceived certain aspects of psychoanalysis inaccessible. These processes are highly complex and Arnold et al (2021) warn against reductive analysis for example "you are angry with me because you think I am your mother". Joseph (1985) argues that defences such as transference and countertransference should be considered as 'total' experiences that require close attention to the moment-by-moment relating between people; so that the EP's mind is open and available to the projections of those they work with and can synthesise unprocessed emotional experience through the act of thinking so that it can be made sense of. In this way, how a person is made to feel is a 'resonance', not an exact replication of the original emotion and relationship. Joseph's (1985) suggestion is by no means 'easy' work and perhaps positions the EP as an 'expert' who is able to notice and understand the projections of those they consult with. It is equally important to acknowledge that EPs may also subconsciously employ similar defence mechanisms in order to protect against their own anxiety and need to notice how this may impact upon others. Of course, there are limits to knowledge (what can be known etc.) in both cases, however I would argue that EPs are perhaps not as well-equipped to unpick some of what might be happening beneath the surface of their interactions with parents. As such, this research relates to the potential usefulness of psychoanalytic concepts in order to help EPs make sense of the emotional interactions we have with parents in our work.

From this relational perspective came the post-Kleinian ideas of Wilfred Bion, who proposed that a certain type of relationship is crucial in facilitating this type of psychoanalytic thinking. Bion (1963) used the word containment to describe the nature of this relationship (container/contained). The dyad of analyst/patient and mother/infant presents a model of how thought and meaning emerge (Symington & Symington 1996). In both cases, the patient or infant seeks to avoid discomfort, initially through violent projections. The thoughtful and containing analyst/mothers mind makes sense of these sensory experiences and enables thought and meaning to develop. Wadell (2002) describes the mother's capacity to hold both the baby's anxiety and her own and to go on thinking and drawing upon her own resources as '*reverie';* that it is relational, not theoretical i.e., it is manifest in the act, not the telling. Crucial to this concept is the ability to tolerate uncertainty, Oliver (1998) refers to this as '*negative capability'.* A reading of Bion's work would suggest that this type of relational thinking may prove difficult for EP's who are often expected to provide a rationale that names and locates a 'problem', often within the child, family, or classroom. Also, that there needs to be some extension of the concepts derived in the context of 'loving' relationships (i.e., parent child) so that they are adjusted to include the wider influences which might shape a relationship. If there is an implicit expectation that EPs are able to provide this level of 'containment' then perhaps this research is an opportunity to discover to what extent this is realistic, for example, are EPs' conscious of the work involved.

The Lacan school of psychoanalysis has often been described as controversial as it advanced the claims of psychoanalysis to political significance (Althuser 1969). Since the mid 1980's his work has grown in influence and specific training courses have been created (Frosh 2012). Lacanian psychoanalysis emphasises psychoanalysis as a practice of language; it is what happens when one person speaks to another. As such, the unconscious is something produced in speech rather than a thing waiting to be given expression (Frosh 2012). Language structures the unconscious as it separates what can and cannot be communicated.

Much of the debate and criticism of psychoanalysis remains linked to Freud (Lemma 2016, Gomez 2005, Pepper 1992) despite the fact that psychoanalytic thinking has grown, developed and adapted to the times. As an area of research, psychoanalysis was not considered to constitute a valid area of knowledge as the unconscious could not be scientifically investigated through 'gold standard' randomised control trials (Fox 2003). Others saw little benefit of psychoanalysis outside the consulting room; however,

Devereux (1967) argues that psychoanalysis is more than a 'treatment' and is an epistemology in itself. Indeed, psychoanalysis has evolved as a tool for research (Hollway & Jefferson 2013) consultancy (Obholzer & Roberts 1994) and coaching (Newton et al 2006).

Psychoanalysis and Educational Psychology

Like other fields of human knowledge, the different schools of psychoanalytic thought discussed above (Freudian, Kleinian, Relational and Lacanian) have been shaped by particular historical and social contexts. Hinshelwood (1995) explains that psychoanalytic theory has, from its beginning, had a significant influence on education with key figures such as August Aichorn (1878-1949) and Anna Freud (1895-19820) applying psychoanalytic theories of child development to their teaching practices. Child and educational psychologists working at this time promoted the idea that children's 'disaffected' behaviours were an adaptation to their environments and encouraged affection and compassion over discipline and punishment. Redl (1966) developed the Life Space Interview advocating for 'therapy on the hoof', i.e., in the here and now, rather than the more formal analytic interview environment. (This is perhaps more affiliated to the EP role today as Hammond & Palmer (2021) explain that EP's draw upon approaches that may be experienced as therapeutic through a relationship but do not have any specific intention to create a therapeutic end).   Susan Isaacs (1885-1948) influence on child-centred practice in the nursery was rooted in psychoanalytic theory highlighting the importance of the environment, play and the adults within early education.

In the 1960's, psychoanalytic thinking became less popular amidst the popularity of behaviourist approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy. It was argued that a more targeted approach to mental health and wellbeing could produce positive outcomes in a much shorter time frame and was therefore more cost effective. Outcome measures related to psychoanalytic approaches had not been forthcoming and consequently psychoanalysis became cut off from psychological research (American Psychological Association 2017). Following the closure of multi-agency child guidance clinics, the role of the EP, social worker and psychiatrist became disparate with CAMHS tending to follow a more medicalised approach to child and family difficulties and the EP community becoming drawn to more systemic approaches (Burden 1978; Osborne 1994). Fox (2009) argued that although EP practice encompassed a more systemic approach, this focused upon developing systems work in schools using an

organisational approach and led to EP's becoming detached from the systemic thinking developing in family therapy.   A very recent paper, McGuiggan (2021), explores EP practice in relation to working with families following the concerns of some researchers (Peake 1999, Jones 2003 and MacKay 2006) that school referrals to EP services do not reflect the needs of children and families but more commonly reflect the needs of the school. Peake (1999) argued that educational psychology services have become increasingly inaccessible to families due to a SEND focus on assessments of need, review systems, and consultation work with teachers;

"*We have become a school's psychological service rather than services for children and families who use schools. Schools and teachers have begun to define what we have to offer and see themselves as the prime recipient of our services". (*Peake 1999 pg 1)

Peake (1999) highlighted that EPs would frequently see the child before the parent so that they can tell the parents what they think, perpetuating the idea that the EP is there to 'tell' rather than to 'listen'. These structural and conceptual boundaries leave little room for a systemic approach that attempts to understand the interactions, relationships and communication within the family and the impact this may have upon a child's presentation in school. In her response, McGuiggan (2021) suggested that there is still much for EPs to do in terms of utilising the full range of their psychological knowledge and skillset to bring about the most effective change for children. This includes resisting the view that home-based family intervention lies solely within the role of social care professionals, reflecting on whether the EP role should be school-focused or across a child's wider systems and how EP skills can be transferred to family work to bring about positive change for children.

Whilst McGuigan makes no explicit reference to the use of psychoanalytic approaches in her paper, I wondered whether the revisiting of psychoanalytic thinking could help EPs utilise their full range of knowledge and skillset when working with families? Whilst a significant amount of EP time is brokered with Local Authority's for statutory work, consultation, assessment, and formulation remain key tasks of our role in meeting the needs of the children we work with. Both Williams (2016) and Pellegrini (2010) argue that what is missing from the wide range of current theoretical frameworks available to EP's, (including consultative models and solution-oriented approaches), is psychoanalytic psychology.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst this study focuses upon a psychoanalytical perspective to understand EP/parent interactions, it does not dismiss the wider systemic and structural forces at work in the context of parent-professional relationships. We exist and interact with others within a social, political and economic context and therefore this research acknowledges that our relationships with others cannot be dichotomised into being influenced by either the individual or social, private or public, and that these factors are mutually interlinked. As such, a psychosocial approach to this research is employed which I hope, can highlight some of the wider systemic, social and cultural forces at work. Further research that explores wider structural forces highlights the concept of 'organisational' defences that are influenced by organisational systems. Menzies (1960) landmark study researched punitive behaviour inherent in the structure of a hospital's hierarchy providing an example of how an organisation itself, can develop unconscious systems to manage stress and anxiety. In relation to education, Eloquin (2016) considers how the use of 'systems psychodynamics' can be used a framework to understand group and organisational behaviour. In considering 'problem situations' within schools, he explains that the level of analysis can be at the individual, group, inter-group, organisational or social. This allows for consideration of various possibilities and working at the level where change is optimal. Eloquin (2016) also explored how staff employed the school's behavioural policy as a social defence against the reality of running a large secondary school. Schools face ever increasing pressure from OFSTED inspections and educational policy, so it is perhaps important that EPs are able to explore and understand with staff, the impact of wider pressures in creating organisational 'defences' to manage anxiety within schools. This may, in turn, help to ensure that parent/partnership does not get 'lost' in practice.

Recent research from a psychoanalytic perspective
There has been some recent interest in applying psychanalytic thinking to the work of EPs and educational settings. Weiss (2002) highlighted the need for teachers to understand the emotions aroused in themselves by children's behaviour in the classroom. He argued that this level of self-reflection encourages teachers to empathise with the meaning and function of children's behaviour. As such, he also argued for psychoanalytic based seminars to be included in teacher training. Greenway (2005) considered the use of psychoanalytic concepts in understanding teacher's responses to critical incidents in schools. She described Bion's (1962) and Winnicot's (1955) concept

of containment as useful in understanding the overwhelming desire of staff to find someone who can contain their feelings and make them more bearable.   Dennison, McBay & Shaldon (2006) explained how identifying processes such as projection, splitting and transference helped multi-agency teams develop their thinking around relationships both with families and with each other. Implications from the research suggested the need to create a space for group members to think about the feelings that were stirred up within their work. Similarly, Pellegrini (2010) reflected upon the way that splitting, projection and projective identification impacted upon his own practice within a multi-agency meeting setting and also when he provided training for Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA's). He advocated that having knowledge of mechanisms such as splitting and projection could help EPs to overcome a reliance on cognitive/behavioural and 'evidence-based' levels of reflection and consider emotional responses to casework. Pellegrini (2010) argued that the over reliance on technical and rational epistemologies (Moore 2005) could, in fact, be interpreted as a defence mechanism in itself which restricted practitioners to working in privileged paradigms subsumed with comparing and measuring children's ability.

Hulusi & Maggs (2015) facilitated work discussion groups with teachers, highlighting the role of the group in providing an emotionally containing space where teachers can be supported to think about difficult feelings arising from their experiences of challenging interactions with colleagues and the children and young people they teach. Eloquin (2016) considers the use of a systems psychodynamics approach as a framework for making sense of organisational behaviour in schools (highlighted above).

My review of the literature suggests a possible re-emergence of psychoanalytical thinking being applied to EP practice and I considered that this paradigm could provide a useful framework to explore unconscious mechanisms that might be impacting upon EP interactions with parents. The literature review highlighted the need for EPs to re-engage with psychoanalytical thinking and the importance of reflective practice in discovering what might not be known in the moment. I considered this type of reflection, the ability to investigate our own professional practice, as being situated at the heart of my research; the 'so what' that I hoped could provide more than just a theoretical description of what might be going on under the surface, but a way in which to uncover and learn from it. In this sense, I was steered towards thinking about practice-based evidence, turning the experiences of professional practice into research through the

process of self-reflection and self-knowing. Literature around the concept of reflective practice was therefore also relevant.

Reflective practice

Thompson & Pascal (2012) argue that despite the concept of reflective practice becoming an integral part of learning in the helping professions, it is often oversimplified given the lack of theoretical base to guide practitioners in integrating theory and practice. This task is a key requirement in the training to become an EP, the learning of psychological theory alongside applying it in practice, learning by doing.

Schon (1987) argues that in preparation for professional practice, students cannot simply be taught what to do, they must be coached to practice in "zones of intermediate practice" where uniqueness, uncertainty and conflict all offer unique challenges. As such, reflective practice constitutes a negotiation of thinking, doing, and learning. Schön was instrumental in rejecting the idea of 'technical rationality', arguing that engineering-type problem solving cannot be applied to 'people problems'. The technical rationality model also fails to recognise how understanding is developed from the integration of theory and practice, rather than the simple application of 'scientific' knowledge to the practice field (Kinsella, 2010). Gould (1996) argues that:

"There is considerable empirical evidence, based on research into a variety of occupations, suggesting that expertise does not derive from the application of rules or procedures applied deductively from positivist research. Instead, it is argued that practice wisdom depends upon highly developed intuition which may be difficult to articulate but can be demonstrated through practice. On the basis of this reconstructed epistemology of practice, reflective learning offers an approach to education which operates through an understanding of professional knowledge as primarily developed through practice and the systematic analysis of experience." (p. 1)

Thomson & Pascal (2012) highlight the 'artistry' involved in reflective practice where professional knowledge can provide insight into practice situations but does not assume a particular truth or simple line of action.   As such, reflective learning seeks to validate the knowledge, skills and experience used in practice, and recognises these elements as valuable components in learning. However, professional practice is also recognised as a set of regulated activities in which actions are governed by codes of hierarchy and expertise (Hogg & Abrams 1988), perhaps not dissimilar to those pertaining to the concept of emotional labour. Lavine (2002) explains that learning from experience requires something beyond the experience to take place. Within EP practice,

supervision often provides a forum for reflection away from the experience itself. However, reflective supervision also requires a relational aspect and not just a focus upon theory and its application to practice. It also requires a two-way process with an appreciation of both professional and service user experience as an important resource. This reflects the complexity of reflective practice encounters where professional identity and the identity of the service user become entangled with a personal non-professional identity (Williams 2013). It was this complexity that I anticipated to be part of the professional-parent interactions that I wanted to explore. Mezirow (1983) argues that the traditional focus upon practitioner performance prevents a more critical analysis and appreciation of wider influences i.e., personal, social, cultural and structural. Mezirow (1983) believes that people can be held back by restricting frameworks of meaning leading to self-limiting understandings of the situations they find themselves in and their role within it. He sees reflective practice as having the potential to help emancipate people from such perspectives and to create new, more empowering meanings. In proposing a more critical approach to reflection, Vince (2009) highlights the need to integrate Freire's (1972a, 1972b) insights into social inequalities to add a sociological dimension to reflective practice and to not neglect the emotional dimension and power relations that may inhibit learning (Griseri, 1998; Thompson, 2011, Archer, 2007; Brookfield, 2005). In this sense, reflexivity becomes important in developing critical reflective practice;

"Reflexivity can simply be defined as an ability to recognize our own influence – and the influence of our social and cultural contexts on research, the type of knowledge we create, and the way we create it (Fook 1999b). In this sense, then, it is about factoring ourselves as players into the situations we practice in. (Fook & Askeland 2006 p. 45)

Brookfield (2009) proposes four intellectual traditions informing the concept of critical reflection: pragmatist constructivism, analytic philosophy, psychoanalysis, and critical social theory. From a psychoanalytic perspective, critical reflection occurs when people become aware of how psychological mechanisms learned and confirmed in childhood may be impacting upon their functioning as adults. Using psychoanalytical thinking to inform critical reflective practice was therefore relevant to my research topic.

Models of supervision that allow space for reflexivity and critical reflection within EP practice and within the wider helping professions often utilise a group element to

reflection. These models include Work Discussion Groups (eg. Jackson 2008, Hulusi & Maggs 2015), The Relational Model of Supervision for Applied Psychology Practice (Kennedy et al 2018) and the Reflecting Team Model (Anderson 1987). All these models can incorporate a psychoanalytic perspective to reflective practice and move away from the traditional focus upon practitioner performance encouraging a more critical analysis and appreciation of wider influences as Meizrow (1983) encourages. The EPS where I was on placement at the time of this research held monthly reflective group supervision sessions using The Reflecting Team Model (Anderson 1987). This is discussed further in the methodology chapter of this thesis where I also explain The Reflecting Team Model's 'fit' with my epistemological approach and my decision to use it as a tool for data collection.

Summary and Research Questions

My review of the literature helped to shape the aims of my research. Amidst the wealth of information regarding definitions of and barriers to successful parent-partnership, there appeared to be a theoretical gap in the way that parent-partnership was conceptualised. The role of empathy and the impact of emotional labour upon professional practice indicated that a psychoanalytic lens might be helpful in exploring EPs' interactions with parents. Using a psychoanalytic lens, I hoped, would provide a critical reflective space to explore the tensions between personal and professional practice and lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how EP interactions with parents could be improved.

RQ1. How can EP reflections upon their interactions with parents be understood using psychoanalytic theory?

RQ 2. How does the Reflecting Team Model support a psychoanalytic process in EP reflective practice?

Chapter Three: Methodology

Overview

This chapter outlines my positionality and methodological approach. Based upon the ontological and epistemological assumptions I am making, the rationale for a psychosocial methodology is presented. I outline the methods of data collection and describe how I adapted the principles of Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI). Through examination of the epistemological and ethical dilemmas associated with 'interpreting' another, particularly in relation to psychoanalytic theory, I explain my decision to use Collaborative Inquiry (CI) as both a research and adult learning method. I describe the steps of the Inquiry in relation to the CI model.   Finally, I consider the importance of research quality and maintaining an ethical position.

Positionality

This research originates from my interest in applying psychoanalytic thinking to EP practice as a way of understanding behaviour and our interactions with parents.   Using a psychoanalytic lens to examine the process of knowledge production and meaning making involves particular ontological and epistemological assumptions. Corcoran (2016) highlights that "*Ontological assumptions are fundamental to how we come to understand ourselves, others and the world we share together* "(p27). My interest in a psychoanalytically informed approach to research does not assume that knowledge about the social world can be obtained objectively (positivism). Moreover, as a practising helping professional for many years, I bring my experience and history of interactions with parents to my research, so the possibility of adopting an objective perspective required in positivist/postpositivist research is neither desirable nor conducive to addressing my research question. My experience of the social world encourages me to believe that it is constructed by each of us in a different way (interpretivism). We do not directly react to other people's actions by a process of cause and effect; we attach meaning to actions based upon our own experience and interpretation. I am particularly interested in the role our 'unconscious' thoughts may play in mediating our interpretations and relationships with others.

So how does this translate into a research methodology? How does our 'unconscious' which is conceptualised as something which is 'not known' become known to me as a researcher? Hollway (2000a) describes ontology as "how the person as a subject of

research is theorised" (p2). My thinking in relation to this has proved more complex than I first imagined. I would argue that my views about the nature of reality are located towards the relativist end of the continuum, however the aim of this research does not fit 'neatly' into a phenomenological or social constructionist approach. Although I am interested in people's feelings, thoughts and perceptions, a phenomenological approach would not attempt to make any claims about causality (Finlay 2013). I do believe that knowledge to a large extent is socially constructed, that our experiences are mediated by cultural resources and language. Willig (2013) suggests that a social constructionist perspective replaces the notion of 'description' with that of 'construction' because language is a form of social action which constructs versions of reality for different purposes; it is language that constructs reality rather than reality determining how we talk about it. I am also interested in 'talk' as suggestive of relational dynamics and unconscious processes that organise our internal worlds in a particular way and that differs between individuals. As such, the assumptions I am making about subjects within this research is that their understanding and meaning of the world is developed both individually and also through relationships with others. As Gadd & Jefferson (2007) explain "conceptualising human subjects as, simultaneously, the products of their own unique psychic worlds *and* a shared social world" (pg 4).   As such, this research adopts a psychosocial ontology. Bibby (2011) states that:

"We are all psychosocial beings. In everyday life as well as in much social science, there is a tendency to drift into thinking about things as either internal and individual or external, social events… this dichotomising is a form of splitting and misses the ways in which the internal and the external, the private and the public, the individual and the social are deeply mutually implicated" (p9).

Psychosocial research does not reduce a person to either individual (internal) or social (external) processes. A psychosocial perspective assumes that intersubjectivity encompasses unconscious experience. It avoids the binaries of internal/external, intersubjective/subjective, thinking/action and so on by considering people as 'relational', a third way, which is based on Ogden's dialectic: "*a struggle with the complexity of the dialectic of individuality and intersubjectivity"* (Ogden, 2001, p20).

A psychosocial ontology is perhaps the most appropriate way in which to frame this research. EP's responses to engaging with parents can be thought of as a combination of, and interaction between, psychic and social phenomena; the psychic being understood as individual conscious and unconscious drives to defend against anxiety,

and the 'social' being understood as the social, historic, and cultural backgrounds that influence the interactions between EPs and parents.

A psychosocial ontology suggests a psychosocial epistemology i.e., how can I gather data from discussions with EPs that allows me to 'know' and explore psychoanalytic concepts that are unconscious?   A psychosocial epistemology and methodology uses the researcher's "subjectivity as an instrument of knowing" (Hunt, 1989 in Hollway, 2015, p31) and therefore acknowledges the researcher as part of a dynamic relationship with the participant.   As Hollway explains;

"Reflection in the psychoanalytic sense is not just another word for cognitive activity; it requires keeping an open mind and, as Bion's theory of thinking explains, is a supremely emotional process" (Hollway, 2015, p31).

A psychosocial epistemology claims that data analysis is never completely objective or free from the researcher's world view, class or cultural position, which is why reflexivity is of such importance. "*Without examining ourselves we run the risk of letting our unelucidated prejudices dominate our research*" (Shaw, 2010, p242).

The role of psychoanalysis in psychosocial research

The growth of qualitative research through methods such as discourse analysis, narrative analysis and Foucauldian critique offer an established way in which to articulate the psychosocial bases of how personal experiences and beliefs are constructed. Consequently, social psychologists have been critical of psychoanalytical attempts to go 'beyond' language to inner experience. Billig (1997) argues that;

"*Discursive psychology… argues that phenomena which traditional psychological theories have treated as 'inner processes' are, in fact, constituted through social, discursive activity. Accordingly, discursive psychologists argue that psychology should be based on the study of this outward activity rather than upon hypothetical, an essentially unobservable, inner states.*" (p139-140)

Historically, psychoanalysis has been resisted by some researchers as a "top-down", individualistic attempt at providing a 'true' nature of human subjectivity, accompanied by an interpretative stance that purports to know subjects better than they know themselves (eg Billig 1997; Wetherall 2003). However, psychosocial researchers that are concerned with the 'external' (social) and 'internal' (psychic) have increasingly considered

psychoanalytic thinking as a way of explaining how the "out there" gets "in here" and vice versa, through the application of concepts such as projection, identification, splitting and transference (Frosh & Baraister 2008).   They argue that whether researchers adopt an Object Relations or Lacanian approach to psychoanalytical thinking, this discipline may offer unique insight into subjectivity and relationships.

Despite always having a keen interest in the concept of our actions being much more complex than we can explain, my relationship with psychoanalysis has always felt uncertain, largely due to my confusion over whether to settle in the Object-Relations (Kleinian) or Lacanian 'camp' of psychoanalytic thinking. A Lacanian approach assumes an 'associative' unconscious where certain ways of perceiving reality are impressed upon individuals through language; it is this invisible influence of language that is the source of the unconscious. Subsequently, all a researcher can know, is what is said i.e., the speech itself, the researcher has no access to anything else. The object relations view of the unconscious is that it is an 'affective' structure dealing with painful experience, rather than a conceptual structure dealing with perception. The way in which the unconscious protects against painful experiences is through the anxiety-defence dynamic; the mind develops a range of processes that protect or defend against overwhelming feelings of anxiety. Indeed, Bion's (1963) psychoanalytic study of thinking suggests that thinking can be understood as a functional response to emotional experience.

I wonder if our resistance to psychoanalytical thinking may serve as a defensive function in the messy, complex, and often stuck situations we, as EPs find ourselves in. We are often encouraged to approach casework at an evidence-based level which perhaps privileges cognitive/behavioural or solution focused paradigms, particularly when measuring children's ability for the purposes of resource allocation. Bion (1976) argues;

 "*I sometimes think that a feeling is one of the few things which analysts have the luxury of being able to regard as fact. If patients are feeling angry, or frightened or sexual, or whatever it is, at least we can say suppose that this is a fact; but when they embark on theories or hearsay we cannot distinguish fact from fiction*" *(p317).*

Bion's notion of 'I feel, therefore I am' values emotions as evidence, encouraging us not to dismiss this potential.

Hollway (2015) describes the role of psychoanalysis within psychosocial research as;

"An attempt to go beyond the dualism of psychology and sociology that has afflicted research into identity, using and adapting psychoanalytic ways of thinking to tap not only those aspects of identity accessible through discourses but also those residing in unthought modes- unconscious, preconscious and embodied" (p18).

This can be understood through the idea that internal conflict is an inevitable part of experience, and therefore considers people as psychologically ready to defend against anxiety. This is a concept based on Klein's (1946) notion that threats in people's lives create anxiety, and this anxiety is defended against through unconscious processes which influence people's actions. The assumption that the mind develops a range of processes that protect or defend against our fragile selves felt the most relevant in exploring my research questions.

Methodology

Hollway (2012) describes the methodology of a research topic as how the ontology and epistemology together inform how the researcher goes about finding out. In discussing my positionality, I previously established that quantitative methods of data collection are not appropriate as this research takes an interpretative stance by asking a 'what is going on here' type of question. To help ensure credibility, the methodology and method used for data collection in this study needed to reflect a psychosocial ontology and epistemology. A qualitative narrative approach may capture the stories of the participants; however, this would assume that participants are able to 'tell it like it is'. Hollway & Jefferson (2013) refer to this as the 'transparent self problem' also highlighting the assumption that participants are willing to 'tell' this to an interviewer; the 'transparent account problem'. This research aims to explore what may not be transparent to EP's as they reflect upon their interactions with parents, therefore the methodology needed to accommodate the psychoanalytic principles of the defended subject. Psychosocial methodologies go beyond narrative and discourse to explore the embodied, affective, relational, and practical experiences of participants using researcher reflexivity (Hollway, 2011). Fundamental to this is a consideration of the counter transferential processes at play between the researcher and researched. These processes are highly significant to this research, which seeks to integrate participants' accounts and their emotional expression.

Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI)

This method, developed by Hollway & Jefferson's (2013) is based upon the psychoanalytically informed view that participants presentation of themselves is shaped by the processes of managing unconscious anxiety, i.e., the defended self. The FANI method is similar to other narrative approaches i.e., the participant is a storyteller rather than a respondent, meaning that the interviewer is less directive than in semi-structured interviews (Hollway & Jefferson 2008). How it differs from other narrative approaches is its ability to elicit more than a language-based account to "*one that includes dynamic, affective, embodied, intersubjective and practical aspects...*" (Hollway, 2009b p.20). This is achieved through paying attention to the inexplicit associations between ideas in participants narratives which, Hollway & Jefferson (2013) suggest, uncovers the emotional structure of those narratives. Free association involves asking the participant to say anything that comes to mind, therefore eliciting the kind of narrative that is not structured consciously but unconsciously (Hollway & Jefferson, 2009b). In this sense the associations follow pathways directed not only by rational thought but also emotions.

An additional element of the FANI method is its focus on the 'gestalt' (or whole); the principle that the whole is greater than the parts. Gestalt psychology traditionally criticises the way modern science proceeds in a bottom-up fashion, the components that make up the whole being examined before the whole (Rosenthal, 1990). From a narrative position, Hollway & Jefferson (2009b) draw on Wertheimer, (the founder of Gestalt psychology), whose primary law, that of 'place in context' (that the significance of any piece of data is a function of the wider context of an interview) avoids the decontextualisation of text, whereby segments are codified thematically. The capacity to hold the whole in mind by considering the overall structure of participant's text means that "*there is some possibility that the components themselves will be understood*" (Wertheimer in Murphy & Kovach 1972 p258).

FANI adopts the principles of the Biographical-Interpretative method (Rosenthal 1990). This method consists of four main principles, each designed to elicit narratives: (1) use open-ended not closed questions, (2) elicit stories (anchor participants' accounts to events), (3) avoid 'why questions' and (4) follow up using participants' own words and phrasing (Hollway & Jefferson, 2009b). This non-directive approach aims to avoid the imposition of structure on narratives and "*imposing one's own relevancies as*

interviewers", which would "*destroy the interviewee's gestalt*" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2009b, p.309).

The principles of the Free Association Narrative Interview, I considered, would be helpful in obtaining the kind of data that facilitates access to experience. The ways in which I adapted this method will be discussed later in this chapter.

Whilst I considered the FANI a methodological 'fit' with my research questions in relation to data collection, the analysis of data raised ethical issues of 'interpreting another'. I was concerned about highlighting participant's defences and possible inner conflicts and interpreting these beyond what they knowingly gave in an interview. Furthermore, the participants in this research were also my colleagues and therefore maintaining positive relationships remained a priority. I felt resistant to any perceived promotion of me, as the researcher, into the role of the 'expert' as this does not sit comfortably with my values as a practitioner. It would also not incorporate the element of learning from critical reflective practice, one of the integral aims and the 'so what' of my research. Park (2001) proposes that interpretive knowledge has a transformative capacity given that, through the act of understanding, new meaning is attributed (to the person or relationship). Elaborating on humanistic philosophy (Buber 1970) and critical social theory (Habermas 2006), Park (2001) introduces the idea of relational knowledge arising through purposeful communicative action. He suggests that any reliable and meaningful information acquired in the research process presupposes a relationship of trust and a specific communicative space.

"*Relational knowledge comes from connecting and leads to further connecting. It is reciprocal, not only in that the parties involved know each other, but also in that it grows from interaction*" (Park 2001 p86).

Park's illustration of 'relational knowledge' aligns to the application of what Hollway (2009) calls the 'experience-near 'principle to research; that people engage with meaning making out of their situations and actions. Hollway's (2009) research into how women's identities were changed by becoming mothers included weekly seminars to reflect upon the subjective responses of the group of researchers. The subjectivities of each researcher and the intersubjectivity between researchers as instruments of knowing provided different perspectives to think about and contribute to a critical analysis of material. Hollway (2009) proposed that this created an opportunity to

research 'beyond' the text and that by attuning to psychoanalytic process between the women, interviewers and the supervision group, an understanding beyond the words used by the women was created. The group supervision process created what Park (2001) defines as 'relational knowledge'; the connecting and re-connecting of ideas through relationships, helping to protect against 'wild analysis'. This approach moved away from the expert positioning implicit in the FANI method and oriented towards co-construction in her research with mothers. Creating an opportunity for a similar 'metabolism' of experiences seemed highly relevant to addressing my concerns in relation to analysis and interpretation, of unintentionally being perceived as an expert and providing a critical reflective space. This led to a methodological decision of adopting a more collaborative approach to answering my research questions.

Collaborative Inquiry (CI)

Collaborative Inquiry (CI) is one of several participatory methods that seek to facilitate learning and develop new knowledge. Whilst partially grounded in traditions of action research, collaborative inquiry is based 'in' personal experience rather than an action research team that collects data from somebody else (Bray et al 2000). Unlike the distinction between action and reflection asserted by Kolb (1984), collaborative inquiry involves a more interactive relationship i.e., a split-second pause to think about what might be happening is, in itself, considered a reflection and a form of action. Yorks & Kasl (2002) state that collaborative inquiry is based on shared engagement and explorations whereby;

"*Together, inquirers formulate a compelling question that they can answer by examining 'data' from their personal experience*".

Bray et al (2000) describe a process where participants engage in a systematic, iterative process that gives prominence to interaction between the following elements: engaging in practice, reflection, and exchange with others about significant experiences, the generation of abstract knowledge to inform and improve practice, and the subsequent implementation of the theoretical knowledge in their own practice (Bray et al., 2000). Mezirow (1991) further describes the notion of 'critical'reflection; the importance of not simply looking back on prior learning in relation to the processes or procedures involved, but challenging the presuppositions on which our beliefs are built. This involves reflection not just as a cognitive process but also an affective one. Indeed, Habermas (1971) argues that the process of revealing our unconscious as conscious is only

achievable through the process of reflection which "dissolves resistance on the affective level" (p229).

Heron and Reason (1997) describe two participatory principles that can influence the position of a CI group: epistemic and political. The political participatory principle directs that group members share power equally and make all decisions themselves, from formulating the research question to creating the research design and to deciding whether and how to share the group's findings with anyone outside the group. The epistemic participatory principle conceives that meaningful knowledge generation can evolve only from the knowledge-maker's personal experience; this principle originates from the phenomenological assertion that we can best understand human experience by being inside that experience. Heron and Reason (1997, 2008) describe the transformation of felt experience into practical new knowledge as including four interdependent ways of knowing; experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical. Experiential knowing is felt experience that is pre-linguistic and grounds all other ways of knowing. Presentational knowing is communicated through images and patterns, manifesting intuition, and imagination. Propositional knowing is the conceptual and analytic way of knowing that is generally valued more highly in academia. Practical knowing is "knowing how" and is perceived by Heron and Reason to be the appropriate culmination of the pursuit of meaningful learning.

The focus on shared exploration and meaning making in the context of critical reflection highlights the potential benefit of Collaborative Inquiry to this research topic given its aim of developing reflective practice and avoiding an elitist or expert approach to the research topic. Given that the focus of a CI group is to understand and construct meaning around experience and uses, as Heron (1996) proposes, the "*full range of human sensibilities as an instrument of research*", suggests it is also an epistemological fit with the psychosocial approach of this research.

Given that one of the defining principles of Collaborative Inquiry is conducting research 'with' participants rather than 'on' them, the line between researcher and participant is disregarded, meaning that all those involved, including myself, were considered participants with a 'dual' role. Each participant (EP) in this research was considered a 'co-researcher', generating ideas, designing, and managing the project and drawing conclusions from the experience. Simultaneously, each participant was considered a

'co-subject'; drawing upon personal experience inside and outside the inquiry group to provide a 'collective' pool of experience and insight for analysis and meaning making.

Having agonised somewhat over the methodological direction that my research should take, it made sense to me that a psychosocial approach to EPs' interactions with parents (theorising subjects as defended against anxiety) could be explored through a Collaborative Inquiry group. Whilst these two approaches could be envisaged as two distinct methodologies, both aligned with my ontological and epistemological position and, this union, I believed, provided added rigor and trustworthiness to the quality of the research. Bray et al (2000) do not provide prescriptive guidelines for conducting a collaborative inquiry. They suggest that the cycles of reflection can be planned depending upon the research question being explored and will vary in form and timing. However, acknowledging that participants need an outline of how the process might evolve, Bray et al (2000) provide a four-phase map that is flexible and provides the space in which learning can take place. Torbert (1991) describes this as a "liberating structure", a way of organising that is productive but also educates participants towards self-modifying awareness. The map conceptualises the process but does not constrict it. It is through this four-phase map that I will describe my research design and procedure; the who, what, where and when of the research (see Figure 1.1) There were times when the process did not feel fully collaborative and the barriers I/we experienced are also highlighted during each phase of the process. This is also reflected in the language I use to reflect ownership as I found myself shifting between descriptions of 'my' research and 'our' research at different times during the process.

The table below gives a summary of the stages and timescales of the study.

Date	Summary
23.6.20	Ethics Application submitted
21.8.20	Ethical Approval confirmed from University of Sheffield
25.9.20	Ethical Approval confirmed from Local Authority
5.10.20	Journal articles relating to psychoanalytic approaches in EP practice circulated to all staff. Participant Information sheet and Information sheet re Collaborative Inquiry was also shared (Appendix 1 & 2)
3.11.20	Whole team meeting to further explore our understanding of psychoanalytic concepts. Staff invited to be part of the Collaborative Inquiry Group and Consent forms circulated
31.11.20	Consent forms received back from 7 participants (co-researchers)
16.12.20	First Collaborative Inquiry Group – agreed on research questions, expectations of the group also agreed
19.1.20	Transcription of 1st CI group sent to co-researchers asking them to read and make note of psychoanalytic concepts to discuss in 2nd group meeting
27.1.21	Second Collaborative Inquiry Group – meaning making, reflections and analysis
Feb 21	Transcription of 2nd CI group in order to highlight themes that emerged from the group discussion
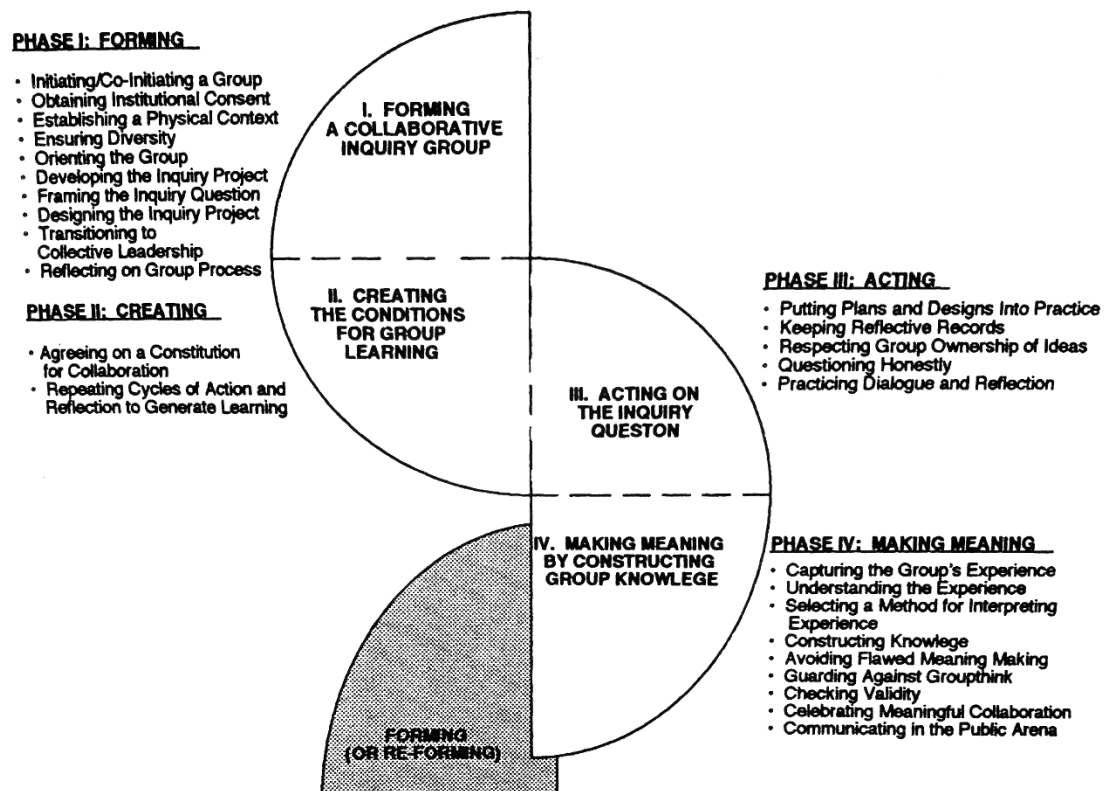
(Figure 1.2 A Four Phase Framework of the Collaborative Inquiry Process adapted from Bray et al (2000) p 14)

<u>Phase 1 – Forming a Collaborative Inquiry Group</u>

Rowan (1981) suggests that the decision to initiate a Collaborative Inquiry group often happens as a result of some uneasiness rooted in personal experience, when individuals experience a 'disequilibrium' or dissatisfaction with their practice. As previously highlighted, my own experience and subsequent discussions in the team regarding interactions with parents that aroused confusing/difficult feelings stimulated enough curiosity to pursue this further. We acknowledged that the possible feelings of defensiveness (given the potential of uncovering unpalatable parts of ourselves) were outweighed by our common interest in psychoanalytical approaches and reflective practice.

I used our team meeting time on 3 November 2020, to further explore my methodological approach and research questions. Bray et al refer to this as "orienting the group".   Prior to this discussion all members of the team (including the PEP, senior EPs, Assistant EPs and TEPs) were provided with a Participant Information Form (see Appendix 1) regarding the aims of my research and the theoretical and methodological approaches I was intending to use. The Ethics application process required me to give sufficient details of my research to allow ethical approval, therefore certain decisions had to be made before the formation of the group and obtaining consent.   Although there was flexibility in the fact that the research questions could be modified during the inquiry, this initial part of the process was not as collaborative as I would have liked. Bray et al (2000) explain that all inquiries begin with an 'initiator' who grounds the original question in their own experience, and this was very much the case. However, I was assuming that my ontological and epistemological position would be supported by members of the group. Prior to the whole team discussion, I had asked everyone to read two papers, Pellegrini (2010) and Williams (2016) which highlighted the psychoanalytic concepts I was using to 'theorise' participants. I also provided an information sheet outlining the principles of Collaborative Inquiry (see Appendix 2).   I felt this was important both in obtaining informed consent and in promoting collaborative practice, and that by giving consent, participants were agreeing that this way of theorising subjects would enable the group to learn from experience and improve practice. The extent to which different members of the team had previously utilised psychoanalytic thinking in their own practice and seen it as a helpful way of thinking, varied. I felt that this criticality was important in providing commitment and rigor to the research by helping to protect against the idea that we would be uncovering some kind of psychoanalytic 'truth'.

Reflection

I was acutely aware that the principles of a CI group encourage steering away from more traditional group objectives such as step by step agendas and a chairperson being in control. I felt somewhat vulnerable in sharing the parameters of my research and worried that the team might look to me as the 'chief' researcher, that the research questions were already fixed and that I would lead them through the process, as it was, after all, my 'baby', part of 'my' course and not a requirement of 'their' job. On reflection, I wonder if it was, in fact, me, who was feeling this way and that these feelings had been projected onto the group.   I found it difficult to not 'take control' of the discussion as it felt like there was a lot at stake, also because I was grateful to the team as participants and perhaps wanted to 'relieve' them from having to do 'additional' work.   My 'othering' of the team perhaps served as an initial defence preparing for a lack of interest or commitment.

Following the whole team discussion regarding the ontological and epistemological assumptions that this piece of research was making, participants were given a consent form (see Appendix 3) and invited to be part of a collaborative inquiry group. A total of 7 participants confirmed their participation representing 5 different roles within the team. Bray et al (2000) highlight that whilst there is no fixed number that prescribes a CI group, 5 – 12 participants create a manageable balance between a group being sufficiently diverse and remaining democratic and effective. Bray et al (2000) suggest that two or three initial discussions may be needed before people are asked to commit, especially if the inquiry is planned over a sustained period of time. Given that this piece of research was constrained by both University deadlines and delays already experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, timescales did not allow for additional meetings, however, I did feel confident that through more informal team discussions leading up to this point and genuine interest in my research, further discussion was not necessary.

Part of this initial process of forming a collaborative inquiry group also involved gaining 'institutional consent'. Given that one of the aims of the research was to develop reflective practice, senior members of the team were supportive and recognised the potential value to the organisation. I was conscious of the time element involved and through team discussion we agreed it would be more expedient to use the 'reflective group supervision' slots that were already planned ahead for the year. The fact that the team prioritised this 'reflective' time together illustrated a level of commitment that seemed tantamount to the 'so what' of my research; that a legitimate collaborative

inquiry would not emerge as a 'fad', becoming disregarded over a short space of time, but produce new approaches to practice. The established nature of these pre-planned meetings had also, in a sense, already helped to create the 'psychological space' away from the day to day matters of the job that Bray et al (2000) describe as necessary.

The first Collaborative inquiry was held on 16th December 2020. As a group, it was important to agree on the initial wording of the research questions and clarify understanding. As a group, we felt that the research questions I had presented in the information sheet were a good starting place and that they could be revised (based on reflection and experience) as the inquiry progressed. It was at this point that my role as initiator and 'implied leader' transitioned to co-inquirer. I expected to have a key role in the initial organisation of the group and suggested ways in which we could get started, however given my reflections on the first team discussion, it was important not to get possessive of the process, particularly if it took a turn in an unanticipated direction. As a member of the team, I considered myself to have a true peer relationship with the group and therefore could fully participate in the experience. Heron (1996) refers to this as "full form co-operative inquiry" rather than "partial form collaborative inquiry" occurring when an initiator is not part of the practitioner community. In this sense, I could fully participate as a co-inquirer; both as a subject and participant.

This first session involved designing the inquiry and although methods of data collection had been previously described to obtain ethical approval, it was important to ensure that as a group we felt the method would produce data that would answer our research questions.

Adaptation of the Free Association Narrative Interview – The Reflecting Team
The principles of the FANI have been described and identified above as a method of obtaining the kind of data that facilitates access to experience. During regular monthly group supervision meetings, the team use the 'Reflecting Team' Model (Anderson 1987) as a way of reflecting upon casework that makes space for a practitioner's affective responses. The practitioner (problem holder PH) is asked to 'describe' to a colleague (facilitator F) a situation that they feel stuck with or that is making them feel uneasy/upset/angry etc. The rest of the team make up the 'reflecting team'. The PH and F talk about the situation for 10-15 mins and then stop their conversation. The reflecting team then wonder what might be happening, paying particular attention to the

affective responses of the PH and the system around the difficult situation whilst the PF and F listen for 10-15 mins. This cycle is then repeated once or twice more. Whilst not intended to solve a problem, this process often provides alternative perspectives that the PH has not considered often including a psychoanalytical understanding of the situation.

This model of team reflection encompasses the four main principles of the FANI method, each designed to elicit narratives: (1) using open-ended not closed questions, (2) eliciting stories (anchor participants' accounts to events), (3) avoiding 'why questions' and (4) following up using participants' own words and phrasing (Hollway & Jefferson, 2009b). The Reflecting Team model also includes a group level of interpretation that is then 'offered' to the F and PH to reflect upon during one or two cycles. This presented an opportunity to address the ethical dilemma described previously of an expert (researcher), 'interpreting' another and to use the subjectivities within the group as 'instruments of knowing' and contributing to the analysis of material, similar to Hollway (2009). The CI group felt that given we were familiar with this model, it could elicit the narratives needed and provide a helpful way of synthesising this data in a collaborative way. Moreover, by using a particular psychoanalytical approach to our thinking, this would help to uncover some of the unconscious defences at play.

Phase 2 – Creating the Conditions for Group Learning

Bray et al (2000) argue that although ideas are expressed, heard, and debated in *any* group meeting, the purpose of a CI is the generation of new knowledge and meaning arising out of authentic cycles of action and reflection. Therefore, developing a group learning culture is crucial given that it is the individual's experiences that are the content for group reflection. Literature highlights that learning cultures are based on a "foundation of good group dynamics and power equalisation" (Imel 1996) and that this foundation supports three conditions of group learning; appreciation of teamwork, individual expression and the operating principles that characterise the group. Kasl, Marsick and Dechant (1997) define these principles as the extent to which the group has organised itself to operate successfully and established a set of shared values and beliefs. During this first CI meeting, the group identified expectations of how it would function and discussed issues such as the differences in power that our individual roles held (the political principle defined by Heron and Reason (1997)). Principles of how we would share experience were also agreed along with boundaries and limitations of the inquiry. These are summarised in the table below.

Each inquirer has their own store of information and experience and each of us is therefore a resource for finding new knowledge.
We acknowledge that all inquirers will have differing knowledge about certain issues and have a different status and therefore perceived level of power. Despite this, we consider all inquirers as equal contributors.
Thinking can be considered an action. Engaging in dialogue and meaning making within the group is a form of action.
Time will be afforded at the end of sessions to reflect upon the group dynamics. Important issues to consider are whether everyone feels able to contribute, whether issues of power are affecting the group dynamic and whether we still feels that there is a collective leadership.
We acknowledge that any change we seek from this inquiry is in ourselves as co inquirers. It is not intended to be emancipatory nor directed towards the performance of the organisation. The focus of the CI is on our own learning development.
Participation is voluntary at all stages of the inquiry

Reason (1992) suggests that reflection is needed not only on the topic for consideration but also on the reflection process itself and in this sense is a form of reflection-on-reflection. The debrief time at the end of our meeting was intended to initiate this higher level of reflexivity and provide validity to our conclusions.

Reflection

As a team of inquirers, we were undertaking our research in a familiar way, through the reflecting teams model, and I felt that there were assumptions being made about the conditions for group learning that were not verbalised; that these conditions were a 'given', that we had previously created a 'safe space' for reflection and therefore didn't need to iterate this again.

Phase 3 – Acting on the Inquiry Question

The CI group agreed that we would use the Reflecting Team model to discuss an interaction with a parent that had felt particularly difficult and that had left them curious as to the affective responses they had experienced. The 1st Collaborative Inquiry group was held on 16th December 2020. We decided to consider one interaction in depth for the duration of the discussion (approx. 1 ½ hours). 2 participants volunteered to be the Facilitator and Problem Holder and the remaining 5 participants made up the reflecting team. Although we were not referring to the interaction as being a 'problem' for the inquirer, these terms were established as part of the original model and were therefore maintained to avoid confusion. The reflecting team made reflective notes about what the PH was describing using a psychoanalytic lens and theorising both the PH and the

parent as defended subjects.   2 rounds of reflection were completed and a whole group 'debriefing' discussion was held at the end. Given that we were unable to hold the meeting face to face due to Covid restrictions the online (Google Meet) meeting was recorded to enable transcription. The Reflecting Teams session was then transcribed by me and distributed to all members of the CI group. This provided the opportunity for the deeper form of reflection-on-reflection that the process of CI presumes; that reflection is needed not only on the action taken (the reflecting team) but on the reflection process itself (the reflections and meaning making of the group). The CI group then met again on 27 January 2021 to discuss further reflections and interpretations from the transcription and also our reflections on the process. This meeting was also recorded and transcribed.

I recorded and transcribed each CI meeting using some of the conventions suggested by Jefferson (2004) as I wanted to include affective and interactional features within the interviews (see Appendix 4). I took care to protect participants' confidentiality (BPS, 2017; HCPC, 2016) through storing video recordings on my password protected and encrypted computer and assigning codes to each member of the group.

Phase 4 – Making Meaning and Constructing Knowledge
Bray et al (2000) argue that CI is not a linear process, and that interpretation, analysis and reflection can emerge at different stages within the process. CI is a discovery-oriented form of inquiry rather than a confirming or validating one and therefore periods of clarity are often followed by confusion and then a feeling of clarity once more. Bray et al (2000) also highlight that learning from experience takes place both inside and outside the CI group and those members may begin to critically reflect upon their underlying assumptions and the activities that generated them. Group meaning making remains at the core of CI and is valuable for two reasons; insights are enriched from the sharing of experiences and diverse interpretations and, these experiences themselves can provide important validity checks upon the interpretations made.

The narratives and interpretations heard within the 'Reflective Team', the transcriptions of both CI group meetings and my own reflective diary (as the initiator of the process) provided the basis for making interpretative meaning. Following each meeting, I recorded reflective comments on emotional responses I had during the team discussions (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Ellis, 1991), relational factors, and any changes in my own thinking about interactions with parents. The collaborative process of data analysis as

highlighted above, occurred at different stages of the process and not solely at the conclusion. As such, the first 'level' of analysis became 'live' through the process of listening and interpreting 'aloud' during the Reflecting Team process. The second stage of analysis occurred following the transcription of the interview and the reading of it using a particular theoretical understanding (Clarke 2002). Each member of the group read the transcript and made their own notes identifying key themes and experiences as well as theoretical observations of psychological mechanisms. These were then discussed and reflected upon in the second group meeting and this meeting was also transcribed. The psychanalytically informed lens that the group used to explore interactions with parents required a level of analysis that took notice of the cognitive, emotional, and somatic; thinking about what was said, observations of non-verbal behaviour and registering our own associative, emotional and physiological reactions.

Quality

This piece of research does not aim to uncover 'objective' knowledge independent of the experience and preconceptions of the CI group. The epistemological assumptions it makes is that the knowledge that we, as a CI group could obtain (both of ourselves and the world around us) is inevitably mediated and constrained by our own perspective, purposes, language, and culture (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003). Therefore, the usual quality criteria of reliability, validity and generalisability (e.g., Willig, 2013) is not achievable and is inappropriate. As such, a different approach to demonstrating the value and validity of the research was needed. Yardley (2008) purports that the quality of qualitative research can be broadly grouped into four key dimensions;

1. Sensitivity to Context: I hoped to address this dimension through the psychosocial approach that was adopted, acknowledging the influence of both the 'inner and 'outer' worlds on what participants said and how this was interpreted by both myself and the CI group.
2. Commitment and Rigor: I hoped to achieve this through the cycles of reflection within the CI group and the collaborative meaning making through theoretically driven analysis.
3. Transparency and Coherence: I included transcripts and excerpts from my reflective diary to try and provide a visible thread for the reader from the data to the group's interpretations.

4. Impact and Importance: I aimed to outline the potential implications for the development of reflective practice for the profession.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration for this research was based on the principles of the British Psychological Society [BPS] (2018) and the Health and Care Professions Council [HCPC] (2016). Full ethical approval was obtained from both the Local Authority and the University of Sheffield prior to any data collection (Please refer to approval letters in Appendix 5 and 6).

The main ethical stance of this research was not to cause harm to participants. I was aware that asking participants to recall interactions with parents that felt difficult or generated a high level of emotion may cause upset and distress. Furthermore, the idea that responses may be subconscious and therefore, unknown at the point of discussion, may have felt overwhelming given that participants may have been processing this for the first time. I ensured that participants were fully informed of the research topic and methodological approach (please refer to Participant Information Sheet Appendix 1) and opportunities for discussion were provided in the introductory team discussion after reading the articles provided and through one-to-one discussion should this be required. Following the decision to be part of the CI group, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time during the process (please refer to Participant Consent Form Appendix 3) and that signposting to additional wellbeing support would be provided if required. I hoped the decision to use the Reflecting Team model as a method of both data collection and analysis would provide some reassurance and safety as it was a well-established group supervision model. Furthermore, Creating the Conditions for Group Learning during Phase 2 of the CI, I hoped, would provide further opportunities for collaboratively negotiating a safe space.

I also gave careful consideration to the limits of my expertise: I am not a trained psychoanalyst. However, Hollway and Jefferson, who pioneered the FANI method, are not psychoanalytically or therapeutically trained (Holmes, 2013). If such training was a prerequisite for using this method, its value to qualitative researchers would need to be questioned as most researchers will not have received such training. The limits of my expertise did raise a further ethical dilemma of 'interpreting another' which I have already made reference to in my methodological decision making. Hollway and Jefferson (2000; 2013) argue that if the researcher's interpretation is accurate, it is to be

expected that participants' defences would work against the researcher's version of events: "*In the psychoanalytic framework disagreements are to be expected*" (p.92). After submitting an ethics application to the University, encouraged by Hollway and Jefferson's conviction, I remained uneasy and uncomfortable with what seemed to be an unjustified elevation to the role of 'expert'. Whilst I have always had a personal affiliation to psychoanalytic thinking, I also wanted my research to contribute to learning and practice. Despite the inevitable delay of submitting a revised ethics application, it was at this point that I reconsidered my methodology and turned to Collaborative Inquiry to help bridge the gap between theory and practice and address the ethical dilemmas that I have identified.

To protect the anonymity of all participants, as a CI group we decided that the location, name of the service and participants job titles were not disclosed. For this reason, demographic information about participants was also not obtained or reported. Participants were given codes that related to the Reflecting Team model. However, I was concerned that following the publication of this research online with my name identifiable as the author, certain identities could be deduced. Deductive disclosure is not widely addressed in the qualitative literature (Kaiser, 2009). Nevertheless, the issue of deductive disclosure may be ethically important in studies containing sensitive information. Deductive disclosure, also known as internal confidentiality (Tolich 2004), occurs when the traits of individuals or groups make them identifiable in research reports (Sieber 1992). As such, qualitative researchers face a tension between sharing detailed, accurate accounts of the social world and protecting the identities of the individuals who participated in their research. This presented a dilemma due to the detail that was shared in the Reflecting Team. Although informed consent was obtained from all members of the CI group, consent was not obtained from the parent whose conversation was spoken about. The BPs Code of Ethics and Conduct is not specific about consent in relation to reflective data, stipulating that "*researchers should ensure that every person from whom data are gathered for the purposes of research consents freely to the process on the basis of adequate information" (p15).* In this sense, the data provided was gathered from the practitioner. A further reason for not obtaining consent was the 'free association' element of the methodology; participants were invited to talk about what felt relevant on that particular day and therefore we could not predict what was discussed. What we could predict, and what was familiar practice within group supervision sessions, was that no names of children, families or schools are given

during discussion, therefore, it is only the PH who could identify the person they talk about.

After reading the transcripts of the Reflecting Team, the group agreed that any detail that may potentially lead to the identification of themselves or the family discussed would be further disguised to maintain anonymity, even if it meant that the validity of data presented to the reader might seem compromised. Sperry and Pies (2010) state that there are three common means of writing about clients: obtaining informed consent, disguising client identity, and creating case composites. In this case, disguising client identity seemed to fit most appropriately with the literature and guidelines available.

Reflection

Given that my research had been given ethical approval, I felt confident that I had addressed this issue in my application. After all, as a TEP, I am obligated to discuss casework in supervision and as a team, we frequently discussed cases in our Reflecting Team group supervisions with no wider consent other than our choice to attend and participate. However, this was mostly limited to a small audience which as a result of this piece of research, would widen considerably. Had we, as a group, decided on which case would be discussed and sought prior consent from the family, I wondered if the PH and wider Reflecting Team would have felt constrained by the family reading the reflections? This may have led to a more 'conscious' understanding of the interaction, which was not what we were seeking.

Summary

In this chapter I have described my positionality and presented a rationale for a psychosocial methodology based upon the ontological and epistemological assumptions that I am making. I have outlined the methods of data collection and described how I adapted the principles of Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI). Through deliberating the ethical dilemmas associated with 'interpreting' another, particularly in relation to psychoanalytic theory, I have explained my decision to use Collaborative Inquiry (CI) as both a research and adult learning method. I have argued that the union of both approaches aligns with my positionality and provided added rigor and trustworthiness to the research design. Finally, I have considered the importance of research quality and maintaining an ethical position.

Chapter 4: Analysis, Interpretation and Reflection

Overview

This chapter highlights how the methodology outlined in the previous chapter creates several 'layers' of analysis. The interweaving processes of analysis, interpretation and reflection are considered in relation to the research questions and relevant examples of data are provided to evidence the CI group's findings. The findings are then discussed in relation to relevant literature and implications for EP practice are considered. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the approach are presented along with thoughts for future research.

Layers of Analysis

The methodology described in the previous chapter creates several layers of analysis. Using the Reflecting Teams Model, the CI group generated interpretation, analysis, and reflection at different stages of the process; the initial CI group meeting, the 2nd discussion after reading the transcription and reflections from our own practice outside of the group.

The psychanalytically informed lens that the group used to explore interactions with parents required a level of analysis that took notice of the cognitive, emotional, and somatic; thinking about what was said, observations of non-verbal behaviour and registering our own associative, emotional and physiological reactions. This shaped tentative hypotheses which invited further reflection.

The data collected aimed to explore the research questions;

RQ1. How can EP reflections upon their interactions with parents be understood using psychoanalytic theory?

RQ 2. How does the Reflecting Team Model support a psychoanalytic process in EP reflective practice?

The interactions with parents that were discussed by the CI group relate to RQ1 and our reflections upon the group process of inquiry assisted in answering RQ2. Given the time limitations of the project, it was not possible for the CI group to meet again following the write up of the discussion sections to further discuss implications for practice. The implications discussed are therefore a combination of the views of the CI group but also

my own interpretations after relating the data to the relevant literature. The use of my 'authorial voice' in this sense, I hope, helps to provides a link from the reflections of the group to the wider implications for practice.

The CI group's interpretations, analysis and reflections are discussed below highlighting the key elements (the headings described below) that were noticed and reflected upon by the group during the different stages of the inquiry. This approach to the analysis of data uses McClure's (2013) notion of 'wonder' as an "untapped potential" in qualitative research. McClure (2013) describes this 'potential' as occasions when;

"*A comment in an interview, a fragment of a field note, an anecdote, an object, or a strange facial expression seems to reach out from the inert corpus (corpse) of the data, to grasp us*" (p228).

These moments have the capacity to stimulate further thought. An example of this was a comment made in the data, "people like us", which the father used to describe him and his son.   I had highlighted this phrase in my own reflective diary when reading the transcript, as had other members of the CI group. In relation to my own experiences, I hypothesised that this may have been related to my own experiences as a mother positioned in a particular way by professionals at times when I had not felt heard. The reflexivity within the group allowed for a thoughtful conversation about how the father may have been positioning himself and how individual members of the CI group were positioning him. How this 'grasped' us a group could perhaps be described as what was felt in our bodies, as well as our minds and, as a result, held some meaning for each of us. This meaning was brought to the CI group and reflected upon to make new connections and hypotheses regarding the data.

The process of a 'Collaborative Inquiry' and the 'reflection upon reflection' is illustrated through the development of a psychoanalytic understanding of the interaction between PH and the father of the child at the centre of the consultation, Danny.   This begins with an initial hypothesis of Danny wanting to control the interaction, however, through the inquiry, this develops into a deeper understanding of his vulnerability defended against through the psychoanalytic concepts of projection and transference.

RQ1. How can EP reflections upon their interactions with parents be understood using psychoanalytic theory?

Using the Reflecting Teams Model, the CI group discussed an interaction with a parent that felt difficult or unusual for the practitioner. It is perhaps helpful at this point to briefly summarise the context of the interaction. I have used PH's own words used in the discussion.

> *'I was doing a *statutory piece of work and I'd arranged to speak with parents to gain their views and perspective and I initially telephoned the house and it was Danny that answered and I asked if we could arrange to speak and he said "yes, absolutely, I'm the best one to*
> *speak to you about my son, I know him better than anybody". So we arranged it the following week. His son is on the **ADHD pathway, he's 7 and presenting with violent behaviour within school and is at risk of exclusion. He's in the ***nurture provision. Danny shared with me that he has ADHD and epilepsy and that he feels his son also has what he has… there was one particular incident mentioned in the support plan, the little boy had hurt an animal and I asked Danny if he wouldn't mind sharing'.*

*An Education, Health and Care Plan assessment

**Referral made to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for assessment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

*** A separate classroom in school where a small group of children are taught using an attachment aware/nurture-based approach

The above description is summarised intentionally. The details of the family pet incident have been kept as brief as possible to help ensure anonymity. This was a decision made collectively by the CI group as we felt it was important to prioritise confidentiality over the richness of data shared with the reader. Where this incident is referred to in the discussions below, hopefully the reader will be able to infer the CI group's meaning and interpretation.

Splitting and Projection - "People like us"

One of the initial themes that the PH discussed in the reflecting team was Danny referring to him and his son as "people like us" and the conversation feeling very "intense". This was spoken about on a number of occasions during the first part of the reflecting team;

> *(PH) "he kept referring to himself and his son as "people like us" erm, and the conversation just was, it was very intense, it was about him sharing his story, …. Had been in care, lots of difficulties, erm, lots of experiences and that he could see all those in his son, erm, so it was really a consultation that was a bit unusual in that sense (sigh) erm, and I couldn't really sort of deviate from that story"*
>
> *(PH" I think he had a story he wanted to tell and that my question had thrown him a little bit" …"I felt drawn into his story, erm, he told me that his wife or his partner didn't understand her son"*
>
> *(PH)"His main concern was that the trust had broken down with the school completely, erm, and he erm, feels that school don't understand his son and that they're not consistent, .. he wants them to recognise that "*
>
> *(PH)"I think that label of ADHD is very important to him and I mean that's something I suppose he uses as it makes sense to him within that you know, label, and I think he feels that that would be helpful for his son also"*

The CI group highlighted that Danny may have been feeling anxious about the consultation, wanting to ensure that PH understood his son in a particular way which he thought would be helpful for him. This may have arisen due to Danny's own experiences of being in care and how he thought he had been perceived and treated and he didn't want this for his son. To enable Danny to tolerate thinking and talking about his past in relation to his son's current difficulties, the 'intolerable' part may have been split off and projected onto PH who described the interaction as "intense" and "exhausting". PH's acknowledgement of this affective state, even after the event, gave some indication as to the transference in play as a way of understanding feelings beneath the surface and how this might have influenced the co-construction of the interaction (please refer to the theoretical overview of psychoanalytic thinking in Chapter Two for an explanation of the terms splitting, projection and transference). Prior to the meeting with Danny, PH had a plan of how they wanted the conversation to go to gather information for the assessment. The emphasis in PH's speech on he suggested some resistance to Danny's agenda which was different, and PH was able to reflect upon this in the discussion. As PH presented themselves as a professional at the beginning of the consultation with Danny, they may have been seen as a 'blank slate' onto which complex emotions can be presented.

The group wondered whether the affiliation with his son enabled Danny to 'split' himself and his son off from those people around them, for example, Mum and the school. This perhaps enabled Danny to project the unresolved parts of himself onto his son and this identification presented his son in a way that perhaps Danny was never 'seen' as a child. The CI group wondered whether this splitting and projection served as a way for Danny to be 'listened' to after all this time and it was difficult to separate the two 'boys'. A common complaint of parents, usually mothers, is that professionals suspect them of having 'agendas' other than the protection and welfare of their children (Ryan & Runswick-Cole 2008). Perhaps Danny's projection onto his son was also an attempt to demonstrate protection and concern.

(RTM 1) "Well, my first thought was, I wondered who came to the meeting, you know, was it Danny or was it when he was a child."

(RTM 2) " Yeah, when he said 'people like us' , that was an interesting thing that PH said was repeated a few times, so where does he stop and the boy begin, I'm wondering, it feels like they're inextricably connected..

(RTM 3) " It's interesting what you said there RTM 2 that where does Danny stop and where does the boy begin and the initial kind of rupture in their consultation was that exact point because PH was asking about the birth of the son, and so almost Danny had to stop and think if this child is born then he's not me, you know… but it's almost that _is_ the point of separation isn't it, when the son was born and if you talk about that birth it makes them two very separate people.."

(F) "Yeah that was interesting when he said about his other siblings and in my head I'd sort of constructed this idea of a, just him and Danny, together in the world against everybody"

The group wondered whether Danny's splitting of "people like us" which suggested an 'other' i.e. people not like us, was perhaps employed as a means of 'control'; to ensure that his voice was heard and to block out other voices that may have had some insight into his son's needs, including the PH. This also raised personal challenges for PH as a female and mother, as well as a professional.

> *(PH)"I felt drawn into <u>his</u> story, erm, he told me that his wife or his partner didn't understand her son"*
>
> *"one of the barriers I was expecting was that the Danny wouldn't engage, so that threw me completely actually"*
>
> *(F) "it makes me wonder though, was he engaging with you as a professional or was he telling you things?"*
>
> *(PH)" yeah, hmm, because he didn't have room in his head to answer questions, he wasn't flexible, he had this (1) that he wanted to tell me, so, yeah"*
>
> *(RTM 3) " F touched on there about the idea of voice, about Danny maybe not having had his voice heard in the past, but it felt like erm, there was a way of sort of blocking the women's voices and maybe PH' sense of not having her voice heard and not being able to be in that professional role she wanted to be, and listened to by Danny has kind of given her more of a conflict about whether she needs to maybe advocate for Mum or make sure, ensure that Mum's voice is heard ?"*
>
> *(PH) "I reflected afterwards, I think it was the thing about erm, how I would feel if my partner had spoken with a professional about my child, I would like to be heard as well.."*
>
> *(PH) " it didn't feel very collaborative, it was more about listening…I wanted specific things, you know I wanted to find out, explore specific things".*

I also wondered whether the splitting into 'people like us' may also have been an attempt by Danny to connect his son and himself to a community to validate their experience. This could be interpreted as 'control' in a different context; an attempt to take control of their lives by aligning with a community that understands. The idea that Danny may not have been engaging with PH as a professional but just "telling her things" also suggests that the professional and parent roles may not have been aligned, for example, did Danny know the kind of information that PH was wanting to get from him? Also, I wondered how PH conceptualised engagement and whether she felt Danny matched her expectations? Without a level of clarity at the beginning of the discussion, this could perhaps create further anxiety and the employment of defence mechanisms (splitting) in order to manage this?

Following a further cycle of analysis and reflection, the concept of control was further contextualised in relation to PH's response and the wider impact these defences can have upon parent and professional interactions;

(RTM 3) *"it felt a little bit that PH almost had to agree with him to be 'people like us' or she couldn't somehow understand his son, so there was that sense of school and Mum didn't understand the son and it was only people like us and it was almost like he was inviting PH to be a person 'like us' and I felt that was what the shocking story was about, it was almost like an invitation for PH to be a person like us who understands his son and the change in PH for me, felt like, she felt she could understand him without having to be like that or without having to somehow be coerced into Danny's narrative…. Almost like a kind of splitting in you could either be like Mum and not understand or you could be a person like Danny and sign up to Danny's story almost and PH was being invited to do that, erm, but she felt she had the confidence by the end to say 'I can understand this boy in my own way, I've heard you, I've listened to you and have my own understanding"*

(F) *"thinking about meetings I've been in, probably with parents, sometimes is a feeling of I need to be on your side, to get through this meeting I need to be on your side, and do you need that group reflective process to then be able to split from that "*

Reflection

My own initial reaction to PH talking about Danny was interesting. I didn't want to be "a person like us" as I wasn't sure I agreed with how Danny was 'presenting' his son. I felt some real resistance, almost like I wanted to physically stop listening to Danny's voice. My own anxiety around not colluding with the narrative of ADHD resulted in me 'splitting' Danny and the professionals into 'bad' and 'good'. If I had been unable to recognise this it may have prevented me from really listening to Danny's story which would have given less power to his voice.

In the above discussions, the CI group identified splitting and projection as representing a form of 'control' i.e. that Danny wanted to control the discussion. Subconsciously, the anxiety Danny may have been experiencing in the consultation (associated with his own past experiences and the current difficulties with his son) may have been defended against by a splitting of 'those who understand and those who don't', i.e., "people like us". Although perhaps not done consciously, this was experienced both at a cognitive and somatic level as an exertion of control; a way of 'othering' those who didn't subscribe to a similar understanding of his son.

Interpretation of the data also identified splitting and projection as a potential 'cry for help', perhaps illustrating the level of distress and vulnerability felt within the interaction. The group highlighted the possibility that within the social construct of 'masculinity' and what that might have meant for Danny, his vulnerability had become hidden.

> (RTM1) *"…that shock value, "look at what my son has done" and I just think, I did wonder if that was a bit of power there, Danny. Although, but then I also wondered, does he, he maybe, although it's the bravado, I, know that could just be his sort of (1) defence mechanisms you know, maybe he wants somebody to take both of them in hand, maybe he does want his son, really, he doesn't really like this, you know, it's a macho kind of culture that he's, he's just ((sigh)) more vulnerable, and maybe I was thinking, well actually deep below the surface that he might be going, he can't say it to you "Please help us, I don't like this either, I want my son to be soft and fuzzy and you know, and take, you know, all kinds of, other kinds of skills that aren't maybe specifically that you would associate with my gender, but you know, and I don't know how to ask for it, I've got no idea, I just wondered if that was something as well, it was a cry for help"*
>
> (RTM 1) *" ..but next to it I've written the word 'a way out' and I just don't know whether they want, Danny wants a way out as well, I think, I keep coming back to this that I think he does, erm, but I don't know if he knows what that looks like because it's just, you know, he's got these ideas from his childhood hasn't he, about you need a label, you know and having that really helped him, I still ((sighs)) I'm still not sure that's what he wants for his son"*
>
> (RTM 5) *"I also wondered if the [pet incident] was a way of demonstrating his level of feeling around all of this that somehow, that was the only way he could express that level of intensity"*

Through the reflecting team cycles, the CI group was able to explore splitting and projection as both 'control' and 'vulnerability', both perhaps influenced by the social construction of gender roles and expectations, but also the possible perceived power that comes with having a 'label' to ensure that you are noticed and listened to and not seen as a 'naughty' boy.   PH was able to resist the urge to 'challenge' or 'rescue' Danny as a result of these projected feelings. It would have perhaps been understandable if she had subconsciously defaulted to her own defences to relate to Danny's views as 'bad' and school's views as 'good'; a form of splitting to cope with the anxiety and uncertainty of the consultation.   The CI group discussed this further using the psychoanalytic concepts of projective identification and containment.

<u>Projective Identification and Containment</u>
Bion's (1962) idea of the container-contained was identified by the CI group as significant to what was happening beneath the surface for PH and Danny; that distressing thoughts and experiences can be mediated by another, who, through providing a capacity to digest, tolerate and survive that distress, provides an opportunity

to retrieve those thoughts in a way that is more bearable. Central to this is an acknowledgement of one's own subjectivity and impact upon the interaction.

(RTM 1) "I think there were some parallel processes going on then I think, that PH was in a parenting role herself to Danny, and erm, because I think he needed to, to do that, telling someone, you know I'm curious, was it as a professional or you know, was it that he needed her as a caregiver kind of thing and caregiving position and I think, I wondered about that, I'm not saying it was all the time but there was some, there was an element of that for me, and that made me think about her own parenting experiences, because she talked, I think it did touch <u>her</u> erm, her experiences, didn't it, and that role of being a Mum, and you know, her experiences of being a Mum and his experiences of being a Danny and you know, I think that was very sad and very different as well, I felt that some of that was a struggle for PH when she was doing it, trying to be a professional but also just really connecting with her experiences"

(RTM 3) "I picked up that feeling 'I was exhausted' and I think that was because she was working so hard and no wonder if felt confusing, so she was doing a lot of containing wasn't she (1) and of emotion"

(RTM 5) " I wondered what kind of journey PH had gone on with Danny almost, from what people had been saying so kind of having that bit of a plan where you think you might be going and then she's followed his plan of where he wanted to go almost, erm, and kind of obviously those instances of thinking on her feet and things like that and I thought it was really interesting at the end, she almost wanted to get his voice, and kind of empower his voice with strategies he thought were useful for his son and that felt quite important to PH erm, which I thought was really nice at the end to almost (1) think of what he's been telling her and make that useful at the end for him if that makes sense"

(RTM 6) "Yeah that's something I picked up on, were they the child's strategies or were they Danny's strategies that he'd used in his life and had kind of found to be useful for his son, erm whether that's a shared strategy, so actually hearing Danny, pretends to meet the child's needs maybe but also probably meets Danny's needs"

(PH)"I felt actually through the conversation, whether it was to shock, it potentially was and I felt, I think I guess I knew at the time, you know that's probably why I didn't dwell on that particularly, I also felt that it was, assuming that he felt shocked as we all would if we'd witnessed that, I think he was trying to understand it and unpick it and perhaps normalise it in terms of saying that we all have those instincts and I think erm, somebody had said it's about protecting his son and reflecting on how you would feel if you'd witnessed that with your own child and rather than deeming them a monster and you know, being horrified you'd need to work through those feelings I guess because how else will you continue nurturing your child"

The group identified that PH tolerated her own discomforting emotions, including uncertainty of how the consultation was progressing and allowed space for the development of thought. PH was also able to tolerate Danny's distress, communicated through what he was saying but also how he made PH feel (projective identification). This also included showing empathy towards Danny, that despite initially feeling that he wanted to shock PH, her own subjectivity of being a parent and the need to protect, helped her to understand what might have been going on beneath the surface. This enabled her to process the projected feelings from Danny, acknowledge her own feelings, sit with them for a while and then return them to Danny in a way that was more comfortable for him. This process is theorised by Ogden (1982) as 'projective identification', a form of communication as the recipient experiences part of the emotional state of the projector.   Whilst these processes may not have been consciously 'known' to PH at the time, PH's own reflections as part of the group discussion illustrated this further;

(PH)"in terms of being a Mum of boys, yeah to me ((laughs)) it's always been really important to bring my kids up to be erm, caring of animals, so that's always been a big thing for me actually, erm and they both have strong feelings about cruelty and that sort of thing, so I suppose I did, it was quite, as in how I'm reflecting how I would feel, I guess, but also, realising that he's a little boy, with lots of difficulties and how you move forward when something like that, the most horrible thing that you can imagine your child perhaps would and how you move on with that and still remain a nurturing parent"

The role of container/contained was also identified in F and PH's relationship and discussion.

(RTM 4) "Also F was a container for PH and you could see that through the transcription, erm, and some of those sorts of questions"

(RTM 1) "So I think you seem different now even talking about him"

(RTM 4) "I noticed from the transcription about how containing the conversation felt, of allowing some of those defences to come out, when anything intense was spoken about, there was that opportunity to kind of erm, there was lots of laughter between F and PH and I thought that was really important because clearly PH is not going to do that with Danny (laughing) that reflection is she when she's feeling a bit uncertain about what he might be saying, but I sense that that was a really important thing to happen"

Relationships and subjectivity

The group reflected on PH's role as a female and mother and how her own subjectivity perhaps impacted upon the co-construction of the interaction and the narrative that was re-storied to the group.

(RTM 3) " I was thinking you know, how we brought some kind of gendered conversation in quite a bit and I was just reflecting on some of my own thoughts that came in when PH was talking, erm, as PH is a Mum of boys and she was thinking about her own relationship of being a Mum of boys and I'm a Mum of girls and I was thinking ' oh I wonder what that felt like' …and maybe there was something about (2) erm, that, I don't know, (1) maybe a drive to try and understand the little, boy a little bit more because she does feel like she understands boy, because she understands her boys…"

(RTM 3) " …and us being a group of women, and how able we are to consider Danny's, like Danny's roles, just made me think that if I'd had a parental consultation and a Mum turned up and I spoke to the Mum, it probably wouldn't even enter my head to also ring Danny, if they were a pair living together, but would, X ((male EP in the team)) think differently about that ?

(PH) " It did make me reflect on that, on those judgements that you make around Danny and, you know, speaking with Danny or Mum, and whether I should pursue speaking to Mum or is Danny's voice good enough ?"

(F) "Yeah, and if it was Mum's voice, why would you think that, Is Mum's voice good enough? that would never cross my mind"

Following a further cycle of reflection, the CI group helped PH to make sense of the professional-parent dynamic and how this may have affected the narrative that was co-constructed between them.

> *(PH) "I hadn't really stopped to think about how I had affected the involvement, you know, my part to play"*
>
> *(RTM 1) " Perhaps that parental role and the level of containment, there was almost that therapeutic relationship with Danny I guess that she really wanted to help and listen, and even though he was controlling, it was almost, like you say, she needed to be on his side to get the best out of him, you want to be helpful, to be on their side, to make a difference somehow, whether it's just listening or empowering their voice"*
>
> *(RTM 5) "It reminded me of the idea of being an ally, and the sort of different levels you know, the different roles PH had, we sometimes feel like we need to be an ally but are we an ally as a professional or an ally as a parent or a human almost, you're all of those aren't you"*
>
> *(RTM 3) "I was just thinking about allies and there was an ethical dilemma wasn't there when he talked about the incident, I was wondering how do you become an ally when you hear that, and I think PH did that well, but I think if you join too much with people, when you hear something like that you can get quiet erm stuck can't you … and I think that can be a real discomfort and I think PH handled that well, because you could leave the situation, not physically but almost virtually leave and I think that's when sometimes being neutral helps, when you're not judgmental about what you've heard or the position you take"*
>
> *(PH) "Yeah, I do feel like he was working through all his experiences…with the incident I had to distance myself quite a bit mainly from the position of a Mum"*

Reflection

Following the above discussion, I could almost feel PH's response change to the level of uncertainty that she had been facing. It felt like she was embracing the opportunity for discussion on a deeper more critical level over having to portray a level of competence.

Discussion

The psychoanalytic concepts of splitting, projection, projective identification, and containment were all terms that the Collaborative Inquiry group used to understand the interaction between PH and Danny. Danny's repetition of the phrase 'people like us' was highlighted as a possible defence mechanism that Danny subconsciously used to 'split' him and his son off from those 'others' that were wanting to understand the difficulties the family faced. The underlying explanations for this 'splitting' that may have been related to Danny's past experiences could only be tentatively suggested given that the group were listening only to EP reflections. However, the functions it served as a form of communication in the current situation were identified as two-fold; splitting as

'control' i.e., an attempt to control the conversation in order to be 'listened' to and splitting as 'vulnerability'. Describing the interaction, PH picked up on Danny's 'control' through her strong feelings of wanting to advocate for Mum and form her own opinion of his son. This was further reinforced by her own situation of being a Mum to boys. PH was able to resist Danny's invitation to join him and his son as "people like us" but also resisted 'splitting' the views of Danny and the school into 'good' and 'bad' to cope with the uncertainty of such an "unusual" consultation (as I had initially done). The CI group felt this was due to PH using her own subjectivity and being able to understand how Danny might be feeling, wanting to protect his son from how he himself was perceived as a child. The group identified how Danny's 'splitting' may also have been communicating a level of 'vulnerability', something that PH later reflected upon herself through her feeling a need to take on a maternal role within the interaction. It was perhaps this feeling that enabled PH to provide a level of containment, of being able to tolerate the intensity of the feelings that were projected onto her by Danny. The CI group discussion highlighted PH's ability to experience the totality of the interaction (Joseph 1985) and her capacity to hold both Danny's anxiety and her own and to go on thinking and drawing upon her own resources, Wardell's (2002) notion of '*reverie*' (discussed in Chapter 2). Furthermore, the idea of 'reverie' was also relevant to the group process which enabled difficulties to be expressed, explored and thought about. In a sense, the groups task was to provide an opportunity for 'reverie' and the tool used to enable this was free association.

These psychoanalytic concepts belonging to the Kleinian/Object Relations school of psychoanalysis discussed in the literature review were also understood by the CI group in relation to the psychosocial approach of the research. Both PH's and Danny's subjectivity were seen as situated within the social constructs and discourses of gender behaviours and disability. Danny's 'splitting' that communicated a level of control felt by PH through her need to advocate for Mum is discussed above, also the maternal role that PH adopted in response to the splitting as communicating 'vulnerability'. The CI group also suggested that Danny may have described the pet incident in relation to his own views on masculinity and that subscribing to a 'macho' culture might have been the only way that Danny could have contextualised the incident. The group wondered if what was beneath the surface of the "bravado" was a 'cry for help'; that noticing the possible impact of discourses regarding gender helped to 'uncover' a more subconscious communication.

The identification of gender behaviours as significant in the interaction also led to a wider discussion regarding the role of fathers in EP consultation.

(PH)" I'd never really thought about the fact that actually most of the erm, pieces of work that I do is with Mum, very rarely both parents"

(F) "Just what RTM 1 said about the social graces and us being a group of women, and how able we are to consider Danny's, like Danny's roles and to, thinking about erm, just made me think that if I'd had a parental consultation and a Mum turned up and I spoke to the Mum, it probably wouldn't even enter my head to also ring Danny, if they were a pair, in a relationship ad they lived together (1) erm, and, but would, X ((male EP in the team)), would X think differently ?".

(PH) "It did make me reflect on that, on those judgements that you make around Danny and, you know, speaking with Danny or Mum or whatever and is it complicit thing that you take for granted, erm, and whether I _should_ pursue speaking to Mum or is Danny's voice good enough, do you know for

(F)" Yeah and if it was Mum's voice, why would you think that, is Mum's voice good enough, that would never cross my mind"

These reflections have important implications for EP practice and the inclusion of fathers in parent partnership working. Research indicates that fathers can often be perceived negatively by professionals (de Montigney et al 2017) and as 'hard to reach' (Bayley et al 2009). Much of the research relates to father's engagement with parenting interventions/social care involvement and Brandon et al (2009) highlighted a tendency for professionals to adopt what they term 'rigid' or 'fixed' thinking. Fathers were labelled as either 'all good' or 'all bad', leading to attributions as to their reliability and prevented workers from taking views expressed by 'bad fathers' seriously. This 'splitting' of fathers into good or bad creates a barrier to partnership working and therefore it is important that EP's can recognise and acknowledge their own processes that might be happening under the surface. The collaborative inquiry group were noticing what was 'under the surface' and wondered whether there are instances when they do 'split' Mum's and Danny's, leading to a wider consideration of their practice.   The fact that EP reflections in this instance were relating to an interaction with a father has raised important considerations for practice, however, whether EPs are engaging with fathers, mothers or wider carers, the 'splitting' of views/people into good or bad in order to defend against our own uncertainty can lead to a reinforcement of the 'difficult parent' narrative. This can be further exacerbated through the splitting of EPs into 'good' or 'bad' ("people like

us") by parents who are experiencing anxiety themselves.   A psychoanalytical understanding of these processes can perhaps help to further address the power imbalances recognised in partnership working.

The "people like us" narrative that Danny attributed to him and his son as a way of splitting themselves off was also considered by the CI group in terms of how Danny understand his own diagnosis of ADHD and how this related to his son. The understanding generated through discussion was that to defend against those parts of himself that others perceived as "naughty", Danny's diagnosis of ADHD perhaps became important in making his experiences more bearable to think about but also in being understood by others. As such, his perception was that a label of disability could do the same for his son. In this way, it is possible to theorise that a diagnosis provides a level of containment itself through the attachment to a medical model of disability.

Understanding the interaction from a psychoanalytic perspective perhaps helped to create a deeper understanding of how subconscious processes may have been impacting upon the relationship between PH and Danny.   Relating this to the literature on emotional labour, it could be argued that reflecting upon practice in this way creates an opportunity for 'deep acting'; that taking notice of one's own feelings to understand the feelings of those we work with creates a level of authenticity that helps to prevent the emotional burnout from 'faking' our feelings. It is possible that considering the psychosocial aspects of Danny's responses helped both PH and the CI group develop empathy towards Danny and his son's difficulties, despite the defence mechanisms in play. The literature defining empathy suggests that empathy is more oriented towards understanding 'another' rather than oneself. A psychosocial understanding of the relationship between PH and Danny required PH and the CI group to consider the subjectivities of both.

The concept of 'mentalisation' is perhaps relevant here. Fonagy et al. (2004) defined mentalization as a form of imagined mental activity about oneself and others involving perceiving and interpreting human behaviour in terms of intentional mental states e.g., needs, beliefs, feelings, desires, feelings, goals, purposes and reasons).

"It is a meta-cognitive ability, the capacity to reflect on one's own mental world and the mental world of others and to develop an internalised sense that the world of "intentions,

feelings and beliefs" is safe to explore. This capacity allows us to collaborate with others, understand feelings, and know who we are as separate from others, and come to know others"

Research has shown that when people lose their ability to mentalize, usually in the context of high affect and threats to emotional security, they have a hard time making sense of other people's behaviour and their own. They become reactive, impulsive, self-centred, and lack perspective. Adopting a psychoanalytic approach and being able to understand the role of defences can perhaps then help us in the task of mentalisation. Extending the concept of empathy to include mentalization, facilitated by an acknowledgement of intrapsychic and intersubjective experiences, enables EPs, teachers and the wider helping professionals to operationalise empathy in their day-to-day work and to retain the balance between emotion and cognition that psychoanalytic thinking encourages. As such, the concept of 'mentalisation' is perhaps helpful in ensuring that EPs remain empathic practitioners whilst also adopting a sense of neutrality;

(RTM 1) "I was wondering, how do you become an ally, still be an ally when you hear that, when ethically and morally it could be quiet shocking, and still have that, want that core principle of wanting to be helpful no matter what…. But I do think that's a common problem, and I think if you join too much with people, that, when you hear something like that you can get quite stuck can't you, not in the sense of what you're going to say because we're all professionals but it's like 'where do I go with this' I've allied with somebody who I morally can't, can't agree with what they've just said… I think that's when sometimes being neutral, can be helpful, where you're not judgemental about what you've heard or the position you take, erm, but that's more in therapy and this wasn't a therapeutic intervention, you know, it was a consultation, but I just wondered if other people thought that was a position if you take the position of neutrality, that can help sometimes"

RQ 2. How does the Reflecting Team Model support a psychoanalytic approach to EP reflective practice?

The discussions within the CI group using Reason's (1994) idea of reflection-upon-reflection highlighted several ways in which the Reflecting Teams Model supported psychoanalytic thinking; privileging relationships and a relational space, reflexivity and taking risks. In the analysis below, I describe the theorising that took place in the group as the individual EPs attempted to answer the research question through group discussion and reflection. As previously highlighted, the CI group was only able to meet

twice due to time constraints, and as such, the following section is my interpretation of the discussion.

<u>Privileging relationships and a relational space</u>

The CI group considered the way in which the Reflecting Team Model privileged relationships, both in terms of providing space to think about relationships with parents but also being able to reflect with others as part of a relationship;

(RTM 1) " I mean, reflecting upon this process again, I think, erm, it's a relational process isn't it, it privileges relationships, and, erm, and I think there's the relationship between the F and PH, the person who brought the problem or the identified client, whatever you want to call them, and then there's the relationships that we, and their transitory aren't they and then you know, we had a transitory relationship with this reflecting team… and then you've got the relationships that you know, PH is bringing into the meeting, wasn't it that she was experiencing but they were transitory as well and then we've got the team as well, we're a team so we've got all that, a group, haven't we going on as well, erm, and I suppose I like this process for, because that's what we've said we want to be a relational service and so I, I like the fact that it, it promotes a, the thinking about relationships all the time.."

(RTM 3) "But just that slowing down I think can be really beneficial because we just rush in, you know we don't have time to think, and that is, I think that's easier to do with someone else than on your own"

(RTM 2) "One thing I've found helpful is having this experience and some of these ideas in mind when we're just talking, erm, not all the time, but if we're talking about, oh god, this parent…then sometimes it's helpful for another person to not 'reflecting team you' but just think about those ideas"

The group felt that the quality of a relationship could also impact upon whether it felt safe enough to introduce a psychoanalytic perspective. Expanding on the idea of safety, the group highlighted that the Reflecting Team Model had benefits as a reflective supervision tool, however, more importantly, it was the quality and nature of the relationships between people that felt more significant. The group identified that our own subjectivities, for example, our own feelings of competence, and our individual subconscious processes that become involved in relating with others can affect the level of safety experienced in our interactions. Also, the uncertainty of how others may respond whom we may not know so well can affect our feelings of safety and willingness to introduce a psychoanalytic approach to discussions.

(RTM 3) " [The reflecting team model] brings some benefits as a model and as tool, erm it's really good but I think it's something about the people who engage with the tool and the safety of the space in terms of relational space.."

(F) "And I think it's different places and different situations with different people and that maybe highlighting how important or the difference that those relationships can make and that I know that in some interactions I can feel (1) really confident in saying, let's slow this down, … and I'm just thinking about a meeting I had the other day and it felt really uncomfortable, erm, but at no point did I feel like I could reflect that, in the moment, and just thinking about what RTM 1 said about feeling grounded there was something, some bodily experience was telling me 'this isn't going well' (laughing) I was like argghhh, so why then, it might have been a really good idea to say that "this is feeling really difficult and I'm just wondering why that is and how does it feel for you guys?" Why didn't I do that? …so is it about me needing to project this level of competence and confidence that I'm here to consult, we're going to do it, and we'll be consulted by the end of it and it's done, erm, whereas I'm sure other people were feeling stuck (1) and not just contain it, fix it and unstuck them by the end of it when that's ridiculous,, but yeah, relationships".

(RTM 1) "Do you think it was the medium [online] that stopped you or the people that were there?"

(F)"Errm yeah, a bit of all of that, I think the medium with other people, it would've been fine, and maybe it's not knowing what their reaction would be because they were all new people to me, so then why does it matter what they do? What would be so bad about their response in the first place that puts you off doing it in the first place? "

(RTM 1) "I think, I have weaknesses about people I don't open up to very well, you know, people who I perceive and this is my projection, are cold and critical, usually in a female role, older than me which isn't many anymore (laughs) .. I immediately go like a little girl (2) so I know I'm a little girl when I meet cold, critical older women <because it reminds me of my mother< "

The group also identified that parent and professional perceptions of the EP role (that had previously been identified in reflecting team discussions) and the expectations that follow can impact upon the willingness to subscribe to a psychoanalytic perspective. The CI group used the term' fluff' as a metaphor for psychological theory, including psychoanalytic thinking, when describing how EP consultations sometimes feel. The group described that prioritising the relationship, and therefore a sense of safety, can help others engage with a more psychoanalytic approach. This idea is comparable to Winnicot's (1971) suggestion; that young children become ready to explore their environment through knowing there is a safe containing relationship to return to.

(F) "I got a feeling that she [*SENCo] didn't want the fluff that comes with a psychologist, I'm not interested in your theories and you're wafflings, I just want the stuff, give me the strategies, so when I didn't have any strategies, I could fall back on the fluff, I had lots of that, erm, but we, that was the important thing, that was the, that's the stuff that would make the difference, but she didn't want to hear it, so I didn't give it because I thought she would be critical of me"

(RTM 1) " Yeah but I think in that moment what you valued was the relationship, and that maybe you valued that relationship more than erm, i.e. you could have, if you (ah) wanted to and could have gone ahead and gone 'right, I'm just going to do fluff [smiling] that's what I've come with and she can look at me like (pulls a face) but I'll deal with that later, but I got a sense that you perhaps valued more than that was the relationship so I got that sense that if you'd just led with fluff she would never come back and you would never have a chance to be helpful"

(RTM 5) " I was going to say similar, is it that the relationship, once you've got it, is more predictable, it's more safe and as a new member of the team, I had that with my own schools and I could get away saying more radical things I guess, whereas I'm still developing relationships and it's all online so I'm probably being a bit safer in those conversations at the at moment and I'm so aware of that…. It's like your secure base almost isn't it, that that's safe for now but you might push it in little steps"

*Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator within a school

Discussions in the group suggested that the role of being an ally to both parents and professionals felt important for developing relationships but that it can also create a level of uncertainty. The group felt that the role of an ally could be important to partnership working in that it reflected a genuine desire to offer help and support, but that sometimes, this led to an "entanglement" that becomes problematic to both professionals and parents. The group highlighted that having a psychoanalytic perspective of an interaction can help an EP 'untangle' themselves from what was highlighted as an "entwinement" with parents.

(F)"Thinking about meetings I've been in , probably with parents, sometimes is a feeling of I need to be on your side, to get through this meeting I need to be on your side, and do you need that group reflective process to then be able to (1) split from that or to, to me it feels entwined, your entwined with the parents and you need help to untangle yourself from that (3) and (2) to me, or thinking about this process over the weeks in between it's felt hard to do that, by myself."

(RTM 3) " Yeah it reminded me of this idea of being an ally, and the sort of different levels you know, RTM 1 talked about the different roles that PH had had and I thought yeah, we do

sometimes feel like we need to be an ally but are we an ally as a professional, or an ally as a parent, or an ally as a human almost, erm, and you're all of those aren't you?"

(RTM 1) "Yeah, I think that goes back to, because you were talking about allies, I was just thinking about allies and, there was also an ethical dilemma wasn't there, that was when he started talking about *** and what his son had done and, erm, I was wondering how do you become an ally, still be an ally when you hear that, when ethically and morally it could be quite shocking and to still have that, want that core principle of wanting to be helpful no matter what and to parents, and er, I think PH did that well"

The group also identified the impact of remote working upon being able to notice and think in a psychoanalytic way. This becomes particularly relevant given the non-verbal communication that is important in understanding someone's feelings both on the surface and beneath the surface i.e., being able to engage with affective ways of knowing beyond the discursive.

(RTM 2) " I think there's something about remote working as well, sort of thinking, there's sort of different levels of it isn't there, so a bit like PH, you know when you're just hearing a voice and you can't picture something.. I think that's really depleting, like you're almost having to work extra hard when you're doing it, I've found that when I've done face to face consultations that I feel less tired when I do when I'm going online because you try to picture things and really listen very carefully to, not just words that are said but the tone of the voice because you haven't got all those extra clues, from people's bodies, you know so it's back to bodies again isn't it (smiles)"

<u>Reflexivity</u>

The CI group described how group reflective practice provided both challenge and new ways in which to think about psychoanalytic concepts, similar to Parker's (2004) description of reflexivity as "*working with subjectivity in such a way that we are able to break out of the self-referential circle that characterises most academic work" (p25)* i.e., the reflections of group members are made public and susceptible to further reflection. This helps to address Frosh's (2010) concern that researchers and practitioners need to be wary of 'simplistic translations' of psychoanalytic thinking.

> *(RTM 3) "Because I think that sort of reflexivity we were talking about yesterday, or any reflection on your own practice, is limited by your own thoughts, so opening that up to multiple ideas and all those perspectives is, really helpful, it's helpful in the moment but its helpful to apply those ideas again and again when you're out in the world"*
>
> *(RTM 5) " you're not just reflecting upon PH's practice, you're reflecting on your own practice in the past but also thinking about, if that were me in that position what would I do, so that reflexivity there again, and then as each person reflects on it, brings in another element to that, so then you're reflecting on you know, their experiences as well so it kind of becomes a bit exponential"*
>
> *(PH) "I hadn't really stopped to think about I had affected the involvement you know, my part to play within that, erm, so yeah, talking about it and having those thoughts, voices from other people although they were probably there deep down, I hadn't acknowledged them"*

Taking risks

It was highlighted in the group that "taking risks" was an important element in being able to facilitate further discussion around psychoanalytic thinking, particularly for those who may not feel confident taking a psychoanalytic perspective. The group highlighted that listening to the views of others who may perceive a situation differently creates a level of vulnerability, but that this can then lead to a better understanding of oneself if done in a non-judgemental way.

> *(PH) "Yeah, you certainly feel very vulnerable… I'm beginning to feel less confident in terms of being able to do the thinking because you're thinking so much more in different ways I guess and its sort of questioning a lot… I suppose doing this reflecting teams has actually been really useful, looking at things in a different way and it has felt, although I feel vulnerable, it has felt quite a comfortable space and given me lots more to think about as well, and how to sort of develop that, you can't prepare for things but you can expect the unexpected which is a cliché but true, things aren't always going to go how you expect and sort of try and go with that, which I felt I did, but I did feel tired and drawn in, but as you said RTM 3, I think, you know, having other people's views and how they think and other ways of looking at things I think that really does, it helps a lot actually and it sort of takes the burden as I think you were referring to maybe of, you know, taking that on myself"*
>
> *(F) "It's good that you felt like it was shared and not kind of ((laughs)) judged"*

The CI group also highlighted that this level of vulnerability meant that PH was taking a risk in terms of her relationships with others in the team but that this could also be considered therapeutic. It was highlighted that although the Reflecting Team model is not considered as 'therapy', the process can feel therapeutic. The EP's uncertainty

around using the term 'therapy' perhaps indicates a cautiousness about describing it in this way. The roles within the group were also highlighted in terms of the hierarchy already existing in the team; that PH was also taking a risk given the seniority of her peers within the CI group. This becomes important when considering how to create a safe reflective space.

> (RTM 1) " Yeah, and I felt, I think we're taking risks in the relationships aren't we, not just the risks of in the relationships we have in the work we do outside of the team, you know, with parents, but you know it is risky with each other, and you know it's about taking those risks with each other isn't is, in this space too… it's not therapy as such erm, although I think this can be a therapeutic process so erm, you know, PH took a risk bringing it here about her relationships with us , as in you know, as an individual, as me as her line manager but as the team as well"
>
> (RTM 2) "PH was a different PH at the beginning I think than to the end of the, when I was reading it, I think she seemed more, _nervous_, and I think that was quite understandable and I felt there was more certainty to what was said to us in the meeting"

The group also talked about what might make taking risks easier, highlighting how an understanding of their own subconscious defences could impact upon their interaction with parents and professionals. The Reflecting Team Model was considered helpful in supporting psychoanalytic thinking but there was also a recognition that this 'fitted' with the relationships already established within the team and that the modelling of this to new members of staff would help to continue to provide the safety needed for it to work well.

> (RTM 3) " Mmmm and that kind of modelling erm, and I think you know, if we brought in RTM 1's dreaded archetypal woman (laughs) it would have been quite a different sort of discussion that we would have been able to have because it might have closed up conversations thinking about those defence mechanisms… I think there's something about the tool fitting the relationships or fitting the people that are using it or something, so maybe there's a critical number around that, and then when it's modelled you can then start to bring in new people that perhaps don't have those relationships, kind of critical mass of people who are all comfortable enough to be talking in that way, sharing and reflecting in that way, then it becomes a safe space for new people to come in and start to develop those relationships maybe"
>
> (RTM 5) Yeah I think I suppose that's happened in our team hasn't it, it was something that was happening when I joined and I became part of"

Group discussion highlighted that the wider systems in which we work can also affect the level of risk we are willing to take in encouraging psychoanalytic thought. This included the perceived experience associated with the level of EP practitioner and organisational barriers such as the nature of the work, highlighted previously from a psychoanalytic perspective as organisational defences.

(PH) *"I think as a Trainee I found it difficult, I think in an ideal world I would have liked to have explored and maybe sort of interrupted him along the way, to explore those bits a bit further.. I didn't feel experienced enough to do that"*

(PH) *"Because it was a statutory piece of work it felt like I would have liked to have explored further, you know there's that time limit isn't there, not having the relationship with the school, there's lots and lots of things that have made it difficult"*

(F) *"Do you feel less worried now?"*

(PH) *Yeah, I think so (laughs) to hear somebody like people who have been in the job for a long time and would have maybe found that difficult"*

Discussion

The CI group highlighted that the Reflecting Teams model 'privileges relationships', and it was this which supported psychoanalytic thinking. This aligns to the Object Relations and Bionian schools of psychoanalysis that propose that unconscious feelings can only be 'known' through the containing relationship of another. Bion's (1963) notion of 'reverie' again becomes relevant to the CI groups identification of being able to "slow things down" within a relationship. Bion described a containing state of mind as having the quality of reverie in that it remains open, curious, and exploratory in order to receive and digest what is being brought to the interaction. Through the containment of the group, PH was perhaps less reliant on adopting her own psychological defences to tolerate the anxiety that was generated in the consultation she described. This could have resulted in her having a 'split' view of herself as either a 'good' or 'bad' EP or needing to take on an expert role to demonstrate a sense of competency to others. It is this 'reverie' that the group identified as being helpful in processing potential negativity directed towards parents.

Being perceived by others as competent EPs was considered a key factor in whether psychoanalytic thinking is given space in our interactions with both parents and professionals. The role of 'expert' that is often assigned to us by others can impede our ability to sit with a level of uncertainty that psychoanalytic thinking requires. The allusion to "fluff" as a metaphor for this approach is perhaps indicative of the defences employed by others who remain cautious of exploring what might be beneath the surface. The group identified that although the reflecting team model was helpful as a tool, it was more about the relationships and feelings of safety that could be created that made the difference. The CI group gave examples of relationships that had developed with professionals who, after a period of time, felt safe enough to consider the "fluff". The group identified the parallels to the development of a secure attachment with a caregiver; that the child is able to explore their environment further knowing that the parent will provide a safe space to come back to. It is this safe space that EPs can help to create with those that we work with through our interpersonal skills of active listening, being non-judgemental, respectful, and curious.

The CI group explored the notion of EPs being an ally to parents and professionals within the context of developing secure relationships which also involves those instances of 'rupture and repair' (Winnicot 1971). The role of being an ally is pertinent given definitions in the literature. Washington and Evans (1991) focus on the ally as someone who provides assistance as "a member of the dominant group or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her personal or professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population" (p. 195). Broido (2000) also emphasises the power status of the ally who she described as "working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based upon their social group membership" (p. 3). The role of an EP can be considered as an 'allyship' given the investment in critically examining the role of power and privilege to promote social justice within the systems in which we work. In this instance, the CI group provided a relational space to critically reflect on PH's privilege as a professional and mother working within the SEN system.   A psychoanalytic lens provided a level of reflexivity that enabled the group to explore the way in which parent and professional intersubjectivity can either support or further oppress parents; that being unaware of psychoanalytic concepts can further promote the 'difficult parent' narrative.

Within the context of social justice action and psychology, Mizock & Page (2016) also identify some limitations to the ally role which is relevant to the nature of the relationships that the CI group highlighted. One limitation they identify is the lack of integration of intersectionality; that social categories are constructed and overlapping. As such we can simultaneously be a member of a privileged and underprivileged group, not falling neatly into either a dominant or marginalized role. In this case, PH was both a member of a privileged group holding power (a professional) but also part of an unprivileged group as a woman and mother which had an impact upon her positioning and her perceived role as an ally within the consultation.   That is not to say that she was completely disregarded as an ally but highlights the complexities of the role.

Mizock & Page (2016) argue that an ally position also constructs a problematic "hero-victim" narrative. The notion of an ally may promote a condescending narrative of allies as "rescuers" to the "helplessly oppressed." They argue that this narrative also reinforces problematic emotions of pity for a marginalized group (Russell, 2011). With pity comes sympathy in the role of a "heroic ally." This is perhaps relevant to the CI group description of having to resist the role of 'expert' being ascribed to them to create a space for psychoanalytic thinking. The role of expert creates a binary of knowing/not knowing which also assumes a degree of power over the 'non-expert'. This position can perpetuate the idea that the professionals 'know better' than the parent, or that the EP 'knows better' than the teacher. The 'splitting' of roles into expert/non-expert or hero/victim does not promote a sense of partnership working. To counter these limitations Mizock & Page (2016) substitute the notion of ally with an activist position. They highlight the importance of a relational approach to social justice, privileging engagement in relationships to work towards social change. They suggest that support is relational in itself and will mean something different in the context of each client or family relationship. These principles highlighted in social justice models of psychology are relevant to the discussions of what true partnership looks like in parent partnership debates.

This reimagining of the ally role perhaps resonates more easily when considering a psychoanalytic approach to practice. The tensions described above of adopting an ally position culminate in the description of needing to "untangle" through the process of 'rupture and repair'; the reflective group provides a reparative relationship following the rupture felt within an interaction with a parent or professional. From this relational

perspective, ruptures are considered a 'normal' part of human relationships. It is the repair stage that is important so that we can reflect and learn new ways of relating in our professional relationships. The repair stage also helps to prevent negative and unhelpful attributions that, if not addressed, can lead to discrimination and oppressive practice.

It might be proposed that within this reparative relationship is a space for reflexivity which enables learning from experience. Britton (2004), whose work is located in the post Kleinian and Bion tradition, describes this as a 'triangular space of thinking'. He explains that this triangular space provides 'the possibility of being a participant in a relationship (PH) whilst being observed by a third person (the reflecting team) as well as being an observer of a relationship between two people (PH and Danny)'. Britton links this to the experience of the self as both subject and object; we can be immersed in experience in a subjective sense, whilst still have a relationship to that experience. As such, we develop a capacity to relate to ourselves as both subject and as object and can witness ourselves in the experience while still being fully (subjectively) involved in that experience. Similarly, Benjamin (2004) who adopts Winnicot's legacy of transitional space, explores the third as the intersubjective mental space that allows a meeting with, or 'recognition' of the subjectivity of the other. Benjamin (2004) describes "*being able to sustain connectedness to the mind of the other's mind while accepting ... separateness and difference'* (p. 2). It is this idea of 'thirdness' that the CI described; the reflecting team gave space for reflexivity in a relational intersubjective sense, supporting psychoanalytic thinking and critical reflection. The CI group further highlighted the importance of this relational space being modelled, that the 'third' part of the triangular remains constant within the team to accommodate changes in staff and to develop a sense of predictability and safety in relationships.

In addition to creating a relational space that can facilitate both reflexivity and critical reflection, the CI group also highlighted the need for EPs to take risks in their relationships with parents and professionals but also with each other to enable psychoanalytical thinking to take place. This becomes particularly relevant when there is already a resistance to the "fluff" and the pressure of wider systems that can impact upon our role. In this sense EPs are managing individual defences but also those unconscious processes that can affect organisations, social defences. For example, the statutory assessment process and lack of time was highlighted by PH as a barrier to

'exploring further' with Danny. It could be argued that the limited time allocated to statutory work is perhaps a necessary function in order for Local Authority's to cope with the increasing number of assessments that EP services are faced with. As such, it is perhaps often difficult to imagine how making time to think about psychoanalytic concepts can be helpful to a process that is structured and constrained by the needs of the system. However, this can also create a 'splitting' of the work into 'good' and 'bad' in terms of mobilising psychoanalytic thought. For example, EPs often express a preference for non-statutory work as they feel it allows for more creativity and psychological thought (hence an opportunity for psychoanalytic thinking). The statutory work is therefore viewed as 'bad' and the 'non-statutory' as 'good'. Furthermore, PH's perception of her own ability and lack of experience causes a splitting of herself into either a 'good' or 'bad' psychoanalytic EP. It could be argued that PH subconsciously employed a 'splitting' strategy to defend against her anxiety caused by what she considered, her lack of psychoanalytic knowledge and expertise. This 'splitting' into good and 'bad' can be further exacerbated by the role of the 'expert' that is assigned to us as highlighted earlier. If we resist this role and choose to sit with the uncertainty that we are often faced with, we can be perceived as a 'bad' EP by those that are expecting more certainty. To 'defend' against this position and be perceived as a 'good' EP, we may be subconsciously coerced into a particular pattern of relating that can leave little room for psychoanalytic thinking.

Reflection

This mirrors my own cautiousness as I embarked upon this research with an ambivalent feeling towards psychoanalytic thinking; feeling fascinated in the potential it might have to understand relationships but equally overwhelmed at the complexity of the language and having the confidence to embrace it. This anxiety has resulted in a similar splitting of my own competence as a researcher into 'good' or 'bad' as I have navigated the good and bad days throughout this project. My research supervisor, peers and colleagues have provided the containing space and reverie that I have needed in order to sit with the uncertainty and welcome the "fluff"; the 'fluff' representing that part of our role that is always tentative and offers a possibility for further exploration rather than a claimed 'truth'.

Implications for developing EP reflective practice

The CI group explored the two research questions above, however, given the time constraints of the research it was not possible to extend the meetings to consider the implications for EP practice more collaboratively. This next section is therefore written from my own perspective with reference to discussions within the CI group.

Using psychoanalytic theory, the CI group explored EP reflections regarding an interaction with a parent and highlighted several defence mechanisms and processes that had an impact upon how the parent was perceived and how the EP responded. The pyschosocial nature of the research also enabled an exploration of the way in which social and cultural influences may have shaped the subjectivities of those involved. The CI group highlighted a number of ways in which the Reflecting Team model supported psychoanalytical thinking; privileging relationships and relational space, reflexivity and taking risks. This suggests that a key contribution of psychoanalytic thinking is the foregrounding of relationships and the connectivity between emotion, thinking and learning.   The findings of the CI group and further discussion relating to relevant literature has implications for EP reflective practice, particularly due to the views of many EPs that educational psychology itself has;

"become almost entirely defined by psychometric and quasi administrative priorities that emphasise symptom management… Missing is the unique perspective a psychodynamic model of thinking can contribute to understanding intrapsychic conflicts and interpersonal dynamics" (Sapountzis & Hyman 2012 p 172).

This also becomes relevant since many models of parent/professional partnership do not encourage a psychoanalytical approach to improving relationships or problem solving.

It is important to consider how psychoanalytic thinking can be more fully integrated into our everyday practice. The methodology of this research included Heron & Reason's (1997, 2008) ideas that felt experience is transformed into practical new knowledge through four interdependent ways of knowing; experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical. The opportunities to think in a psychoanalytically way do not always present themselves 'in the moment' but through the process of reflection. Within EP practice, opportunities for reflection that include all four domains present themselves through supervision, highlighted in this instance by the reflecting team model. As such, it is through the supervision process that psychoanalytic thinking can be explored more

fully. The term supervision is used here in the sense that it is a relational conversation, involving another person rather than supervision as a performance management tool. In this way, it includes peer conversations, group supervision etc.

Discussions within the CI group highlighted the importance of Bion's concept of container/contained in creating the type of relationship that facilitates psychoanalytical thought. The capacity to hold anxiety and continue to think oneself, i.e., reverie, is also seen as crucial. Oliver's (1998) reference to 'negative capability', the ability to tolerate uncertainty also becomes relevant to the 'supervisory' relationship. It is therefore important that EP practice privileges these kinds of relationships either through 1-2-1 or group supervision models.

Within these supervisory relationships it is important that EPs are able to acknowledge that the shifting between what Klein refers to as the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions are part of everyday human existence and that the defence mechanisms employed to manage these positions can be interpreted as a form of communication. We must be open to acknowledging our own anxieties and how these can influence our practice. If our own 'defended selves' remain hidden, we can fail to notice the intersubjectivity within our interactions which can result in us colluding with a 'difficult parent' narrative, privileging our own power and preventing partnership working as was explored directly in this research. As such, a psychoanalytic perspective can help provide a level of critical reflection.

A deeper understanding of subconscious processes beneath the surface can help EPs to reduce the emotional labour often involved in showing empathy to those we work with. Moreover, if we include Fonagy's concept of mentalisation to help us operationalise the notion of empathy, this can further add to our psychoanalytic capacity both on a theoretical and practical level.

As EPs we need to continue to resist the label of 'expert' that can obstruct our ability to sit with the level of uncertainty that a psychoanalytic approach requires. Our need to display a level of competence synonymous with the expectations of others can often lead us to take on an 'ally' role as opposed to an 'activist' role. As social justice psychologists, Mizock & Page's (2016) definition of these roles provide us with an important distinction that is relevant to partnership working. Whilst adopting an 'ally' role can help to develop relationships and create a sense of safety, it can also cause tensions when we need to "untangle" ourselves (the rupture and repair) and retain a

sense of neutrality. The notion of an 'activist' role that considers the relationship itself as supportive and privileges the unique experiences of individuals can perhaps help us to avoid the 'doing to' and help empower others. The 'activist' role can perhaps also help us to avoid the 'hero-victim' position that can be perpetuated by the 'ally' role and encourage us to retain a critical approach to practice.

Whilst the CI group highlighted aspects of the reflecting team model supported a psychoanalytic approach to reflective practice, there are some models of supervision/ group reflection that use psychoanalytic concepts in a more explicit way. These models place emotion, relational dynamics, and containment at the centre of the process and as such, may be more appealing to EPs who, like me, are not psychoanalytically trained but acknowledge that thinking in this way can add a deeper level of understanding to our practice. Hawkins and Shohet's seven-eyed supervision model (2012) focuses on the emotional responses of the supervisee and their client and the supervisee and supervisor are encouraged to explore Kleinian concepts such as splitting and projection and transference. In this sense, the model supports Britton's (2004) triangular space of thinking discussed earlier. Darongkamas, John & Walker's (2014) have adapted the original model to include an 'observing' eighth eye. The key feature of this mode is that it encourages a reflective and reflexive movement between all the other levels that is loosely monitored and attended to by both the supervisor and the supervisee. This provides the opportunity for reflexivity that the CI group identified as important in supporting psychoanalytic thought. Kennedy, Keaney, Shaldon & Canagaratnam (2018) have also developed a supervisory model that privileges relational dynamics, the Relational Model of Supervision for Applied Psychology Practice. The model describes inputs, processes, and outcomes. The inputs refer to experiences that both the supervisor and supervisee may have had with families and professionals that elicit feelings, thoughts beliefs etc some of which are conscious and others that are more implicit. The model assumes that the supervisee feels that they should be able to work effectively with all children and families and therefore the supervisor is required to create a level of containment to hold the supervisees anxiety using appropriate interpersonal skills. The supervisor enables comfort with 'not knowing' through their curiosity and openness without the need to adopt an expert role. This containment allows for reflection and leads to an 'outcome'; a new or transformed insights into the self and role. The inputs that are brought to supervision are often unprocessed, unconscious feelings that both parties may struggle to make sense of. The model encourages the exploration

of psychodynamic ideas to further understand what might be happening beneath the surface.

In relation to group supervisory models, the CI group highlighted that Anderson's (1987) Reflecting Teams Model supported thinking through a psychoanalytic lens. In addition to this model, O'Sullivan (2019) found that a Work Discussion Group provided containment for a social worker's anxiety, allowing her to make sense of this and its accompanying defences to understand her work with a particular family.

EP services have access to a range of different supervisory and group reflection models that might support a psychoanalytic exploration of their practice. It is important that EP services can create a relational and safe space through high levels of self-awareness and self-reflexivity that these models require.

Conclusion

This research has highlighted that exploring EP reflections of interactions with parents using psychoanalytic theory can provide a deeper understanding of subconscious processes that may be happening under the surface. Using a psychosocial approach and theorising participants as defended subjects has facilitated a level of reflexivity that can assist EPs to consider the role that psychoanalytic concepts such as splitting, projection and transference can play in their day-to-day interactions with parents. Relating this to the literature on emotional labour, it could be argued that reflecting upon practice in this way creates an opportunity for 'deep acting'; that taking notice of one's own feelings to understand the feelings of those we work with creates a level of authenticity that helps to prevent the emotional burnout from 'faking' our feelings. Given the broad spectrum of definitions of empathy, Fonagy's concept of 'mentalisation' is perhaps useful in operationalising this concept, increasing our psychoanalytic capacity, and adding further clarity to the way in which we can work in partnerships with parents.

Discussions within the CI group highlighted the importance of Bion's concept of container/contained in creating the type of relationship that facilitates psychoanalytical thought. The capacity to hold anxiety and continue to think oneself, i.e., reverie, is also seen as crucial. Oliver's (1998) reference to 'negative capability', the ability to tolerate uncertainty also becomes relevant to the 'supervisory' relationship. It is therefore

important that EP practice privileges these kinds of relationships either through 1-2-1 or group supervision models.

When working in partnership with parents, schools, and young people, it is necessary to continue to resist the label of 'expert' that can obstruct our ability to sit with the level of uncertainty that a psychoanalytic approach requires. Our perceptions of needing to display a level of competence synonymous with the expectations of others can often lead us to take on an ally role. Whilst this can help to develop relationships and create a sense of safety, it can also cause tensions when we need to "untangle" ourselves (the rupture and repair) and retain a sense of neutrality. The nuances within definitions of allyship can perhaps help to provide an important distinction to ensure that we continue to empower those we support. As supporters of social justice, EPs must also continue to acknowledge the political meaning of allyship and adopt an 'activist' role that explicitly recognises the impact of power differentials. As such, EP practice that privileges the unique experience of individuals and considers a psychosocial approach to critical reflective practice can perhaps help to improve our partnerships with parents.

Chapter Five: Evaluation

Strengths and limitations of the research

Learning from a psychoanalytic perspective in this research project was not about mastery or expertise but rather about the genuine desire of a team of practitioners to understand and grow. Waddell (2002) writes of learning that;

"Engages with life passionately and honestly, if painfully… a learning which encourages change, one which inspires growth and supports a person in thinking for himself and thereby becoming more genuinely himself" (p122)"

The psychosocial approach to this research provided an opportunity for practitioners to reflect upon their practice in a critical way whilst acknowledging the strengths of a group reflective process. Using a Collaborative Inquiry method helped to protect against the criticisms of psychoanalytic thinking as offering 'wild analysis' and provided levels of interpretation, analysis and reflection throughout the process. The 'artistry' involved in reflective practice provided an insight into practice situations but did not assume a particular truth or simple line of action. As such, our reflective learning validated the knowledge, skills and experience used in practice, and recognised these elements as valuable components in learning. The relationships already established within the team continued to offer a sense of safety and containment that was crucial for the free association method of discussion, the experience near principle of research and the intersubjectivity that was used as an 'instrument of knowing'. The collaborative inquiry process seemed consistent with the team's approach to learning and highlighted the fact that research is not a form of learning that is exclusive to specialists. The cycles of reflection as part of the reflecting team model provided validity and trustworthiness to the research by testing and retesting our reflections against our experience.

There were some limitations to both the Collaborative Inquiry group and the process. Bray et al (2000) highlight being able to 'recruit for breadth'. Given that participants were existing team members this limited the diversity within the group. Although there was a breadth of expertise, background and personal experience, the group was made up of all women. This was considered through reflecting upon how gender may have impacted upon the interaction between PH and Danny but also the wider reflecting team.

At times, I felt a tension between the roles of 'participant' and 'co-researcher', the latter being the role advocated by the participatory methodology of a collaborative inquiry and

synonymous to positioning myself as an 'insider' rather than 'outsider' to my research domain. This tension first became apparent when submitting my ethics application. In the first application, I positioned myself as an 'insider' to my research, acknowledging my personal motivation for the topic, describing the qualitative methodology and how I was choosing to 'study' a group to which I belonged. However, it was this concept of 'studying' or 'knowing' others that felt uncomfortable. I have highlighted this previously in the methodology section of this thesis, outlining the ethical dilemma of trying to 'uncover' something which is not known to participants and beneath the surface. The idea that I would interview participants and then 'uncover' and interpret their subconscious defences using psychoanalytic theory following the interview, I felt, positioned me as an expert which was not my intention or motivation for the research. It also made me question the concept of 'informed consent'. How could participants give consent for me to know what is 'not known to them' and agree for this to be recorded for others 'to know'. Hollway & Jefferson (2013) argue that psychoanalytic thinking challenges the belief that it is best to avoid distress and that whilst it may feel discomforting for participants it is not necessarily harmful if a researcher employs the principles of honesty, sympathy, and respect. However, my position within the team and the need to maintain relationships and avoid harm to others may have influenced my interpretation of the interview data. Ethical approval was not agreed for this first application without consideration of how to mitigate the ethical dilemmas highlighted above. This did not come as a surprise to me given the level of 'discomfort' I was feeling. Having been aware of these ethical dilemmas at the start of my research, in hindsight, it would have been difficult for me to achieve my research aims within the constraints of individual interviews and my own interpretation as a researcher.   My second application that advocated for a more collaborative, participatory approach sat more comfortably with me, the idea that we would uncover our own defences together as co-researchers. However, this method was not without its complexities either, perhaps firstly evident in the interchangeable use of the term's participant and co-researcher within this thesis. As highlighted in Chapter 3, given that one of the defining principles of Collaborative Inquiry is conducting research 'with' participants rather than 'on' them, the line between researcher and participant is disregarded, meaning that all those involved, including myself, were considered participants with a 'dual' role.

I felt that the University thesis process did not support the group being truly collaborative. The University ethics application understandably needed a level of detail

that would normally be discussed and agreed within the group i.e., research question, methodology etc. Although there were opportunities to discuss this within the group after ethics had been approved, the ability to change the research questions or methodology had to be balanced with the risk of having to reapply if the group wanted significant changes to be made. The Covid-19 pandemic meant having to re-negotiate data collection and storage resulting in further time constraints and limiting the amount of time for group meetings. As such, the group met on two occasions and further collaboration regarding the implications for practice section of the thesis was not possible. This was perhaps unavoidable, however, if I were to use a Collaborative Inquiry method in future research, it would be important to incorporate a timeline that would give space for co-researchers to shape the question, design and inquiry process and allow for further repeated episodes of reflection as Bray et al (2000) suggest

My first research question intended to explore the reflections of EPs on their interactions with parents using psychoanalytic thinking. I hypothesised that exploring our own defences which may impact upon our responses to parents could, perhaps, improve partnership working. As the CI group began to 'unpick' and reflect on the interaction described by PH, I felt that Danny's defences were being highlighted rather than the defences of PH. Although psychoanalytical concepts are 'uncovered' within relationships and are therefore interlinked, I felt this led to the 'splitting' of PH and Danny into controlling/controlled i.e., good/bad, a process that appeared to be 'othering' Danny on the basis of him trying to make sense of his and his son's experiences. This may have been due to PH's, and the group's own defences employed to manage the anxiety felt by the interaction. Given that I was a co-researcher within a collaborative process it was hard to challenge this. As the group completed further cycles of reflection, and PH was able to explore some of her own possible defences in a safe way, I felt that the group was able to 'mentalise' Danny and acknowledge his possible vulnerabilities which was the motivation for my research. PH described that she was not familiar to thinking in a psychoanalytical way and at times this felt hard. Had a different co-researcher who was more familiar with this paradigm chosen to share their interaction, the group may have been able to mentalise the parent sooner. A more carefully negotiated and genuinely co-constructed iteration of my method, might have allowed me to scaffold a more reflexive analysis in the group.

However, this example, perhaps captures the importance of relational knowledge (Park 2001) in critical reflective practice, that people engage with meaning making out of their situations and actions. It also perhaps highlights the potential synergy between research and practice, that making space to 'sit with uncertainty' and the messiness of real-life situations can be beneficial to practice-based evidence.

In considering practice-based evidence, the discussion of one detailed interaction with a parent was chosen by the group rather than shorter accounts that might have provided a wider range of experiences. This limited the data available for discussion and reflection. However, given that the interpretation and analysis of EP reflections was not intended to uncover similar themes across cases but provide a 'gestalt' approach without decontextualising data, this hopefully did not detract from the validity of the research.

Future Research

This research has demonstrated that a psychoanalytic approach to EP reflective practice can deepen our understanding of our interactions with parents and have a positive impact upon partnership working. The use of a group reflective tool can be beneficial to applying a specific theoretical approach and could therefore be utilised to explore parent partnership working from different theoretical perspectives. This would provide both EP services and schools with practice-based evidence to apply to models of partnership that already exist.

This research has explored EPs' interactions with parents using psychoanalytic concepts on an individual basis i.e., a case example.   As highlighted previously, it is also important to consider the wider systemic influences at play within the context of parent-professional relationships. Future research that focuses upon how unconscious processes can dynamically affect organisations may help the systems we work in recognise some of the less obvious processes at play that undermine the principles of collaboration, shared power and mutual respect. The notion that unconsciously, people can come together to collectively support each other's defensiveness may provide a starting point to explore these 'social defences' using a similar group reflective approach.

Final reflection

The aim of this research was not to provide an in-depth critical analysis of psychoanalytic approaches or suggest a step-by-step approach of how to apply these in practice. My motivation for using psychoanalytic theory in the past has perhaps felt some resistance as a result of my own defended self and the anxiety that working in this way can sometimes create. I hope that through the application of a Kleinian/object relations way of thinking this project re-invigorates an interest in a level of self-reflexivity that feels comfortable for EPs to explore. Also, that its participatory approach to meaning making encourages a more collaborative approach to EP reflective practice.

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List of Tables and Diagrams

Appendices

Appendix 1 Participant Information Form

Participant Information Sheet

Understanding Educational Psychologists responses to parents of children with Special Educational Needs - A psychosocial exploration

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, 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 me 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.

What is the project's purpose?

The aims of my research are;

- to explore Educational Psychologist's (EP's) responses to parents from a psychoanalytic perspective. In particular, how unconscious defences against anxiety such as splitting, transference and projection might influence the emotional interactions we have with parents in our work. Pellegrini (2010) highlights that EP's have a wealth of tools available to them to analyse 'problems' from a cognitive standpoint. However, EP's could also benefit from being sensitive to their own feelings in social interactions with clients to help them understand more about their experiences and help them make sense of these.

- to improve how EP's (and other helping professionals more generally) understand their responses to parents so they can work in partnership more successfully. Appreciating and being able to draw upon a psychoanalytic understanding of mind may be potentially helpful and offer additional ways for EP's to reflect upon their practice.

 This research is part of my Doctoral Training and should be completed by September 2021.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as you are employed as an EP within the Educational Psychology Service.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and 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 without any negative consequences. You can withdraw at any point up to the submission of the thesis. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact me on sgreene1@sheffield.ac.uk

What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

Two questions have informed my methodological approach to this research; "How can I gather and analyse data from EP's that allows me to 'know' and explore psychoanalytic concepts that are unconscious?" And, if the purpose of this research is to encourage reflective practice, how can EP's be helped to 'know' what may be subconsciously impacting upon their interactions with parents? Interviewing individual EP's and analysing what is said raises ethical issues of 'interpreting another'; is it acceptable to analyse a participants inner conflicts and interpret these beyond what they knowingly give in an interview? This would promote me, as the researcher into the role of the 'expert', which does not sit comfortably with my values as a practitioner. It would also not incorporate the element of 'reflection' which is the 'so what ?' of my research. As such, I have decided to employ a participatory approach would allow for the co-production of knowledge in a more collaborative way using a method of 'Collaborative Inquiry' (Heron 1996).   Yorks & Kasl (2002) state that collaborative inquiry is based on shared engagement and explorations whereby "together, inquirers formulate a compelling question that they can answer by examining 'data' from their personal experience". As a participant, I am inviting you to be a co-researcher during the 3 phases of my research which are summarised below;

Phase 1 - The whole team of EP's will be provided with information and reading re psychoanalytic concepts, in particular unconscious defences against anxiety such as splitting, transference and projection. This will be introduced as a topic of one of our monthly journal clubs which is common practice in the team. As a team, we will then have a discussion regarding the information/reading provided and discuss our understanding and thoughts. Information sheets will be given to all members of the EP Team prior to this 'journal club' discussion. This team discussion will also include information regarding the method of 'Collaborative Inquiry', what this looks like in practice and what you can expect if you decide to be part of the next stages of research.

Phase 2 – If you agree to be part of the research as a co-researcher will be invited to a peer supervision session using the Reflecting Teams Model (Anderson 1987), a model that you may already be familiar with following peer supervision sessions in the team. At the beginning of this session ground rules and expectations will be agreed in order to create safety within the group. (As a recap, the Reflecting Teams model invites a practitioner to talk about an experience with a facilitator who asks questions to gain a deeper understanding of the problem or issue. The rest of the reflecting team listen and wonder what might be happening, providing additional interpretations at different points in the process). For this research, EP's will be invited to talk about their interactions with parents that might have elicited strong emotional reactions or felt particularly difficult. This will be done in the same way with a facilitator and the rest of the group will be asked to listen and respond at certain points, thinking particularly about the psychoanalytic concepts discussed in Phase 1.   As we will all be considered co-researchers, I will also be involved in the discussions as part of the reflecting team. The discussion will be recorded and transcribed to enable you and all other co-researchers to look back and reflect on what has been discussed.

Phase 3 - The data from the Reflecting Teams group discussion will then be analysed using several layers of analysis. Using the Reflecting Teams Model, we will generate interpretation, analysis and reflection at different stages of the process; the initial CI group meeting, the 2nd discussion after reading the transcription and reflections from our own practice outside of the group. The psychoanalytically informed analysis will take notice of the cognitive, emotional and somatic; thinking about what is said, observations of non-verbal behaviour and registering our own associative, emotional and physiological reactions. The second part of Phase 3 will involve consideration of how the process may or may not have been helpful in reflecting upon EP practice (Research Question 2) and implications for future practice. This discussion will take place with you and

the same group of co-researchers and ground rules will be re-visited at the beginning of the session. It is hoped that the findings may provide recommendations not just for EP practice but for the wider helping professions more generally.

Note : Due to the global pandemic that we currently find ourselves in, I am at this point unable to carry out the group discussions face to face with participants. I will therefore conduct the discussion using Google meet technology, a secure encrypted platform recommended as the most appropriate by the University. Recordings of discussions will be deleted as soon as they have been transcribed. Should the government and/or University guidance change before September allowing me to conduct socially distanced face to face discussions then this would be my preference.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Group discussions and reflections may elicit recollections about incidents of a sensitive, upsetting or stress-inducing nature both in relation to the families you have worked with and also your own personal experiences. If these feelings become too overwhelming you are able to leave the discussion at any point and we will discuss what support you may need. This may involve accessing external support if we feel this is appropriate. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time up to the point of submission of my thesis and do not need to provide any explanation.

Although your identity as a participant will, of course, remain anonymous, assumptions may be made regarding the location of the EPS the research was conducted in given the identification of myself as the author.   Given the participatory nature of this research, you will be involved in discussions with myself and other co-researchers and we will agree how we can maintain confidentiality of participants and the families we work with. This may include not disclosing the location of the EPS, rather describing it as a 'psychological service' located in the UK.   Also, professional titles of participants not being disclosed. After reading the transcripts of the group discussion, you may feel that the detail may lead to identification of yourself or a family you have worked with. If this is the case, then we will work together to change the details before submission to ensure anonymity.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there is no immediate benefit for those participating in the project, it is hoped that this may provide an opportunity to reflect upon your own practice in a way that you may not have previously considered or had the opportunity to do.

What will happen to the information I share?

Your consent form and any recordings of our discussions will be saved onto a Google Drive file created specifically for this research and the original versions destroyed. Data stored on Google Drive is encrypted and password protected. All information that is taken from you will be anonymised to maintain confidentiality. You will not be identifiable within the research. If the group discussions cannot take place face to face due to the Covid-19 pandemic and are undertaken online, they will be anonymised straight away and will only be viewed by myself as the researcher.

According to data protection legislation, I am required to inform you that the legal basis I am applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.'

Throughout the research I will comply with the terms of the Council's Data Protection Policy, which can be accessed via the Council's Intranet: http://home.hullcc.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures/ict-and-information-governance/data-protection

Also, I will comply with the terms of the Council's Information Security Policy, which can be accessed via the Council's Intranet: http://home.hullcc.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures/ict-and-information-governance/information-security

The analyses from all of the group discussions will be used as part of my doctoral thesis which will be published online at: https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/. The contents of the Google Drive file will be deleted once my thesis has been approved and published.

This project may lead to the publication of a research paper. If you wish to participate in the study and the research is to be published upon completion, you will be contacted beforehand and asked whether you wish for your data to be included in the paper that would be published.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the School of Education,University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure. The University's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University. It has also been approved by Hull City Council Research Governance.

What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

You should contact Dr Penny Fogg (University Research Supervisor) p.fogg@sheffield.ac.uk should you wish to raise a complaint. If you feel the complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the University's Registrar and Secretary.

Given that you are also an employee of Hull City Council, you should also ensure that Lisa Stanley, Principal Educational Psychologist, is also notified of any complaint you wish to raise.

Contact for further information

Researcher:	Research Supervisor
Sara Greene	Penny Fogg
Sgreene1@sheffield.ac.uk	p.fogg@sheffield.ac.uk

What to do next

If you are interested in taking part in this research or have any further questions, please email me at sgreene1@sheffield.ac.uk

Thank you, your participation is really valuable to this research and I appreciate any contribution you are able to make.

Appendix 2 Collaborative Inquiry Sheet

A Collaborative Inquiry Approach

DEFINITION

"Collaborative Inquiry is a process consisting of repeated episodes of reflection and action through which a group of peers strives to answer a question of importance to them" Bray & Lee (2000)

COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY is also;

A powerful method for conducting human inquiry and facilitating adult learning

An innovative way of improving practice and developing new knowledge

Developing knowledge in field settings as a catalyst for change both personal and organisational change

CI makes systematic human inquiry accessible to people in a truly participative and democratic way. As such it is a significant tool in facilitating learning that helps people to make meaning from their lived experience and foster change.

Inspired by John Heron's (1981,1985,1988) ideas about cooperative inquiry and Peter Reason's and John Rowan's work (1981) on participatory human inquiry.

Collaborative inquiry finds philosophical support from both pragmatism and phenomenology. It is a logical extension of humansistic psychology and provides a means for fostering transformative learning

PEERS AS CO-RESEARCHERS

Doing research 'with' people rather than 'on' them

CI is research based in personal experience, not like an action research team that goes out to collect data from someone else

Habermas (1971) – the process of making unconscious blocking forces conscious reveals itself as a process of reflection in that it is not only a process on the cognitive level but also dissolves resistance on the affective level

Rigorous reflection especially when done in a process of social interaction with others can be exhilarating and painful – importance of a safe space

Each participant is a co-inquirer making and communicating meaning. Simultaneously, each participant is a co-subject drawing upon personal experience from inside and outside the inquiry group to provide a collective pool of experience and insight for analysis and creating meaning

Appendix 3 Participant Consent Form

Please note that this form was converted to a google form for participants to complete online due to the Covid pandemic

Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Understanding Educational Psychologists responses to parents of children with Special Educational Needs - A psychosocial exploration.

Name of Researcher: Sara Greene, Trainee Educational Psychologist

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

1. I have read and understand the information sheet and had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. Please email sgreene1@sheffield.ac.uk if you wish to withdraw from the research after the interview has been completed

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that if the interview is conducted via video link due to Covid-19 restrictions this will only be accessible to the researcher Sara Greene and noone else. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

4. Upon the event that this research study leads to a publication of a research paper, I am happy to be contacted to discuss how my anonymised data might be included

5. I confirm that I am happy to take part in the research project

_____   _____
Name of Participant   _____   Signature

_____   Date
Name of Researcher

Appendix 4- Transcription code used based on the Jefferson transcription system (2004).

Notation	Description
(.)	A micro pause of less than a second.
(4)	A pause with a measured length of seconds.
((laughs))	Nonverbal communication or other contextual information.
[ ]	Overlapping speech
CAPITALS	Louder or shouted words
Underscore	Emphasis
(??)	Unclear/ inaudible speech
> <	Pace quickened
< >	Pace slowed

Appendix 5 Local Authority Ethical Approval Letter

My Ref: RS/RG

Dear Sara,

Research Governance application - Understanding Educational Psychologists responses to parents of children with Special Educational Needs - A psychosocial exploration

Thank you for submitting your Research Governance application. Your application has been considered by ████████████████████████████ and me. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved, subject to you confirming that you will comply with the points that I have outlined below:

1) You should confirm that throughout your research that you will comply with the terms of the Council's Data Protection Policy, which can be accessed via the Council's Intranet: http://home.hullcc.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures/ict-and-information-governance/data-protection

2) You should confirm that throughout your research that you will comply with the terms of the Council's Information Security Policy, which can be accessed via the Council's Intranet: http://home.hullcc.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures/ict-and-information-governance/information-security

3) You mention that interviews will take place in work time. It is not usual for participants in research to do so during works time. You, and the participants, should ensure that this proposal is approved by ████████████, Principal Educational Psychologist before the research commences.

4) Your Participant Information Sheet states that any complaints will be referred to your research supervisor. Should any complaint regarding you research be made by employees of the Council you should also ensure that ████████, Principal Educational Psychologist, is also notified. Please confirm that you will amend the Participant Information Sheet to reflect this.

5) Any additional documentation that you need to produce throughout the research for the benefit of participants should be agreed with ████████, Principal Educational Psychologist prior to use.

6) Please confirm that videos taken during your research will be deleted as soon as they have been transcribed.

7) Your application states that your research may *"…elicit recollections about incidents of a sensitive, upsetting or stress-inducing nature both in relation to the families they have worked with and also the EP's own personal experiences".* If you believe that your research is having a negative impact on any of the participants then you should immediately inform ██ ██████, Principal Educational Psychologist.

8) Please confirm that the University of Sheffield is insured, and that this insurance covers research of this nature, as per the request in the application form.

██Any queries regarding data protection or information security matter that arise during the research should immediately be referred to ███████████████████████████

Please confirm that you will comply with these requirements before your research commences.

I should also make it clear that it is not the role of the Research Governance process to make commitments on behalf of the Council regarding the allocation of any resources and levels of support that you require from Council service areas in order to progress with your research. Research Governance approval does not constitute consent from either individual participants or service areas to participate in the research. This will be left to you to negotiate with the appropriate individual officers and service managers.

I hope that your research progresses smoothly and would like to wish you all the best in your future studies. If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

████████

Education Organisation, Governance and Operations Officer

Children, Young People and Family Services

███████████

███████████ Principal Educational Psychologist

Appendix 6 University of Sheffield Ethical Approval Letter

The University Of Sheffield.

Sara Greene
Registration number: 180107522
School of Education
Programme: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DEdCPsy)

Dear Sara

PROJECT TITLE: Understanding Educational Psychologists responses to parents of children with Special Educational Needs - A psychosocial exploration.
APPLICATION: Reference Number 034238

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 21/08/2020 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 034238 (form submission date: 04/08/2020); (expected project end date: 31/08/2021).
- Participant information sheet 1079039 version 5 (04/08/2020).
- Participant consent form 1079035 version 3 (04/08/2020).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy:
  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy:
  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Appendix 7 Transcription Extract from the 1st Collaborative Inquiry Group

Transcription of 1st Collaborative inquiry session 16.12.20

		Transcription Code	
F	Facilitator	(.)	A micro pause of less than a second
PH	Problem Holder	(4)	Pause with measured length of sec's
RTM 1	Reflecting Team Member 1	((laughs))	Non verbal communication or other contextual information
RTM 2	Reflecting Team Member 2	[ ]	Overlapping speech
RTM 3	Reflecting Team Member 3	CAPITALS	Loud or shouted speech
RTM 4	Reflecting Team Member 4	Underscore	Emphasis
RTM 5	Reflecting Team Member 5	(??)	Unclear speech
RTM 6	Reflecting Team Member 6	> <	Pace quickened
		< >	Pace slowed

Time	Transcription
0.08	((F)) Hi PH, so do you want to describe your experience ?
0.13	((PH)) - Erm, yeah, so I (.) erm, doing a statutory piece of work and, erm, (.) and I'd arranged to speak with erm (2) parents, erm, to gain their their views and perspective and I initially telephoned the house, (.) the home, (2) erm, and it was Dad that, that erm, answered and I just sort of like rather than say <"Have you got an hour to speak can we arrange erm (1) can we arrange this" < and he said, yep, absolutely, he said i'm erm the best one to speak to you about my son I know him better than anybody, (1) erm, and yes so we arranged it, so the following week, erm, (2) I had questions that I wanted to ask, I was interested in the developmental history etc (1) but when I sort of began erm to speak to him, it sort of seemed tooo stop him in his tracks a little bit, I think he had a story he wanted

1.06 1.57	to tell, erm, and that my question had thrown him a little bit (1) erm, and he sort of glossed over my initial question and then began sort of sharing his experiences and his understanding of his son's difficulty, erm, and his son's on the ADHD pathway erm,he's, erm (1) presenting with lots of, erm, he's 7, he's presenting with lots of erm ,violent behaviour within school, erm and he's at risk of being excluded, erm he's in the nurture room erm nurture, I suppose provision, erm and the behaviour provision at the primary school, erm, so Dad shared with me that he had ADHD and epilepsy and that, erm, this is what his son, he feels his son has, and he kept referring to him and his son as "people like us" erm and the conversation just was, it was very intense, it was about him sharing his story, the fact that he had erm, been abused received, physical abuse from his Dad, had been in care err erm, lots of difficulties, erm lots of experiences and that he could see all those in his son, erm, so it was really a consultation that was a bit unusual in the sense that (sigh), erm, I couldn't really sort of deviate from that story and it was (sigh) there was one particular incident mentioned in the support plan and we discussed with the SENCO that erm the little boy had hurt a family pet, erm, and it had turned out that he had killed a pet rabbit, erm ((puts hand to head)) and I asked Dad if he wouldn't mind sharing erm because it had been mentioned in the my support plan and Dad had sort of described the incident which was quite brutal, l erm, in he, erm told me that ((hand to head)) I think he told me that he snapped the rabbits neck and held it up to his Mum and erm, you know, was sort of smiling about it, school mentions he displays lack of remorse and empathy that sort of thing, erm, so I was quite shocked I guess, at that, erm, and Dad said to me that he sort of <understood> (2) err how is son was feeling that he shared those killer instincts (smiled) erm, and that it was something his son needed to, erm, (1) control those impulses and that's something that he'd learned to control erm, and, erm, (1) yeah so, and he said,I said, I asked him if he minded if i put it, shared that in the report and he said, no, if it helps his son, erm and his words were "you read about psychos doing that and that it's something that his son needs support with, erm, (puts hand to mouth) so, yeah, it was just a very tense, unexpected … ((sees to dog in the background)) .. can we just pause for a minute
4.59	Yep (5) I'll just wait for you to come back
5.34	Right, I'm back, can you hear me ? I'm really sorry, my son's just turned up and my dog obviously saw that ((laughs)) Erm, yeah so, ((laughs)) where were we, is that,so did you get my, I was reflecting on thefact that I was just speaking to Dad, I wanted, wondered if we should seek Mum's views but I, err you know, in a normal case that isn't something I would do, if i had spoken to Mum I wouldn't go and seek Dad's views, erm, he was very much within child, that it was the child's ADHD and that's something he shared in common with his son, erm, (2) so yeah, ((sighs)) so then obviously through supervision with L, ((puts hand to mouth)) it was really sort of talking about the issue of control and how I felt drawn into his story, erm he told me that his wife or his partner didn't understand her son, erm, and so those issues of how she may have felt, erm, and yeah, so ((smiling)) it was quite erm, (2) quite a difficult consultation I would say, I felt a little bit [over..]

6.42	[Hmmm it sounds, interesting] oh ((laughs)) I was just interested in something you said early on about it being, very, erm, intense and I was just wondering about that intenseness, what it was like to be in that ?
6.57	I felt very drawn into his story, erm, (3) he was very, erm, eloquent in his descriptions so he, for example, he described, err, a strategy for his son about music, how calming music was for his son and it was like, erm, ((sighs)) how did he describe it ? erm, "warmth to the soul" and like a, you know, like a switch and he was very sort of, erm, ((sighs)) I can't think of the word, I used it earlier, but, erm, (1) yeah, and I suppose it really sort of helped me reflect on how I would feel as a Mum if I'd seen my son do that, erm, and how he was sort of, not rationalising it, but he came from a different perspective, I would have been [*couldn't hear due to overlap*]
7.43	[hmmm]

7.45	...reflecting on how I would have felt ((laughs)) ermm in my context I guess
7.50	So how did you feel at the end of your conversation with Dad ?
7.55	Exhausted ((laughs)) (3) I felt, yeah, I felt exhausted, I felt erm, (2) it was difficult, I've never seen him, you know, so it was a telephone conversation, there was no sort of, you know, face to face, you can't pick up on body language, on expression, erm (1) but yeah, it was, it was interesting, because part of the, I think I wasn't expecting it, SENCo, there'd been social services involvement and she'd sort of, one of the barriers I was expecting was that the Dad probably wouldn't engage, want to engage with other professionals, so that threw me completely that he actually, you know, erm, shared that with me
8.33	> It makes me wonder though<, was he engaging with you as a professional or was he telling you things
8.42	Yep, yep (2) yeah that's something that I, you know, considered as well
	Yeah
8.50	Hmm, because he didn't have room in his head to answer questions, he wasn't flexible, he had this (1) that he wanted to tell me, so , yeah
8.58	And you said that first question sort of stopped him in his tracks , what was your first question ?
	Well, it wasn't the very first question but it was more, it was really wanting to know about meeting developmental milestones and just, you know, Mum's experiences through pregnancy and obviously

	(laughs) that was something he was quite surprised about really so, yeah, (laughs)
9.20	Were you, it surprised me I suppose that we often, when we're talking about meeting with parents or talking to parents, actually that means Mum (2)..
	Yeah
	… and this wasn't the case here, was that something you were expecting ?
9.38	I'd never really, I'd never really thought about the fact that actually most of the erm, pieces of work that I do is with Mum, very rarely both parents, erm, (2) so yeah, I'd never really thought about it before until then, and >maybe because the consultation was slightly unusual it made me think and reflect on that aswell<

Appendix 8 Transcription Extract from the 2nd Collaborative Inquiry Group

Transcription of 2nd Collaborative inquiry session 27.2.21

		Transcription Code	
F	Facilitator	(.)	A micro pause of less than a second
PH	Problem Holder	(4)	Pause with measured length of sec's
RTM 1	Reflecting Team Member 1	((laughs))	Non verbal communication or other contextual information
RTM 2	Reflecting Team Member 2	[ ]	Overlapping speech
RTM 3	Reflecting Team Member 3	CAPITALS	Loud or shouted speech
RTM 4	Reflecting Team Member 4	Underscore	Emphasis
RTM 5	Reflecting Team Member 5	(??)	Unclear speech
RTM 6	Reflecting Team Member 6	> <	Pace quickened
		< >	Pace slowed

Time	Transcription
0.50	Ermm, when I was reading through the transcription it felt really psychological and maybe it's not something I had (3) kind of considered so, erm, (1) openly in a reflective team even though it does always feel psychological, I think it was, erm, (2) it was almost like a really good script of what a psychological reflective team should be because of the kinds of questions that were asked as well, erm, and I thought that was really interesting, so kind of wondering and then I think erm, the facilitator was able to ask questions that brought even more out in the problem holder and I suppose when you're in the moment (1) even though I was in the reflecting team, I picked up on more reflection reading the transcription of the reflection if that makes sense? And I thought that was

	really (2) interesting and really good for my kind of professional development as well as of thinking about why I might, kind of bother in the future and how to ask questions, so I found it a really useful experience and very psychological
2.06	Yeah, just carrying on from that RTM 6, I wondered how people felt about reflecting on the reflecting team because we don't do that do we (laughing) we have the reflecting team and then it's kind of over, erm, but in this case we've had the opportunity to reflect again, erm, so it will be interesting to, I suppose just to see what comes out of that really and erm, I'm sue there's lots more that probably will but then you can go on forever can't you (laughs) erm, but the, I'm going to transcribe this discussion and then that will be it, (laughing) we won't be reflecting and reflecting but I suppose in that sense you could do , couldn't you
2.46	It was interesting reading it, having never read a reflecting team before, and being amazed, I suppose like RTM 6 said, amazed at how much does come out in that erm, in the team discussion erm, and looking through erm, the, the bit where we first go back to the problem holder and facilitator erm, and, the thing that comes out first, I don't know, I'm, maybe I've missed it in the team discussion, was not something that was discussed by the reflecting team, which is fine, it's just interesting that erm, (1) something new comes out and everybody accepts then that that is something that the reflecting team talked about and we go on that journey, erm, and how much, I'm rambling now but there is a point, how much the like, of those reflections are lost once you leave that room, you only remember what was important to you and maybe that's , maybe that's the value in it, that you only need to remember the bits that are important to you, but reading it back, there's tons of stuff that's brilliant, erm, that I would have left behind I think (2) and erm, yeah, that's the (1) I suppose you take it for granted how good it is, and how
4.15	You see, I, well I kind of (sigh) when we've done reflecting teams, the reason that we give a month in family therapy is, is purposeful it's not because we can't fit it in and we've got too many families, it is that thinking time, and, families don't get it written down, their statements or reflections, and I've always wondered about what do they remember, and when they come back the next time they say, erm, nothing (laughs) What do you remember about the last session ? so we could ask PH that, that might be interesting if she doesn't mind being put on the spot , but I've, we've never taken that as a negative because we feel that people go away, they kind of hear, the bit that they needed to hear, yeah, and they'll be stuff that you, that they hear subconsciously as well, that has, that they might not be able to articulate and that they have, and they, so it's just like that difference that we talked

	about in holding helpful conversations, so I think sometimes, erm, we probably have been a bit more critical because we've got this transcript and we're going oh yeah, yeah but I think you've stimulated it so it's gone, you heard it, it's now in your subconscious, it's kind of fitted or filled a gap that it needed to fit and now, you've moved on , and you are a better, more <u>wholer</u> person because of it. Does that make sense ? erm, because (2) a lot of the time when we ask people at the end of the session and we've done it deliberately for feedback, how was that session or how were the reflections, families say that was spot on, and that was kind of a bit of my sense of PH, when I was reading it from the beginning to the end , it was , it was a different PH at the end, erm, she had done, in that moment a lot of I think, thinking while she was talking, identified certain aspects of the conversation, particularly about roles I think, erm, that maybe she wouldn't have arrived at if we hadn't had those conversations, I'm still interested about her learning, because I think that was one of my reflections at the end was about, well you've talked about this case in different places now and what have you learned from each one and, you know, what's it helped, which was has been I suppose, the most helpful in terms of her learning, yeah, I think that's all I want to say at the moment
6.55	Erm, yeah (laughing) yeah, I think a lot of the things that i've probably been thinking myself but obviously concentrating on writing up the advice and, although I'm unpicking it I hadn't really stopped to think about how I had affected the involvement, you know, my part to play within that, erm, so yeah, talking about it and having those thoughts, voices from other people although they were probably there deep down, I hadn't acknowledged them, so, that was really useful , erm, like you were saying about roles etc and thinking about,one interesting thing I was going to say, I think it was RTM 2 that said, erm, when I said he was open and he was sharing a lot, and I think RTM 2 had said that she felt he was quite controlling, he was sharing what he wanted to share, he was giving out , and that was picked up when I gave the presentation the second time, one of the, erm, one of my cohort had said that it was really good that he shared so much with you and, erm, the tutor who was examining also picked up on that, that he felt that was a very controlling, erm, story, you know that everything about it was, so that was really interesting and I suppose it just, it really helps you to reflect on a deeper level and erm, (2) I think it's really important to be able to try and do that through, but you don't always have time but, yeah, I found it really valuable, and definately erm, reading it through, again it just reinforces that
8.45	I think as well PH, erm, when I was sort of reading it, is that, when you said it's made me think about things that I didn't know about, I think that's the point of a reflecting team isn't it, that actually you can't think about those things in the moment all the time, and there isn't an expectation to think

about those things but then having the opportunity to reflect on it, it's about those subconscious things perhaps then coming to the forefront, erm (2), and that that's a useful erm, I suppose that's a useful exercise to have because then it might kind of influence you, or any of us, going forward, I suppose, erm, and that again might be subconsciously, we're not really sure, erm, but yeah, I wondered if you had thought about, or I wonder if, having done the reflecting team and reading the transcript made you think any differently about the conversation with Dad or Dad himself

Appendix 9 Extract from my reflective diary

Reflective Diary 22·1·21.

Concept of ally — can we be an ally to
parents and how do we do this? Wherever
  Professional ally
  Parent ally
  Human ally ?

Issue of consent — we expect parents to
want to work with us because we are 'good'
there to help etc.

Critical Race theory.

Idea of professionalism — used as a defence
mechanism ?

4·2·21.
  Transcription — noticing defences
when we offer something to the
conversation, laughing, "does that
make sense?".
  I'm probably talking rubbish ek·····

do these conversations not happen due to
our defenses — concept of imposter
Syndrome.

Issue of trust. Safe space — so
important.