"It feels very white of me to go in and start poking my nose around in that, do you know what I mean?": How do Educational Psychologists (EPs) experience their own whiteness during racialised interactions in their day-to-day life?

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Abstract

The education system in the UK continues to disadvantage children who are racialised as other than white: data repeatedly suggests inequity and discrimination within the system (see for example: Long et al, 2023 for a recent round up research in this area). There have been repeated acknowledgements of failures and repeated initiatives to address systemic racism (Barnardo's, 2020). Educational Psychologists working for Local Authorities are positioned in a way that means that they are afforded opportunities to implement meaningful change across the different systems in which their work has impact and are well-placed to locate instances of systemic failures. Calls for EPs to investigate their own practice and an acknowledgement of the Whiteness of educational psychology, in terms of both the foundations of the discipline and attitudes held within the profession, feel important to recognise and act on. Whiteness, although having multiple definitions, is a social process that has its roots in global colonialism, imperialism, and the transatlantic slave trade. It is a 'lens' through which to examine social relationships and it is maintained by institutions, ideologies and societal practices that tend to normalise power imbalances and preference symbolic cultural meanings attached to people with white skin. Whiteness is identified as a barrier for change to create more equitable systems (DiAngelo, 2020). However, the focus on addressing whiteness within Educational Psychology, noticed in the wake of the events that led to the mobilisation of the #BLM movement (Williams, 2020), is vulnerable to losing momentum as things have returned to a business-as-usual way of doing things. In response to this concern, the aim of this study was to explore the experiences of EPs who identified as white and gain some insight into their awareness of their own whiteness and their experiences of racialised interactions within their work and day to day lives. Four EPs who were employed by Local Authorities took part in unstructured interviews where the concepts of whiteness and racialised interactions were discussed. The data produced was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and four Group Experiential Themes were identified: 'Uncomfortable Conversations', 'Shifting sense of Self', 'Degrees of Agency' and 'The fact of Whiteness'. The conclusion of this piece of research is that the processes of racialisation and whiteness have inevitably shaped and continue to shape, the interactions of the participants within this study and that time for critical self- reflection

is necessary for EPs to be able to consider how their own whiteness has an impact on their everyday work.

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Introduction

Steve McQueen's BBC series of short films, 'Small Axe' was a beautiful, poignant series, cut through with an incandescent vein that branded the watcher a witness to the inequalities, discrimination and violence directed towards Black Londoners in the 60s and 70s. I watched the semi-autobiographical episode 'Education', where Kingsley, a bright 11-year-old boy, is categorised as 'educationally subnormal' and separated from his peers. Coard (1971) drew attention to what was being done in the name of psychology when he wrote about how children with a West Indian heritage were being failed by the British school system and disproportionately sent to schools for the 'mentally subnormal' (Coard, 1971). The role of Educational Psychologists, who designed and validated the tools used to measure and separate, are implicated here, as taking part in "epistemological oppression" (Sewell, 2016, p.1). Oppression here is defined as: "the unfairness of a dominant "in group" over an "out group" in the form of limited access to resources and covetable opportunities, as well as social devaluation and isolation" (Nzira & Williams, 2009). Or, to put it another way, it is the "demeaning application of power" that results in the everyday injustice (Thompson (2003), cited in Sewell, (2016). I am interested to explore how Educational Psychologists (EPs) make sense of their experiences, in relation to being part of a profession that operates within a system that has been positioned, over the decades, as taking part in oppressive practices and being associated with a structurally racist education system; how do they experience the suggestion that they may be upholding the status quo in their day-to -day actions within it.

The intention of this study is to produce better understandings of both the process of racialisation, and the construct of whiteness. I am interested in how they are experienced and understood by those who identify as white themselves and who may feel complicit by working within a structurally racist system. Ahmed (2007) asks, "If whiteness gains currency by being unnoticed, then what does it mean to notice whiteness?" and in a sense, that is the crux of what I hoped to achieve by conducting this piece of research. I hoped that by encouraging people to turn in and notice their own whiteness as well as providing an opportunity for reflection to explore their own responses to the construct of 'race', something would be better understood.

However, I wasn't quite certain what it was that would be better understood, and this project became unavoidably exploratory in nature. The phenomenological approach taken (IPA) and the open-ended interviews meant that I was free to explore the experiences of my participants without any expectations of what I might find. I aimed to adopt a curious and compassionate position throughout because of my genuine desire to learn more about the way whiteness operates within our profession. As a researcher who is racialised as white by others, Kenyon (2022) suggests that I may be breaking a social contract by talking about the existence of racism with other white people; that it is not something usually discussed, disrupting as it does "the false narrative that we are inherently good, that what we have achieved in life has been achieved fairly, and that we are in no way culpable for the situation of those who are not White" (Kenyon,2022, p.34)

Positionality

Like my participants, I am also working within an Educational Psychology Service as a practicing EP. I am racialised as a white woman, although my own identity is not quite white and might be better described as 'off white' (Fine et al, 1997). Although in most instances I pass as white, I am ethnically a Jewish woman and at many times throughout my life I have been racialised as other than white. I have experienced racial slurs and often stereotypes made about Jews. I feel vulnerable at times when I hear anti- Semitic speech in the media or on the streets and I notice and understand an element of concealment amongst Jews who hope to keep their ethnicity and their activities out of the public eye. Unlike many people who are racialised as white, 'race' is something that I have considered throughout my life as I have tried to make sense of the difference that I feel; and although I am not religious and was not brought up as an observant Jew, I nevertheless acknowledge a shared culture and a long history of discrimination that is different from that of the majority group in this country. I feel that it is important for me to state this positionality in relation to race here because although I am racialised as white, there is a slight dishonesty in claiming that I am speaking from the same perspective as my white participants who all identified as white British.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

How does Whiteness Colour Psychology?

The following literature review attempts to explore some of the existing literature within this area of research. Because I am operating from a critical perspective, the literature included has been selected in a problem-solving way, seeking to understand how whiteness has manifested, been reproduced, and is structurally sustained within the places where we work. Ahsan (2020) has explored how clinical psychologists understand and are aware of their whiteness in her article titled 'Holding up the Mirror' (Ahsan, 2020); this study will draw participants from educational rather than clinical psychology, but similarly hopes to understand how whiteness is understood within our own practice, where the construct is explored from the perspective of a 'majority' group (white EPs), rather than exploring how minority groups experience whiteness. I hope that in exploring and interrogating whiteness from this perspective will create spaces to make changes in practice and enhance reflexivity.

The next section explores some of the context of how EPs working as part of the local authority system in the UK have been implicated in maintaining an unequal society.

In 1965, Britain passed its first act of Parliament that related directly to racial discrimination, making discrimination based on 'colour, race, or ethnic or national origin' *in a public place* illegal. This was partially in response to tensions that rose during the post-war period and events like the Notting Hill Riots and the Bristol Bus Boycott. In 1976, a new Race Relations Act extended the definition of discrimination to include indirect discrimination - any practice that disadvantaged a particular racial group- to public areas including education and housing. It wasn't until 2000 however

that a later amendment placed a duty on public authorities to actively promote race equality.

Alongside the British legislation, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides an imperative for those working in education to promote community cohesion. It recommends that education for children should contain '... the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin' (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, p. 9). Taft et al. examine the potential role of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in addressing the UNCRC call to promote community cohesion through their work in schools. They argue that skills, models of consultation, and person-centred practices already used by EPs may support the promotion of community cohesion in schools (Taft et al., 2019).

The subsequent PREVENT strategy (2015) made it clearer still that there was an expectation on practicing EPs to contribute towards the community cohesion agenda, placing a requirement on all professionals working with children to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (Department for Education, 2015, p. 3). It positioned radicalisation of young people as a safeguarding concern for local authorities, with a clear duty placed on EPs and other educational professionals to respond. However, the PREVENT strategy has continued to be contentious and felt to be ill judged amongst the education profession, with concerns that it had the potential for British Muslim children and young people to feel implicated and stigmatised based on their ethnicity (Busher, Choudhury, Thomas, & Harris, 2017).

Sewell and Hulusi (2016) examined the literature on addressing the radicalisation of young people and proposed a possible response from the EP community towards the PREVENT agenda, recognising that it highlighted a need for psychologists to develop a clearer understanding of the existing psychological theories in the field of radicalisation, and consider which theory might underpin applied practice. The article also considered the ethical considerations that might arise for EPs (Sewell et al, 2016).

I am really drawn to Sewell's article in that it identifies some hopeful strategies for psychologists working with young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation (for example, working with anxiety and personal uncertainty as risk factors to adopting a radical position), yet there is also something that concerns me in terms of the ethical considerations of subjectively identifying young people who might fit this category of need. Sewell al (2016) raise this concern, suggesting the example of the risk to the moderate UK Muslim community of being exposed to suspicion, stereotyping and prejudice because they may be deemed susceptible to radicalisation (Sewell et al, 2016, p. 352). Other EPs have wondered whether it is ethical to call into question individual and personal beliefs that have not yet been acted on.

There is discomfort felt in relation to this topic, but Smith (2002) found that a 'culture of silence' and avoidance of discussion of issues of community inequality and conflict can perpetuate a failure to address issues crucial to community development. Silence on this topic could contribute to the inequalities that continue to pervade our society (Reed, 1999)

British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines state explicitly that 'Psychologists need to understand the discrimination suffered by people from diverse and/or minority ethnic and religious backgrounds as a result of 'the maintenance of the

colour-blind approach in service where 'one size fits all', resulting in a lack of formal recognition of the varied diverse needs as well as these needs being ignored, unacknowledged or assumed to be the same' (British Psychological Society, 2017, p. 33). However, a discomfort at examining topics around race and racism continue to feel uncomfortable and tend to be ignored or skirted around within our everyday practice. Reed et al (2019) has argued that intergroup sensitivity can render discussion 'extremely risky' (Reed, 1999, p. 91). But there is a sense that if nothing is examined, if nothing is 'made strange', then the status quo will be maintained, and apathy will reign. Taft (2019) calls for EPs to acknowledge their own personal values and biases so that they may be better placed to reflect on their own practice and act ethically in line with the duty placed on them by recent legislation. The EPs that they interviewed also reflected on their own position of power and their cultural location both within and without the local authority and what that may mean for their practice. The tension of the position was noticed (Taft et al, 2019, p.11).

There is an existing literature around psychology and in particular, Educational Psychology which has a well-documented history of discomfort and oppression related to issues of race. Fine et al. (1997) position education and psychology as two "fields that have harvested vexing and debilitating internal contradictions, related to studies of the concept of 'race'" (Fine et. al, 1997, p. vii). In her examination of the 'buried history of whiteness within psychological research', Morawski notices that,

> *"Until recently, race research comprised a psychology of "the other", wherein non-white races were the targets of investigation. That research presumed but did not interrogate a normative psychology of whiteness…it demonstrated a keen regard for the nature of otherness, all the while largely neglecting the meanings and implications of whiteness" (Morawski, 1997, p. 14).*

She finds that there is a 'conceptual confusion' about race within the field of psychology and that historically, race has been "at once visible and invisible", where it was simultaneously promoted as a valid variable within experiments on intelligence testing on one hand and yet was missing from the concurrent work on introspection in the early twentieth century, that concentrated instead on the universality of the human experience. Hudson cuts through the problematic nature of using psychometric tests to measure abstract "murky and misleading" constructs such as 'intelligence' in response to the publication, of the 'The Bell Curve' that sought to find a correlation between race and intelligence (Hudson, 1995, p.4).

The premise of the Bell Curve, that there was a difference in intelligence between racial groups, was easily dismissed at the time, 30 years ago, as in fact was the very idea that it was possible to measure something using the flawed idea of a 'genetic' or scientific 'race' as a variable; however what troubled Hudson was that the very fact of its publication suggested something more sinister: "a myth which remains a potent ideological weapon in the service of reaction and fear" (Hudson, 1995, p. 9).

The ideology of 'fear' is a factor that is implied by the lens of coloniality: a perspective that acknowledges that our extant ways of thinking, being and viewing the world are rooted in a violent and oppressive past that enduringly privileges a White, Western understanding of the world, creating undisputed psychological norms as 'truths', when instead they are just "particular constructions of reality, rooted in modern/colonial experience, that masquerade as positionless or disinterested fact," (Glenn- Adams et al., 2018).

Some of the tools that EPs use within our work have arisen directly from this oppressive and violent colonial past. For instance, IQ testing and the notion of an

objective measure of 'intelligence', developed in Europe and America, has a particularly problematic and sometimes brutal history and is entangled historically to a eugenics movement. Yet the use of these tests, with caveats, is one of the competencies required to qualify and practise as an Educational Psychologist. As Connell (1993) has commented,

> *"In Western school systems, and Western-style school systems elsewhere in the world, a particular assessment regime is hegemonic. This means both that it is culturally dominant, connected with the society's central structure of power; and that it functions to maintain the social power and prestige of dominant groups (Connell, 1993, cited in Boykin, 2014, p.).*

There has been some consequent resistance to the past; a move to unpick the historical context that has unfairly privileged certain types of knowledge. Pillay (2017) talks about the task of re-examining and querying our practice as psychologists through the lens of coloniality and from a critical psychological perspective. Psychologists who interrogate current psychological practice suggest that "coloniality persists in particular forms of knowledge and ways of being that colonial power imposed on the world as a hegemonic standard" (Glenn- Adams et al, 2018). Dirth (2019) destabilises the EP's project by questioning the very nature of 'inclusion' itself, calling for,

> *"a recognition that normate or standard ways of being in WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) settings are not naturally superior, culture-neutral, or racially innocent standards. Instead, they are modern/colonial forms that reflect and reproduce colonial violence"* (Dirth and Adams, 2019, p.276).

Desforges and colleagues were also troubled by the notion that they were contributing to oppressive practices and following some anti-racist whole educational psychology service training, wondered whether they worked in a 'subtly racist psychological service'. They go on to make the claim that "We feel that until we acknowledge our own 'whiteness', we will not face up to, and deal with the causes of institutional racism," (Desforges et al., 1985). That paper was written almost forty years ago, but those same themes of 'unexamined assumptions and practices', including the construct of 'whiteness' and the epistemological power EPs possess, feels current. It is worth noting that surveys suggest that Educational Psychology is still broadly a profession that employs people who identify as 'white' (86% in 2021, AEP).   The ten recommendations at the end of the paper (Desforges et al, 1985, p.12) are stark in that they are recognisable as ongoing social justice endeavours within the EP services I am familiar with. Sometime after this paper was written (2006), the Division of Educational Child Psychology (DECP) working party report on anti-racism in 2006 was published and it looked back at the work that had been undertaken in the 1980s and what had been happening since then. It identified a framework for t for promoting racial equality in educational psychology services DECP, 2006).   More recently, Ahsan, writing about clinical psychology, finds that "Eurocentric, psychocentric models of distress grounded in individualism dominate the profession obscuring systemic, racial and political trauma as explanations of distress" (Ahsan, 2020, p. 46). It feels as though there is a glitch in the system that causes our profession to become stuck; that we have been caught in a loop of words and provisional action.

Most recently, Meheux (2022) (co vice- chair of the Division of Child and Educational Psychology at the BPS) reflects on the progress towards a more equal and non-discriminatory education system, answering the question she poses in her title, "How

far have we come?" Although she notes some progress, (primarily presentation of research and sharing of good practice around diversity and equality), the facts and figures persist in demonstrating a system that is not equitable. For example, she reports that Black Caribbean students are permanently excluded twice as much as White British peers and are four times as likely to be suspended. They are more likely to remain in alternative provision following exclusion, rather than be reintegrated back into a school. The concepts of 'adultification' and 'criminalisation' of Black students has featured in the media which Meheux suggests need further exploration (Meheux, 2022).

With the knowledge that discrimination towards racialised people, concerns over epistemological oppression and a discomfort about confronting our part in a system that upholds whiteness, this piece of research hopes to explore the experiences of psychologists who are emotionally and mentally invested in their work within local authorities in England. The systems in which they work have continued to be found to be 'stained' by its colonial and discriminatory past (Wright, 2017), but yet EPs simultaneously feel committed to a project of social justice. There is something that feels contradictory in being both, and somewhat unsettling, leading to avoidance and defensive moves. In reading Wright's thesis (2017), I find that I am attracted to the psychoanalytic idea of 'hauntings' and the 'uncanny'. Freud experienced the 'uncanny' when he was faced with an image of himself in the mirror that he did not immediately recognise as his reflection (Frosh, 2012, p.256). It was when he was confronted (and haunted) by this alienating, disreputable figure, and realising with dismay that it was himself, that led to this destabilising, or uncanny, feeling. Maybe this has an element of how it feels to be working within a system and a profession that is repeatedly found to be racist and discriminatory, 'haunted' by our own experiences of the past as well

as the past of the profession while simultaneously feeling that the work we do is ethical and centred on emancipatory practices.

Context: 'Post- racial Britain'?

The McPherson enquiry, begun in 1997 in response to the mishandling of the case of Stephen Lawrence's murder, found the police to be 'institutionally racist' and set out recommendations to make changes. In the early years following its publication, attempts were made to address institutional racism. However, the Home Affairs Committee (2021) found that "Over time that progress has stalled and race equality has too often not been taken seriously enough…. it is disappointing that it is taking so long for forces to agree on much needed action." The committee talks about a "fragmentation in addressing race equality issues", concluding, "We do not believe that the current structures will be sufficient to deliver change that is already twenty-two years overdue". Mirza, a former adviser on education standards, reflects that the McPherson report led to a 'performativity of anti-racism' noticed in organisations, where:

> If they invoke the term "institutional racism" … they're seen as "doing" race and that means … they've tackled the issue … the technologies of concealment become more difficult to reveal because the language is there but the very policy mechanisms themselves, have solidified racism. So, we're in this Catch 22. (Professor Heidi Safia Mirza, academic, former advisor on educational standards (Warmington, 2017, p.420)

Indeed, there is a discourse that in the UK, that we now live in a post-racial era, where ethnic and racial differences are considered inconsequential because it is the individual's 'choice' to maximise opportunities available to them. (Both Warmington et

al, 2017 or Clarke, 2021 illustrate how a post racial Britain is presented). However, Goldberg suggests that the post-racial discourse and the accompanying 'colourblind' narrative that runs alongside it, presents us with a new kind of racism that operates under the illusion that "the dream of the non-racial has already been realized", (2015, p. 108, cited in Lane and Smith, 2021, p.78). Lane and Smith (2021) examine UK policies around Roma integration and how 'post racial' policies' obscure-specific forms of structural inequalities. In their review, they highlight the inequalities and exclusionary practices evident in the way the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities are treated by authorities in the UK (hyper-ethnic policies) while the post-racial discourse simultaneously makes 'invisible' the differential experiences and outcomes of racialised groups. Because imbalances of power and inequality are understood to be integral to neo-liberal economies: even though legislation gives individuals 'rights', it does not demand the necessary changes that would be necessary to reduce social exclusion sufficiently to make those rights meaningful in practice (Goldberg 2015, cited in Lane and Smith, 2021, p. 78).

The Commission for Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) report was a government-commissioned study on race, published in 2021 that was heavily data driven. It took a post-racial perspective and draws heavily on experimental social psychology, in particular theories of prejudice and Social Identity Theory (e.g., Tajfel, 1979) when it seeks to explain how group membership categorises our social world into 'them' or 'us' and explores the experimental literature establishing conditions for optimal group interactions. It introduces the concept of "psychological asymmetry" as the most salient concept when thinking about minority–majority relations and interactions e.g. (Tropp et al. (2005). It explains that minority groups, "even after several generations, often feel a detachment and unease relative to majorities and tend to remain sensitive

to their group's relative status in the society" (CRE, 2021). Tropp's meta-analysis also found that *majority* groups are generally less inclined to reflect on their group's more privileged status (Leach et al., 2002, cited in Tropp, 2005) or to think of themselves as part of a distinct group (Pinel, 1999, cited in Tropp et al., 2005). Throughout this report, I felt like there was a lack of getting to the roots of things; it did not 'reach back' far enough behind Sarah Ahmed's metaphorical desk (Ahmed, 2007). The report found that most of the disparities that were examined, which might be attributed to racial discrimination, "do not have their origins in racism" (CRED, 202, p.11). The report concludes, "the ethnic minority experience is part of the whole; what works for a Black boy in Brixton will work for a White girl in Barnsley," (CRED, 2021, p.54), categorically laying out a post racial position.

This individualistic model is a starkly different viewpoint from Menakem (2021) who talks about racism as trauma, experienced over generations and who locates the racialised individual within the context of historical and present oppression: "Trauma decontextualized in a person looks like personality. Trauma decontextualized in a family looks like family traits. Trauma in a people looks like culture", (Menakem, 2020). This is an extreme position, nevertheless, experience of racism has been understood in clinical studies as trauma, either first or second hand. For example, Heard-Garris et al (2018) refer to racism as "a pervasive stressor" that will inevitably have an impact of children at significant points in their development, as it is transmitted via caregivers as 'second- hand' or intergenerational trauma. They cite evidence that racial discrimination experiences of caregivers may lead to "strain on the parent-child relationship, harsher parenting practices and racial socialization… all of which may increase children's threat perception and psychological vigilance" (Heard- Garris et al, 2018). These findings flag up the problematic nature of an individualistic position of

failure and success communicated by the post racial discourse. The CRE report also differs in its conclusion from the preliminary report from a recent visit by a United Nations working group (2023), partly organised by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that found that racism in the UK, in this case relating to people who are of African descent, was found to be "structural, institutional and systemic". Roberts (2013) found in her research with Black student teachers, a post-racial discourse did not represent their experiences: "Where public policy discourses present a rhetoric that sanitises and solves the 'problem' of race and racism, as reflected in some participants' views of themselves, evidence of its existence nevertheless persists", (Roberts, 2013, p. 341).

Clarke explored how the idea of 'nation' is tied up with the construct of 'race' in a 'post racial' UK. She interviewed people who identified as 'White middle-class' and notes that this group is underrepresented in the studies of race and racism. She found that racialised hierarchies of belonging or nationhood continue to exist, despite claims that we are now living in a post -racial society and although certain individuals of colour or certain groups are recognised as British by these respondents, there were some contradictions. She found that "in the making of middle-class whiteness, race continues to frame and underpin dominant understandings of Britishness… while whiteness transcends embodiment, bodies still matter," (Clarke, 2021, p. 283). Another study where 'bodies still matter' is a comparison of recent populations of Eastern European migrants' differential treatment when they came to live in the UK conducted by Fox et al. (2012). They examined the process of racialisation and how it is communicated in the media and immigration policy, particularly when comparing how migrants from Romania and Hungary are differentially racialised, based on discriminatory attitudes towards the migrant Roma population.

Another study published in 2023, found that the media coverage of the refugee crisis in the first few weeks following the Russian invasion was unusually positive compared to typical reporting of other refugee crises. Cultural similarities between Ukrainian refugees and their host countries were amplified.

The fact that they were deserving of help and vulnerable was evident in how they were portrayed within the media, as well as the suddenness and unexpectedness of their refugee status. In contrast, refugees from other countries were more usually described as having choices and plans and their motives for seeking refuge was questioned (Sambaraju and Shrikant, 2023). Bayoumi (2022) commented on how the British media had portrayed the refugees fleeing from Ukraine:

> "*all these petty, superficial differences – from owning cars and clothes to having Netflix and Instagram accounts – add up to is not real human solidarity for an oppressed people. In fact, it's the opposite. It's tribalism. These comments point to a pernicious racism that permeates today's war coverage and seeps into its fabric like a stain that won't go away. The implication is clear: war is a natural state for people of colour, while white people naturally gravitate toward peace. (Bayoumi, 2022)*

It is hard to understand these differing discourses available within the media without seeing them in terms of racialisation.

Fox et al. provide a clear explanation of the process of racialisation and what it means in practice. I find the term a difficult one to get to grips with and so will include part of their definition here by way of a useful way of thinking about the process for this project:

"Racialisation occurs when the category of 'race' is invoked and evoked in discursive and institutional practices to interpret, order, and indeed structure social relations… 'Race' in this sense is not an essential trait of migrants, but rather the socially constructed contingent outcome of processes and practices of exclusion. It is the valorised language through which structured inequalities … are expressed, maintained, and reproduced. Racialization does not require putative phenotypical or biological difference; it can also make use of (and/or construct) cultural traits as a basis of differentiation," (Fox, 2012, p. 680)

It is interesting to note here that the process of racialisation- which seems to be the process that does the work of upholding and reproducing whiteness – does not rely on the colour of someone's skin to be operational. Racialisation can be directed to bodies of all colours (including European Jews seeking to settle here before and after the war, or people moving here from Ireland); the white/ black binary is not necessary for it to occur. In fact, whiteness is not about 'corporeal lightness' at all, but about having a coherence with 'norms of whiteness' (Garner, 2012, p.446). Lighter skinned bodies may gain access to preference in terms of attitudes towards them in the press, the nationalist rhetoric and resources, but it is not a fixed variable. Fox compares how migrants from Hungary and Romania, from neighbouring countries and who share similar phenotypical characteristics, are "dramatically lightened and darkened by immigration policy and the tabloid media" (Fox et al., p. 776), via the process of racialisation. However, Bhattacharyya et al., (2002), despite this broader definition of whiteness, described how it is easier for lighter skinned and European bodies to be associated with whiteness, since they have been constructed as representative of it over centuries. My own experiences in school suggest that lighter skinned migrant families are spoken of differently than darker skinned Europeans and are racialised

differently. For another stark example, Bayoumi considers the contrast between how Ukrainian and Syrian refugees have been received in the UK and consider how the conflicts were reported in the "slanted and racist media coverage…that easily bleeds into our politics," (Bayoumi, 2022).

The 'myth of post-racial Britain' (Ahsan, 2020) and the message of the CRED report is at odds with other contemporary understandings of what is happening in the UK, where the 'colour blind' and meritocratic narrative proffered is resisted time and again. In 'post-racial' Britain, racism still exist, but they have found 'new' 'seemingly non-racial' 'modes of articulation', for example anti- immigrant or Islamophobic rhetoric (Patel and Connelly, 2019, p. 4). Goldberg (2008) makes the point that that far living in a society where racism no longer exists, instead racisms have shifted in their signifiers and are no longer recognisable (or 'unseen'). Nevertheless, the impact of those racisms are felt and the repercussions are real. For example, the Runnymede Trust finds that "racism is deeply embedded in schooling… and argues that schooling must be radically reimagined to place a commitment to anti-racism at its core" (Salisbury, 2020, p. 2). This report focuses on four strands: schoolteacher workforce, curricula, police and school policies. Gilborne et al. (2021) find that there are 'persistent and significant inequities of achievement experienced by Gypsy/Roma, Black Caribbean, Dual Heritage (White/Black Caribbean) and Pakistani students' and that the lowest attaining groups are consistently Gypsy/Roma, Black Caribbean, Dual Heritage (White/Black Caribbean) and Pakistani students regardless of their FSM (free school meals) status (Gilborne et al., 2021, p.2). Gilborne has argued previously that quantitative, statistical ways of working and gathering data, as generated by psychometric assessments, are seen as 'facts', the numbers 'speaking for themselves', but that they are no less socially constructed than more qualitative ways

of working. Writing in 2018, he looks at how numbers are used to "disguise racism in education and protect the racist status quo, that is, a position of White supremacy where the assumptions, interests, fears, and fantasies of White people are placed at the heart of everyday politics and policymaking" (Gilbourne et al, 2018). Maybe it is because of the methodologies prioritised in the CRED report that creates this 'myth' of a post racial Britain; Gilborne et al (2021) have found that: "statistical models frequently reduce racism to a 'left over' category that assumes the dominance of other factors and does not recognize how race inequity threads through and influences those issues, e.g. income, social class, and poverty" (Gilborne et al., 2021, p.2) The narrative proposed currently by those in power globally is repeatedly found act as though race no longer matters (e.g. repeal of the affirmative action laws re university in USA)

Along with a post-racial ideology comes a 'colour blind' approach to race. Gilborne (2019) suggests that advocates of 'colour-blindness' tend to present themselves as occupying the moral high ground (e.g., as rising above petty racialized disputes) in order to see the true worth of people and claim to take an individualistic approach. In practice, however, 'colour-blindness' has become an argument to ignore race inequality and silence critical discussion of racism in all but its most crude and obvious forms (Gilborne,2019, p.8). By avoiding discussion about race, by pretending that we live in a 'colourblind' society, we may strengthen the hold of whiteness. The preceding examples that critique the post-racial narrative feel important to me as a practitioner; no matter how intent we are to prioritise a personalised approach that sees the person not the colour of their skin, it seems important to recognise that for a child or family from a minority group, the process of racialisation and forms of everyday discrimination exist.

So, the context of this piece of research is situated in a historical place and time where there are conflicting ideological narratives that are difficult to resolve: the lens of coloniality that seeks to understand structural and systemic racism as bound up with our history and sees whiteness and blackness as entwined and reciprocal, bearing legacies of "hegemony, othering and power" (Wright, 2017, p.14) and the conflicting ideology that develops a post-racial narrative that flattens out the different experiences of racialised bodies and situates the resolution in the suggestion of the equal opportunities offered by present day Britain, 'unfolding' the world from now, as though our histories can be annulled and minimising both the reach of the past and the 'stain of colonialism' (Wright,2017). The 'threads' of racial inequity used here as a simile to indicate the complexity of the matter is developed by other authors: Powell uses a visual metaphor to illustrate her thoughts on what she calls Black underachievement. She visualises,

> "a *knot with many strands both in black and white. There are tiny intermediate twists which have been in place for many years and are hard and tight. Some of the twists are new and have been tied over the old. The black strands and the white act like a hoist and hold each other in place. Pulling the black strands alone will not untie the knot, and may actually tighten it*". (Powell, 1997, p. 10).

 I notice the echoes here of Gilborne's sense that 'race inequity threads through' the statistics and norms presented as 'truths'. (Gilborne, 2021).

In the following section I intend to examine some of the literature around whiteness to explore how the 'white strands' operate and are positioned to maintain the existing power imbalances and inequities discussed above.

White Bodies and Whiteness

The study of whiteness aims to critically analyse and deconstruct the concept of whiteness, challenging its assumed normativity and exploring its historical, social, and psychological dimensions. Whiteness has, historically, gained a great deal of its strength from assuming a position that race is something that other people have; hence, "ethnic" is a code for non-White, and White is synonymous with "normal" (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997).

Historically, whiteness in the UK has been intertwined with colonialism and imperialism. The British Empire played a significant role in shaping racial hierarchies and reinforcing the idea of white superiority. The legacy of colonialism has had lasting impacts on the construction of whiteness in the UK, having influenced societal attitudes, policies, and cultural representations and it is often associated with notions of Britishness and national identity. In recent years, there has been an increased awareness and discussion around whiteness in the UK, following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, the subsequent raising in profile of the #BLM movement and the illumination of the inequities experienced by racialised minority groups during the Covid pandemic that exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities affecting minority communities within the UK (Public Health England, 2020).

Gilborne makes the distinction between "Whiteness" and "White people" (2019). Whiteness is the "system of beliefs, practices and assumptions that privilege the status and interests of those who are racialised as white", or a racial discourse (Leonardo, 2002, p.31); fluid and shifting according to context. To explore whiteness within educational psychology, the participants for this study are racialised as white and identify themselves as white; I am interested in how whiteness might manifest in how

they communicate their experiences to me and how they reflect on it themselves, how their "particular forms of knowledge and ways of being" might illuminate whiteness.

Often explorations of race and racialisation have ignored whiteness as the subject, choosing instead to forefront the experiences of minority groups in relation to whiteness, arguably reinforcing whiteness as a normalised and dominant racial identity to be resisted. Instead, it has taken the place of 'an unmarked marker' and is most visible to those on whom its action is felt (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 16). Frankenberg goes on to describe whiteness as 'habitation'; "those who are housed within its borders usually do not examine it" (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 228-229). I note Frankenberg's deliberate use of the passive voice here; those who are housed rather than those who inhabit, maybe suggesting a process of racialisation that is done to one rather than an entity that is embraced. Ideas about white bodies are generalised and positioned by particular discourses around race and ethnicity that surround them, whether they are accepted or resisted. This idea, of 'race- making' ties in with concepts of social construction of whiteness and is related to the process of racialisation. Guess (2006) makes the point that prior to the 16th century, people were not talked about in terms of black and white; this artificial binary is a remnant of the slave trade and that their continuing existence presupposes racism, without which physical characteristics would be devoid of meaning (Guess, 2006, p.657, citing Stanfield (1985) and van den Berghe (1967).

Clarke and Watson instead used a critical engagement with whiteness within a children's centre in the UK to explore how this approach can 'open up spaces for emancipatory interventions' and in a sense deconstruct what whiteness means (Clarke and Watson, 2014, p. 70). The critical whiteness framework is related to Critical Race Theory and has the same assumptions. It also imagines that, just as it was created,

whiteness can be 'deconstructed and remoulded' to open new possibilities of anti-racist action.

However, even accepting that racialisation constructs our ideas of what it means to be racialised as black or white, whatever definition is used in the moment, the body and our perception of bodies is involved; the perception of the body comes first, so "whiteness serves as an organizing principle that conditions normative ways of being in and understanding society that are *fundamentally predicated upon the raced body as social signifier*", (Seawright, 2018, p.911). So even though whiteness is an abstract social construct, it is the body and where it is located that experiences and notices whiteness. Whiteness and racial embodiment refer to the specific experiences and embodiment of individuals who are categorized as white within a racialized society. However, Williams (2020) suggests that although whiteness is not an entity that is purely attached to someone with white skin, but skin colour becomes a signifier for meanings that have been established and constructed, and in a sense reinforced over time, so that whiteness becomes an organising principle to structure the racialised society that we inhabit. He imbues skin colour with socially constructed meanings and expectations, so that:

> *We begin to expect to see certain sorts of people in certain positions. It becomes unremarkable that there are relatively few educational psychologists of colour, unremarkable that there are few senior managers of colour, or perhaps to be expected that the boy at risk of exclusion is Black. This becomes just the way things are, and expectations of practice and ways-of-being within this community remain narrowly defined* (Williams, 2020, p. 2).

For white skinned people, the meanings attached to their skin colour may mean that they experience racial privilege, and may learn to enact whiteness, to internalize and perpetuate racial biases and stereotypes. A racially structured society involves everyone within it. Frankeberg (1993) points out that:

> *"Race shapes white women's lives. In the same way that both men's and women's lives are shaped by their gender, and that both heterosexual and lesbian women's experiences in the world are marked by their sexuality, white people, and people of colour live racially structured lives. White people are "raced," just as men are "gendered." And in a social context where white people have too often viewed themselves as non-racial or racially neutral, it is crucial to look at the "racialness" of white experience"* (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1).

Lewis (2018) and Seawright (2018) both explore the phenomenology of whiteness and racial embodiment within the realm of education. Lewis (2018) suggests an understanding of whiteness and racism, rooted in phenomenology that "points towards a pre-conceptual, pre-critical forms of racial embodiment". He wonders whether his white friends display a kind of racial 'dysfunction'; an asymmetry between their cognitions and their actions; as Lewis points out: "racism exists despite ideological protests against prejudice," (Lewis, 2018, p.118). Lewis argues that this 'asymmetry' between mental beliefs and bodily perceptions are not explained by unconscious or repressed thoughts, asking:

> *Can one hold anti-racist or colour-blind beliefs in one's mind while still being racist in one's bones? Are the bones themselves capable of racism? Is it possible that racism takes root in the body in ways that are semi-autonomous from mental beliefs, leading to actions that, on the surface, appear to contradict*

mental states? Such a possibility would suggest that there are different ways of

being a racist beyond simply holding racists beliefs (Lewis, 2018, p. 120)

Lewis calls for "a Gestalt shift in the way we *hear* Du Bois and Freire. While traditionally, emphasis has been placed on the word consciousness (at the expense of the body or of perception), what we need here is a renewed inflection on the corporeal." He uses the idea of body schema (Merleau- Ponty, 2012) as a way of reimagining the focus for anti-racist education and to theorise how racism can exist through actions that are in fact pre-cognitive and pre-psychological. Lewis is theorising that as racism continues to exist and is experienced by People of Colour, often by white people who claim not to have racist beliefs, then racism is potentially more pervasive than can be accounted for by beliefs or cognitions and is experienced at more embodied level. For Lewis, the emphasis on critical consciousness and on ways of thinking about other races and challenging stereotypes is not the optimum location for anti-racist education: instead the work should provide experiences of what he calls "schematic breakdown where the full and immediate flow of perceptual apprehension is interrupted and replaced with hesitation in the form of radical reflection" (Lewis, 2019, p. 129), reminding me of the central process 'critical consciousness' described in Freirean theory (e.g. Freire, 1970).

Granger (2010) similarly suggests that racism could be understood through a phenomenological lens and in an embodied way. He examines some of the primary embodied dimensions of feeling, perception, action, and thought, particularly through the functioning of habit and in so doing, explores the way, "…ideologies of domination (for example, racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, ageism, etc.) are covertly (and at times overtly) materialized and preserved through encoding in somatic norms" (Granger, 2010, p.70). Like Lewis, Granger talks of the need to "interrupt the

cycle of habitual action… to create a space for reflective consciousness" (Granger, 2010, p. 77) and my hope is that this study will create such a hesitation or interruption for the purpose of critical self-reflection.

These moments of dissonance or asymmetry are the points where maybe the real work can be done: the pauses and moments of reflection. These pauses remind me of 'the cracks' that Pillay (2017) uses to illustrate the spaces where resistance can take place: 'A crack is a perfectly ordinary creation of space or moment in which we assert a different type of doing' Holloway, cited in Pillay, 2017, p.135). The 'crack' is a metaphor for the "small spaces and everyday acts of resistance…the small cracks that cumulatively produce the crumbling of seemingly impenetrable edifices of power" (Cornish et al, 2016, p. 116). He talks about the task of re-examining and querying our practice as psychologists through the lens of coloniality and from a critical psychological perspective. Psychologists who interrogate current psychological practice suggest that "coloniality persists in particular forms of knowledge and ways of being that colonial power imposed on the world as a hegemonic standard" (Glenn-Adams et al, 2018). As Owen writes, whiteness can be "exposed, challenged, resisted and disrupted" (Owen, p.2007, p. 2005), in those moments of radical reflection and pause.

However, what should happen in those moments and pauses? What should be the focus for the reflection? I wonder whether, having noticed something that feels 'uncanny' or a misalignment with values and cognitions and action or embodied feelings, is there a point where racialised attitudes slip past unnoticed?

Maybe this uncanny sense that something is slipping past, suppressed as a feeling that is maybe confusing or troubling, and is disregarded or defended against, is the

fault of what di Angelo calls 'White fragility' (2018). This term describes the defensive reactions and emotional discomfort that many white people experience when confronted with discussions of racism and their own complicity in it. She explains that it manifests as a range of defensive behaviours, or 'White moves', such as denying or minimizing racism, deflecting blame, or withdrawing from the conversation altogether. It is rooted in the discomfort and unease that many white individuals feel when their racial identity is brought into focus. The premise is that white people are often shielded from discussions about race and racism; race is felt not to be relevant to people who identify as white and so they are implicated in an ignorance of their own privilege. This lack of racial awareness and understanding can make it difficult for white individuals to engage in productive conversations about race, as they may feel personally attacked or overwhelmed by feelings of guilt or shame. Morgan (2021) noticed during a seminar of white therapists that there was a resistance to talking about the 'race' of clients; that it was inappropriate to bring up 'race' during a consultation or formulation. She describes what happened:

> *"As we discussed this (mentioning the concept of 'race') further people began to express a fear of saying the 'wrong' thing or using the 'wrong' words, betraying a deep anxiety that racist thoughts might be exposed"* (Morgan, 2021, p. 20).

Di Angelo suggests that recognizing and addressing white fragility is essential for white individuals to engage in anti-racist work and contribute to dismantling racial hierarchies (Di Angelo, 2018). Di Angelo's approach in White Fragility has been criticised for amplifying shame and defensiveness in people who identify as white, and for inadvertently perpetuating the resistance to change and polarised anti-racists into two camps: one that felt that her 'guilt- based framing' encouraged self-reflection and

another who felt it described a racial essentialism, reinforcing a Black/ White binary (Ghadiali, 2021). Di Angelo revised some of her ideas later, (di Angelo 2021) although she maintains that White Fragility accounted for the liberal White hostility to her original book (DiAngelo, 2021). She suggests that "Progressive white people are more likely to manifest *aversive racism*" (rather than overt racism) which "allows the person to enact racism while maintaining a positive self-image" (DiAngelo, 2021). Again, this book has caused DiAngelo to be criticised for lacking self-awareness and pushing "us deeper into the silos of ethnic identity" (Ghadiali, 2021). If the concept of white fragility cannot wholly account for a failure for things to change to become more equitable, I am curious to see how else it might be explained.

Lewis (2018) proposes that the perpetuation and dominance of whiteness suggest that existing ways of thinking about it do not provide us with adequate ways of resisting or disrupting it. Maybe challenging racial biases or cognitions invite those defensive reactions and the focus instead should be on individual, embodied experiences. Several studies look back towards Fanon's writing and now call for a more phenomenological approach to exploring the embodied experience of whiteness and how it unfolds in the world (e.g., Ahmed, (2007), Lewis, (2018), Alcoff (1999)).

Sara Ahmed's phenomenological exploration of Whiteness enriches my ability to conceptualise and explore the concept. She describes it as "an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space, and what they 'can do'" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 149).

Eckstrand (2017) builds on Ahmed's phenomenology of whiteness and makes a case for the reciprocal nature of whiteness, that is both constructed in and yet also constructs the world around it; how race, and in particular whiteness in this case,

orientate us within the world, so also the world has an active role in maintaining the status quo.

Working as a researcher who is racialised as white, I hope to be able to create a space to examine the experience of whiteness with other people who are also racialised as white, specifically people who are working within the same system as me. Because whiteness does not tend to acknowledge itself (Chadderton, 2012, p.368) I hope that by naming it and discussing the topic of their whiteness, to encourage educational psychologists to explore and notice their 'ways of being' (Glenn- Adams et al, 2018), there may be an opportunity to open up a space for reflection and move beyond the guilt, uncertainty and discomfort often associated with the concept of 'race'.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The aim of this piece of research was to understand experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in relation to the constructs of 'race' and in particular, whiteness and how they experience racialised interactions in their day-to-day work through this lens. Initially, I felt motivated to understand how the EP community felt collectively in response to the calls to examine their practice considering the mobilisation of the #BLM movement and calls of structural racism. It felt important to notice and make some changes, but at the same time I was aware of my own uncertainty in navigating this area. I wondered how and where 'whiteness' as a construct was located within the profession. I wondered whether we noticed 'whiteness' operating at work and was interested in exploring other people's experiences of how the 'white gaze' might skew

the work that we do and how we go about it. I became increasingly interested in how 'whiteness', almost as a frame of reference, might be noticed within our profession. I became interested in what Garner calls 'the whiteness problematic', or whiteness as an analytical perspective, a way of examining the world (Garner, 2007, p.2). Garner says that accepting whiteness as a viable way of understanding social relationships 'strips a normative, privileged identity of its cloak of invisibility', allowing us to use it as a conceptual tool to examine its effect in different situations. It is an overarching frame of reference that can be helpful in examining other elements of identity as well as a focus on the social and power relations between people who are racialised as other than white or white. I became interested in exploring how examining the taken for granted discourses and ways of working within our social world, by making the familiar strange, would provide a space for working with uncertainty and examining how, collectively, we can address the calls for change and action to address inequality within our work. However, in order to do that, I felt I needed to go through the process with individuals; to explore the individual experience to explore this from a place of subjectivity; I was curious to hear how individuals reflected on their experiences.

Garner has related Du Bois's 'double consciousness', the concept that people who are racialised as Black must hold two notions of identity: a 'twoness'. They view themselves at first, but then, simultaneously, need to consider also how they are seen by white people, leading to a duality of self-perception. Garner suggests that the double consciousness is created by the 'white gaze' and that whiteness is the cause of it. Whiteness is often explored as it is experienced by people who are not racialised as white and for this project, I began slowly to identify that what I wanted to examine was how 'the white gaze' operated within educational psychology; how EPs made sense of what happens in social interaction that might perpetuate the inequalities and

structural racism within the systems where we work. I was curious to see how whiteness, used as a lens or critical perspective, had the potential to illuminate the points at which EP practice might be immobilised or 'stuck' in relation to examining practices that are discriminatory within our profession.

This chapter sets out the rationale for the chosen research method and will also describe the research design, including recruitment of participants, data collection and method of analysis. It begins with sections on the ontological and epistemological position that I have used as a basis for the decisions I have made about how to go about this piece of research.

Ontology

Ontology refers to a person's way of viewing the world and their social reality and this will inevitably influence our perception and ways of doing things therefore the choices we make about how to go about doing research. Sikes (2004) states that "'where the researcher is 'coming from', in terms of their philosophical position and their fundamental assumptions" is usually the most significant factor in choosing methodologies and approaches to research (Sikes, 2005, p.5) and the shape of what happens begins to form then. First and foremost, I come from a Critical position, because I am interested in the how the world is subject to the power imbalances and is set within a historical context; I am wondering "What would make a change?" and hoping that this research will yield some small insight into how we can continue the work of disrupting whiteness within our context. However, it is also interpretive and post- structuralist in that I understand knowledge to be socially constructed and that I understand identities are performative and are constructed discursively. Post structuralist thinker Butler theorises that identities are something we 'do', not that we

'are', and we perform these, often unwittingly, in different ways in different situations (Butler, cited in Tracy, 2020, p. 371).

I am also interested in the "shifting, fluid and constructed nature of power relations" (Tracy, 2020, p.53) and am therefore approaching this subject with a 'post' structuralist / modern approach and it is firmly situated within a critical lens, because I am hopeful that research has the potential to change things for those who are in situations that feel unjust or oppressive and in querying the hegemony.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) builds on critical legal studies and radical feminism, developing insights into the relationships between power and social construction of roles, illuminating as it does patterns and habits that contribute towards forms of domination or oppression. Because I am interested in exploring and maybe illuminating white ways of acting in the world and uncovering attitudes to racialisation, I initially wondered if I could claim to be using CRT as an approach towards this research. CRT is also aligned to my own understandings of 'race', and takes in concepts of intersectionality and differential racialisation, for example:

> *"race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient,"* (Delgado and Stefanchich, 2001, p. 7).

However, another tenet of CRT is that it seeks to turn up the volume of marginalised voices and lays emphasis on the voices and experiences of people from minority ethnic groups. This aspect seems to override for me the other elements of the approach. I may align myself with the principles of CRT, but for this piece of research it is not a good fit. Morales has suggested white researchers are 'epistemologically

incapable of studying whiteness' (Morales, 2022, p.708) because of their tendency to recentre whiteness; she suggests that the methods used in critical and disruptive work can be imagined as 'epistemological appropriation', leaving the white researcher 'theoretically bereft'. This has been a criticism and a cautionary note for me when considering my epistemological position and something that I recognised as part of my decision to discard Critical Race Theory as a lens through which to view the findings of this research. She feels that the methods that white students engaged in critical and disruptive work utilise, can be imagined as leaving them feeling 'theoretically bereft" to begin to dismantle or investigate whiteness (Morales, 2022, p. 708).

Aveling (1994) uses a Critical Whiteness Studies perspective to deliver a course to undergraduates. She has chosen this approach because her aim is to explore how whiteness operates within the student cohort and to encourage them to examine their own whiteness, as an object of study, or a more appropriate 'change object', enabling them to move beyond the feelings of guilt that critically examining whiteness frequently engenders (Aveling, 1994, p. 1). There is a sense that analysing whiteness opens a theoretical space for exploration of how white racial identities have been shaped by a racist society, and how white people are also racialised and learn ways of being and acting in the world. Because I am interested in examining how whiteness operates and how it is made visible within the experiences of these participants, as well exploring whiteness as a potential object of change, Critical Whiteness Studies is the perspective that I have chosen as a broad way of positioning this work.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the area of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge: the "how and what can we know" about something: what are the possibilities of 'knowing' that will come from a piece of research. For this piece of research, I adopt a social constructionist position in relation to the kind of 'knowing' that is made possible by my research. Social Constructionism is a subjective approach that understands that human experience, including perception, is mediated by history, culture and language. It is situated in a specific time and place in history and culture and the language we choose to relay an experience is part of that construction. It is aligned to Subjectivism that maintains that knowledge is "always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 21): external reality is not possible beyond individual reflections and interpretations, or as Levers suggests, "Observations are influenced by the observer and the observer is influenced by the observed" (Levers, 2013). As such, there are different ways of understanding the same experience and the same phenomenon will undoubtedly result in negotiated 'truths' or knowledges, rather than one 'truth' or knowledge. This relativist understanding will be firmly situated in the available ways of knowing within a particular historical and social culture and our subjective experience of it. This differs from other epistemological positions, such as positivism or the empiricism that seek to find a direct correspondence between 'things' and their representation, leading to the objective understanding of a phenomenon that can be tested using data collected through observation.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Phenomenology is rooted in the philosophical tradition, proposed by Husserl (1936) that is concerned with the world, as it presents itself to humans (Willig,2001, p.51) and that humans are 'sense-making' organisms' (Smith and Osborn, 2015). Husserl's thinking about the intentionality of consciousness, how our consciousness is directed or 'stretched out' towards or away from certain objects of experience feels relevant to this subject. The phenomenological approach to research gives rise to a descriptive and qualitative study of human experience. Its' aim is to conceptualise the processes and structures of mental life and how situations are "meaningfully lived through as they are experienced" (Wertz, 2011, p. 125). Because the existing literature seems to examine 'whiteness' either by exploring cognitions and biases, or by taking an alternative 'embodied' or perceptual understanding of the subject, phenomenology presents itself as a helpful way of analysing the data, in the hope that I can get closer to seeing how whiteness unfolds and noticing where it become visible. In order to gain access to the 'essence' of the experiences under investigation, Husserl suggested that the researcher should 'bracket off' any preconceived ideas and biases through the process of époché. This feels like a tall order, but more pragmatically, I aim to notice and remain aware of my existing frames of reference or prior knowledge and remind myself throughout the process of analysis of the need to remain constantly reflexive.

By using a phenomenological approach for this study, I am stating my intention to focus on the participant's perceptions of the world in which they live and what this means to them. The object of examination for this study is whiteness and how EPs make sense of their own whiteness within racialised interactions. From a phenomenological perspective, the object cannot be removed for examination from the world in which it is perceived and there is no separation between the object

(whiteness in this case) and the 'world' in which it is perceived, at a certain time and in a certain context. There is no "once-and-for-all knowledge to be found out about a real knowable world" (Langridge, 2007, p.5) and what is perceived is perceived and understood differently by different people, depending on their circumstances and experiences of the world and in the moment. As I interpret these experiences, my own world will inevitably tinge understandings and meanings made of the experiences, but for me, this feels appropriate and the authentic way of understanding the world, given that I do not come from a realist or scientific position.

Also implied in this way of working is the inevitable employment of a double hermeneutic, as an interpretative interaction between participant and researcher is established; the participant makes sense of the experience using their own framework of meaning and the researcher, in turn, makes sense of what the participant has told them, but inevitably using their own frame of reference and process of interpretation.

For the analysis phase of the research, I have selected Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Although it is not 'a recipe' for 'doing' phenomenological analysis, for me as a novice researcher I found the structure and steps suggested helpful in guiding this part of my research project. It provides a framework for analysing qualitative data that tries to reach the 'essence' of participants' experience as interpreted by the researcher. Smith and Osbourn suggest that IPA is a particularly useful methodology for examining topics that are "complex, ambiguous and emotionally laden" (Smith and Osbourn, 2015) and as such, it is a good fit with the topic I aim to research, giving rise to accounts of lived experience "in its own terms, rather than one prescribed by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions". I am aware that the nature of the method means that it is one of interpretation – my interpretation of my participants' interpretation of their experience

but I wonder whether this is different from any other method I might have chosen. The nature of all qualitative research means that there is a level of interpretation in analysis by the researcher and the rigorous reflexivity that is embedded in the method as suggested by Smith (1995) makes that explicit and open to interrogation by the reader.

IPA accepts that direct access to the life world of the participant is impossible and that the knowledge produced is the product of my own life-world and perspective in interaction with that of the participants. As such, my own experience of the object in question: 'whiteness', will inevitably frame the course of the interviews, the questions I choose to ask and the fact that I have chosen to explore this aspect of lived experience in the first place. This is acknowledged within IPA. I like the way that Tracy makes real the experience of analysis when she describes the process of "absorbing, sifting through and interpreting the world" (Tracy, p. 3) and I acknowledge that I will be doing this in my own way, inevitably tinged by my own experiences. How I have chosen to interpret my interaction is not a 'truth' but my interpretation of another's own interpretation of their experiences: a double hermeneutic.

IPA Procedure

I followed procedure laid out by Smith et al. (2022) closely when the time came for me to analyse the data produced in the interviews.

The analytical and interpretative steps that I took are illustrated in the table on the next page.

Steps in Interpretation and Analysis		
1	**Immersion in the original data**	Reading and re-reading the data from the interview transcripts and listening to the audio-recording while reading the transcript.
2	**Exploratory noting**	Initial noting - considering the semantic content and language used on an exploratory level. The objective is to create a thorough and in-depth set of notes and comments on the data. This can be descriptive, linguistic or conceptual.
3	**Construction of experiential statements;**	Analysing exploratory comments created in Step 2 to identify experiential statements. These experiential statements are articulated as phrases which express the experiential essence of the piece, hold sufficient particularity to be grounded and sufficient abstraction to be conceptual.
4	**Searching for connections across experiential statements**	Locating connections between the experiential statements for an individual participant.
5	**Identification of Personal Experimental Themes (PETs)**	The clusters of experiential statements gathered in Step 4 are identified as Personal Experimental Themes for each participant. They are organised into a table.
6	**Development of group experiential themes (GETs)**	Identification of patterns of similarity and differences across the participants' PETs that have been produced via the previous steps. This then generates a set of GETs.

Table 1: IPA steps followed, taken from Smith et al (2022)

Validity and Quality

Because I was engaged in qualitative research, the data was gathered in a way that enabled me to gain a detailed insight into phenomena experienced by these four participants. I acknowledge that my own subjectivities and standpoint, will inevitably have had an impact on the reliability of the study.

The data was collected in a naturalistic setting (two participants were interviewed in their office, one I met virtually and one I met in their own home) and participants were free to challenge and clarify meanings throughout the interview and after the event. I attempted to bracket off my existing thoughts and knowledge and engaged in reflexivity as part of the research process. I approached the process with a curiosity and genuine sense that I wanted to find out about the experiences of these participants. The whole process has been dynamic and circular in nature and this has ensured a level of validity.

This is a study set in a particular location and it will be limited in its generalisability or representativeness. Nevertheless, the analysis of the data will seek to find themes that can be generalised across participants, and it may be that some of the themes raised may be useful in future conversations with others with similar aims.

Ethical considerations as laid out in the BPS guidelines (BPS, 2014) and university data handling considerations have been adhered to carefully throughout. A more detailed protocol of how I approached the ethical considerations of this study is found in the appendices (Appendix 8), but I would like to highlight the types of harm I considered during the process of data collection and subsequently.

Firstly, I was highly aware that EPs were trusting me to talk about something that placed them in a precarious position, both personally and professionally. Talk about

race is unavoidably something that can feel 'risky' and I recognised the importance of ensuring that participants felt safe and contained. I was also clear that the accounts needed to be not only pseudonymised but also anonymised, to avoid participants being recognised. The nature of the interviews, where identities and personal details were examined, had the potential to expose participants and I took steps to ensure that they could not be identified. I ensured that I maintained contact with all participants and checked in with them and continue to check in with them since the interviews took place. Throughout the interview process and subsequently, I have made my own uncertainty and hesitancy clear and shared instances of my own anxieties related to the topic. In so doing, I hoped that my own genuine grappling with the topic might support other EPs in maintaining a compassionate stance towards themselves and others implicated in their narratives. I hoped that these approaches and care taken to minimise potential harm would mitigate any ethical concerns that were raised by this study.

Participants were drawn from EPs working within local authorities. I approached the recruitment initially not having identified whether I would include participants who identified as white or EPs from the whole community, whether they identified as white or not. Consequently, I did not specify this within the initial email that I circulated to all regional local authorities, asking only that EPs were currently practicing within local authorities and were interested in engaging in the topic of whiteness (See Appendix 9). During the process, however, having refined the focus of the research, and having read more widely about being a white researcher researching race, I decided that I would work with EPs who themselves identified as white, narrowing, and defining the research further to explore 'white gaze' as it is directed both out to the world and turned in towards the viewer. In fact, only one respondent who identified as other than white

approached me and asked me to clarify if I was seeking to recruit white participants or participants from all backgrounds. It was that respondent who helped me to clarify and define the topic more clearly and I am grateful for the opportunity to talk this through with that person. Any respondents to my initial email were contacted and initial meetings arranged to discuss any queries, concerns and outline the interview process.

The ethical procedures laid out within the University regulations were followed and discussed further in supervision where concerns arose about specific ethical dilemmas. I felt there could be significant personal and professional risks for the participants because the nature of the topics that we would talk about might potentially expose them to negative judgements from others reading the study, affecting them both professionally and personally. The focus of the study takes us into topics that are often left 'untalked' about and 'race' is felt to be a 'risky' and difficult area to discuss. Apart from the professional harm that might occur through identification of the participants by others. I also considered the emotional harm that might occur as the participants shared with me aspects of their identities, allowing me to get so close to their experience in the retelling. Some of the conversations that we had could potentially expose them to troubling or distressing feelings, as they were encouraged to reflect on problematic situations that may previously have been unexamined; personal reflection that might cause some discomfort and dissonance for the participants. For all these reasons, I took the ethical considerations of this study seriously and took steps to mitigate any potential harm to my participants.

Dates were organised for the interviews, interviews were held and then follow up meetings planned once the transcripts had been produced, anonymised and pseudonymised to check that participants were happy with those measures and that they felt safe enough to let me proceed to the next stage of analysis. Not only

pseudonymisation but also anonymisation were necessary because of the potential for harm due to identification of the EP participants. This was especially so because the data contained details about identities and life experiences that could identify them and also because the EP community is so small that identification becomes more possible. For this reason, all names have been changed, geographical locations have been changed and other minor details altered to protect identities.

I took the ethical considerations of this study seriously and took steps to mitigate any potential harm to my participants.

Tracy (2020) has developed what she refers to as her "8 Big Tents of Qualitative Quality" (Tracy, 2010, cited in Tracy 2020) which is designed to provide qualitative research with a framework of criteria to work towards in order to provide good quality qualitative work that can be trusted and valued across different paradigms (Tracy, 2020, p.269).

The eight criteria are: worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical and meaningful coherence. Each 'big tent' will now be looked at in more detail to illustrate how I have addressed each one.

To be a worthy topic, Tracy (2020) suggests that it should be relevant, timely, significant and interesting. The topic initially came about as a result and as a response to the events of Summer 2020 and the ensuing call for Educational Psychologists to examine their ways of working in response to the #BLM movement and evidence that the education in the UK was systemically racist. This led to acknowledgement that these discussions are often "uncomfortable" and this has been reflected widely on social media and on the EPNET forum. There is an acknowledgment that previous silence and ideology of 'colour-blindness' could be construed as complacency and has

served to uphold structural or systemic racism. The same issues are relevant now, writing 3 years later and the work of the educational psychologist community in trying to dismantle whiteness and understand how they are implicated within this system continues to be active.

The rigor and sincerity of the research was maintained by using an appropriate sample for my research question, (EPs who identified as 'white', who were currently employed by a local authority). Adequate time within the field and appropriate theoretical constructs were used to guide the project. These were discussed and validated by my reading and effective supervision with my supervisor. I followed an established method of analysis (Smith and Flowers, 2020) and maintained a position of reflexivity. This has involved a level of transparency about the process throughout. I chose to work with 4 participants and felt that this relatively small sample size would be adequate at this stage because of the comparative novelty of this particular group (white EPs talking about whiteness and racialised discourses within their day-to-day work).

I aimed to build a 'thick description' from the transcripts of data and to provide appropriate detail in the analysis that means that the research can be seen as credible by the reader. The benchmark of resonance is brought about through the way those descriptions and the analysis is brought to life so that a reader may feel that they are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences. This is central to my project, situated as it is within the critical paradigm that is hopeful that new understandings may change the experiences of people who are marginalised or oppressed. The previous criteria flow into the next, which is whether the research can provide a significant contribution to the understanding of the topic area. My sense is that the analysis has contributed to a wider understanding of this topic within a very specific context, namely within the

educational psychology community working within Local Authorities in the UK. There is no doubt that the process has widened and developed my own understanding and I continue to reflect on the conversations that were part of the data gathering phase. My intention was that the participants would also find the space useful as a part of their own reflections. I also felt that by writing this now, there was a sense that the conversations about whiteness and the process of racialisation are 'kept live'. Throughout I have felt vulnerable and am clear that I am only providing one interpretation of the experiences as they were relayed to me. I have been transparent about my own lens and am quite certain that someone else using the same data may have come away with different themes and ideas about the topic. I am sincere in that I lay out my interpretations and hope that they are interpreted and critiqued again in order to offer an ever-richer understanding of the subject in hand.

The last 'tent' in Tracy's quality qualitative framework suggests that the research should have a meaningful coherence. Every attempt has been made to engage and make the topic and findings meaningful to the reader and I have attempted to assimilate information from a wide variety of sources within this writing. I revisited the research questions throughout the project to make sure that I was answering them in a coherent manner and have tried to make my thought processes transparent within the body of the writing.

Procedure and Data Collection

Data collection took place in April 2022 and took the form of recordings of open ended, 1:1 interview that were transcribed by me prior to analysis.

My initial intentions in approaching the interview were that I wanted to explore how the participants talked about their own identities as white EPs. I was also interested in other aspects of their identify to get an idea about how they positioned themselves in relation to the concept of race. I was also interested in understanding better how the topic of race and racism were noticed in their day to day lives. I hoped that these narratives would help me to understand and theorise about how elements of the EPs identity informed their approach towards racialised interactions. I understood that these interactions are firmly situated within the contexts described to me as part of the interviews and I wondered whether the 'white gaze' might become more apparent to me as the researcher EP. I wondered how the structural elements of discrimination, maybe as a result of whiteness, might be experienced by these EPs and how they made sense of them or noticed how they were reproduced and reinforced by their own interactions or the interactions that they noticed in their day-to-day work as practicing EPs.

My initial questions for each participant were related to how they identified and given that the participants knew that we were meeting to talk about race, all participants talked to me about how they identified in relation to the construct of race. This may have been even more the case because of my own disclosures about feeling that race has been a significant part of my identity.

After the event, I wondered whether that initial question then steered participants down a direction of talking about the white identity, or lack of a feeling that they had

an identity related to race and that a more open question might have produced some more interesting accounts, with other more salient aspects of their identity and intersectionality being discussed more thoroughly.

 I had a list of questions to ask participants that were used if the conversation began to die down or when I needed to bring the conversation back to the topic of interest. Other than that, I was keen to allow the participants to lead the conversations and take them in a direction that seemed meaningful to them. This felt important in building up rapport with my participants; I felt that for these interviews to be meaningful and insightful, then they needed to cover the things that participants felt were important, rather than me imposing an interview schedule on them. I felt that the resulting transcripts are a record of interviews that were as naturalistic as possible and that this allowed some candid and trusting conversations to take place, where the most salient experiences of participants were discussed, and they felt safe to share them with me over the course of the interview.

Smith et al. (2022) suggested the semi-structured interview is a "conversation with a purpose" (Smooth, 2022, p.54) and this seems a good description for the interviews that took place. All but one of the four interviews took place face to face. One was conducted via a virtual video conferencing platform for efficiency (this participant lived further away than I could reasonably travel).

All participants were recruited via word of mouth. They responded to an information sheet that was emailed to them and all ethical procedures in terms of consent were followed as laid out within the data management plan (Appendix 6). All four participants were practicing EPs who were employed by 4 different local authorities in the England.

Brief participant details are included below:

Ash

Ash qualified as an EP within the last five years. She identifies as a white and British. Before she began her doctorate training, Ash worked within the health sector.

Sam

Sam qualified as an EP more than 10 years ago and previously worked as a teacher. She identifies as white and British.

Fran

Fran qualified as an EP within the last ten years and previously worked within the education sector. He identifies as a white, British male.

Charlie

Charlie qualified as an EP within the last 10 years and was previously a teacher. She identifies as White British.

The interviews were conducted over a two-week period and transcribed soon after the event. The process of analysis and interpretation outlined in *Figure 1* was followed.

The findings and analysis are now presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 : Findings and Analysis

Overview

Four distinct General Exploratory Themes (GETs) were discovered:

Uncomfortable Conversations, Sense of Self, Degrees of Agency and "The Fact of Whiteness". The GET in each case was expressed slightly differently by each participant, but if the experiences involved and the emotions involved were felt to be similar, then I placed the statements (PETs) within an overarching GET. People reading this will undoubtedly see alternative ways of organising and interpreting the data, but the way that I have chosen to present it to you has been thought through and feels true to the meanings as they were conveyed to me and interpreted by me.

The analytic process and the infographic (below) make the interconnectedness and the fluidity of the themes evident. There were different ways for me to interpret and categorise the statements and even as I write this, I can imagine other ways of grouping or naming the themes. However, my confidence in the analysis was strengthened by returning to the original transcript repeatedly and checking phrases and sentences and so "connecting the part back to the whole" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 105).

Sam: talking about 'race' has felt uncomfortable

Fran: Talking about 'race' has required a 'safe space' and trust and may be uncomfortable

Ash: Getting it wrong: 'race' as a problematic discourse

Charlie: talking about 'race' is risky & requires a safe space – 'the white club'

Sam: Noticing difference

Conscious of her own white privilege

Ash: Embodied feeling of discomfort

Noticing systemic differences in attitude

Uncomfortable conversations

Ash: Sense of self

Wondering about 'race' as part of identity formation

Sam: Core values

The kind of person that she is shapes her sense of self in relation to 'race'

Fran: Working out how to be as a white, British male

The fact of whiteness

GETs

Shifting sense of self

Charlie:

Intersectionality and identity

Questioning how to be in relation to racialised discourses

Charlie: 'race' is significant but located elsewhere

Recognition of power imbalances

Fran: The values that his family held may have shaped his sense of self

Degrees of Agency

Fran: noticing systemic differences and inequality

Finding a way through, but feeling thwarted by systemic attitudes

Ash: working within the system while planning for future action

Sam: is on an effortful journey to make a difference

Responsibility

Commitment to the project

Charlie: Feels present and yet absent from the situation

Disempowerment

Irony

Querying her role within the wider system

Figure 2: Diagram to illustrate the four General Experiential Themes (GETS)

GETs were generated following the initial, ideographic stages of analysis.

Each of the GETs will now be explored in detail, with a discussion of the Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) contained within each, with quotations that I felt characterised them effectively.

1: Uncomfortable Conversations

Uncomfortable Conversations	
Ash	Getting it wrong – 'race' as a problematic discourse
Charlie	Talking about 'race' is risky The White club: safe spaces to talk about 'race'
Fran	Talking about 'race' has required a safe space and trust and can lead to discomfort
Sam	The talk feels uncomfortable

The discomfort in speaking about ''race'', both as part of the interview process and within the wider contexts of the lived experiences of the participants was something that was evident in all four accounts.

I have labelled the GET "Uncomfortable Conversations" which I hope captures the embodied sense of discomfort that was tangible at times and noticed in the hesitations and pauses when the talk was explicitly about personal experiences of ''race''. Fran admitted towards the end of our conversation that he had noticed how he felt during the interview and reflected that he was consciously shifting the conversation away from discussing whiteness or 'race', preferring instead to talk about politics:

"…at several times in the conversation, I had an urge just to say – bring in politics or something – and not talk about my experiences at all!" (laughing) (line 429)

Fran touches here on his own defence against coming too close to his personal experiences of 'race', the laugh maybe being part of that, and it is also something noticed by Charlie in reference to delivering anti-racist training: *"… it's so loaded, isn't it? And I think … it's such a … such a tricky thing. Because people get defensive straight away, don't they? And it's… how do you get over that?" (Line 65)*

Fran does talk about 'race' nowadays, having felt that it was almost 'impolite' to do so when he was younger. He felt frustrated as a child: he was troubled by racist incidents and racist comments that were taking place around him, but he felt frustrated, that he didn't have a language to talk about 'race'; "it was wrong but didn't have the words to articulate it at the time" (line 80).

Now, Fran has a close circle of friends with similar values, he has a safe space to examine and explore his ideas about 'race' and whiteness, although he would still feel hesitant to bring up the topic of 'race' within his professional life. He says,

> *"In my circles, it's talked about a lot. But it's probably a bit of a bubble. I don't think it's talked about everywhere,"* (Line 159)

As an EP, he wears a "mask of professionalism" and feels as though there would be "more at stake" if he were to "get it wrong". I get the sense that however much he has read and discussed and considered the concepts of 'race' and whiteness, that sense that it is a topic to be avoided, that it might offend someone, persists. He is frank with me about his dilemma; he has been involved with thinking and noticing differences in his personal and work life and has critiqued several narratives around the subject, and yet the feeling that 'if you talk about 'race' then you're a racist' (line 377) lurks on.

Charlie talked with irony to me about the notion of a 'white club' where white people felt safe enough to comment on 'race' or make racist remarks:

"Because people know, don't they? If you're Black or Asian – they know not to say anything, don't they. Whereas if you're white, then people let their guard down don't they and think that they're all part of the same kind of club. And they share their racism / their racist views. And it's acceptable. This is the white club…"

Charlie has found herself part of this club at times when family members have been openly racist in front of her, but she is aware that any challenge might jeopardise the fragile relationships she has.

I kind of accept that he's racist and I don't challenge him because I have challenged him in the past and there's been big arguments over it. And I've stormed out of the car. And it hasn't got me anywhere and it hasn't changed things…. I think he's quite entrenched in his views and I think I would find it very tricky to change his views. I think he might agree with me, just for the sake of it. He'll carry on thinking the way he thinks. (Line 97)

A little later, Charlie explained:

I grew up in a racist household. I can remember my dad saying to me, "You eat chocolate ice- cream, you'll turn into a (and I won't say the word)". So that …Yeah, and I kind of … that kind of racist language was used. And even now, mum; mum will sit and watch the telly and say, will use offensive words and yeah… so I think it's in me and I always feel guilty if I have a racist thought. If I quickly think to a racist thought, I feel bad that I've done that. (Line 148)

I wondered whether some of Charlie's discomfort and hesitancy around talking about race may have been related to her earlier life experiences; she is clear that there is a 'right' way and a 'wrong' way of talking about 'race' and that getting it wrong would

leave her feeling exposed. Talking as an EP feels particularly risky for Charlie because there is maybe more at stake.

> *I would be afraid of saying things …using the wrong terminology…. It's best not to talk about it because it's too contentious. And particularly within the work context- I wouldn't want to … because the work context is different, you know, from with your family… and even that's tricky (Charlie, Line 89)*

She might choose instead to talk about 'race' with her partner or with friends and close colleagues; as they did for Fran, friends or partners provide a 'safe space' to discuss 'race' and manage any difficult feelings. Charlie grew up in what she calls a 'racist household' and even now she finds that sometimes she finds herself having a thought, as an adult, that she would think of as prejudiced or racist. She explained how growing up in that environment has meant that,

> *(My) mind can jump straight into racist thoughts…. If I quickly think to a racist thought, I feel bad that I've done that…I notice it and I wouldn't voice what I'm thinking. Although I probably would to my partner (Charlie, line 147).*

Charlie feels that a sense of safety is a necessary requirement for people to be able to express themselves; for honest dialogue to take place, she feels that people need to be able to talk openly without the fear of being shamed if they say something 'wrong'. There's an idea evident in Charlie's narrative that there is a 'right' way and 'wrong' way to talk about 'race', as there is an accepted way of talking about gender and she gave an example of an online meeting that she'd attended. Someone said something in the meeting that had been building on a stereotype that had been called out by another member of the meeting. Charlie recounted the incident, where she draws a parallel with talking about gender stereotypes:

And it all suddenly felt very uncomfortable…you could sense the awkwardness, I tried to change the topic and make light of it…it was a group of EPs, group dynamics, power, who could say who was listened to, who could be heard….but it was all very tetchy and it was all very uncomfortable…so in terms of thinking about whiteness … people need to feel they can be open and people need to feel safe…? People are not going to be honest and open and genuinely change their views … unless they can say something that politically incorrect and feel safe. And have an open debate and challenge about that. (Line 305)

Sam is cautious of talking about 'race' as well, although seems to be developing a language to do so; for her, as for the other participants there is the notion that it is a topic that can cause discomfort and that there is a 'right way' and a 'wrong way' to talk about it. Generally, she has not talked about 'race' in a professional capacity, reflecting that:

"*Whenever you're going to talk about 'race' there is always the possibility you might put your foot in it or say something that is the wrong thing to say and might be seen to be racist itself by having the conversation about it, somehow... So, it's a tricky conversation to have*" (Sam, line 180).

I wondered whether Sam felt more safe talking to colleagues about 'race', because she had told me that she was invested in developing in anti-racist practice within her service. Sam thought for a while and then shared, *"To be honest – it's always slightly uncomfortable even with colleagues because you always feel like you could say the wrong thing* (Sam, line 196).

This seems to be born out of a desire to cause no harm; that talking about 'race' has the power to upset, explaining that: *"You don't know when you're speaking to*

someone, where their thoughts are because not everyone will be wanting to talk about 'race' even if they're from an ethnic minority." (Sam, line 186)

Sam, like Charlie and Fran, felt that there were some people who provided a 'safe space' to discuss 'race': Sam has a "*a very safe relationship*" with her neighbour (who is racialised as white), suggesting that certain features of that relationship minimised the risk of discussing this topic for Sam. *"She is very hard to sort of upset. And she says what she thinks. So, she was quite happy to have that conversation* (about whiteness and 'race') *with me."* (Sam, line 269)

There is a sense here that the conversation was only possible because of the 'safety' of the relationship and the confidence that Sam wouldn't upset her neighbour by discussing this topic with her; she is secure enough to manage the feelings that other people may defend against.

There is an echo of Fran's 'if you talk about 'race' then you're a racist' comment (Fran, line 375) seen in what Sam says when she admits, she had been worried about feeling somehow exposed by having conversations openly about 'race':

> *"But even then,* (when talking to her neighbour in the garden) – *I was aware that people might be listening in. I've got to get this conversation right. That discomfort, that fear that you might say the wrong thing, and someone is going to think you're racist, I guess. That awareness was there then when we were having those conversations. That worry that you are going to say something wrong. Yes, that discomfort was there…"* (Sam, line 269)

The sense of 'getting it wrong' is prominent in Ash's talk around this theme and the tendency not to talk about 'race' unless necessary because she might get it wrong. She says, "*I mean it's a bit like shame. It's not to be spoken about,*" (Ash, line 111)

and when she was growing up it was not something spoken of: *"the idea that we would speak about… well we never would speak about like whiteness and white people and how white people navigate the world" (line 37).*

When it has been necessary to respond to instances of racist language in schools by teachers, she knows that there has been some uncertainty shown about how to deal with the incidents. Ash also hints at the idea that it was only because the racist talk was witnessed by an outsider, someone from outside the organisation, (a visitor to school and during online learning) that it had been responded to and treated differently from other behaviours. To use a concept evident in the experiences of other participants, the 'safe space', the 'white club' had been breached and this had meant that action had to be taken, even though it was uncomfortable to do so. (The *"pupils used racist language in front of this external person…"* (Ash, line 76)). So, Ash brings in the idea that racist language should be responded to, but often there is an ambiguity about how to do that within schools and in her experience, it was the racism being exposed to someone outside the school system that triggered a response.

This incident parallels with how Ash talks about an incident that she was directly involved in, where she had felt exposed in her interaction with a friend who was racialised as black. Ash talked about an incident between her and the friend, where they had shared an exchange that she described as 'clumsy at best':

> *I have a friend and he's from London. I said something to the effect of like not "where are you really from?" but like, "Are you from London?", as in central London, as I would understand as London, or do you know, the arse end of, and immediately we ended up having a conversation about 'Oh no- I didn't mean that…" (Line 114)*

Ash had tried to apologise for what could easily have been misunderstood by her friend as a micro-aggression. It had been unintentional but continued to trouble Ash and she had noticed how her friend had tried to make her feel better, which for Ash, made it worse. On reflecting on that situation, she now feels that,

> *"It's probably easier just not saying anything. And just go – Christ, I hope they didn't notice* (the potential microaggression)*. There is almost that thing that it is better almost not to say anything about it. I'm going to get called out and made to look silly. I'm going to be held to account and made to feel bad and so I'm not even going to go near that conversation which is tempting. There is a seductiveness to that."* (Ash, line 122)

And yet Ash is torn; although it is easier to avoid saying anything*,* from a personal values perspective, she would rather tolerate the discomfort and speak out: *"I'll have the conversation because I know that's how I value, that's what I value…So I'm just going to have to, have to do it"* (Ash, line 127).

There is a sense in Ash's account that talk about 'race' can complicate relationships and lead to fracture and need for repair. Ash works within a traded model of EP delivery, and she notices that she feels reluctant to bring up conversations about 'race' with leadership teams because it might jeopardise relationships within schools. For Ash, even though she is aware of potential situations where behaviour is maybe understood differently, depending on whether a child is racialised as white or black and she is aware of news stories where schools have been found to be systemically racist, she would be reluctant to bring 'race' up in conversation unless she already had an established relationship in a school; where "you have enough time and space to repair and manage conflict" (Ash, line 150). However again, she is conflicted, maybe

because of her values that she is mindful that these are important conversations that need to be had even though she feels that they may be perceived as 'aggressive' and damage the traded relationships (Ash, line 147).

In summary for this GET, all participants reported a sense of discomfort when involved in conversations about 'race', sometimes expressed as an embodied feeling of discomfort, particularly when they were not amongst trusted others. The precarity they experienced was signalled to me repeatedly and was conveyed to me by the use of embodied metaphor, changes in pace, lowered voices and emotive language. There was a hesitancy to their talk, and it took time for participants to build up to being more open with me. I noticed a reliance on tropes and scripts in the earlier stages of the interviews and wondered if these were a way to distance themselves from the content and to indicate that they knew the expected responses. But during further reflection, I felt that these scripts on whiteness were being rehearsed, tried out for their efficacy, and maybe spoken out loud for the first time in some cases. The sense that there are ways of talking about 'race' that are felt to be 'wrong' means that the participants were relying on accepted ways of talking to me initially, but this did shift over the course of the interviews, and I felt I was given access to their more authentic voices as the participants developed a sense of trust with me. This GET suggests that the participants, who were all highly educated, experienced, and thoughtful practitioners are reluctant to discuss the topic of 'race' within their day-to-day interactions and are also reluctant to express their own identities in racialised terms, the conundrum being that their defensive moves to avoid talking about these topics may mean that they remain unaddressed and maintain the status quo, despite the best intentions of everyone involved.

2: Shifting Sense of Self

Shifting Sense of Self	
Ash	Sense of self and values shape how she acts 'Race' was not part of Ash's identity when she was growing up - other discourses were more available
Sam	Core values/ the kind of person that she is has shaped how she feels in relation to racialised interactions. Her identity in relation to 'race' was not something she had considered before she started to read about whiteness: Impact of learning on self
Fran	The values his family held shaped Fran's identity. Friends and travel to other countries where he was in a minority group have strengthened Fran's sense of self.
Charlie	Intersectionality and identity Impact of upbringing – questioning how to be in relation to racialised interactions

The second GET to explore is named Shifting Sense of Self. I asked each person as an initial question how they identified and so it is expected that this was a theme that arose across participants and maybe the personal experiences that I wanted to tap into meant that this is an inevitable theme. However, as I read and re-read the accounts and began to get a sense of what was important in what was said, I felt that a broader sense of identity and sense of self emerged. This GET relates both to how

participants identify and influences on that, but then also how identities have shifted over time, particularly in relation to how they see themselves in relation to the construct of 'race'. I also noticed in some accounts a 'sense of self', in terms of values and a reflexivity towards how they position themselves towards 'race' and whiteness.

Sam's sense of self in relation to this topic and the kind of person that she is comes through strongly in her interview; I get the sense that her identity both as a responsible practitioner and a compassionate and empathic listener is key to her approach to the work that she has done within the area of thinking about whiteness and the impact of racism.

Sam has extended family who lived in another part of the UK from where she grew up and this is part of her identity. It feels significant for Sam in relation to how she understands belonging in terms of where you live and where you have been born. She experienced being 'othered' while at school because she was seen as different for being 'posh' and talking without an accent. Maybe because of this, her drive to be inclusive is strong and a significant aspect of how she sees herself:

> *I'm a friendly sociable person and I think I'd already go out there to make people feel comfortable. But I think now I'd make even more of an effort now with people who are from an ethnic minority, who are of a different skin colour… I'm more aware of trying to include people that might otherwise not be included.* (Sam, line 310)

Because she has been affected by the experiences of people who are close to her (line 68), and because of the events around the summer of 2020 and the way that the profile of the #BLM movement was raised in the UK, Sam has been proactive in reading about whiteness and its impact. The reading that she has done has changed

how she sees herself as a white person; as she says, on her learning about whiteness, "*there is an emotional content …. Of white privilege. Which makes you feel like uncomfortable" line 75)* and her journey to finding out about the experiences of racism from colleagues and friends has altered her sense of self. As she explains, she is 'Making up for it'; because of the reading she has done, she now feels more aware of the experiences of racialised people and knows that others are not so aware – she has positioned herself in a role of making a difference; she feels a sense of responsibility as a white person to make things better.

There is no hint that Sam sees herself as the keeper of the knowledge she has accumulated: she'd like to share it; she sees it as everyone's responsibility and she is bringing what she has learned to other people: speaking about how she had had a conversation about whiteness with her neighbour, she explained*, " She hadn't got that idea that she was advantaged by being white, I was bringing that idea into her", (Sam, line 260).*

As well as being a 'teacher' or bringer of knowledge, Sam's identity as a psychologist is also evident within the transcript, as she tries to make sense of where racism comes from: "I guess as psychologist we're always looking at the whys and the motivations of why that child is being racist" *(Sam, line 219)* and *"*as a psychologist you're trying to look at everything in their life" (Sam, line 235)

But there is also a clear sense that Sam tries to understand how other people have developed their views when she hears white people saying things that are discriminatory in her day-to -day work. She sees herself as a compassionate person and she is not judging others for not having the learning that she has; she reflected at

one point that she was worried that what she had said to me might sound patronising and was keen to make it clear that wasn't her intention at all.

Sam uses the metaphor of a journey or a path throughout our conversation and the journey has not been easy and has led her to some difficult situations. Her view of the world has changed and yet there is a sense that she sees this as a journey that needs to be taken; that it is her responsibility. She has taken small and pragmatic practical steps that she feels will have an impact on how people are included. The idea of the journey being effortful is repeated several times (e.g. "*I think now I'd make even more of an effort now with people who are from an ethnic minority*" (line 312), "*I made a real effort to learn their names and write their names down …I've really made an effort to remember their names which I might not have thought about in the past.*" (Line 323), "*in …. making that extra effort that I might not have done had it been a white British family… it was really making that effort to say that you are welcome*" (Line 330)). So, Sam experiences the uncomfortable emotional load of becoming more aware of the impact of whiteness, and now she knows about the impact of whiteness, her sense of responsibility means that she is prepared to put in the work to make a difference, even though it is experienced as something effortful and uncomfortable.

Each participant spoke of how 'race' was not something that had been part of their identity growing up and that it was often a concept that they had been largely unaware of. Sam says that 'race' is something she didn't think about as a child (line 45) but since she has been reading around the topic of whiteness, she has become more aware of the idea of 'race' (line 75). Ash is troubled by the white British identity and what that means for her (line 8), because of its connotations with far-right organisations. She finds the values instilled in her from having been brought up in a 'Left middle-class' household are somehow at odds with being labelled as 'white

British'. *"Yeah – I'm a bit squeamish. Something to do with the Left middle classes. But. Yes. I am White British. And left middle class. In an intersectional way (laughing)"* (Ash, line 9).

It was only when Ash began the doctorate course that she began to consider her identity in terms of 'race' during a seminar where she was asked to consider how she identified herself. I wondered what Ash's laughter meant here; it was the beginning of the interview and I felt that there was some tension or defensiveness towards labelling herself as 'white British'. She reflected on her answer, noticing that 'race' was not part of her identity, whereas as other discourses were more prevalent growing up:

> *My answer went off on a kind of like gender identity tangent because I was quite familiar with ideas of Feminism and gender and sexism from quite early on, it had really never entered my head. It's that 'Whiteness as default' kind of idea that I don't have - I almost don't have a 'race' identity because I am White- and that is everywhere.* (Ash, line 22)

Ash has noticed that some of her social interaction around 'race' has led to her feeling at odds with her own sense of self and her values. She explains how she has noticed her, *"sense of self being kind of eroded because you allow racist or discriminatory practices to continue but it can be shelved, I suppose. That inner work…"* (line 64).

Then there is a sense that working through the discomfort and reluctance to act has been necessary and led to a sense of 'smugness' and that she is 'one of the good guys' realigning her values with her actions (line 58). There is also a sense with Ash that she is aware of a more collective identity of EPs, when she talks here about how her service has responded to the call to re-examine their practice:

We like to think of, or perhaps there's this idea of ourselves as quite critical, you know, right on thinkers and practitioners but then when someone sort of, I don't know – it's sort of, it's almost like an afront to all of that (line 54).

Fran grew up in a household that may have had some similarities with Ash's. He described his parents as*, "lower middle class with fairly strong left-wing values… I mean I've got fairly similar values. I don't know how much I absorbed from them but probably quite a lot"* (Line 10). Fran also felt that the concept of 'race' was not really a feature of his identity growing up, explaining "*certainly it wasn't something very prominent in my mind when I was a kid" (line 45)*. Although Fran did experience some incidents that suggest that he became of aware of systemically racist attitudes, he didn't know how to articulate them at the time. His mother's voice is particularly strong in this part of Fran's account, as a noticer and commenter on systemic racism and this feels significant in how Fran began to identify in relation, for example, to how he viewed the police and maybe in informing some of his attitudes as he grew up.

Fran has also struggled with the white, British identity and I noticed that he preferred to talk about class as a more salient aspect of his identity; he acknowledged a reluctance to describe himself in terms of 'race':

I wouldn't deny that, you know, I am White and British and stuff. But there's this awkwardness because that ends up a kind of right-wing nationalist narrative in a way – sort of – "White British and Proud" sort of thing (line 109).

When Fran went to university and became involved in activism and learning about diversity, he felt that,

Part of me actually was a bit sad because I felt that my background was a bit boring. Being default is a bit boring. It also comes with incredible privilege, and I recognise that now, but it is bland (line 198).

It was when Fran went abroad that he began to consider his white Britishness as other than default, maybe seeing himself in relation to people of other nationalities for the first time and as part of a minority group; so whereas being white in the UK was 'boring' or 'bland', in a different country, it was not a default identity and even seen as an '*ethnically interesting'* identity (line 212).

Charlie identifies as white and having grown up as working class and wondering whether she is now middle class, she recognises that class is a stronger identity for her than 'race'.

Yes- I mean, I am white, and I assume a lot – I take for granted a lot I think, that I have that – it's a bit of a buzz word, isn't it? Privilege – but I kind of walk that privileged path I suppose. But a stronger identity for me would be my social class. Whether I identify as, well it's interesting for me whether I identify as a white working-class woman or a white middle class woman. So, I suppose I kind of – that's a stronger sense of identity I think, my social class. (Line 28).

I get the impression that Charlie views class as a similarly discriminated against characteristic to 'race'; I wonder whether this comes through her account because class is a more salient factor for her own identity and so she finds it in others' biases and judgements. It is a theme that she returns to over the course of the interview. She brings up the idea that discriminating against someone based on class is another way of 'othering' people and that the class identity may carry equal weight in terms of being discriminated against systemically (Line 255).

Feminism is another important part of Charlie's identity, and she sometimes finds herself conflicted: at part of the conversation, we talked about the burka and she explained her feelings towards women who wear a full face covering:

> *And it's all so mixed up that way. I mean, the burka, the full face, everything covered apart from your eyes... I always get so … I mean my reaction, whenever I see a woman who is dressed that way… I come at it from a feminist perspective, and I get really angry. I think "Why are you doing that?!!" So, it's not… it's that thing of all our identities get mixed in and like, your class, your feminism and it's all complex, isn't it? And those identities all kind of pull together… (line 135).*

It is interesting to note the emotional experience related to encounters like this: Charlie notices that she becomes "really angry" when she sees a woman wearing a burka. She locates the source of the anger to her Feminist ideals, that she feels are at odds with a woman covering her face. However, I am also struck at the word 'angry' in this context and wonder what it is about the burka that causes such a strong emotional response.

I feel like Charlie is illustrating here how different facets of identity can resist and pull against each other. Charlie is different from the other participants in that she actively resists some of the views held by other family members in relation to 'race' and her identity seems to reflect this. She says that she grew up in a racist household (Line 122), and although she has challenged the views in the past, she recognises that it "*hasn't got (her) anywhere and it hasn't changed things*" (Line 93). So, part of her identity then is an element of resistance, but also some compassion as she tries to make sense and understand where the racism comes from, because she also has

occasions where she knows she makes assumptions based on 'race' and tries to make sense of those times: "*I think it's a human reaction. I think it's part of being brought up in a racist culture that we think that way.*" (Line 135) and later (at line 213), she explores ideas of inequity and poverty and lack of aspirations and poor housing experienced by white working class people and wonders whether racist beliefs would be limited if people did not experience such an unequal society.

I get the sense from talking with Charlie that she is committed to social justice, but that at its most basic level, maybe naively, this can be understood as human kindness. Although she recognises the disparities that exist, based on 'race' or class, if people treated each other with kindness, then things would feel different. I wonder whether this naivety that 'niceness' will prevail is a way of smoothing out the issues of 'race' and possibly not recognising the very specific harms that are experienced by people who are racialised as other than white, which have an impact on their sense of self and identities. She recognises that with the identity of EP, as a professional and as a 'doctor', comes a level of status and power within the system where we work. Maybe because of this, Charlie seems troubled by this; the responsibility felt by Sam to educate and to guide is experienced by Charlie as a sense of guilt that we do not always use this power and status to challenge when we see discrimination (line 264).

This GET, 'shifting sense of self' explores the way that participants have been shaped and have changed over their life course because of racializing processes. All four participants have experienced a shift in being unaware of their 'race' or how they are racialised, to becoming aware of their whiteness and what that means in relation to their sense of self. This has happened for most participants relatively recently and appears the shift in their identities is expressed in different ways; as a sense of responsibility, or as shame and guilt and has led to either action or a sense of

confusion about how they are meant to be in the world in relation to the construct of 'race' that was previously unimportant in their lives.

3. Degrees of Agency

Degrees of Agency	
Ash	Working within the system Planning for future action Passive voice
Sam	Embarked on an effortful journey. Responsibility Committed to the project
Fran	Noticing differences and inequalities Feeling his way through the system but feeling thwarted
Charlie	Present in absence -feelings of impotence -querying her role within wider political situation. A sense of irony / disempowerment to be able make anything changes. Questioning her role within a wider system of inequity

Listening to how the participants spoke about their experiences of racialisation taking place and in considering the impact of whiteness, it felt as though there were different degrees of engagement in the subject and that they experienced different degrees of agency or efficacy in their day to day lives in relation to this subject. This is the third GET and it explores how participants expressed their action or inaction towards the

object under exploration and the sense I made of how they made sense of their experiences of working within the system and in their wider lives.

Sam appears to have a strong sense of responsibility to act on the reading that she has done and the workshops she has attended:

(I'm) really, really committed to learning more (line 148)

I got really into it and got quite passionate about it (line 109)

Wanting to be an ally more than anything else. And make this central (Line 70)

Sam considers herself to be on a journey *("that journey of becoming aware of 'race'",* line 78) and understands us all as having reached different stages of awareness and thinking related to the topic along the way. She used this metaphor throughout her account, and I felt that that figurative language was useful to her in that it allowed her to have a way of communicating with a degree of clarity and certainty that was maybe not so evident in other accounts. Sam considers herself to have been on this journey for a long time, and I felt it was relevant that the motivation to learn about the impact of racism arose from her own experiences, rather than only responding to a call to engage in the examination of practice following the events of Summer 2020. Sam feels both the responsibility and the sense of agency in making a difference; she has taken small and pragmatic steps to alter her day-to-day interactions and has noticed the effects on how she sees the world and her sense of self as an 'ally'. She recognises some of the barriers to change; she recognises that there is a defensiveness and resistance to change, but says quite clearly that change is necessary, and that EPs should play a part in actively seeking to alter our practice.

In order to change your practice, you've got to stop being defensive about changing past practice because how will there be evolution and change? (line 354)

It's got to be central. Everybody's …. Everybody's priority. Not just those from an ethnic minority. It's got to be all those. All of us (line 71).

Sam sees herself as further along the path than some others:

It was just so interesting to hear quite how distant from it they were…it feels like a journey into understanding white privilege and I'm definitely more advanced than some people I know because I've read around it. Their views are very much at the early stages or maybe not even thought about being white or white privileged (line 112)

Nevertheless, listening to Sam, two things are evident. Firstly, even though she is further along the journey, it has not been an easy journey for her and has often felt uncomfortable. Sometimes I sense that she feels proud that she has 'come so far', but she reflected that she did not want to sound patronising. The journey metaphor allows her to claim that embarking on the journey is for everyone; it is not exclusive. It is simply that others haven't started the journey yet; she is not exceptional, she's just done the reading and the thinking. Secondly, it seems as though the journey is not linear: it is more nuanced and complex than it first reads, and, in some ways, it feels exhausting and more ambiguous than suggested by her initial tone. As a child, before she started on the journey, Sam was aware of different colour skin, but was not aware of any meaning that she attached to it, beyond just noticing a difference. She used to sort the cards of her card game into families of people with the same skin colour, and she noticed the different make- up of the skin colours in families she knew as a child.

It sounds like a purely perceptual process and yet: it is hard to imagine that she did not assign some meanings to the differences that she noticed. As an adult, she may have noticed different skin colours, but was still unaware of any meaning that she attached to different skin colour: she was not mindful of ''race'' or how people are racialised. But at this point in her journey, she has become very aware of the racialised meanings attached to the concept and is now continually aware. She regards 'race' as a social construct but recognises that it has meanings that she didn't realise as a child or young adult, and this has affected her day-to-day life.

For example, Sam attends a social group that is a mixed group, with people who are from different ethnic backgrounds. She seems almost saddened when she considers how her 'journey' has led her to change her interactions within that group. She explains, almost melancholically at the end of this reflection:

> *There is this ironic 'step in' to being more aware of 'race' and it has been – it has been odd in itself, because then there is this shift in awareness wherever I go. I am aware of everybody's colour now. And that almost feels more racist now. It's ironic because- and I don't mean racist – it's just more aware of differences. So, I guess what I am saying is – almost further apart. Whereas before I wouldn't have seen us as different, and now … (line 82).*

I found myself wondering here how conscious Sam is of the way that she is herself racialised and how she might be perceived by people who are racialised differently and whether she has also become more aware of the interactions that she has with members of her group.

The sense of agency and responsibility, experienced very personally by Sam is not so evident in the other accounts that seemed more hesitant and maybe less certain that they could have a meaningful impact.

Ash reflected on the realities of working within a traded model where the work is generally directed by the school and where the workload was experienced as very high, so there is not time for more systemic work*:*

> *You just get bogged down. It becomes well not, not a priority… if it's not having a detrimental impact on your immediate day, churning out the assessments and all that… (line 218).*

Ash speaks with a kind of "knowing" that I interpreted as a cynicism that she was able to disrupt any of the 'business as usual' ways of doing things; her voice sounds passive at the beginning of the interview, and impersonal as though she was keeping at a distance from the subject area. As Ash talked about the things that have happened at a service level that are related to the issues around 'race' and discrimination, she hesitated and seemed unsure, and she found it hard to remember what had been actioned, suggesting, as she says,

> … even the vagueness of my recollection means that it hasn't remained particularly on the agenda for *the service… there are a few EPs who have been sort of nominated by the rest of us to keep it at the top of the agenda. But it hasn't … (line 45).*

This seemed to trouble her as she expanded what she as saying:

> *It's not apathy, is it? Is that the right word? Like "I'm with you" but, the terribleness of it. I can make excuses for inaction. I've got a million different*

assessments that I need to do. Like it's almost- you know, it's not an immediate

threat (line 60).

In Ash's experience, there seems to have been a point at which to choose to engage or not engage with examining ideas around 'race' and racialised practice, and up till now, she has not felt in a position to be able to bring up these concepts with schools.

But Ash seems conflicted, because her personal values and her knowledge of the way that children and young people have poorer outcomes if they are racialised other than white is at odds with how she has operated so far and she seems to notice that from a systemic perspective, things are left unsaid, and action is not taken at a service level or at a wider professional level.

I felt the opportunity to think about what was happening allowed Ash to begin to assimilate what she has learned about and what she has seen on social media that she could incorporate into her work. I felt like there was a shift and she became more engaged, almost as though she was finding her way; considering future action: "*There are definitely times where I could be more assertive. I could definitely be more assertive*" (line 146).

And thinking about the practicalities about how she would implement anti-racist work in schools:

> I *wonder if you'd even talk to them - would you have a conversation with the kid and their family first about – I don't know – "This is my hypothesis about what might be happening". I don't know. Maybe it is our responsibility to notice* (line 167)

> *I follow things on Instagram that are geared to being really implementable. Everyday racism. There are things that exist – like toolkits…there is scope to*

do more... Have a conversation within the service. Because there's probably varying levels of receptiveness. And I think that some of my schools would be open to it. The danger would be that that kind of box ticking exercises… even though, there's a place to start isn't there (Line 226).

I felt Ash's enthusiasm and determination come through our conversation as she spoke more quickly and with more clarity, deciding how she would go about making changes in her practice when she returned to work, while also recognising that this is not something new; but as she reflected earlier in the account: there has been a vagueness that has meant that nothing has changed in reality, but an aspiration that things will be different:

Whether it's conversations with kids or the training with adults. And unfortunately, it – it's not like this is new. But that it's renewed. It's tipped off but I hope that there is enough kind of traction yeah – make changes to my practice or be mindful of a person at a conversation level… there's an aspiration to kind of do that type of work. It's doable, innit? There is still some appetite there, (line 237).

As we talk, Ash gets closer to possible reasons for her previous inaction: we have already talked about how she feels overwhelmed by the number of reports that she is asked to write. However, it is also because of the areas that she works in, where: *"… certainly the chat about the area, the ones (students) we are panicked about - it tends to be about the White working-class boys' narrative"* (line 69).

So, the schools prioritise work with this group and gatekeep access to services according to their perspectives and priorities, taking away Ash's agency in relation to the work she completes.

However, there is also something in Ash's account that hints at the fact that she is querying her position as a white EP to be exploring the work around 'race' and racism, some doubt about her suitability and she wonders about whether she is the right person to be doing it:

But then we are an overwhelmingly White service… and do I do that on my own? Am I best placed? I mean I can put a training pack together on Whiteness maybe (line 249).

The hesitancy and lack of a sense of agency experienced by Ash is also articulated by Charlie.

Charlie speaks almost with an air of resignation or maybe helplessness at points in her interview; there is an awareness that discrimination and a difference in outcomes within the system persists:

It just continues, doesn't it? No, I don't know what the answer is… and I'm sure bigger brains than me have struggled as well! And the fact that there has been so little change for so long, um… I don't know. (Line 41)

The events of the Summer 2020 and more recent reports about discriminatory practices and systemic racism exist simultaneously with Charlie's experiences in schools, where she does not meet many children who are not white. She is frank in sharing her thought process and there is a sense that she confused about the situation, in the same way that Ash felt confused at the dissonance between the things she read about and her day-to-day experiences at work.

Am I being cynical in thinking - so when all the BLM stuff came out, I was thinking, "So where all our Black kids?" You know I don't see many – so why aren't they coming through to us? And we know, don't we? That lots of Black

kids are excluded – the exclusion rate for Black kids is really high and that's never changed which is totally depressing. That's never changed over the last 30 odd years, has it?

The sense of resignation noticed in Charlie's account, existing alongside her acute awareness of the disparities that are reported, may be a result of the sense that she queries her ability as a white EP to be able talk about 'race' effectively or authentically, as can be seen in the extract below. Here Charlie is talking about the concept of 'adultification' that had been in the news around the time of the interview.

It feels almost disingenuous– that I as a white person I need to be taught about 'adultification'; their experiences…. I am sure there are lots of other things I've never heard about, and I've only heard about 'adultification'… because it's just been in the press recently. But what other assumptions and experiences are theirs? You know – that I don't know about. It feels like there's something for me about: if it's your lived experience, then it feels very 'white' for me to go in and start poking my nose around in that. Does that make sense? (Line 418).

But there is a conflict evident throughout: she is affected by reading about experiences of people who are racialised as other than white and the trauma that they experience. She talks about a book that she is reading that has affected her, which talks about intergenerational trauma associated with slavery:

There is a bit that really made me stop in my tracks; the bit where he said something about, that intergenerational trauma of coming from slavery, through the generations, it's still here… You know – that internalised trauma that has passed through generations. How do we get away from that? That is so true, isn't it? (Line 57).

So, although Charlie is affected by experiences she hears about or news reports, and although she feels that there is no change through the decades, there is a resistance to her becoming involved and engaging with the topic that is borne out of a sense that it is not her place to assume she can get close to the lived experiences of others; in a sense, she feels compromised and disqualified because she is white and aware of her own whiteness. This leads to a feeling that she is helpless, and her narrative follows an arc where she starts by feeling resigned. Earlier in the narrative, Charlie explains how she feels it is pointless to challenge the racist views of family members; she worries that by challenging that it might conceal the views and push them underground and cause rupture. There is a sense of disempowerment that has come full circle in Charlie's narrative– evident at the beginning of the interview and strengthened by the end. Rather than consider 'race', Charlie would rather focus on the core value of kindness and inclusion on a systemic and national level as a way of creating a fairer system for all.

Fran is highly engaged with ideas of 'race' and whiteness and as with Charlie, he takes in a broader, political perspective, challenging the influence of a neo-Liberal, individualist, post racial agenda that concerns him, when they are in opposition to what the data and his experiences are suggesting (line 510). We are reminded of his upbringing and how his parents' more left-wing political stance has shaped his values. Fran senses that his views are validated by the EP community, where there is an understanding of systemic rather than individual failures leading to a disparity in outcomes, however as with other participants, he feels frustrated that momentum seems to have dropped off a little. He makes the point that there has been lots of talk and he has been actively engaged in these various forums; but frustrated that the

action or consensus about how to explore the position of EPs in this matter has not been reached.

The closeness of the subject to Fran is really evident in his talk: I get a sense that it is a live concern for him as he critiques what is happening around him. Talking about the Brexit post-racial narrative, he admitted that he has,

> *Got less worried about that recently. But I don't know if that is just complacency. It feels like there's this constant tension going on between different narratives there and it unfortunately gets politicised and to me it seems to me very obvious that a systemic approach is what is necessary (line 550).*

Later in the interview, Fran problematises the thinking around psychometric assessments, one of the tools of the EP that has a relationship with psychological oppression and discriminatory practice. He critiques what might be felt to be a liberal stance on them: that they should not be used because of their connection with racist practices and their lack of validity and reliability, suggesting that the EP community needs to think more about the scientific facts of the matter. For me this suggests that Fran is critically engaged with current issues around 'race', rather than running with the expected assumptions that are associated with his general political stance. There is a discomfort at finding himself taking a potentially more right-wing position in relation to this 'scientific', objective method and it seemed to be a conundrum that troubles him. I include this point within this GET because it links back to the sense of agency experienced by Fran. Several colleagues acted quickly to dismiss psychometric tests and do not use them anymore, because they are seen as part of the epistemologically racist past of psychology. Fran has not acted on this understanding and has paused

to consider and critique this idea more thoroughly before acting, which seems to be consistent with his approach throughout.

Fran has been aware of inequalities within the service where he works: he works in a city that is a divided city, with each area having different populations and socio-economic groups. Fran is working in an area that has a high percentage of families from minority groups and he has felt responsible for advocating for parents who may not have felt confident to do that themselves, maybe because of having little or no English.

> *The West team, for example is more first or second-generation immigrants, whereas the South of the city is more White middle class. But so that – that has a lot of implications with work with kids and parents as well -so the south team often have a lot of issues with parents challenging decisions and stuff- whereas the West team was quite opposite, like I would quite often explicitly give guidance to say – like if it's an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)– then say if it doesn't go how you want it to, then here is what you do and here is how you appeal it. Because the chances of them doing it seem to be a bit lower. (Line 231).*

Fran has also tried to make things more equitable by trying to enlist an official interpreter but was advised against it by his supervisor because it was felt to be too expensive. A theme that became evident in the interpretation of Fran's interview was that he notices difference and he notices systemic failures and they trouble him. He tries to make a difference and make things more equitable where he can, but he is compromised by both the system that he works in and the broader political system.

This includes the time constraints and pressures of statutory work that has been mentioned by other participants.

> *I struggled with any systemic projects. SENDCOS and particularly headteachers just weren't interested. I really felt strongly that people just wanted casework. And a lot of that casework was just to do EHCPs. (Line 579)*

Apart from the constraints of the current system, there is something about who Fran is that he alludes to that makes it difficult to take a more active stance, despite noticing examples of discriminatory practice. He explains that he does not feel comfortable in the role of EP and resists the expert role, so it felt to me in the analysis and during the interview that Fran was almost biding his time; waiting to feel more confident and that he may be poised to take some more definite action once he feels more confident. However, there is also a sense that Fran is invested in a broader, political stance towards racism and discrimination and that he may continue to feel a lack of personal agency, because of the distance between action and himself as an active participant. Instead, he feels frustrated at the pace of change; there is a lot of talk and meetings, and the momentum has potentially been lost.

There is just one more barrier however that Fran faces, related to his own colour and how he has been racialised to act in relation to work around 'race': he seems uncertain about his role as an agent for change simply because he is white and he positions himself in a supporting role to someone who has the lived experience of being racialised within the system, and does not seem to appreciate that he too has been racialised and is part of the same system.

> *I'd like to think that if the right project came along, I would be able to make the difference… but there's the question of who is the right person to do it? Like, I*

would sort of be very happy to, but as a privileged White person, maybe I shouldn't be leading it? Maybe I should just be supporting it or something. (Line 585).

The degree of agency experienced by each participant was interesting to explore within this GET and I feel like the examples selected from the text convey the different ways that the EPs have responded to the awareness of their on whiteness and racializing processes within the system. In some instances, the colour of their skin has been a block; the participants talked of their intention to act and to make changes to their practice; they talked about an awareness of racism within the system and drew on theory to develop their ideas and yet there is a sense that the talk rises is up and participants feel agentic and then, a thought sweeps across their minds, an awareness of their embodied self, and the impetus is lost as they query their potential to make a difference. The exception is Sam, who has developed an attitude to agency by finding a role that she feels she can play, the 'ally' that provides her with a framework for action. However, for the other participants, Whiteness here seems to be manifested in a sense of helplessness and uncertainty about their ability to be agentic and they feel overwhelmed.

4. The "Fact of Whiteness"

"The Fact of Whiteness" – focus on racialised interactions and attitudes	
Ash	Embodied feelings of discomfort related to interactions related to 'race'. Explaining differences in terms of systemic attitudes to racialised children and young people
Fran	Becoming conscious of his own identity as a white male Noticing disparities and systemic failures
Sam	Noticing Difference / feeling different Awareness of her own whiteness and privilege Belonging/ not belonging
Charlie	'Race' is significant but located elsewhere. Recognition of power imbalances Causes of more overt racism

This final GET is related to how participants have experienced being part of racialised interactions, or having noticed racism or discriminatory behaviour and contains some of their reflections as they have tried to make sense of these situations. It also relates to the participants' sense of how they are racialised as white and what that might mean for how they interact with the world. It is a reference to Fanon's 'Facts of Blackness', which he stated were key elements of the maintenance of colonial power but insisted that there was no absolute essential 'blackness', but that the concept is constructed within the specific social and historical contexts (Fanon, 1967). The title of this GET has been chosen purposefully then to explore how the participants' sense of their whiteness is noticed in the everyday context of their lives and in a relational way.

The white British identity troubles Fran: his own 'race' was not something that he considered when he was a child, although other people's 'race' was noticed, and racism was identified. Later, he resisted the identity because of the connotations with actively racist, Far-right organisations who can be associated with a white British identity, but now has a broader understanding of what it means to be both those identifiers since living abroad as part of what was a minority group.

> *It's interesting being in other countries it's a lot easier to get a sense of what being white, middle-class British is I suppose - because that is not the default assumption (Line 45).*

Fran talks of racist incidents that he witnessed when he was younger that he feels were racist in their action. He also talks about some more recent examples from working as an EP, and from a broader, systemic, or political perspective.

Fran described how at a birthday party for his 16th birthday, the police had been called because of underage drinking. Only one friend had been given a caution by the police, and that was a friend who had Chinese parents and came from Hong Kong; what is implied is that most of the other young people were white and that the police had not cautioned any of them, despite also drinking illegally. Fran remembers his mother saying at the time, "Well that's probably racist" (Line 88), and he reflected that he has felt wary of the police ever since that incident, suggesting a sense of empathy experienced by responding to an assumed wariness or discomfort around police felt by his friend.

As an EP, Fran has noticed the disparities within the city where he works; it is divided, presumably along lines of wealth rather than 'race', however it is 'race' that is noticed

more, with part of the city being described as "more White middle class" and part that is "more first or second-generation immigrants" (Line 229). The areas that have been contrasted racially seem to place different demands on the EPs who work in those areas, where expectations from parents for what can be offered or what can be possible, differ. There is some frustration felt by Fran at the inequity of the situation, where children from the area described as white, middle class are referred to the service for relatively low priority reasons (arguing with their brother), and the high level of need in the contrasting area means that those cases would not be referred.

When Fran talks about the secondary schools, he describes an 'inner-city school', where there is a high percentage of children from backgrounds other than white. It is an interesting reflection that we both understood 'inner-city' as double speak for a school, probably under-resourced, with pupils from diverse backgrounds, suggesting that we accept that there are pockets of the population in many cities where there is a concentration of poverty that overlaps with areas of high racial diversity. Fran compares both schools.

> *There was a big racial difference as well. Like my inner-city school was majority black… it did affect my work a bit. Because a lot of my primary schools did feed into that one and so I did end up to some extent basically trying to warn parents what their kids would be dealing with if they were there, particularly if they were say Autistic, because it was a very chaotic school so it was just very hard to – it was a challenging environment for many of the kids that ended up there(Line 295).*

This extract illustrates both the concern felt by Fran about the 'chaotic' school and his need to 'warn parents' about the 'challenging environment there', particularly if he was

working with a family where the child had an additional need. Fran notices the inequity between the two schools in this situation and his empathic response is to be alongside the families who will feel challenged by the chaos of the school. This is similar to the response that he showed previously, when he aligned himself with his friend and began to view police negatively or even earlier, noticing at school that the racist remarks of his classmate went unchallenged and feeling upset, but not having the words to articulate it to his teacher. In each situation, Fran has taken on the role of wanting to defend or protect, but it is also interesting to notice that in each case, Fran has not been able to advocate to change the situation: in each case, there has been something about the hierarchy of the system that has meant that he did not have any agency to be able to change the system, but instead aligned himself to support the person who was oppressed.

Ash is aware of the types of othering that take place within the system; she talked about current stories that have featured in the news and has absorbed current narratives around whiteness and everyday racism. Ash had not considered her own 'race' until she came to do her doctorate course ("*I think that the awareness of that probably only even entered into my head kind of mid-* to late twenties" Line 22) However, Ash was articulate in the way she spoke about "race". I felt that she had learned a way to speak about whiteness and privilege that provided her with a script to be able to convey ideas to me; although I wondered whether some of the language (idioms or phrases) did the work of distancing me a little from Ash's experience. I felt there was maybe a sense of shame or defensiveness attached to the identity for her, maybe because of her engagement with the topic online and what she has taken upon herself from that. And so, the learned ways of talking about whiteness acted as a buffer to me getting close. This was evident also in other accounts.

At other points, I felt she allowed me more genuine access to the conflict she experiences as a white middle class woman working within the system. As she says, *"I don't know if there is an unproblematic way of being aware of your own 'race'"*, (line 13). I noticed several examples within Ash's account that suggested a distaste for her white British identity using figurative language, *e.g. "I'm a bit squeamish" (about the white British identity) (line 9)*. Other discourses about identity were *"more palatable"* (line 31).

The conflict between the discomfort felt, combined with the knowledge she has accumulated about racism and the values she holds mean that Ash is conscious that she might make excuses for her inaction.

> *Oh, I don't know – I'm mindful about everything where you are just trying to make excuses for yourself. But not having these conversations is not on…*Line 164

Ash showed in her interview that she has absorbed current discourses on whiteness and racism and is mindful of how they occur within the education system. She spoke of two specific examples where concepts of 'adultification' and dehumanization had been perceived as well as the phrase 'weaponizing whiteness'. Ash is actively involved in theorising about how these processes occur and theorises about how it is that she rarely has children other than white children referred to her. The pervasive narrative of the disadvantaged white working-class boy has meant that Ash has had more experiences of working with this group, rather than working with minority group students or families in her schools; schools act as gatekeepers to services and do not prioritise children who are racialised as other than white. I felt also that Ash was

accepting and reproducing the 'underperforming white working-class boy' discourse, so accepting some of the post-racial rhetoric that exists in our consciousness.

I was struck by what felt like an ark in Ash's interview; it began with a sense of discomfort and an air of hopelessness of the existing situation; a sense that there was no clear route to change the way things are. As we talked, I felt like she became motivated and clear headed, suggesting specific ways of becoming more proactive within the existing system. But then right at the end of our conversation, when we talked about how behaviours were understood differently depending on colour of skin, she became more reflective and resigned, finishing our conversation starkly with a reference to school shootings in America.

> *I do wonder whether there is a dehumanizing thing- you see White kids as being more able to access a kind of talking intervention type therapies. Whereas Black kids as a group – that's the sanction side of things. I suppose it's the kind of shooter kind of thing where the White kid needs our empathy and love, and then other extremist groups are just mad bastards who need locked up. Or shot on site because they're too dangerous to be apprehended*. Line 255

This extract suggested to me that Ash can find a way of examining what she sees in her everyday work as an EP and then extrapolate it out to wider systemic disparities. Earlier in the interview, Ash had said that she 'ruminated' on issues surrounding whiteness and race and this felt like rumination in action with the turn to this violent, ultimate endpoint to discrimination.

Sam experiences this theme through noticing difference and also becoming aware of her privileged position as a white woman. Although Sam did not recognise the concept of race as a child, she has always been aware of difference. She talked about friends

and neighbours both from her childhood and more recently who have a different skin colour and are racialised differently because of it. I interpreted much of what Sam was talking about, in respect of 'difference' in her earlier life, as being in terms of 'belonging' or 'not belonging'.

Where Sam grew up, the overarching difference that she was aware of was whether someone was Catholic or Church of England: which church someone belonged to, was the first difference she knew about.

> *I think differences in religion was Catholicism and Church of England. They were the first differences I noticed* Line 20

She noticed skin colour but at the time, she feels this was no more than a perceptual process; children who had been adopted and had a different skin colour to their parents still belonged together as a family, even though the difference was noticed by Sam.

> *So, I found it really interesting and obviously that was a difference because they were not the same colour as their parents. So, it was kind of there but very much in a kind of in a matching peoples hair colour and skin colour. I don't think I ever saw it as anything other than that. Just that - very superficial.* (Line 31)

The neighbours over the road who had a mother who was originally from India still belonged in the community, and in fact took Sam to Brownies, where *she* was the person who did not feel like she belonged, because it was held at the Church of England hall. When new neighbours moved in, she went out of her way to learn their names and make sure that they felt welcome; that they belonged, despite having a different skin colour.

Now that Sam has engaged with the topic of whiteness, she continues to feel the drive to make people feel like they belong, but I infer that she feels a level of sadness that she has now become so aware of the impact of racialisation that she notices difference everywhere; the difference between her own skin colour and what that means and the skin colours that other people have and what that means. She's moved beyond the perceptual to the meanings associated with the process of racialisation and the emotional impact on her; the discomfort felt at her awareness of white privilege.

> *It's not that it's about colour – it' about different experiences. And there is also this emotional content that we are going to go into. Of white privilege. Which makes you feel like uncomfortable. Line 90.*

Sam hopes to become an ally to people of colour and has embarked on a journey with that goal in mind; she has made an active choice to 'step in' to becoming more aware. Thinking about her experiences at university, where she felt she had an advantage in terms of her parents' expectations for her, she felt her privilege. At school she had always been told that she was privileged; that she was snobby or rich and so she knows that she was already perceived as privileged and with 'white privilege on top' she indicates that she is aware of a kind of 'baseline' privilege that exists just from being white skinned.

I felt that Charlie has always been aware of race because it was commented on while she was growing up; when she moved away from home, she was surprised to meet a man with black skin who was smartly dressed and very well spoken because that was not her experience of people racialised as non-white while growing up. She is very open about some of the racist talk and ideas that she witnessed while she was growing

up. Race has been significant for Charlie but located elsewhere; it's something that other people have and it is something negative, not an attribute to claim.

Race can also be concealed and hidden, maybe better hidden than on show; Charlie's friend says that she 'wears her passport on her skin' (line 2) and I am drawn then to the ideas expressed by Charlie about how white people form a 'white club', where the word 'club' comes with rules and expectations. If, like Charlie's friend, your race is visible, then it will mean that the people in the club will know that you are not part of it and will not say anything racist, but if (like her partner) your race is not discernible or detectable, then it may leave you open to hearing racist slurs.

Charlie is aware of the power held by those in the "white club", but also sees the complexity and intersectionality of the situation where race and class and wealth and ideologies are entangled to create power imbalances and social injustices created by poverty and class differences as much as race. Charlie resists some of the dominant narratives around white privilege in this way.

Who can speak and who can be heard is also a powerful thread running through Charlie's narrative, reflecting on 'adultification' in this example and who has the right or the responsibility to act and advocate for change:

> *Is there something about power relations maybe? So that knowledge is there.*
> *But then we take hold of it as white, educated, professional people and kind of*
> *somehow, it's no longer their experience that we are talking about with this*
> *power and authority. (Line 441)*

Charlie is cautious; she voices her concern that it is not for white people to identify and focus on specific issues relating to discrimination. She notices that the profession is predominantly white and middle class and wonders whether we should be the ones

who are 'heard' and listened to in this scenario. And yet, my sense is that there may be something of an avoidance here, a helplessness about what can be done and yet the same time, her question is more nuanced and complex than might be interpreted. Charlie has a strong sense of the irony of the white middle classes using their power to direct the gaze of the media and the academics or professionals on to a specific object of discussion that they have 'discovered'. Charlie clarifies what she means when she explains that she would rather centre the voices and experiences of the young people and hear what they want to say; they are the people who should be 'heard' and given the power to shift the white gaze where they want to direct it.

> *We only know about that because someone has plucked it and made it visible and actually there's lots of other experiences that go on all the time that we don't know about because we haven't experienced it and how will we know from our white privileged experience … When it's out there as well – like adultification is out there now. That we don't take over as White people now. That it still remains an experience that is voiced from the young people who have lived that. Does that make sense. And how is that possible – now it's been scooped up now – as a term of interest – to be discussed … It feels … all these things are all hard… If you could sit Girl X down and she might say – oh yes that happened to me when I was … but there's all sorts. There's lots of shit going on. There's probably loads of different experiences going on. (Line 459)*

Instead, Charlie feels that the focus of the work on whiteness and race should be less about systemic changes, and more located internally; that this is where she can make changes that may have an impact that can be felt more widely.

Who am I to try and make any changes? I can only really come from a perspective of Whiteness. I can do the work on myself to understand how my whiteness, assumptions or privilege then interact with the children and families that we work with. (Line 504)

Charlie summarises that it is not her position to do this work; that race is still located elsewhere and that whatever she does will always come with the constraint that she is a white woman and as such does not have the validity required to assume an understanding of the lived experiences of people racialised other than white. She sees the power to be too firmly in her hands and white voices to be too readily heard.

The title chosen for this GET, 'The fact of whiteness' hopes to get close to what the participant's own whiteness means to themselves and how it has been noticed or experienced; to isolate and identify whiteness as an analytical object. The participants indicated that they have a sense of how whiteness operates within a system where inequities and discrimination are noticed. There is also awareness of how they are racialised as white in relation to others who are not and what that means for how they can act on the word. The discomfort felt at the assumptions that might be made about them as white professionals and how whiteness somehow permits or disqualifies them from certain activities is significant for me to notice.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In this chapter, I revisit the research questions stated at the beginning of this research, drawing on my interpretations of what participants shared with me in the previous chapter. The findings are then set within a wider context of existing literature to explore how they support, illuminate or problematise current understandings of how EPs experience whiteness and the process of racialisation. So, in essence, this chapter is my attempt to present how I have made sense of this research and what it might mean. I step away from the analysis so that I can look back at the whole and see how things have taken shape; using the new perspective to see how the meanings have been created and understand how the parts form the whole with a different sense of perspective.

Through the analysis and interpretation, I find that whiteness has become more 'knowable' and alive to me (Nayak, 2007, p.743) and this section aims to present it as it seems to me.

My initial research questions were broad: I was interested in how EPs made sense of their experiences of working from within a Local Authority in relation to being part of a profession that operates within a system that has been positioned as structurally racist (e.g.Gilborne, 2018 or Barnardo's, 2022). As the interviews developed, and as I first began to analyse what was actually talked about, I felt that the focus of the research shifted somewhat. What was spoken about became more around how educational psychologists, who identified as white, experienced interactions that were related to race in their lives.

In order to clarify the aims of the research more concisely, and to consider what I have found out with those aims in mind, the research questions that informed and structured the conversations that ultimately resulted in the analysis are re-stated.

1. How do EPs (who identified as white) experience or understand their 'whiteness' in their day to day lives?
2. How do EPs (who identify as white) experience racialised interactions?

The analysis and interpretation of the conversations resulted in commonalities that were placed within the umbrella of the following themes (GETs) (*see table below*).

General Exploratory Themes (GETS)	Uncomfortable conversations: there is a right way and a wrong way to talk about ''race''
	Identity: A shifting sense of self in relation to experiences of 'race' and racialised interactions.
	Degrees of Agency
	The Fact of Whiteness

Figure 3: Table of GETS generated from the data analysis and interpretation.

These were explored within the analysis chapter; now I am approaching them from a slightly different angle within the discussion, to answer the research questions that I posed at the beginning of this study with some authenticity: what have I found out? Instead of looking at each theme independently, I present them here in relation to each other, how they overlap, or merge and I hope to illustrate the understanding that I am left with at the end; how things seem now as I walk away from the site of analysis.

Looking back and considering now, with the insight that this process has given me, I suggest that the perspective of whiteness provides one way of understanding the participants' experiences of processes, behaviours and cognitions that are related to racialised interactions. It does not necessarily take the form that I would have previously recognised as whiteness, having read widely around the literature that has emanated from the USA. Whiteness here is not experienced as a fear that power will be re-distributed (consciously or unconsciously) as it is sometimes conceptualised; I did not get a sense that the participants, already privileged in terms of class, status, and education, were concerned with losing the advantages afforded to them by being racialised as white. Instead, whiteness worked in other ways; it created a self-consciousness and a discomfort and almost a sense of resignation. I noticed a hesitancy and a confusion that arose, maybe from a thoughtfulness and a sensitivity towards others; a sense that the participants wanted to know what to do. Some theorists suggest that whiteness, rather than a lens, could be conceptualised as "a multilayered, multidimensional, ongoing, adaptive process that functions to maintain, reinforce, reproduce, normalize, and render invisible White power and privilege" (Matlock and DiAngelo, 2015, p. 68). The functionality of whiteness suggested here is difficult to identify in the talk analysed as part of this study. Instead, I notice something more flimsy, less agentic: when I look back to get an overview of the whole, what I notice are hesitancy and uncertain, faltering speech, hidden behind tropes, selected, and rehearsed from the canon of critical whiteness studies. The functionality of whiteness that leads to the perpetuation of systemic racism is hard to locate within the experiences of these participants. However, Frankenberg (1997) explores Whiteness as multidimensional entity:

"Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which White people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, 'whiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 1).

The structural advantages and privilege were alluded to by each of the participants and yet I am still unsure of how these were *experienced;* I have a sense that the fact of their white privilege was accepted, but not considered; as though privilege had been claimed but maybe not taken out of the box and examined. However, it may be that that is unfair: if the EPs within this study have always been racialised as white, then how can they experience the privilege that they have as part of that process of racialisation? As Charlie says, "I can only come from a perspective of whiteness". Maybe it is too much to really imagine the opposite perspective: to imagine when race has been salient, to imagine the possibilities of not being racialised as white and not being part of a dominant group. It is also important to remember the Feminist perspective of intersectionality and consider that although the participants in this study are educated and privileged in terms of their social status, narratives of white privilege must be even harder to attach to white people who do not feel privileged; who are maybe discriminated against in terms of class or education, religion or sexuality. The relatively privileged white EPs keep this aspect of how they are racialised unexamined; for less privileged white people, the expectation for accepting white privilege must feel like a more difficult and meaningless task if they are all the while feeling disempowered and disadvantaged by other elements of who they are and how society treats them. Nevertheless, DiAngelo insists that white people who experience other oppressions still benefit from structural racism, and this is demonstrated throughout her work (DiAngelo, 2021). As Morgan (2021) phrases it,

"Those of us who walk the world inside what is perceived to be a white skin have important matters in common. Whatever our personal history, wherever we were born, however young or old we are, if we are regarded as 'white' we have inherited layers of privilege and supremacy from which we benefit at the cost of others," (Morgan, 2021, p. 13).

When I think about where this study fits, I feel that it has attempted to zoom in on the second point that Frankenberg (above) makes: it has been an opportunity for white people to turn inwards and look at themselves and their whiteness in relation to identity and racialised interactions.

The themes (GETs) within this study indicate that whiteness is experienced as troubling when it is made visible to the identities of the participants; that it does not fit with their identification of 'good white people', committed to social justice, who advocate for children and families on a daily basis. The dissonance between stated or 'felt' values, intentions and behaviour is undoubtedly experienced as discomfort at times, and sometimes as shame; or "white shame" as identified by Hunter (2010). Hunter suggests that shame, far from being a disabling emotion in resisting racism, inserts self-doubt into discursive encounters. Self- doubt epitomised much of the talk during this study and is evident in EPs reflections on their racialised interactions; however, Hunter suggests that this is quietly potent. He suggests that 'white shame' can "pose a challenge to the surety in heroic action, providing the hiatus necessary to disrupting dualistic patterns for apportioning guilt and blame and creating multiple possibilities for antiracist agency" (Hunter 2010, p. 469). So, although white shame perpetuates uncomfortable interactions around race and can lead to a hesitancy to act, the function of the shame is maybe better understood as not perpetuating whiteness, but as providing a powerful pause, that could problematise identities,

particularly when noticing those moments of discomfort, rather than 'glossing over' them or resisting them. There was no shortage of examples of discomfort within the data ("I mean it's a bit like shame. It's not to be spoken about" or "I'm going to be held to account and made to feel bad and so I'm not even going to go near that conversation" Ash). At times discomfort was openly stated and at other times was inferred from the language used to describe a situation or an experience and interpreted as discomfort and there is an abundance of literature that has already noticed feelings of discomfort, (see for example Kwon, 2020 and her description of 'touchy topics'). The term 'uncomfortable' in relation to conversations about ''race'' and 'racism' has been used multiple times, for example in the conversations by EPs writing on EPNET. Eddo - Lodge (2017) writes a searing account of her experiences of talking to white people about race. She has observed that:

> "*At best, white people have been taught not to mention that people of colour are 'different' in case it offends us…. They've never had to think about what it means, in power terms, to be white, so any time they're vaguely reminded of the fact they interpret it as an affront. Their eyes glaze over in boredom or widen in indignation. Their throats open up as they try to interrupt, itching to talk over you but not really listen, because they need to let you know that you've got it wrong.* (Eddo- Lodge, 2017, pp. ix–x)

The defensiveness and discomfort is also recognised by sociologist Robin DiAngelo in her book 'White Fragility' (2018). She suggests that talking about 'race' and racism causes discomfort and defensiveness amongst White people and disbelief and sensitivity when they are told that they are complicit in society's institutional racism.

All the EPs in this study had engaged with independent thinking and learning around the subject of their whiteness and anti-oppressive practice and all had engaged in reflection about 'whiteness' and what that means in their work and everyday lives to some extent, so it is interesting that despite that, these interactions and sense of whiteness continue to be problematic. I wondered whether the way that these EPs felt was almost a metaphor; that what was happening here at a personal, 'micro' level, was akin to what happening from a more systemic, 'macro' level. Maybe the structural hesitancy, shame and discomfort that exists results in the extant inequity of outcomes and differences experienced by racialised minority groups.

Cooke (2022) explores how theoretical agency, that is knowing how to act in theory, transfers to activism in pre-service teachers and what factors contribute to either hesitancy to act or action. In this context, activism is defined as "taking actions aligned with values that result in [cultural], social and/or political change" (Blackburn (2014), p. 2 cited in Cooke, 2022, p. 274), which fits well in this study, aligning the ideas of personal intention and values with action. Cooke found that struggles to align values to action generally manifest as hesitancy that is connected to their awareness of and navigation of their own whiteness (Cooke, 2022, p.273) and noticed the disconnect between 'theoretical agency', and actioning policies in real life, or 'practical agency'. Participants in this study were found to fall back on rehearsed and adopted positions that were useful to them in order to convey a position of awareness, although I felt that they caused a disjunct between their authentic experiences and me. They sounded agentic at times, but for the main I feel that the participants would acknowledge that it is simpler to talk about action than overcome the hesitancy experienced. The frustration at this position comes across strongly in Fran's transcript. Cooke found that the reasons for the hesitancy that his participants talked about were thoughtful;

his participants were well intentioned, but their contemplation confounded their practical agency, that is, putting theory into practice. An awareness of their own whiteness; 'identity struggles' with being white, are implicated in their hesitations: for example, they attempt to avoid acting like, or being perceived as, the "nice white teacher" or as the "white saviour" (Bisonette, 2016 and Aronson, 2017, cited in Cooke, 2022, p.24). In this way, hesitancy is seen as a "passive manifestation of whiteness" (Cooke, 2022, p. 288). This same thought process is very evident in how the participants in this study spoke about their hesitations and the thought processes that they had that acted as barriers to a more proactive, anti-racist (Kendi, 2020) approach to their work. However, I would suggest that the hesitancy, as we have seen above, is preferable to performative, 'heroic' action or discursive repertoires that can prevent authentic engagement with what is happening and 'gloss over' the cracks where the real work can happen.

Another point for reflection and discussion is the language that is selected and chosen to talk of 'race'; that the words and concepts that are related to 'race' have the potential to upset and cause distress in the form of microaggressions and misunderstandings. There is something that became evident in the analytic process that throws up questions of who can talk about race and where race can be spoken of; Where racist language is 'allowed' and why it is tolerated in those situations and where it is not allowed to go unchecked. There is a sense that the participants did not feel that they could be open in the way that they talked about race; that a 'safe space' was needed, where they would not be judged for speaking about 'race' in the 'wrong' way.

The interviews and the consequent analysis and interpretative process left me with a sense of precarity. By making the whiteness of the participants visible to them, on encouraging reflection and holding up whiteness as an object of analysis, there is a

sense that I have exposed them; exposed the participants as racialised subjects who emerge as vulnerable and open to criticism or assumptions that they do not want to recognise. I felt that the participants experienced discomfort related to the language used about 'race', and that speaking about race had the capacity to either constrain, to provide a defence against or distance between, the speaker and the topic or could potentially betray the speaker. I was struck by the power of language to create a position in relation to the construct of race. Discursive repertoires were employed and I recognised certain tropes that are repeated often in literature on whiteness and white supremacy (white privilege, walking a privileged path, ally vs. white saviour) I felt that the use of these phrases acted both to position the participants as theoretically aware and engaged and at the same time prevent the listener from getting close to authentic attitudes and emotions. I felt that at times of reflection, where participants were clumsy or stumbled over their words, when they seemed more unsure or vague within the transcripts, did I really get access to a more authentic version of their experiences. The participants appeared acutely aware that the language that they used was important and that there was a chance it would expose them in some way; that the words they chose would indicate their positionality (for example as an 'ally'), but also that it might also expose them in unpredictable ways (as a white saviour, maybe or as uninformed).

The participants acknowledged that there was a risk involved; that talking about 'race' or 'whiteness' presented a potential threat to how others perceived them and maybe how they perceive themselves.

Haviland (2008) noticed that there were patterns of discourse common when teachers who identified as white talked about race and examined their whiteness, examples of which can be found within the talk within this study. There are eight features of talk:

avoiding words, false starts, safe self- critique, asserting ignorance or uncertainty, letting others off the hook, citing authority, silence and changing the topic (Haviland, 2008, p. 44). Evidence of all these can be found within the transcripts generated within this study. How we talk about race and whiteness may be a useful point of reflection for the EP community.

Derald Wing Sue writes about the discomfort experienced when white people talk about race; he describes how the "discomfort in racial dialogues leads to cognitive avoidance, emotional avoidance, and behavioural avoidance" (Sue, 2015, p. 131) Although Sue is writing from an American standpoint, there are echoes of some of the 'avoidances' noticed and reported by him in the participants in this study. Using his descriptions, cognitive avoidances are illustrated via denials of personal bias, prejudice, and discrimination (for example, locating racism as residing in others, but feeling free of it personally).

> *All these denials are played out in both conscious and unconscious ways that are often confusing and anxiety provoking … verbalizations have been observed to be unclear, anxiety ridden, constricted, ambiguous, filled with qualifiers, tentative, and oftentimes, incoherent. The result is that the well-intentioned White participant is rightly or wrongly perceived as being hung up about race, being biased and prejudiced, having something to hide, and not being truthful" Sue, 2015, p. 134*

However, Applebaum suggests that instead of any certainty, hesitancy is preferable. She calls for a re-examination of complicity in terms of moral and ethical responsibility and suggests that instead of guilt, it is rearticulated as "uncertainty, vulnerability and vigilance". In this sense, the EPs within this study who displayed uncertainty and

vulnerability and a confusion about their place in this process could instead be positioned as mindful of the "dangers" of white moral responsibility and how the desire to "do something" can act as a defence against guilt and taking responsibility. As Ahmed has written,

> *"The impulse towards action is understandable and complicated: it can be both a defence against the "shock" of hearing about racism (and the shock of the complicity revealed by the very "shock"); it can be an impulse to reconciliation as a "re-covering" of the past (the desire to feel better); it can be about making public one's judgment ("what happened was wrong"); or it can be an expression of solidarity ("I am with you"). But the question, in all these modes of utterance, can work to block hearing; in moving on from the present towards the future, it can also move away from the object of critique, or place the white subject "outside" that critique in the present of the hearing. In other words, the desire to act, to move, or even to move on, can stop the message getting through.*
> (Ahmed, 2009, cited in Applebaum, 2010).

Gardiner et al. (2022) picks up the topic of the well- intentioned practitioner and explores the interplay between white peoples' sensitivity and concern about how they are perceived in their performance of racialised interactions. She explores how 'niceness' and whiteness operate together as a barrier to confronting inequity within education. Both 'niceness' and whiteness are examined as a socialized dispositions that "shape and often work against centring equity" (Gardiner, 2022, p. 91) and go some way in explaining the hesitation felt by the EPs in this study. There was a reluctance to come across to others as confrontational or aggressive amongst the participants in the current study but as Gardiner states, "If niceness is a symptom,

whiteness is its root" (Gardiner et al, 2022, p.91). Applebaum (2010) also suggests that good intentions are often bound up with complicity, asking,

"Even if white people are well intended, even if they consider themselves to be paragons of anti-racism, how might they still be unwittingly complicit in sustaining an unjust system they claim to want to dismantle?" (Applebaum, 2010, p. 8).

Applebaum goes so far as to say that white people can reproduce and maintain racist practices *especially* when they believe themselves to be morally good (Applebaum, 2010, p.8) and explores how to make white complicity with systemic racism more visible, for the purposes of deconstruction and more authentic understanding of what is happening.

The interpretative analytic process has been a pause for me: an opportunity for self-reflection and critical consciousness raising (Freire, 1970). It has caused me to consider my own positionality and how I am perceived by others, and it has answered some questions for me about the reasons for extant inequality of outcomes within the education system. My sense is that whiteness is flourishing within the system, but that it does not act in a way that I might have imagined previously. The findings of this study suggest that the EPs involved experienced discomfort during racialised interactions that manifests in uncertainty and hesitancy and a shift in how they see themselves. Hesitancy manifests as inaction and a reluctance for the EPs to become activists and in most instances, to avoid what has been learned in theory (theoretical agency). There is an anxiety that despite good intentions and sensitivity related to their practice, that they will be perceived as either racist or aggressive or maybe be open to claims that they are 'white saviours' (Straubhaar, 2015) or that they are again perpetuating whiteness because they imagine that they might be able to do something

to change things. However, there is a possibility of disturbance within these spaces and a possibility for reflection on structural advantages that may usefully explored.

Significantly, it may be exactly these pauses, these hesitancies, these cracks in the everyday, that provide the opportunities for genuine critical consciousness raising activities, through self-reflection and noticing how whiteness is manifesting within themselves or within their community of practice.

In conclusion, the findings of this study are difficult to define, and it has taken me some time to identify a 'take home' message or a final summary; it is almost as if the uncertainty noticed throughout the conversations and the hesitancy in the talk around the topic has carried through to the end and I mirror that same sense of "What next?" or "Where do we go from here?" communicated so strongly in experiences of the participants.

In summary

Imagining the construct of whiteness as a lens through which to explore the participants' experiences has enabled me to draw out some tentative conclusions about how EPs might experience racialised interactions in their day-to-day lives. It helps me to begin to understand how the invisible influence of whiteness might structure how we as EPs manage racialised interactions and how we might perpetuate the status quo.

Within the interviews, 'whiteness' was first noticed by me in the hesitant, and faltering speech of the participants and in their difficulty at retelling of social interactions that were racialised in nature. There was a repetition of words that suggested the 'uncomfortableness' of talk related to race. The hesitancy can be understood as participants trying out ideas, piecing together different thoughts and trying to convey

the complexity of the feelings involved; using the relatively 'safe space' of the interview to talk out loud about things that are difficult and problematic to articulate. It was in the more hesitant and reflective moments of the interviews that I felt that I was closest to the more authentic experiences of the participants. These phases of talk could be characterised as "exploratory talk", (e.g., Mercer, 1995) where meanings are co-created and tried out in dialogue with another. These moments of the interview felt as though I was given access to the 'inside of the dialogue', where meanings and understandings of the experience were created by the act of talking and where I was given access to more 'unrehearsed' ideas. So, for me, a clear finding of this study was that the lack of opportunity to talk about race and racialisation, because of a concern that we shouldn't talk about race, or we don't have a language to convey what we want to say, leads to a shutting down of more creative and productive talk generated through dialogue in a safe space.

A second finding that has emerged from this section is that the discomfort associated with whiteness could be attributed to a sense of something akin to shame. The physical and emotional discomfort experienced may suggest a turning inwards and engaging with the beliefs, values, biases, assumptions that are evident within our systems and which may perpetuate racism. In this sense, when the feelings are acknowledged, shame can be something positive and generative. However, with all the discourse around whiteness and anti-discriminatory practice so widely available, it can cause a rush to grasp a rehearsed or performative way of 'doing' anti-racism that has the potential to circumvent the navigation of more difficult feelings and authentic engagement with personal, lived experience. Some of the performative ways of being, even while they are signalling awareness and anti-discriminatory practice, are simultaneously closing down engagement with feelings of shame or more complex

emotional responses because they are too painful. My sense is that this more performative or strident way of being, although defending against the pain of acknowledging the harm that whiteness does within social relationships, also ignores the subtleties of the intersectionality between class, race and gender and can close down a more creative, individualised and nuanced approach to the real-life, dynamic context of the places where we work.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, Implications for future practice and Limitations

Conclusion

This piece of research aimed to explore how EPs who identified as white experienced their own whiteness in relation to their everyday work. I hoped to explore whether there was a sense that there was an awareness about how their own identities as white practitioners might interact with the systems within which they work. I was also interested in exploring how they felt at being positioned as working within systems that have been identified as being systemically racist: how they rationalised this within their experiences of working within a local authority. The interpretative phenomenological analysis has given me important insights into the experiences of the EPs who were part of this study and has given me a sense of what might be useful in future practice. As I walk away now from the experience of working with this data, I am left with a sense that the process of racialisation has worked in a problematic way on the professionals represented here who are stakeholders in the system. It has worked to silence and immobilise, where instead there should be compassionate and sensitive activist work by skilled professionals. The white skinned participants all resist the assumptions and generalisations made about the motivations and meanings inferred by a white British identity, but at the same time are powerless to avoid them. There is

an echo here for me of DuBois' 'double consciousness', where black skinned people are aware of how they see themselves and then simultaneously how they are perceived by the white gaze, creating a dissonance; a 'twoness' (DuBois, 1903). By encouraging the participants to notice their own 'twoness'; the dissonance between their conscious self and how they are perceived as racialised beings, there is a sense that whiteness and its way of acting on the world has become visible within this context. The process of the interviews and the analysis has caused me to pause and reflect; it has been helpful to me in contributing to an understanding that answers the questions I posed at the beginning, and I am grateful for the insight my participants have afforded me. I hope that this piece of work may encourage a hesitation and pause for other professionals working within the education system.

Implications for Future Practice

The process, both during the interviews and afterwards during the stages of analysis and interpretations has led me to think and reflect on how things might be different. The following are ideas that I hope to explore further and may be useful for future research and case study or focus group work within services. They are all derived from findings in the previous sections and sometimes are related directly to things that participants alluded to themselves.

The pervasive sense of discomfort and precarity, potentially understood as 'white shame' (Thandecka, 1999) might explain the phenomenon of how the educated, thoughtful and conscientious participants find it so difficult to discuss 'race', or even their own racial identity; it is as though their 'inability to navigate the murky waters of race' (Crowley,2019, p.181) results in a powerful affective experience whenever talk of 'race' is around. The following ideas for future practice accept that white EPs may

experience 'white shame' and are possibilities for reducing the anxiety experienced because of that strong, emotional response.

1) **Study groups and Journalling**– the purpose of these would be reflective spaces to explore issues related to whiteness and racialised interactions. Journals would provide some structure and purpose to the groups. Charlie spoke about the need for a safe space when she said,

> "*People need to feel they can be open and people need to feel safe, don't they? And you're not going to get that. People are not going to be honest and open and genuinely change their views I don't think unless they can say something that politically incorrect and feel safe.*" (Charlie, line)

This ties in with the idea that unless people are encouraged to sit with the uncomfortable feelings, acknowledge them and express what they notice, then authentic change will not happen. The practitioners within these groups would need to develop open and trusting relationships where people feel safe to talk openly and frankly. They should be a safe space for creative, collaborative problem solving. The findings of this study suggest that apart from some distinct examples (e.g. Sam talking to her neighbour), there is sense that "If you talk about race, then you're a racist" (Fran). The hope would be that and openness and confidence would develop over time and discussions and ideas can be rehearsed without fear of shame and threats to identity. There would be an element of challenge and the emphasis would be on working through problematic situations related to racialised practices. Within these groups, there would be a potential for the hesitant, faltering speech noticed in the interviews to become more genuinely exploratory in nature through the

generative process of constructive social interaction: Mercer and Wegerif (2004) suggest that phases of exploratory talk are evident when participants engage critically and constructively with each other's ideas, generating and testing hypotheses. For this to happen effectively then ground rules and a non-hierarchical, relational approach would be necessary to ensure all positions are valued, explored and challenge is appreciated rather than avoided. Wegerif makes the point that new meanings and social construction of knowledge occurs when humans talk to each other: "When humans enter into dialogue there is a new space of meaning that opens up between them and includes them within it" (Wegerif, 2013, p. 180). This is the rationale for the study groups; creating the spaces for new shared meanings and understanding to emerge and allow generative discussion.

2) Journals (as in Gardiner et al. 2023)

Journals are a tool for gathering personal reflections and thoughts close to the lived experiences of the group members. They could be used for personal reflection, growth and problem solving by encouraging the writer to capture and consider maybe uncomfortable and difficult situations.

Gardiner suggests that self-study creates opportunities to explore tensions between instructional aspirations and enacted practice, so working reflexively. Aiming for self-reflection can raise critical consciousness and develop 'quiet activism', rather than creating short cuts to heroic acts. The EPs within this study shared a general sensitivity and reluctance towards performative action, and a discomfort in situations where they had gone beyond their comfort zone to perform demonstrative acts. But there was an uncertainty about how they could act or what could be said appropriately. Journalling

has the potential for self -reflection but also for collecting experiences for discussion within the groups.

Via the process of journalling and reflexive practice, frequency of situations where participants experience cognitive dissonance might be reduced as the disparity between the hoped-for ways of being in the world and the reality can be reduced, so reducing the sense of shame and discomfort. Re-storying events and picking out threads of what holds value and what can be discarded is an activity that can be carried out independently. However, journalling can also offer the chance for generating broader questions related to equity and to explore options for systemic work, where experiences are common. Gardiner describes the process of self- study as "a tension… a negotiation of where we currently reside in relation to naming and grappling with enacted niceness and whiteness as individuals and that collaborating in critical and methodologically rigorous ways is necessary to enact change on our journey to centre equity, both in principle and practice" (Gardiner et al, 2023, p. 5). The collective of academics embarking on this process of self -reflection used journals that were then brought to safe -study spaces for interrogations and discussion.

3) Acknowledging difficult feelings and noticing when they occur

The hesitancy noticed in the interviews and the reliance on well-rehearsed discourses noticed in some participants, suggested a level of anxiety experienced in talking about whiteness and 'race' and when considering the part we may play in upholding discriminatory structures. Some level of anxiety can be useful; an awareness of an uncomfortable emotional load may be a signal that change is necessary. However too much anxiety can lead to shut down and defensiveness. Anxiety is often related to an uncertainty, maybe a social uncertainty or an uncertainty about how to act. It is also

associated with defending against shame or guilt. Defensive behaviours are generally responses to a threat or dangerous situations and are designed to reduce harm to the threatened organism, or in this case, EP. Because the anxiety related to talking about whiteness and 'race' may be one factor that prevents reflection and change, so examining where the anxiety springs from may usefully support positive change and action. Encouraging EPs to notice the uncomfortable feelings; where they are located and when they are around maybe be a useful first step in personal reflection and a growth in understanding. To be able to 'sit' with the uncomfortable feelings and work through them rather than defending against them, it can help to identify the embodied feeling and then reduce the physiological feelings of anxiety. Alongside common strategies for reducing symptoms of anxiety, co-production within services of rubrics or scripts for working through uncomfortable feelings and working out where they are coming from/ interrogating how whiteness plays a part in generating the uncomfortable feelings might support more open and free discussion and change.

4) Narrative approaches

A narrative approach encompasses the idea that the stories that we tell organize, structure, give meaning to events in our lives and help us make sense of our experiences. Some elements that may be useful in considering ways to support EPs to develop more inclusive practice and to understand the way whiteness impacts on their work might be for them to adopt a narrative approach within their services, maybe as part of supervision. Narrative therapy developed the idea of "externalizing the problem" (e.g. White, 1984). These externalizing conversations could enable a process of reconstructing or re-authoring identities, thickening of alternative stories and challenging the dominant cultural stories, paying attention to the discursive mechanisms that work to maintain the status quo (Brown and Augusta- Scott, 2006).

I am curious about how we can use the concept of 'externalisation' to develop a better understanding of whiteness and how it operates within the profession. Externalisation removes 'the whiteness' from the person, so that it is located externally and can be better held up as a subject of interest. It potentially removes some of the anxiety experienced, as discussions about whiteness can be conducted in a way that does not cause a threat to anyone involved: it is not something within them, but a separate entity, similar to the concept of the 'white gaze' (Garner, 2010) that exists and endures despite individual attitudes.

Individuals or groups may like to examine, for example, when 'the whiteness' (or exchange whiteness for example, with 'discomfort' or 'worry' or any other agreed term) is around. When is the 'whiteness' felt and when is it absent? What makes you stay loyal to 'the whiteness' and when do you resist it? What shape or character would it take? When did 'the whiteness' become strong and when was it weak etc. All the usual types of question associated with a narrative approach might usefully be engaged when exploring 'whiteness' as an externalised entity, rather than being within person. This gives permission for very frank and open conversations that may in turn encourage greater reflexivity and thoughtfulness in practice. We should aim to normalise discussions around race so that we can move past being reactive and toward being transformative, becoming sensitive and responsive activist EPs.

Another potentially useful element is the 'thickening' of identity stories, related to the theme of 'Shifting Sense of Self'. Thickening simple, single stories might encourage EPs to look for commonalities and intersectional aspects rather than focussing on differences between each other and with the people with whom they work.

Thicker identity stories move away from more essentialist or binary notions of identities, instead noticing shared elements across traditional, social categories. Brown and Theodore Scott (2006) quote Segal, the Feminist writer, as she imagines "a vision of radical equality, without hierarchical ordering . . . which must always be the basis of any progressive restructuring of diversity and difference" (Segal, 1990, p. 201). They also quote hooks (1995) who supports efforts to resist essentialist, single stories around race, where resisting the 'static, overdetermined identity' stories can open up new possibilities for the construction of self (hooks, 1995, quoted in Brown and Theodore Scott, 2006). Whiteness or 'the white gaze' over the last few hundred years has created a mass consciousness that has conditioned us to perceive difference based on colour; thickening stories around identity is a way to destabilise whiteness in this guise.

Developing an understanding within your service that 'whiteness' can usefully be conceptualised as a frame of reference or a critical lens; a discourse that could be queried to examine how structural inequalities are maintained. It is something that can be disrupted; an individual can notice whiteness, resist it, and redirect it within their everyday lives and so begin to destabilise the way things are within the places where we work.

Limitations

My sense was that this piece of research has adopted a curious approach and the findings have maybe not been as clear as I would have liked. Because of the exploratory nature, the research questions were necessarily broad and now looking back as the project comes to an end, I admit, I have found it hard to establish what this study actually adds to existing knowledge about whiteness as it is experienced by

a majority group. However, I have begun to accept this is a limitation but not an outright failure. If I were to repeat something like this, I would have ensured that a more probing pilot interview was undertaken and that I had established a more consistent interview schedule. Because of my emphasis on keeping the interview as naturalistic as possible, I felt that some of the detail and 'nitty gritty' about what I wanted to find out was lost as we moved away from topics of interest too quickly and skirted around some more challenging conversations. However, I now reflect that this was potentially a manifestation of my own whiteness; trying not to put other white people in an uncomfortable position; being "the nice white lady" (Kenyon, 2022).

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Appendices

Appendices 1-4 attempt to illustrate the initial stages of the analysis followed for each participant.

Appendix 1- Charlie's transcript: steps 1 and 2 of the IPA procedure noted in *Table 1*

Appendix 2- Charlie - clustering by colour coding of emergent themes /provisional exploratory statements into Personal Exploratory Themes (PETs)

Appendix 3- Table of Personal Exploratory Themes (PETS) – colour coded across participants.

Appendix 4- Table of General Exploratory Themes (GETs) generated from PETs

Appendix 5- Participant Consent Form

Appendix 6- Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 7- **Interview overview – sample questions**

Appendix 8- Ethical considerations

Appendix 9- Original email to regional services

Appendix 1: Charlie's full transcript – Step 1 and 2 of the IPA process noted in Table 1- Step 1 – immersion in the data and Step 2, exploratory noting

Emergent themes	Charlie's transcript	Exploratory comments
Provisional themes Awkwardness attached to bringing up race as a topic White Club – ideas about a binary – White/ Non White – White people share understandings and are capable of Racism – intentional or unintentional White people are unlikely to be overtly racist with intention – there is something in them, but it is contained until they feel they can ' let their guard down'. Other forms of 'difference' are open to racialised talk 'race' can (should be?) hidden	I remember a really good friend of mine who I have known for 25 years and she is Asian – she's from India and she said to me – I wear my passport on my skin and she says "There's no hiding it". So I have some awareness of what you're talking about it from my background. So not about me personally – but before I was with my current partner, I was married to a guy who was Jewish, whose family was Jewish – mum was Irish, Dad was Jewish. And his family was in Philadelphia – his dad and his gran – and I kind of know from his experiences- but more than that- my current partner is Irish. **Very Irish** with strong accents and from that I kind of know from him, you know – jokes about the Irish. They don't know he's Irish and he's kind of sitting there – like people don't know you're Jewish do they? And it's, you know, awkward isn't it – because how do you challenge it in a way. Because people know don't they – if you're Black or Asian – they know not to say anything don't they. Whereas if you're white, then people let their guard down don't they and think that they're all part of the same kind of club. And they share their racism / their racist views. And it's acceptable. This is the white club…	Listening to other people's experiences – being open Letting your guard down – it's something that needs to be kept consciously in mind when speaking with People of Colour Race as something that can be 'hidden' Race as something that is commented on Race by degrees? (Very Irish) Whiteness as a club Seeing reassurance that I know what she means? Questions: 'don't they?'

Getting it wrong *Threat to identity* *Challenge to action-* *intrinsic and extrinsic* *Professional/Personal life* *Families* *Relationships* *Journey / path* *Whiteness in action* Idea of a White/ Non – White binary e.g. White schools		
Acceptance of whiteness / privilege	I've had that thing, I don't know whether your partner has experienced it… it's like "Oh – I didn't know you were Jewish. Oh – not you – you're the exception" It's a funny position to be in. But generally – and for my work – I am white and I am part of that club and I never know whether being a Jew is … I never know which box to tick – you know – I am white – my skin is pale and I live a white lifestyle these days and that is what people identify me as being white so …is it – at the same time I don't really want to identify with the 'white club' and in different phases of my life I've identified differently. My sister never ticks the white box. She reckons she's not white. So I don't know…but for other people, I tick the white box and that is my experience of how I pass through life. So how about your own identity? Is whiteness part of your identity Yes- I mean, I am white and I assume a lot – I take for granted a lot I think, that I have that – it's a bit of a buzz word isn't it .. privilege – but I kind of walk that privileged path I suppose. But a stronger identity for me would be my social class. Whether I identify as,	Interview – conversation with someone known to me already– helping me to develop my thoughts around this/ opening up ideas Turn quickly to class Buzzword – dismissive? CLASS

Class a stronger identity than Race Other aspects of identity as well – Feminism	well it's interesting for me whether I identify as a white working class woman or a white middle class woman. So I suppose I kind of – that's a stronger sense of identity I think, my social class. Yeah … I'm interested I suppose in – you'll be aware of the calls to confront systemic racism and certainly in the world of racism you'll be aware I know of the disparity in outcomes, found again and again, access to various services and hidden or overt racism and I'm interested in how – I'm wondering how we – as people working within or just outside the system. How do we see our roles in challenging – how do we see our role in terms of making a change? There's been a call for change over the decades. I'm not sure of any answers but..	Class as a more salient aspect of identity – the 'white' is assumed – the class is ambivalent and that is what leads to more thought/ contemplation? Whereas for me – my 'race' has caused more cause for contemplation? For me that is the area of ambivalence
Systemic Racism is an issue – sense of disempowerment or hopelessness – "the Helper" / Kindness - although engaging with the topic has led to her coming to deeper understanding – through reading about experiences or listening to thoughts of People of Colour	Yes, it just continues doesn't it? No I don't know what the answer is.. and I'm sure bigger brains than me have struggled as well! And the fact that there has been so little change for so long, um… I don't know. I mean at the moment – and I may be going a little off piste here … but I'm reading a book called Open Water which was written by a black guy and it is written about the relationship between a black photographer – young, living in London and his Black partner. And there was a really poignant bit that I read the other day that really stopped me. Because he was talking about – throughout .. so it's called Open Water and it's about that feeling of him being out there- in this big space and he's always got this sense of fear and dread. So he lives in London and I suppose it's on the back of what happened to Stephen Lawrence – and other things in London. And he's always talking about how he never feels safe. He's always watching his back. He's always careful about the language he uses. You know he is always worrying about going round London with his hoodie up. He feels like he's always a target for the police. He doesn't want to talk to the police or be involved with the police. But there is a bit that really made me stop in my tracks was the bit where he said something about, that intergenerational trauma of coming from slavery, through the generations, it's still here. And that's what is sitting inside my stomach and that is why I have all that fear and don't feel safe. And how …. "How do we get away from that?" he was saying. You know – that internalised trauma that has passed through generations. How do we get away from that? That is so true isn't it?	Feels like too difficult to have effect- **disempowered and hopeless? Passive ?** Sighing – resignation? Then laughing out loud–relieving some of the uncomfortableness? Deeply effected by story of trauma – the helper? Kindness – does this resonate with other stories for this participant? What was it about this story that has made her 'stop in her tracks'?

Walking a path Getting away / moving away / getting over – who is it that needs to get over it?	I have to own here that I don't think I have ever once brought up the idea of 'race' or colour in consultation. But I wonder, you know, whether that experience of racialised interactions- that experience might be very significant for that young person – or the family. I mean – there will be differences of course, depending on circumstances- but that feeling must be common to all people of colour in some way, I would imagine? I don't know… Should we be talking about it in consultation with families or young people or teachers…? Yeah – well I think *(colleague's name)* has put the training together, hasn't she? About … and I think just having the conversation about Whiteness… but I think it's so loaded isn't it? And I think … so I think that she delivered some training and she said that it was quite contentious and it's such a … such a tricky thing. Because people get defensive straight away, don't they? And it's… how do you get over that?	Getting away / moving away / getting over – distancing or recovery/ repair ? Walking a path Getting away / moving away / getting over – who is it that needs to get over it? Engaging with experiences and accepting – idea of internalised intergenerational trauma Almost feels like a hopeless – repetition -? Whiteness as a loaded concept Someone else has been 'doing' the training Acknowledgement of the 'trickiness' of the conversations about Whiteness. Defensiveness is immediate.
Family relationships – complex – difference from her – but wanting to maintain a fragile relationship – choice to	Yeah – and I suppose that's the nub isn't it? That we don't talk about race. And so in a sense- how do we ever move through it. And I think there is a lot of fear around getting it wrong. *I think that's big time, isn't it. And even for me … I consider myself quite 'up' on that kind of thing, but I would be afraid of saying things …using the wrong terminology. And all this stuff at the moment around sex and gender- you know, that's kind of the hot potato at the moment It's best not to talk about it because it's too contentious. And particularly within the work context- I wouldn't want to … because the work context is different, you*	Trickiness of conversations about race recognised – context important – **work persona / relationships** Work is not a forum to challenge

Left column:

challenge or not to challenge in some circumstances – if it would jeopardise a relationship e.g. at school as well – conditional

Like before – acceptance that white people are racist and at each point, there are other factors to consider – to challenge or not to challenge

Partners very important in this account – interesting that her partner and her brother's partner are both involved in this dynamic- her sister in law will admonish her brother- her partner will query her about not challenging – relationships run through the account – rarely her on her own? Bringing others in to the account – not in isolation

Middle column:

know, from with your family… and even that's tricky. I mean, my family are racist. Openly racist. My brother is openly racist. And my partner says, "How can you sit there and listen to him saying that?" And I say, because I don't have much… my family is very estranged/ dysfunctional. It's like the families that I work with! (laughing) in *Sometown*… and I say, because the relationship with my brother is fragile, I kind of accept that he's racist and I don't challenge him because I have challenged him in the past and there's been big barnies over it. And I've stormed out of the car. And it hasn't got me anywhere and it hasn't changed things. So…

Yeah – so that's interesting. That those conversations – even with family – are difficult to have. Even with that kind of "safety" – well actually I was going to say the "safety" of … but actually, it doesn't feel safe to have that conversation with your brother because of the reaction to it.
Yeah. So what is it? Would he consider himself to be racist, your brother?

I don't think he would. I mean his partner will tell him "You can't say that" but I think he's quite entrenched in his views and I think I would find it very tricky to change his views. I think he might agree with me, just for the sake of it. He'll carry on thinking the way he thinks.

Yes – that is so difficult. And I wonder – he has the reaction openly. But I wonder do we all have a strong internal reaction to being… because this narrative of Whiteness does suggest this privilege and this unconscious way of being racist. I think that word 'racist' is unhelpful because it shuts down the conversations. Whereas if we instead used the idea that we all have unconscious biases and some of us have learned how to be White, over time, we have all learned about this construct of 'race' and whether – with that learning- it's formed early on and maybe it feels like a threat to be open to that we are all probably likely to be quite racist.

Right column:

Hot potato- likened to another issue – analogy like class before – now gender
Almost a sense of confiding ? trust?

Challenge to action from partner
Expectation on her? From where? Is it from me? That idea of shame/ Owning up/ guilt

Where has participant or partner learned what she can say/ what is not ok to say? Where do 'we' learn? *Can/ can't say things*
Some things you say make you sound racist/ some don't

Some people are racist – her family are racist- you can call other people racist ?

Decisions not to challenge – dependent on context

What is this about? Idea of can/ can't say things? What is it you can and can't say?
What are the rules?
Is this a problem? Feeling of being judged – does that strengthen the position?

Or certainly make assumptions. I listened to an interesting podcast. Helen Morgan. She is a psychoanalyst and she talks about a seminar where she was exploring race and Whiteness. And she was talking about… she said that people felt affronted at the notion that they held racist beliefs. But then one woman said, "Actually, on the way here, I was driving and I was in a traffic jam and I looked…

P- I know what you're going to say…you're going to tell my story…!

I- Well she looked to her right and there was a woman wearing a full burka driving, and she thought "Oh – I didn't know they could drive!" She noticed her own surprise. And she put it like that in the story. And she realised that she had a whole raft of assumptions about the experience of that, presumably Muslim, woman and her experiences. And I suppose we all walk through life, having those assumptions …

You do… don't you? I think you go straight… my mind can jump straight into racist thoughts. And I think… I grew up in a racist household. I can remember my dad saying to me, "You eat chocolate ice- cream, you'll turn into a (and I wont say the word)". So that …

That is quite a background to come from to where you have developed your identity?

Yeah, and I kind of … that kind of racist language was used. And even now, mum, mum will sit and watch the telly and say, will use offensive words and yeah… so I think it's in me and I always feel guilty if I have a racist thought. If I quickly think to a racist thought, I feel bad that I've done that.

But you notice it?

Yes I notice it and I wouldn't voice what I'm thinking. Although *I probably would to my partner.* But I don't think… I think it's a human reaction. I think it's part of being brought up in a racist culture that we think that way. And it's also mixed up that way. I mean, the burka, the full face, everything covered apart from your eyes.. I always get so … I mean my reaction, whenever I see a woman who is dressed that way… I come at it from

Is that the same as participant worrying about getting it wrong? That unconscious biases might slip out? What would that mean for how they feel they are seen? Identity?

More to risk/ lose ? Within the social/ professional group of an EP? Is it the 'unsaid' things that are perpetuating it all

What was her story??? Why didn't she tell me?

Noticing own reactions and thoughts

Being very open with me here

Shame/ guilt
Feeling 'bad' for unconscious feelings
Internal dialogue

Making sense of where racist ideas come from – racism is part of a mix of identities/ ideologies	a feminist perspective and I get really angry. I think "Why are you doing that?!!" So it's not… it's that thing of all our identities get mixed in and like, your class, your feminism and it's all complex, isn't it? It's all complex… And those identities all kind of pull together… But then you, I guess what that woman … I guess it was only when this woman's assumptions were challenged, by seeing this woman driving next to her, that she noticed it. And I wonder if that's something to think about. Maybe …. You know it's like that idea, maybe of our body. That we don't necessarily notice parts of our body until something goes wrong with it, you know I wonder whether it's that idea. If something is challenging your assumptions, it's that idea of causing dissonance. Yeah – so I remember growing up in Sometown and … I moved away from Sometown when I was 19. I moved to Othertown. And I remember me and my partner walking down the road and stopping this guy who was in a pinstripe suit. Very smart, very well dressed, Black guy. And I asked him a question, Where's this restaurant or where's something..? And he was really well spoken and I can remember being really taken aback. And I think that was probably, well it *was* my assumptions around Black people in the community that I'd grown up in.	*Becomes very reflective* *Idea of safety again – feeling safe to be open and talk* *angry here – from a Feminist perspective – turning towards something that is easier to talk about? As a woman?* *Concept of race exists within* *Intersectionality*
Reflecting on her early experiences/ where she lived and what she observed and heard – had an impact on how she sees the world now / assumptions she has Rationalising	Yeah – I mean the assumptions come from a long process of… I mean those studies you see of very young children… Black children and White children seem to learn from a young age that you're more beautiful if you're blonde haired and blue eyed and White. And I suppose some of the work that has been done over the last few decades has been about challenging those kinds of narratives. Have you seen that one – with the Black dolls and White dolls. Clarke and Clarke?	Remembering/ noticing incidents where assumptions have been challenged *Searching for where her assumption had come from –* **she doesn't offer what the assumption was – was it that he**

	How young are the children? Very young – like I'd say 3 or 4ish Early years? Yeah - They are asked things like, "Which one is the nice doll?" and the Black child will pick out the White doll. And which doll is the good doll? I mean … it is a slightly problematic experiment, and it is an experiment but, you know ... it has been developed since and they looked at how nursery aged children treat Black dolls and White dolls. And they treat them very differently. And they ask – and It's painful to see- ask them which doll is most like you. And the child points to the Black doll. And, like you say, it's very early on that children are taking on this construct that White is … White is Best	*wouldn't have been well spoken?* *Back to this idea again* Back to the White Club? e.g. what would it *mean to be in the white club? Does it mean – shared assumptions/ shared understandings / a sense of safety /to say what you think / to excuse and understand?* Interesting that she uses these kind of 'soundbites' to encapsulate broader more complex ideas e.g. 'the white club' – this feeling that I would understand what is meant? White person talking to white person? She knows that I will understand that she doesn't mean it/ doesn't assume that is her point of view – she is being ironic – but …
Accepts how early this happens		*Doesn't elaborate – doesn't run with this theme – discomfort?* *Acceptance*

	Yeah and I am very really interested in looking at that in what I do – in personal and work life and think about what would make a difference… and I don't know	I have to change the subject a bit to keep the conversation going
	Yeah – so it's how do you make a difference in our job?	
	Yeah and I wonder whether it's about noticing our own assumptions first…	Reflective – long gaps
Rationalising again / theorising – inequality/ class/ politics/ poverty is more important than racism per se – that is the root – and understanding where the racism comes from	I think it's knowing the inequalities that are there	
	So yes that would be a start, wouldn't it – if everyone was aware here of the difference in outcomes locally	Inequalities
Partner disrupting again / challenging – this is something talked about at home	Yeah – I feel like I'm not following one line of conversation here, but talking recently to my partner about – I can't even remember how it came up, Tam – but we were talking about racism. And I said, "I think that you know one way of addressing racism is to make sure that everyone has a good standard of living. You know, maybe people on the Red Wall. Maybe if they had good jobs, if they had decent homes, if they had aspirations for their kids and a sense of investment in their communities and their future. Maybe that would stop racism. Because it's coming from that "I haven't got that such a nice house and you're coming to our country and you're getting a house and blah blah blah". So maybe if those communities had those things, but then he says, there are people who are racist who have got all those things. Look at your own brother! You know – he's not short of a few bob. He's got a nice house and a car and whatever. And he's racist.	Seeking to understand more overt racist ideas?
	So maybe it is more to do with upbringing…	
Actively making sense – 'we' – personal to her	Yes but I am sure that you could also find wealthy racists (from wealthy backgrounds) It's probably a piece of the jigsaw as to why we are like we are.	

	Can you think of a time when race/ work experiences – where race or Whiteness , your Whiteness maybe, or racialised assumptions from you or form a teacher maybe, was a factor?	
White schools = race isn't a 'problem' Race as geographically located	Have you ever come across…	White schools – interesting that there is this concept 'bad to say that' – suggests regret?
	Do you know, nothing springs to mind. And that sounds bad to say that. Because that must mean that either I'm not investigating. I'm in mainly White schools…I'm just trying to think back to when I was teaching because I taught in *a place* but it was a Catholic school and it was very White. Erm.	Again – does my question make her feel bad?
Race/ racism – not been part of her work – reflects that it feels bad to say that		
	Yes it doesn't tend to come up for you	
	What about you Tam- have you ever been in a situation where it's come up?	
	I have been on a learning curve really. I've taught in schools where White children have been very much in the minority. So I think I had quite good learning early on about challenging some of my assumptions which was very useful to me. And I feel like there have been times where parents have had assumptions made of them that maybe weren't… that were racist really. Racist assumptions Like I was working in a school with a high number of Roma children and I don't know why – I've come across this thing before. I think it is a thing. There is a definite thing that there is a really high percentage of children from a Roma background in that area that have children who are deaf. And it is a genetic thing. And a lot of children were deaf within that community, I guess because there is a lot of marriage between families. And the Hearing Impaired service in that area had a huge- disproportionate number of children from the Roma community and I just remember being struck by the dismissiveness of the whole attitude. You know the – well they might be deaf – but we're never going to get mum to engage with services. She'll never go to the appointments. And I wondered where that assumption came from – or whether there was any thinking about barriers. I mean- I don't think that assumption would have been made about a White woman generally No Maybe she wouldn't have done? Maybe she would have done	

Class – working class woman discriminated against – othered in the same way – but reflects that it is another layer of challenge	Do you think that assumption would have been made about a white working class woman? From a so called … From a troubled family? Yes- from a troubled family. I think those assumptions can be made about working class women as well. Yes both class and race It's that kind of othering thing. That they're not this that or the other And at the core of it, it is more difficult for some people to 'engage with services' sometimes it's difficult to get somewhere, sometimes there's fear … I suppose for a white working class woman, there are all those challenges – but for a working class woman of colour there is another layer	Challenging my assumption that that call was made about race? I get the impression that this participant privileges class as a more discriminated against characteristic than race – that is a more salient factor for her own identity and therefore in others' biases/ judgements
Identity as a psychologists – recognises the position of power and privilege and status and feels 'bad' that we are part of this system – without challenging	Absolutely And I suppose it's just being – I suppose I'm just trying to be more aware… Yes I suppose that's one thing that we could do as Psychologists, in our privileged position, as Drs, so you've all that status and power that goes with that. I suppose it makes me feel quite bad really that we have the power to challenge, don't we and perhaps we don't challenge enough and we don't say …. I know sometimes, I might not	Back to class again –idea of Class othering / being a more salient idea than race? Assumptions made on basis of class similar to those made about race? Othering
Epistemological position – humanist ? Human kindness or lack of Not kind to put people in a position of discomfort – o not kind of others to treat someone in a discriminatory way - overrides racism – at the root of the thing it's not kind	challenge because I might feel like how do I say that nicely? How can I say.. that's not inclusive- it's not inclusive, but for a want of a better word, it's not 'kind', is it really? It's not a kind thing to do. It's like when kids get chucked off the speech and language because, "oh mum never took him to the appointment". So they're chucked off the list And I always think – you can't do that! You can't just throw people off the list because … you know – it's not kind. And we know, don't we, there's lots of complex issues going on in those families, and it's easy to just shut the door. Time's up, you're out kind of thing,. Yeah	Intersectionality Psychologists are in a privileged position – power and status of the role – feeling that there is a responsibility ? Bad vs nice Kind vs. unkind – race is irrelevant – more about core

		values in how we treat all people?
Core values	So kindness is quite important isn't it? Kindness keeps coming up – it feels quite key to people in this role. If that's one of core values that we would like to see in other people, then how does that notion of Whiteness and privilege fit with that? Is that why this notion of Whiteness is so difficult to talk about. We don't see ourselves as racist because we don't fit the picture of someone who is racist? And so … maybe that's one of the reasons why it's difficult to confront it in ourselves because we are being kind?	
	Yes, we're being kind … I think – so I had a recent experience at work recently and it was all a bit awkward. So it was a virtual meeting and I made a comment – so someone else had made a comment that could have been viewed as sexist – and I then added something to that other person's comment and then someone said something to me: "Oh you're kind of building on a kind of stereotype there". And it all suddenly felt very uncomfortable. So, someone else tried to, you could sense the awkwardness, tried to change the topic and make light of it and then someone else responded …. It was fascinating – I thought about it after I came off- it was a group of EPs, group dynamics, power, who could say who was listened to, who could be heard. And that was just a group of EPs, but it was all very tetchy and it was all very uncomfortable. And that was kind of all something of nothing. And so in terms of what we're thinking about now: about Whiteness and discussions… people need to feel they can be open and people need to feel safe, don't they? And you're not going to get that. People are not going to be honest and open and genuinely change their views I don't think unless they can say something that politically incorrect and feel safe. And have an open debate and challenge about that.	Power/ challenge/ who can speak who can not speak / difficulty of challenging conversations Uncomfortable Awkward
Sense of safety – openness – people need to be able to express themselves – honest dialogue to bring about change without fear of being made to feel like they have said something wrong		Analogy with talking about whiteness – people need to feel safe – this participant felt safe to discuss with partner – but may nobody else? Involves trust
	Yes – because there are different possibilities when someone says something that is politically incorrect, you can embrace and explore…	
Position of EP as 'on it'	Yes and it depends how safe someone can feel to be able to embrace it	

She feels like she's on it / clued up	And we are very on it as EPs, you know we are politically aware, articulate, educated and yet it was very tetchy	Engaged with thinking about this exchange where she had felt like she had made a politically incorrect comment – it had felt uncomfortable and 'tetchy' – *to be avoided?*
	Yes sounds like it was a threat,	
	Yes I think so	
Absorbing new ideas – listening to the radio – reflection	So when I was listening to this programme on Women's hour driving in, there was this woman who'd done some research was saying that even babies as young as 3 apparently were recognising different colour skin. There was this woman saying "Oh I always so – I didn't even notice that you were Black", you know. And she said, "No I want to be noticed" . Because if people say… , and they mean it in a nice way… but what that's saying is that "you don't matter. I don't notice you. But I want to be noticed that I am Black and I have a heritage and a culture and ways about me that are me"	'Colour blindess'
	It's a bit like that shutting down of conversation, you know in little children if they point out the colour of someone's skin, often that conversation, they are 'shushed' and it's almost like race or colour of skin is some kind of thing that we don't mention. And we learn that very early.	
	Yes we do	Reflective
	I heard a good quote, "How does a baby born pink learn to be White" and I quite like that How does that happen? But yeah – slightly different idea	
	That idea of shutting down conversations. There was a magazine article I read. There was a psychologist writing about this. She is white and married to a black man. And she tells the story about how when her children were small, they had a friend round for tea and as they were leaving with their mother, her husband came home and they passed in the door. The little girl asked "Why are you married to him because he is black and you are white" and the child's mother instantly shushed her daughter. Told her not to say things like that et. Bu then the psychologist said " I'm married to him because he is	

	a very kind man and I love him very much" and– it just explained how it was. The skin was there – but that wasn't the important part in this conversation. I wonder whether that is a role for EPS and certainly teachers – looking at those early communications and conversations	
Humanist – commonality		
	I do think there is definitely power in recognising commonality. You know – we all love , feel jealousy, feel hurt. I don't know how at an early age – that could help us not to see – *because at some point that othering thing comes in. Oh you're Black so you're different from me. That thing about recognising our humanity – somehow seeing common points if humanity with each other.*	Shift to problem solving – but again it moves away from concept to race towards commonality between humans
	I don't know – it is very tricky. I mean the BPS has put out the call for some change – but it's the "What next?" How – but maybe developing those kinds of conversations with children – or setting them up as good practice might be useful. I suppose it's hard because our work doesn't necessarily involve that kind of …	
Problem solving – asking questions as a starting point		
	I suppose things like in planning meetings- in the way we raise LAC, then we could ask about ethnicity and I suppose it's asking those questions.	More ideas – coming thick and fast… problem solving
Awareness – of the experience of Black children – but also the trickiness of the situation / depressing	Am I being cynical in thinking - so when all the BLM stuff came out, I was thinking , "So where all our Black kids?" You know
I don't see many – so why aren't they coming through to us? And we know, don't we ? That lots of Black kids are excluded – the exclusion rate for Black kids is really high and that's never changed which is totally depressing. That's never changed over the last 30 odd years has it?	Thinking back to the events of summer
	Yeah – so is their behaviour understood differently? I haven't looked into it - but this concept of adultification. Child x with the strip search. I've been wondering – is it to do with different expectations from White kids and Black kids- or a fear of challenging some …	
Struggling with the concept of Whiteness as a concept (although doesn't directly call it that)	It almost feels like – it feels almost disingenuous– that I as a White person need to be taught about 'adultification'; their experiences. But if you are telling me about	Shift to

Position of a white woman – taking on the role Challenging the assumption that she can do anything – should she be the person? **Searching for her role in this**	'adultification', then I am sure there are lots of other things I've never heard about and I've only heard about 'adultification', about that because it's just been in the press recently	Whiteness – getting closer to a concept of what it means to be white ? Why it's problematic
	But what other assumptions and experiences are theirs? You know – that I don't know about. Yeah – is it about getting more Black and Asian people into our role. It feels like there's something for me about: if it's your lived experience, then it feels very White for me to go in and start poking my nose around in that. Does that make sense?	
	Yes I've wondered about talking about race in schools. What is that young person going to do though? They're going to have to teach me and why would that young person need to have that responsibility or why would they trust or accept that I will understand what they say properly? On the few occasions when I have worked with a young person of colour in this job – it is really rare – I haven't brought it up but I've wondered … I	
	Yeah – I don't know what I'm thinking - I understand what you're saying, about how it's our responsibility to learn about those things that happen – adultification etc. But is there something about power relations maybe? So that knowledge is there. But then we take hold of it as white, educated, professional people and kind of somehow it's no longer their experience that we are talking about with this power and authority.	Who has the power to speak and be heard ? who does not ? Echoes of earlier problematic episode – sexist comment –
	I- It becomes visible because we are choosing to make that visible and so we are choosing to make visible ad that might not be the experience that	
	I can't quite articulate it well. I know what I'm trying to say	
	I think what you said earlier – we only know about that because someone has plucked it and made it visible and actually there's lots of other experiences that go on all the time that we don't know about because we haven't experienced it and how will we know from our white privileged experience	
	When it's out there as well – like adultification is out there now. That we don't take over as White people now. That it still remains an experience that is voiced from the	Potential here for not hearing – almost an idea of a White Gaze?

Awareness that she doesn't as yet have access to experience to cyp of colour in schools – from their perspective	young people who have lived that. Does that make sense. And how is that possible – now it's been scooped up now – as a term of interest – to be discussed … It feels … all these things are all really hard I wonder what that term means for the parents of children of colour. .. If you could sit Girl X down and she might say – oh yes that happened to me when I was … but there's all sorts. There's lots of shit going on. There's probably loads of different experiences going on. I'd forgotten I had worked with a young lad that was African. and I feel bad now because it was when I had just qualified . He was in secondary school and he was referred for SEMH and the narrative around him was that he was hearing voices, you know. That he was schizophrenic. And you now. The Senco would tell me that at the time and I remember thinking well that's kind of boxing him off at the time. But I never challenge any of that- looking back on it now. And that is a discourse isn't there – So yeah – I suppose there is a rare opportunity when we could try and change the conversation with the person we are talking to	That privileges certain concepts- loses the genuine experiences Questioning place of a White woman Really grappling with this – the discomfort – Whiteness – White person as an outsider Incident led to reflection/ wondering / curiosity and realisations This feeling 'bad' assocaiated with inaction or not challenging assumptions
	But I suppose as EPs where *do* we get the broadest impact? I think we need to recruit more people into our profession from a BAME background. I think it's predominantly White and middle class and I think probably the way to change it is to recruit from a wider and to recognise the constraints that are there on the application process. It' a full circle isn't it. I recognise that too. Who am I to try and make any changes? I can only really come from a perspective of Whiteness. I can do the work on myself to understand how my whiteness, assumptions or privilege then interact with the children and families that we work with.	Summary

Appendix 2: Step 3 and 4- Charlie Personal Experiential Themes - Searching for connections across experiential statements colour coded to cluster exploratory themes together to form provisional PETs

- Race is an essential property – people have it or don't
- Visible and invisible/ concealed (?) or hidden - or in the open
- The white club- safe to comment on race, but only with people who are close to us, who are in "the white club" (ironic)
- White people have learned/know not to joke / comment about race in front of people who are racialised- it's awkward (embodied)

Reflections: I am being included in the assumptions/ resisting the assumptions

- Taken for granted nature of privilege- white privilege walking the privileged path
- Class as a stronger identity that she needs to explore
- Lack of agency/ resignation / disempowerment at being able to change anything
- Uncertainty / wondering / questioning
- Emotive response to hearing stories of racialised people stopped me in my tracks

How do we get away from that? how do you get over that? – repeated

- Talking about race is a tricky thing; people get defensive- Bringing other characters in all the time (friends, colleagues, characters in books, 'people' on training – is she feeling defensive? Is she projecting? Do these people act as a buffer to talking about her direct experiences
- Importance of family background and relationships in forming views (My mind can jump to racist thoughts)
- Families/ partners – safe space to talk openly about race – without fear of getting it wrong / being judged- so far the family has been a 'safe space' for conversations – the white club – decision to leave it like that rather than jeopardise relationships
- Getting it wrong- being judged – 'work' persona – even more important
- Pointlessness of challenging racist views again – by challenging it might push the conversations underground again – concealed racism- people don't show their true views about race
- Competing elements of identity
- Making sense of where racist ideas come from – racism is part of a mix of identities/ ideologies
- Being taken aback when assumptions are challenged- Feminism? = white Feminism?
- Searching/ reaching for where assumptions come from/ where racist behaviour comes from – families and where you are brought up
- Political situation / Poverty / othering because of particular discourses
- Challenge has the capacity/ potential to jeopardise relationships
- Race – located elsewhere – white schools – so 'race' does not feature – not relevant to white people
- Class – working class woman discriminated against – othered in the same way – but reflects that it is another layer of challenge - intersectionality
- Guilt and shame about not doing more to challenge
- Discrimination based on race/ class/ complexity of lives vs. kindness – core value for Charlie – if people were just kind then none of this would happen

- Sense of safety – openness – people need to be able to express themselves – honest dialogue to bring about change without fear of being made to feel like they have said something wrong – the lack of this is felt
- Discomfort felt at the conversation – and that was amongst a group of like minded people – shut down/ ridiculed – importance of being careful about how you speak so as not to cause offence all very uncomfortable
- Interested in the dynamics – who could speak /who could be listened to / who was heard
- contrast between ideals/ values "And we are very on it as EPs, you know we are politically aware, articulate, educated and yet it was very tetchy "
- People being *nice* can cause offence – not being authentic or genuine – causes difficulties
- In theory (news/ stories /radio) Charlie knows that children are disadvantaged educationally if they are racialised as other than white – but in practice, in Charlie's experience- in her day to day work – it does not feel relevant – she does not see black children – and that is also a concern to her. She wonders why that is.
- Concerns that it is very 'white' of her to go in and try to understand experiences of children and young people/ families who have been discriminated against- going back to that idea of trying to be 'nice' – nice white helping lady.
- Recognising the importance of bringing people into the role of EP who are racialised differently – Charlie feels it is not her place to assume she can understand the lived experiences of people who are racialised as black or other than white. Feels like it would be disingenuous
- I get a strong sense that Charlie is imagining how she might come across – strong sense of irony- she doesn't want to feel like she is perpetuating the role of the white helper /making assumptions/ presuming she can help etc.

Nice is used differently by Charlie than kind – being nice is unhelpful and suggests a lack of authenticity and maybe glossing over difficult conversations – but kind is a core value to her – kindness is important in treating people fairly and with compassion (nice white lady reference)

- Scope/ ability to actually make any changes is prohibited/ compromised by being white
- There is a sense of disempowerment that has come full circle in Charlie's narrative– evident at the beginning of the interview and strengthened by the end. Difficulty of stepping aside from the self – from accepting the discrimination and noticing the part that just being white – with the power that that involves (white and middle class in a profession that is also powerful) – amplifies the problem by directing gaze to certain objects while ignoring others
- Pointlessness of challenging racist views again – by challenging it might push the conversations underground again – concealed racism

Appendix 3: Table of Personal Exploratory Themes (PETS) – Step 5- PETs colour coded across participants

Ash	Sam	Fran	Charlie
Sense of self Identity formation	An effortful journey	The values his family held shaped Fran's identity	Race is significant but located elsewhere
Embodied feelings of discomfort	Noticing Difference / feeling different	Racist incidents that occurred while he was growing up were troubling and confusing and have contributed to his awareness	Power
Passive voice	Committed to the project	Talking about race has required a safe space and trust and can lead to discomfort	The White club: safe spaces to talk about race
Getting it wrong – race as a problematic discourse	Core values/ the kind of person that she is / identity	Becoming conscious of his own identity as a white male	Intersectionality and identity
Working within the system	Awareness of her own whiteness and privilege	Noticing differences and inequalities	How does racism happen?
Planning for future action	The talk feels uncomfortable	Finding a way through	A sense of irony / disempowerment to make anything different
Explaining differences in terms of systemic attitudes to racialised children and young people			Talking about race is risky
			Charlie does talk about her family – but more in terms of resistance to their values ; but actually she talks about the roots of where her ideas have come from etc- so it is evident

Appendix 4

Table of General Exploratory Themes (GETs) generated from PETs (Stage 5)

	Ash	Sam	Fran	Charlie
Race talk	• Getting it wrong – race as a problematic discourse	• The talk feels uncomfortable	• Talking about race has required a safe space and trust and can lead to discomfort	• Talking about race is risky • The White club: safe spaces to talk about race
Identities / sense of self	Sense of self Identity formation	Core values/ the kind of person that she is / identity	The values his family held shaped Fran's identity	Intersectionality and identity How does racism happen?
Engagement	Working within the system	An effortful journey	Noticing differences and inequalities	**Present in absence -feelings of impotence - querying her role within wider political situation**
Plans /Action or not	Planning for future action	Committed to the project	Finding a way through **(echoes of Charlie- broader perspective)**	A sense of irony / disempowerment to make anything different
Is this whiteness?	Embodied feelings of discomfort Explaining differences in terms of systemic attitudes to racialised children and young people	Noticing Difference / feeling different Awareness of her own whiteness and privilege	Becoming conscious of his own identity as a white male	Race is significant but located elsewhere Power

Appendix 5: Participant information sheet

<p style="text-align: center;">**Participant Information Sheet**</p>

Exploring 'whiteness'- How do Educational Psychologists reflect on their life experiences and understanding of this concept in relation to their day-to-day work?

 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 get in touch to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

1.   What is the project's purpose?

This project will form part of my Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology and aims to explore some of the experiences and thoughts of practising educational psychologists in relation to the concept of 'whiteness'. Initially, the motivation to explore this area was as a response to the events of Summer 2020 and the #BLM movement, at a time when the disparities for health and outcomes for people of colour In the UK and America were exposed clearly during the Covid -19 pandemic. The subsequent report produced by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (March 2021) has been widely condemned as a 'wasted opportunity' (Royal College of Psychiatrists, April, 2021) that failed to address the structural and institutional racism that exists in the UK and that contribute to the inequities experienced by People of Colour. Diane Ashby, Chief Executive of the British Psychological Society (BPS), also put out a position statement in relation to the report in April 2021. She stated that

 "The findings of the report represent a missed opportunity to identify the causes of disparities in our society, systemic racism, and to drive forward the positive change the Government said it wishes to deliver…. As stated previously we recognise that institutional racism exists and as an organisation we will tackle it", (Ashby, 2021, [British Psychological Society's response to the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities | BPS](#)

This is not a new position and yet the disparities in life outcomes persists. This research project aims – in a very small way – to explore one aspect of the problem- the notion of 'whiteness' and how this construct may be problematic in understanding the ways we talk to children and families and whether we may perpetuate some of the status quo in our work as Educational Psychologists.

2.   Why have I been chosen?

I am Interested In exploring the narratives of Educational Psychologists, practising In the UK in 2022, in a specific time and place in the world, fulfilling a specific role in the lives of children and young people and their families. You have been chosen because you have indicated that you have an interest in being part of this piece of research.

3.   Do I have to take part?

Whether or not you choose to participate in the project at this point is entirely voluntary. 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 until the point of submission, without any negative consequences. I will check with you that you are happy to have your data included following the interview and also following the transcription of the interview, before it is used in the analysis stage. You do not have to give a reason if you wish to withdraw. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact me via email (below).

Please note that that by choosing to participate in this research, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

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

The time commitment for you as a participant will be for two sessions. I expect these to last for around an hour maximum, but this will depend on the course that the discussions take and may be a little shorter or longer. The initial interview will be a chance for you to talk about your life and how your experiences have contributed to a concept of 'race' and in particular 'whiteness'. Following this Interview, I would like the opportunity to meet again for a follow- up session, where I can clarify meanings with you, reflect on some of the themes that have come out and ensure that I have represented your views correctly. This will also be an opportunity for you to add any further thoughts around the topic.

The sessions will take the form of an interview with some open-ended questions to form a narrative: it is hoped that using this methodology will serve as a way of understanding meanings and personal theories that have become a social reality for you. I hope it will be possible to explore the meanings attributed to certain events or actions in your life through talk and reflection around this topic: 'race' and in particular 'whiteness'.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

I will be recording the Interviews. If they take place virtually, I will use the online platform's 'Record' function. If we meet face-to -face I will make an audio recording of the Interview. The audio and/or video recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

4.   What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The topic of race can sometimes be felt to be uncomfortable one to discuss and there is a chance that this sense of discomfort may be seen as a personal disadvantage in the moment.

The time taken for the interviews may be a disadvantage for you. I am happy to work around your schedule to make this work for you if you decide that you'd like to be involved.

5.   What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that you may feel that it provides you with an opportunity to build in a dedicated space and time to explore and reflect on this topic and that this reflection might in turn feed into your practice and in opening up the conversations with colleagues.

6.   Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to me. Any identifying information will be anonymised by me at the point of transcription and I will check back with you that you are happy to include your data at that point.   You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this.

7.   What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The data collected will by pseudonymised and anonymised by me immediately following transcription and will only be shared with my research supervisor. The results of the research will be written up into my doctoral thesis and this will be shared with internal and external examiners.

The data provided by you will be kept in a pseudonymised and/ or anonymised form for the duration of the project. Any identifiable personal data will be destroyed as soon as possible after transcription.

8.   Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

9.   Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Education.

10.   What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research or report a concern or incident?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact me, Tamara Leon (tleon1@sheffield.ac.uk) or my research supervisor, Dr. Tony Williams a.williams@sheffield.ac.uk in the first instance.

If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the School of Education (Professor Rebecca Lawthom, r.lawthom@sheffield.ac.uk)

If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general

If you wish to make a report of a concern or incident relating to potential exploitation, abuse or harm resulting from your involvement in this project, please contact the project's Designated Safeguarding Contact [NAME; CONTACT DETAILS]. If the concern or incident relates to the Designated Safeguarding Contact, or if you feel a report you have made to this Contact has not been handled in a satisfactory way, please contact the Head of the School of Education, Professor Rebecca Lawthom. r.lawthom@sheffield.ac.uk) and/or the University's Research Ethics & Integrity Manager, Lindsay Unwin: l.v.unwin@sheffield.ac.uk

11.   Contact for further information

For further Information, please get in touch with either me:

Tamara Leon

Tleon1@sheffield.ac.uk

or my supervisor and Course Director, Dr. Tony Williams

Antony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk

I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider whether you would like to take part in this project.

Appendix 6: Consent Form

Exploring Whiteness in Educational Psychology Consent Form

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 06.01.2022 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)	☐	☐
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include being interviewed and being recorded (audio and video) on two occasions	☐	☐
I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.	☐	☐
I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time/before the submission date May 2022. I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.	☐	☐
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.	☐	☐

Name of participant [printed]   Signature   Date

Name of Researcher [printed]   Signature   Date

Project contact details for further information:

Tamara Leon - PGR student - Tleon1@sheffield.ac.uk

Under the supervision of: Dr. Anthony Williams, Programme Director, Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology- anthony.williams@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Rebecca Lawthom – Head of the School of Education- r.lawthom@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 7

Sample Interview questions

To ensure consistency as well as flexibility across participants, I generated themes and potential questions that I hoped to cover within each interview. The structure of each interview remained relatively constant, despite allowing each participant to take the direction of conversation broadly where they wanted to take it to ensure that it felt as naturalistic as possible.

- I was keen to explore the participants own identities in relation to race.
- I wanted to know how salient concepts of racialisation or whiteness were within their social experiences at work or in their own lives.
- I wanted to know how they felt about being positioned as part of a structurally racist system.
- I wanted to know about their experiences in relation to any interactions that they had had where they noticed that race or whiteness had been involved.
- I was also curious about whether they had reflected on possible ways forward.

Below are some of the questions that I used as part of a protocol

How do you identify? / What is important to you about your identity?
(Discuss my own identity and the contradictions and uncertainty that holds)

When do you think that you first became aware of 'race'?

Can you tell me about experiences of social interactions that you may have had where you felt that there might have been an element of racialisation or where you may have become aware of whiteness as a concept?

What does whiteness mean to you?

How did you feel when you became aware or were told that the education system was structurally racist – what emotions does that bring up?

Have you reflected on how whiteness operates within the profession of educational psychology?

Could they think of a time when whiteness had been problematic for you or noticed that it has been problematic for others?

Have you ever considered how things could be different?
Have you made changes to your own practice as a result of things you have learned that are related to whiteness or 'race'?

Appendix 8

Ethical procedures

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Education.

I identified that participants were at risk of significant personal and professional harm.

This was related to accidental identification of the participants and the subject matter that was felt to be potentially harmful by causing some threats to identity to the participants who were being asked to reflect on their personal experiences and values. I was concerned that they may feel exposed and vulnerable.

To mitigate any distress or harm, the following steps were taken:

Ethical procedures followed as advised by University of Sheffield Ethics Review Procedure.

A data management plan was designed and implemented in accordance with University of Sheffield guidelines.

Following initial interest, participants were contacted by me and a face to face or online initial interview was arranged to talk through the process and talk through any concerns that the participants may have had, or that I wanted to check out with them.

I discussed the topics involved and also the level of engagement that would be required of them as a participant.

Informed consent was gained and participants were free at any point until the point of submission.

I felt that the participants and I were all on a fairly similar level in terms of power; I considered this matter but did not feel that there were problematic power imbalances in terms of age, experience or class.

During the interviews themselves, I aimed to put participants at ease: to avoid any sense of worry or concern, I ensured that participants felt that I also felt uncertain and unsure and that I too felt uncomfortable discussing my own interactions around 'race'. I also struggled with articulating my own sense of identity in relation to this subject. I felt as though the participants trusted me over the course of the interviews to share with me their genuine experiences.

At the end of the interviews there was a de-briefing session and any questions were discussed, articles and ideas shared and the conversations tended to continue in an informal and reciprocal manner.

Because of the level of trust involved, and the details relating to identify, pseudonymisation ad anonymisation were important and following transcription, I checked with participants that they felt safe with the level of identify obfuscation.

I have kept in touch with participants throughout the process and am still in touch with all participants now via WhatsApp. They know that they have been free to withdraw at any point. All participants have requested I send them a copy of the completed thesis which I will share with them once it has been marked and passed.

If I intend to use any of this study in the future or if I intend to publish this thesis in any form other than for the purpose of examination, I will check in with my participants to ensure that they are still happy with the level of identity obfuscation given the potential for a wider audience.

Appendix 9

Original email circulated to regional PEPs

Subject: A call to participate in my research project (finally)

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that you have found some time to relax over the holidays and this email finds you well.

Please may I ask you to cascade this email invitation to your colleagues and services. It is a call to participate in a piece of research that will contribute towards the completion of my Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DEdCPsy) at the University of Sheffield.

This is an invitation to any Educational Psychologist or Trainee Educational Psychologist working within Local Authorities in the UK. The research aims to explore experiences of the discourse of 'Whiteness' and hopes to contribute to the development of anti-racist practice within the profession and within individual services.

For further information, please see the attached Participant Information Sheet attached. (Appendix 5 above)

Should you choose to participate, the commitment would be:

- one initial semi- structured interview that I would anticipate would last no longer than one hour
- one follow- up interview to check meanings and clarify themes

These interviews can be conducted either virtually, using a platform such as Google Meet or Micosoft Teams, or face to face at a location to suit you, if time and geographical constraints allow. I hope to accommodate any interested participants and can be flexible with the timings of the interviews- I appreciate that many of you will have time constraints.

I would ask that you register your initial interest by **Friday 29th April.**

To express interest, please contact me by email: Tamara Leon Tamara.Leon@rotherham.gov.uk

This research has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield School of Education Ethics Committee.